

Copyright
by
Nancy Ann Bandiera
2006

**The Dissertation Committee for Nancy Ann Bandiera certifies
that this is the approved version of the following dissertation:**

**THE MEDIEVAL LABYRINTH RITUAL AND
PERFORMANCE: A GROUNDED THEORY STUDY OF
LIMINALITY AND SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCE**

Committee:

Lynn C. Miller, Supervisor

Larry D. Browning, Co-Supervisor

Joni Jones

Brian M. Stross

Betty Sue Flowers

**THE MEDIEVAL LABYRINTH RITUAL AND
PERFORMANCE: A GROUNDED THEORY STUDY OF
LIMINALITY AND SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCE**

by

Nancy Ann Bandiera, B.A.; M.A.; M.F.A.

Dissertation

Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School of

The University of Texas at Austin

in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements

for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

The University of Texas at Austin

May 2006

Dedication

To my nephews,
Jesse and Andrew

Acknowledgements

I am grateful to the various soul forces and human energies that have inspired me to create and implement this research study. I have been blessed over and over with a remarkable opportunity to engage in a celebration of life and Spirit with so many wonderful people.

I feel inadequate in expressing my profound gratitude to my dissertation committee for their unconditional support in my efforts to grow as a spiritual person and scholar through these many years.

I express my deepest appreciation to:

Lynn Miller, my chairperson, for her gifts of creativity, performance, and scholarship, and her dedication to nurturing me and so many others in becoming aware of their potential and realizing their dreams. Her inspiration, insight, and realm of possibilities are contagious. I am so grateful for her patience, guidance, and friendship.

Larry Browning, my co-chair, for his generosity in giving me so much encouragement in learning how to think like a researcher and to follow through even when I did not know how I would muster the courage to jump into the next phase of the unknown. I am so grateful for his patience in allowing me to journey through so many phases of growth.

Joni Jones, for her contributions to performance ethnography and for being a role model integrating her spirituality, performance, and scholarship as a

unifying force. She is always willing to care for both my spirit and mind and I am so grateful for her life and presence in my life.

Betty Sue Flowers, for her most thoughtful insights, wisdom, and guidance. She knows so well how to share her gifts in scholarship and practice in tending to the development of a student's heart, mind, and soul. I am so grateful for her generosity and participation in my life.

Brian Stross, for his scholarship and steadiness. He consistently offers enthusiasm, insights, and belief in my life and work. I am so grateful for his encouragement to keep alive my desires to bring meaning and purpose out into the world.

Lauren Artress, for her outstanding leadership in training labyrinth facilitators around the world.

Linda Webster, a labyrinth facilitator, for her compassion, encouragement, and help in creating performance events for this study.

Pat Thomas, a Methodist minister and most incredible friend, for her dedication, support, and prayers during my program of study.

Rev. Dr. Sarah Bentley of the New Life Institute in Austin, for her support during preliminary study.

I am also grateful to family, my sister Vicki, Dan, Doug, and LuAnn and my colleagues, Alisha Lenning and Jill Carleton.

I especially thank all the subjects of this study for their willingness to share and their dedication to my project.

**THE MEDIEVAL LABYRINTH RITUAL AND
PERFORMANCE: A GROUNDED THEORY STUDY OF
LIMINALITY AND SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCE**

Publication No. _____

Nancy Ann Bandiera, Ph.D.
The University of Texas at Austin, 2006

Supervisor: Lynn C. Miller
Co-Supervisor: Larry D. Browning

To explore the concept of the medieval labyrinth as a spiritual tool generating the phenomenon of transformational spiritual experience as found in the Reverend Dr. Lauren Artress' Theater of Enlightenment, seven labyrinth ritual performances were created and thirty-two participants were interviewed. The central argument is that ritual and performance both share the concept of spirit—a developing consciousness towards self-knowledge, which is the journey to wholeness. Explaining the *what, why, where, and how* of phenomena occurring in performance is the work of performance studies. Situating the labyrinth as liminal performance, the phenomena of transforming spiritual experiences are explored. Chosen to generate theory, grounded theory methodology involved:

developing categories and themes inductively rather than imposing classifications on the data; analyzing interview narratives of subjects' spiritual experiences; and formulating a set of relational statements as labyrinth ritual performance theory. Using an outdoor medieval labyrinth and an indoor portable canvas labyrinth modeled after the Chartres labyrinth and built by artisans from Artress' non-profit, *Veriditas*, thirty-one subjects perceive they had spiritual experiences: (1) *relating to the Divine*—God, Goddess, Jesus, the Holy Spirit, Spirit, Essence, or the Universe; (2) *finding Self*—inner knowing, inner Self, life-force, or center of Self; (3) *walking a sacred space*—demarcated space for meditation, design of ancestral tradition, or historical Christian tradition; (4) *gaining meaning*—intellectual and emotional clarity of events, life-plans, problems, or situations; and/or (5) *creating intention*—co-creation with energy forms or the natural world. The three stages of the labyrinth path mark *where* change occurs while emotions, appreciations, motivations, values, and attitudes mark *what* changes. *How* change occurs involves contextual, causal, and intervening conditions; actions/interactions; and consequences that parallel the continuum of Krathwohl's taxonomy in the affective domain. Individual stories emerge around themes of spiritual, personal, and/or social development. This study contributes to performance studies in exploring what ritual *does* to the performer by way of thought, action, emotions, the senses, space, time, embodiment, and agency. Implications suggest the field of performance studies deal with the concept of Spirit in performance and research.

Table of Contents

List of Tables.....	xii
List of Illustrations	xii
Chapter One: The Medieval Labyrinth and Research Study.....	1
Introduction	1
Statement of the Problem	5
Research Question.....	8
Significance of the Study to Performance Studies	9
Background of the Present-Day Labyrinth Revival	14
Medieval Christian Symbology of the Labyrinth.....	17
Contemporary Archetypes of the Labyrinth.....	23
The Labyrinth Journey from Darkness to Light.....	28
An Experience with the Dialectic of the Labyrinth.....	31
Definition of Terms	36
Organization of Chapters	37
Summary	38
Chapter Two: Theoretical Approaches to Labyrinth Performance	41
The Aesthetic Field and the Work of Art	41
My First Engagement with the Labyrinth	48
The Labyrinth as a Happening	51
A Labyrinth Happening.....	54
Religious Studies.....	61
Ritualistic Theatre and the Concept of Spirit	67
Reader Response Theory.....	72
My Reading of the Student's Anonymous Letter	74
An Anonymous Comment.....	81
Other Labyrinth Research Studies.....	81

Summary	90
Chapter Three: Conceptual Frameworks of Ritual and Performance	93
The Labyrinth Ritual and Performance	93
My Labyrinth Engagement in the Middle of the Night.....	99
Liminality and Spiritual Experience.....	101
The Labyrinth as Restored Behavior.....	111
Flow and Reflexivity	113
Liminal and Liminoid Phenomena	119
My Engagement with the Labyrinth after a Labyrinth Performance	127
Other Research Studies of Spiritual Experiences	129
Summary	133
Chapter Four: Grounded Theory and the Labyrinth.....	135
Grounded Theory Methodology	135
Focus of the Research Study	137
Ethical Considerations	143
Questions	150
Research Subjects.....	153
Delimitations and Limitations	158
Data Analysis and Grounded Theory	159
Chapter Five: Applications of Grounded Theory and Findings.....	165
The Performance Rituals and Subjects.....	165
Pre-Data Analysis: A Personal Memory	173
Open Coding	175
Axial Coding	178
Storyline Memo.....	201
Selective Coding	216
Spiritual Development.....	225
Personal Development.....	233
Social Development	244

Summary of Findings	256
Labyrinth Performance Theory	259
Chapter Six: Looking Back and to the Future.....	276
Introduction	276
My Role as Interpreter of the Research.....	277
The Research Question: Spiritual Experiences	285
The Research Question: Performance Elements	287
Implications for Further Research.....	299
Conclusion.....	310
Appendix A Letter of Recruitment for Subject	320
Appendix B Letter of Permission from Church	321
Appendix C Informed Consent of Subject	322
Appendix D Data Sheet of Subject	324
Appendix E Model Flyer of Labyrinth Performance	325
Appendix F Model Flyer of Labyrinth Performance.....	326
Appendix G Guidelines to Labyrinth Walking	327
Appendix H Labyrinth Facilitator Certification.....	328
Bibliography.....	329
Vita	340

List of Tables

Table 1: Performances and Respondents	165
Table 2: Glaser's Coding Families	177
Table 3: Demonstration of Comparative Findings for Core Category: Process.....	183
Table 4: Properties and Dimensions of Spiritual Experience	189
Table 5: Properties and Dimensions of Liminality.....	190
Table 6: Properties and Dimensions of Secondary Phenomena.....	192
Table 7: Dimensions of Pre-ritual to Post-ritual States-of-being.....	193
Table 8: Process and Structure of the Labyrinth Ritual.....	216
Table 9: Working Model of Comparative Findings for Structure and Process.....	217
Table 10: Conditions, Consequences, and Results.....	267

List of Illustrations

Illustration 1:	The Chartres Labyrinth	312
Illustration 2:	The Medieval Labyrinth.....	313
Illustration 3:	The Outdoor Medieval Labyrinth	314
Illustration 4:	Canvas Labyrinth	315
Illustration 5:	Labrys	316
Illustration 6:	Labyses	317
Illustration 7:	Lunations	318
Illustration 8:	The Seven-Circuit or Cretan Labyrinth.....	319

CHAPTER ONE: THE MEDIEVAL LABYRINTH AND RESEARCH STUDY

Introduction

The labyrinth symbol, with its 11 concentric rings, was designed in the early 13th century and is a circular geometrical form and scheme of movement measuring 42 feet in diameter. The center of the circle is 9 feet in diameter, and the circuitous walking path is 861.5 feet in length. Walking to the center and back out (1,723 feet) is approximately one-third of a mile and takes about 20 minutes depending on how long one stays in the center. (See Illustration 1.) The labyrinth is known as the Chartres labyrinth because it was built for Notre Dame Cathedral at Chartres, France. Because it was first built in 1201, it is also referred to as the medieval labyrinth.

The Reverend Dr. Lauren Artress, credited with the world-wide renewal of labyrinth walking, claims, “When the imagination travels through the psyche, archetypal symbols release energy which creates meaning that is experienced as sacred.” (p. 144) Artress names the ritual, *Theater of Enlightenment*, a concept central to this study. Upon completion of the sacred walk, people claim to have spiritual experiences of enlightenment.

Walking the labyrinth is performative. Participants, whom I claim are “performers” of the ritual act, enter the labyrinth, which is *Stage 1: Purgation*,

and physically journey through the unicursal symbol to the center. Having arrived in the center, a performer rests in what is called *Stage 2: Illumination*. The performer, in *Stage 3: Union*, then leaves the center by walking the same spiraling path back to the entrance of the labyrinth and exits. The labyrinth is a two-way street in that performers entering the labyrinth traverse the same path as those leaving the labyrinth. Thirty participants may comfortably perform the labyrinth ritual at the same time.

In her book, *Walking a Sacred Path: Rediscovering the Labyrinth as a Spiritual Tool*, Artress explains the original purpose of the labyrinth. “In the tradition of pilgrimage, the path of the labyrinth is called the Chemin de Jerusalem—the road to Jerusalem—and the center of the labyrinth, the New Jerusalem.” (p. 33) However, because of war during the Crusades, Jerusalem became a dangerous journey for people to travel. Hence, the labyrinth became the pilgrimage path whereby pilgrims symbolically journeyed to Jerusalem by walking to the center of the labyrinth.

For my qualitative study, I use an indoor canvas labyrinth with the Chartres labyrinth design painted on it. This labyrinth measures 37’ in diameter, which is slightly smaller than the original labyrinth’s measurements. (See Illustration 2.) I also use a larger outdoor labyrinth that is built from small rocks and measures 60’ in diameter. (See Illustration 3.) During preliminary sampling, I brought numerous college students from my classes, as well as various small

groups of adults to other available labyrinths at the time. During this time in my research, I used two additional medieval labyrinths not used in my formal qualitative study: an outdoor labyrinth built from rocks measuring 42' in diameter and a 42' in diameter labyrinth in which the unicursal path is painted on pavement. I collected over one hundred anonymous comments, including anonymous comments from a Methodist church labyrinth walk. I utilize many comments for discussion in chapters one, two, and three.

Initially, I had seen a picture of the Chartres labyrinth on a flyer advertising a retreat in San Francisco at Grace Cathedral Church under the leadership of the Reverend Dr. Lauren Artress, who is an Episcopalian priest and psychotherapist. In 1989 Artress, along with a small staff, had visited the Chartres Cathedral in France, which houses the original 13th century marble labyrinth, and later fashioned a portable canvass labyrinth using the measurements and design of the marble labyrinth. Today, Grace Cathedral has a labyrinth made of a wool tapestry rug inside the church and an outdoor labyrinth made of terrazzo stone.

Staring at the meandering labyrinth on the retreat flyer, I felt an immediate attraction to the design as art. Then, realizing that I could actually *embody* the sacred symbol by walking it was such a compelling force that I quickly made arrangements to attend the retreat. Upon my arrival at Grace Cathedral Church, a

magnificent Gothic structure, I met a group of approximately 50 people from various states across the United States, as well as from Europe and Australia.

These vibrant people were enthusiastically exchanging challenges and successes about the labyrinth movement that they were initiating in their country, city, or state. Labyrinth walking is becoming a means of meditation across the country and the world, not only in churches but also in health centers, schools, parks, prisons, spas, and places of work. Lauren Artress writes in her newsletter, *Source*.

Our small non-profit, *Veriditas*, is in demand as the word gets out. We have been on the Peter Jennings ABC Evening News, on the front page of the New York Times and even been taped for the “Remembering the Spirit” segment for Oprah! The phone never stops ringing. Thousands of people want to know about *Walking a Sacred Path*, or how to help their community design a labyrinth, or how to locate a labyrinth in their area. We scramble each day to relay the information that folks are seeking. (Fall 1998: 12)

Astounded by the worldwide renewal of the 13th century symbol in the 21st century, I began collecting literature and purchasing books to begin my personal study of the Chartres labyrinth. Although at the retreat I did not realize the depth of my future participation with the labyrinth movement, I would later earn certification as a labyrinth facilitator in preparation for my qualitative research study.

Statement of the Problem

I began this study with a challenge formed by theatre artists and scholars, whom I discuss in chapter two, to produce performances built upon spiritual premises. My personal challenge was to create and evaluate performance that serves to fill a spiritual gap between two disparate human processes—creativity and destructiveness and to show *how* ritual is performed through the labyrinth.

Ritual and performance are linked as accomplished actions that stimulate creativity, behavior, thoughts, feelings, intuition, the senses, imagination, and/or desires for the purposes of awareness, choice, decision, and/or transformation. I further link ritual to performance since both create liminality, a state in which time feels suspended until the ritual or performance actions/interactions are accomplished. I situate the labyrinth ritual as a liminal performance. Later, I link the labyrinth ritual process to the process of actor training for theatre. In addition, labyrinth ritual shares a major characteristic of postmodern performance—indeterminacy. The medieval labyrinth ritual no longer molds people according to fixed notions of religion; rather, people arrive at their own spiritual meanings during the ritual. Even if a person comes to the labyrinth with spirituality based in fixed doctrines of a particular religion, the labyrinth becomes a spiritual tool

that acts as a mediator bridging the performer's spirituality to unique personal meaning.

Because of the scarcity of scholarly research about understanding and evaluating the experiences of individuals in the contemporary labyrinth movement, I situate my qualitative study in the field of performance studies, which essentially seeks to discover what performance *does* to performers and audience. To explore the concept of the labyrinth as a spiritual tool generating the phenomenon of transformational spiritual experience as found in Artress' Theater of Enlightenment, I create seven labyrinth ritual performances and interview thirty-two participants. Participants, becoming both the performer—the *doer* of the labyrinth ritual and the audience—the *recipient* of the transforming action, engage in creative interplay with the labyrinth. I further discuss the dual roles of participants in chapter two.

Explaining the *what, why, where, and how* of phenomena occurring in performance is the work of performance studies. Linking my study to the work of performance studies, I must explain the *what, why, where, and how* of the phenomena of transforming spiritual experiences that occur in the performance of the labyrinth ritual. Using grounded theory, I set aside as much as possible the theoretical ideas and notions explored in chapters two and three once I begin the coding process through which “data are fractured, conceptualized, and integrated to form theory” Strauss and Corbin (1998: 3). Similar to the labyrinth walker

taking steps along the specific yet unknown path, I take specific steps in data analysis allowing meaning to emerge from the participants' spiritual experiences through specific performance elements that account for conditions, actions/interactions, consequences, and results in order to generate labyrinth ritual theory.

In *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice*, Catherine Bell states, "...ritual is to the symbols it dramatizes as action is to thought; on a second level, ritual integrates thought and action; and on a third level, a focus on ritual performances integrates *our* thought and *their* action." (p, 32) Based on the analysis of individual audiotaped interviews, I seek performance elements contributing to the phenomena of spiritual experiences and interpret my participants' thoughts and actions as a unifying theoretical understanding and assessment of relationships among conditions, actions/interactions, and consequences resulting in spiritual enlightenment.

Major concerns to be resolved are: (1) *whether* participants experience transformative stages of the labyrinth ritual; (2) *how* a participant perceives the ritual as a spiritual experience; (3) *what* performance elements are contributive to the experience; (4) *how* a participant arrives at a level of understanding the spiritual experience; (5) *what* judgments or decisions a participant makes about the experience, and (6) what are the implications for performance studies.

Research Question

My dissertation is a qualitative research study on walking replicas of the Chartres labyrinth, also known as “the medieval labyrinth.” My dissertation question is: does performing the sacred labyrinth ritual create a spiritual experience, and if so, what performance elements contribute to that experience and how does an individual interpret the experience? I utilize grounded theory. John W. Creswell explains “...the intent of grounded theory study is to discover theory, an abstract analytical schema of a phenomenon, that relates to a particular situation.” (pp. 55-56) Anselm Strauss and Juliet Corbin define *theory* derived from the data. “A set of well-developed concepts related through statements of relationship, which together constitute an integrated framework that can be used to explain or predict phenomena.” (Strauss and Corbin 1998: 15) I encounter the following subquestions using the coding prescribed by grounded theory methodology. I adapt Creswell’s explanation of the coding methods.

- What are the general categories of spiritual experiences to emerge in the first review of the thirty-two interviews? (*open coding*)
- What caused the spiritual experience? What contextual and intervening conditions influenced it? What strategies or outcomes resulted from it? What were the consequences of these strategies? (*axial coding*)

- What is the development of propositions integrating labyrinth ritual performance theory? (*selective coding*) (Creswell, p. 103)

Significance of the Study to Performance Studies

The field of performance studies, by employing qualitative studies, such as those employed in the fields of anthropology and communication, needs to supplement formal theory with substantive theory generated from data of performance participants. No dissertation exists as a qualitative study of the labyrinth as performance, so my research study enriches the field of performance studies by substantive data concerning experiences of Spirit in performance and liminality during ritual action.

My central argument is that ritual and performance both share the concept of spirit—a developing consciousness towards self-knowledge, which is the journey to wholeness.

In addition, too often in performance, discussion about a performance is limited to the description and experience of a delegated critic and/or theorized by a scholar. At best, audience members are informally asked if they liked a performance, are asked to fill out a simple questionnaire assessing strengths and weaknesses of a performance, or are invited to a group talk after a performance. My qualitative study offers through grounded theory methods a model of an analytic system of discovering labyrinth performance theory.

In his article, “Liminality: A Synthesis of Subjective and Objective Experience,” Colin Turnbull offers personal reflections on the quality of his “performance” as a field worker and concludes that the field worker must be open to total participation in the objective study of society, and that total participation includes being open to the subjective experience of Spirit. Turnbull explains two reasons for scholars to include experiences of Spirit in their studies.

a) because we need to deal with the concept of Spirit, the failure to do so has been one of the greatest weaknesses of contemporary anthropology, and b) because I believe that personal development is an essential and integral part of the field experience and is in itself valid ethnographic data as well as being essential for our proper evaluation of such fieldwork. (p. 57)

Turnbull makes a case for this participation as he self-evaluates his personal development in his fieldwork. He considers field experience as compelling personal development. By linking with Turner’s anthropology and theatre, Turnbull explains that the anthropologist who fully participates in field ritual improves the “...quality of my ‘performance’ as a field worker, involving me immediately and personally in two basic elements of any ritual, transition and transformation...” (p. 57)

Turnbull assesses that anthropologists have given serious consideration to transition rather than transformation but claims that the study of transformation is more essential to our full understanding of liminality. It is apparent that Turnbull deems ritual as sacred, not in the sense of religious spirituality but in the sense of Spirit as a way of knowing human behavior in relation to cosmic order. I argue

that experiences in the psychological and physiological domains are also spiritual because they occur in sacred space and the participant interprets them as such.

Likewise, I argue that to completely understand the patterning of human behavior in ritual, the researcher must also fully enter the range of immaterial functions of the human spirit or of Spirit as outside force infusing the human spirit. This study responds to Turnbull's challenge to deal with the concept of Spirit in that I fully participate in rituals during field research as a way of apprehending patterns of human behavior.

My study supports the theory of anthropologists, Arnold van Gennep and Victor Turner. Ritual is a liminal performance. Turner uses the term, *liminality*, derived from the research of van Gennep. Describing ritual as a rite of passage, Turner explains liminality as the period of time that is "betwixt and between" the previous social state, which is the time before ritual engagement and the yet to be completed new social state, when the ritual is completed. Linking theatre with Turner's work, performance studies scholar Richard Schechner joined Turner to study liminality as a space-time of creative potentiality in individual and communal human behavior.

Victor Turner claims "...that liminality is not only *transition* but also *potentiality*, not only "going to be" but also "what may be," a formulable domain in which all that is not manifest in the normal day-to-day operation of social structures (whether on account of social repression or because it is rendered

cognitively “invisible” by prestigious paradigmatic denial) can be studied objectively, despite the often bizarre and metaphorical character of its contents.” (1978: 3) Liminality as potentiality parallels my engagement with the data as an inductive process of “what may be.”

Again, comprehending, analyzing, and evaluating a performance is the work of performance studies. In *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*, Erving Goffman defines performance as “...all the activity of a given participant on a given occasion which serves to influence in any way any of the other participants.” (p. 15) In labyrinth ritual performance, a participant may influence one or more participants; however, the focus of influence is self-reflexivity since the participant plays both performer and perceiver.

Contributing to the study of ritual as performance, I assess and build a framework for comprehending, analyzing, and evaluating the relationship between the object—the labyrinth and the subject—the performer-perceiver, as well as the relationship between process and structure. Although the labyrinth is a three-fold process – walking to the center, resting in the center, and walking away from the center, the structure has no fixed meaning; rather, it generates multiple possibilities of meanings with each individual performer-perceiver (indeterminacy). With its twists and turns, the labyrinth ritual at first undermines order, obscures meaning, and dislocates thought and action.

Because walking the labyrinth is an embodied practice, each participant receives these unknown elements through her body and responds to the conditions. Meaning emerges as revelatory as participants integrate thought, action, and Spirit interiorly and/or exteriorly felt. This study explores embodied meaning, a significant emphasis in performance studies, in conjunction with original narratives of performers experienced during a liminal state.

Likewise, literary criticism supports the notion that fixed categories of text, author, or reader can be broken down to examine reading as a response, that there is never any closure of meaning, and that every work is a part of a larger one (intertextuality). This research study contributes to the exploration of the role of performer as it parallels the role of reader.

My methodology, grounded theory, also relates to postmodernism in that theory emerges from the data. The significance of grounded theory to the field of performance studies lies in the following statement. “Generating theories about phenomena, rather than just generating a set of findings, is important to the development of a field of knowledge.” (Strauss and Corbin 1998: 22-23) The field of performance studies needs researchers to perform detailed analyses of performance data in order to see new possibilities in phenomena occurring in a specific ritual performance by systematically developing data in terms of their properties and dimensions then integrating and refining the findings into ritual performance theory. I situate myself as the “interpreter” of the research.

Analysis—interplay between researcher and data—parallels the interplay between the labyrinth and participant. Analysis does the work of performance studies: (1) explores multiperspectival possibilities of meanings, (2) enhances understanding of human behavior, (3) formulates insights as to the nature and power of performance, and (4) provides theoretical ideas and notions about performance.

I present the following four sections to describe: (1) the background of the present-day labyrinth movement; (2) medieval symbology of the labyrinth according to Christian spirituality in the Roman Catholic tradition; (3) contemporary symbology of the labyrinth; and (4) the labyrinth journey from darkness to light.

Background of the Present-Day Labyrinth Revival

The Rev. Dr. Lauren Artress is an Episcopalian priest, psychotherapist, and Canon of Special Ministries at Grace Episcopal Cathedral in San Francisco. Under the leadership of Dean Allan Jones, Artress in 1986 established a center called *Quest* whose goal it was to build a bridge of understanding between the traditional church and non-traditional forms of spirituality. Artress re-created the Chartres or medieval labyrinth out of natural canvas with the symbol painted in purple on it to delineate the unicursal path. The mobile canvas is 37 ft. in diameter, which is slightly smaller than the one in the Chartres Cathedral. (See Illustration 4.)

In 1989, Artress began traveling with the portable Chartres labyrinth to numerous churches and wrote her book, *Walking a Sacred Path: Rediscovering the Labyrinth as a Spiritual Tool*. Her book serves as a standard text in the spiritual revival of labyrinth walking, which inspires people in diverse spiritual traditions. Artress subsequently founded in 1996 a non-profit organization, *Veriditas: The World Wide Labyrinth Project*, through which she trains labyrinth facilitators from around the world to teach others how to build labyrinths, how to use the labyrinth as a spiritual tool, and how to introduce a replica of the Chartres or “medieval” labyrinth to churches, schools, community centers, corporations, prisons, hospitals, hospices, and airports. *Veriditas*, which operates under the Episcopal Church, also hosts annual pilgrimages to Notre Dame Cathedral at Chartres, France. Artress established a working relationship with the Catholic administration at Chartres Cathedral whereby the original labyrinth was again made available to the world after serving as a storage space for four hundred years.

In his book, *Magical Paths*, Jeff Saward states, “Hundreds of portable labyrinths have been produced since the early 1990’s, and while it is difficult to find reliable estimates, it is clear that many hundreds of thousands, maybe millions, of people around the world have encountered the labyrinth through this medium.” (p.165) Saward documents that other revivalists of the labyrinth across the United States formed another organization in 1998, the *Labyrinth Society*, to

support outreach and educational projects of people working in various labyrinth settings, which are not necessarily spiritually based. (p.162) Saward presents numerous pictures of labyrinths at events and programs, which reach an even broader and more diverse audience than *Veriditas*.

For example, Saward reproduces a picture of one construction of Robert Ferre, founder of the St. Louis Labyrinth Project. This construction was a large indoor labyrinth made of canned food as a mass media challenge for a charity appeal on behalf of the homeless. With the rapid expansion of the Internet in the 1990's, thousands of websites record labyrinths made from a variety of materials such as rocks for outdoor labyrinths, wood, paint, masking tape, stained-concrete, and handcrafted brick.

The numerous books written about the labyrinth revival cover labyrinth history, construction, symbolism, prayers, and the use of the labyrinth in therapy. Saward comments on the organic growth of the labyrinth in the 1990's to the present, stating, "The fact that these labyrinth symbols were in widespread use in the medieval church eight hundred years ago not only provides validity for the form, but allows the modern pilgrim to participate in an 'authentic' medieval Christian ritual." (pp.167-68) Saward believes that this respected ritual provides a direct connection to medieval pilgrims, a connection that transcends time, language, and differing liturgical traditions. In addition, the labyrinth provides

shared experience for people of all ages and is a means of building communities that bridges the diverse interests in churches today.

Commenting on what people experience when they walk the labyrinth, Saward says:

Many report that their lives have changed for the better, saying that walking the labyrinth has brought them increased calm, clarifying insight and spiritual rejuvenation. For many, the labyrinth is a pathway of prayer, an opportunity to connect with the Divine while traversing a human course, and, as such, gives opportunity to contemplate the magic and mystery of one's existence. Despite its lofty claims, the labyrinth continues to invite soulful expression, release and healing, not with weighty dogma, but with the charms of delight and curiosity. Perhaps it is this interaction with what cannot be understood and explained, that so appeals to our impoverished postmodern imaginations. (pp. 168-69)

Current literature, which affirms Saward's summary, documents people's labyrinth experiences as prayer, healing, or spiritual growth. However, no formal qualitative study exists; my research explicates the labyrinth ritual as a performance to both the academic and labyrinth communities.

Medieval Christian Symbolism of the Labyrinth

In *The Sacred & the Profane: The Nature of Religion*, Mircea Eliade writes, "The sacred reveals absolute reality and at the same time makes orientation possible; hence, it *founds the world* in the sense that it fixes the limits and establishes the order of the world." (p. 30) The medieval laborers symbolically established the order of their Christian world through the labyrinth.

During the middle ages, people made a vow to make a pilgrimage to Jerusalem during their lifetime, which was considered the center of the Christian world. The labyrinth is a sacred space, which meets the criteria that Eliade describes.

... (a) a sacred place constitutes a break in the homogeneity of space; (b) this break is symbolized by an opening by which passage from one cosmic region to another is made possible (from heaven to earth and vice versa; from earth to the underworld); communication with heaven is expressed by one or another of certain images all of which refer to the axis mundi: pillar (cf. The universalis columna), ladder (cf. Jacob's ladder), mountain, tree, vine, etc; (d) around this cosmic axis lies the world (== our world), hence the axis is located "in the middle," at the "navel of the earth"; it is the Center of the World. (p. 37)

The *axis mundi*, which supports all things in a sacred space, is the symbol of the rose in the center. The Chartres labyrinth rests in Notre Dame Cathedral at Chartres in France. *Notre Dame*, in Latin, means Our Lady, who is Mary, the Holy Virgin Mother of Jesus. Although both Catholics and Protestants believe in the doctrine of the virgin birth of Jesus, Catholics deem Mary as the Mother of the Church to whom people can pray for intercession in their relationship to Jesus, who is believed to be God-incarnate. According to all Christian denominations, God, the Father, who in some Christian circles is also referred to as Mother God, impregnated Mary, a young Jewish girl from Israel, through His Holy Spirit rather than through the seed of a man.

The petals, which design the center circle of the rose, are numerically symbolic of the Virgin Mary. In *The Labyrinth Revival*, Ferre explains that the

geometric design is one center circle that is surrounded by six circles. The six circles overlap five times to provide open space for the entrance path. Although the 7th circle is not visible, seven is the number for virginity. It symbolizes both Mary's virgin birth and a spiritual goal. "The center of the labyrinth represents Heaven, the goal of our earthly journey. The chance of arriving there is enhanced by Mary's help and by her status." (p. 22) Ferre further suggests that the geometers imitated the act of creation, as recorded in the Bible, by creating six petals to correspond to the six days in which God created the world.

The rose is the intersection for two axes, which are made up of 10 labryses that evoke the symbol of the cross. A labrys looks like a double-headed ax and there is one for each circle except for the inner and outer circles. (See Illustration 5. Labrys.) The cruciform symbolizes the cross upon which Jesus died as an act of redemption from original sin.

According to the *Encyclopedia of Catholic Doctrine*, original sin spreads to humanity via generation. (p. 482) Original sin is called sin only in an analogical sense in that it is a sin 'contracted' and not 'committed' as an act. Consequently, original sin is a state or condition of being, which can only be erased through Jesus Christ. All humanity inherits the condition from Adam and Eve, the first man and woman. Satan first seduced Eve who then seduced Adam to follow Satan's suggestion in challenging God's ultimate authority and power. Satan originally was Lucifer. Lucifer was an angel of light who in his pride contested

God's order and persuaded other angels to follow him. These angels became known as devils.

In *Through the Labyrinth*, Hermann Kern (p. 144) explains that the number 11 in medieval Christian symbolism signified "sin, violation, excessiveness" since it exceeds the number of 10 commandments that God gave as a means of governance to Moses, a Jewish prophet who led the Jewish people out of Egyptian captivity into Israel. The cross superimposed on the labyrinth by the 10 labryses forms "...barriers that repeatedly force one to change direction and, metaphorically, compel one through the "Stations of the Cross." (See Illustration 6.) The Stations of the Cross refer to the 14 times Jesus stopped along the path to his crucifixion site because he was near death from a beating and from the weight of carrying the cross upon which he would be crucified. The labyrinth contains 28 of these turning points, a multiple of 2 for the 14 stations of the Via Dolorosa, the Latin term for Jesus' "path of sorrow."

In *Origin, Symbolism, and Design of the Chartres Labyrinth*, Robert Ferre adds further symbolism to the labryses. He explains that the labryses give the labyrinth its cruciform shape, which is important in the Christianization of the labyrinth; however, the cross is not unique to medieval Christians. Ferre states, "The alchemical symbol for earth is a circle with a cross in it, just like the labyrinth." (p. 20) The symbol in this case refers to the four cardinal directions. The four labryses along the top vertical axes, the four labryses along the bottom

vertical axes, and the three labryses on each side of the horizontal axes create seven 180-degree turns in each quadrant. Ferre adds further numerical significance. “The total number of 180-degree turns for the labyrinth is therefore 28, the same number of days in a lunar month. To these, add the six 90-degree turns along the entrance paths for a total number of 34 turns (three and four!).” (p. 20)

The 112 lunations are two-thirds circles around the periphery of the outer circle. There are 28 lunations per quadrant with each of the four quadrants representing each quarter of the year. Robert Ferre further comments on the symbolism of the lunations. (See Illustration 7.)

When examining the lunations, I was certain that they would be formed using a geometric shape of great importance, called the *vesica piscis*. Also known as the *mandorla*, this shape encompasses the overlapping area of two circles of the same size, each with their center on the perimeter of the other. The two circles again represent our two natures, human and divine. The *vesica* is the integration of those two natures, similar to the joining of the numbers three and four. On the front of many Romanesque churches (as well as Chartres Cathedral, which has a Romanesque façade), Jesus is portrayed in the center of a *vesica*, since He represents both circles, God and man, the ultimate integration of both natures. (p. 18)

Artress suggests that the labyrinth served as a calendar. “It offered a method of keeping track of the lunar cycles of twenty-eight days each. Using this method, the church could determine the date of the lunar feast of Easter.” (pp. 60-61) Kern explains the symbolization of the labyrinth to Easter. Easter celebrates the day of Christ’s resurrection from death and the belief that he went down to

Hell for three days before his resurrection. The entire path is unicursal—meaning one path to salvation as opposed to multiple paths leading to salvation. Kern writes:

Redemption through the labyrinth had been made possible by Christ, who sacrificed his life. Once again, the close relationship between the labyrinth and death becomes apparent. Christ “went down to hell”; the path leading out of the labyrinth symbolizes the path through purgatory, followed by resurrection. (p. 146)

Jesus Christ redeems humanity from original sin by embodying the ultimate separation from God—death. However, because He is also God-incarnate, he was able to rise from the dead through the power of God’s Holy Spirit. Calculating the four 28 day cycles of the lunar year in preparation for Easter was a sacred act, which represents the hope of resurrection.

The Chartres labyrinth is also associated in medieval Christianity with the Greek myth of Theseus and the Minotaur. Ferre states, “In Chartres, the presence of the Greek myth reflected one of the principles of Scholasticism, the main intellectual orientation of the 12th century. Scholars strove to reframe all of the knowledge passed down from ancient times into a medieval, Christian context—especially the teachings of Pythagorus and Plato.” (1996: 7) The grotesque Minotaur, which had the body of a man and the head of a bull, was possibly engraved in the center of the labyrinth. In the Greek myth, the labyrinth, which was built by the mythical first architect, Daedalus, for King Minos on the island of Crete, held the Minotaur captive. The daughter of King Minos, Ariadne, gave

Theseus a thread, which guided him back out of the labyrinth after he succeeded in slaying the Minotaur. Kern explains the medieval Christian's interpretation.

The path leading out of the labyrinth must be understood as redemption. Christ, who is identified with Theseus, who conquers the labyrinth's ruler, the Minotaur, i.e., Satan, at the center, leads the way. Christ is able to do so because he is not a mere mortal but also God; His Godliness was equated with the thread of Ariadne and thought to lead humankind out of the labyrinth, delivering it from the "walls" of original sin. (p. 146)

Ferre believes a different medieval interpretation. "Christ wouldn't *need* a thread, since Christ *is* the thread. It is *we* who need the thread. Hence, Theseus is the pilgrim, the Christian, the seeker, who must overcome his inner fears and temptations (the Minotaur) with the aid of spiritual guidance (the thread)." (1996:

6)

Contemporary Archetypes of the Labyrinth

Artress teaches that the labyrinth is an archetype, a spiritual tool, allowing people to enter a sacred space. She (p. 67) compares the labyrinth to a spiral circle, "which is an ancient symbol for the Divine Mother, the God within, the Goddess, the Holy in all of creation." Artress also likens the labyrinth as an "invisible thread" that guides us to our Source, the God within, Goddess, our Higher Power, the universe, or Spirit or to whatever force we attribute divine guidance.

Artress notes that the center of the labyrinth is referred to as the rosette. It is a symbol of an acceptance of “God’s love for the world.” She also mentions that both the rose, symbol of the Holy Spirit in Western mystical tradition and the lotus, its equivalent in Eastern spiritual tradition, universally represent enlightenment. Each of the six petals may symbolize the evolutionary process of Spirit coming into matter. “Starting on the left as you enter the center, the first petal is mineral, then vegetable, animal, human, angelic, and Unknown.... which is the mystery, the divine pattern of evolution that is unfolding and is beyond the grasp of the human mind” (p. 60).

The labyrinth also forms a mandala, which is circular. *Mandala* is a Hindu word meaning “magic circle,” in the shape of a ritual geometric diagram. Cirlot states its use.

...a means towards contemplation and concentration—as an aid in inducing certain mental states and in encouraging the spirit to move forward along its path of evolution from the biological to the geometric, from the realm of corporeal forms to the spiritual.... (pp. 190-192)

C. Michael Smith comments on Carl Jung’s view of the mandala. “The archetypal Self has the characteristics of an axis mundi, a center of the psychological world of the individual.” (pp. 122-123) Smith explains the mandala’s function.

Mandalas apparently function as a way of evoking or reconstituting an axis mundi (sacred center) and so provide a sense of order and safety. Whether they be employed in shamanic ritual, or emerge spontaneously from the unconscious of troubled

modern individuals, mandalas seem to impose order on psychic chaos, perhaps by establishing a central focus (sacred presence) while providing a protective enclosing circle (ritual boundaries). (p.123)

As a labyrinth facilitator, I sometimes refer to the sacred space of the labyrinth as a temple without walls. Chuck Pettis explains the rich associations of the word *temple*.

The word temple comes from *templum*, meaning a space that is “cut off” or demarcated as being consecrated to the gods. A temple is a sacred edifice and a place of religious worship. Temple is also related to the words *tempus* and *temperare*, bearing the connotation of doing things at the right time-at the suitable season. Finally, temple is derived from *contemplare*, meaning to view intensely or for a long time. So, the sacred space-the-temple-is actually the basis for all existence because it includes time (*tempus*), space (*templum*), and self (*contemplare*). (p. 173)

Both terms, *mandala* and *temple*, help bridge the concept that the labyrinth is a spiritual tool for any seeker regardless of her spiritual tradition. Walking the labyrinth’s three stages—journeying inward to the center, receiving in the center, and journeying outward to the world—makes temporal and spatial metaphor real and significant.

Artress considers the labyrinth as a container in which we make connection with Spirit, claiming that the experience of the labyrinth can be wondrously supportive and gentle as people gain loving wisdom in rediscovering the Divine within them. The labyrinth works through the imagination by means of metaphor. Artress notes the most immediate archetypes of the labyrinth.

Most immediate are the journey to our center of being and the creation of order from chaos. Completion, competition, emptying, turning our back on the center, distrusting our judgment—whatever our psyches need to deal with becomes the spiritual lesson of the labyrinth. The labyrinth captures the mystical union between heaven and earth, an understanding of death and rebirth. It is a path of faith and doubt, the complexity of the brain, the turns of the intestine, and the birth canal, and the Celestial City. (pp. 96-77)

In *The Labyrinth Symbol of Fear, Rebirth, and Liberation*, Helmut

Jaskolski adds that the labyrinth is the symbol of Mother Earth.

It is surely not a symbol that one can receive into oneself in meditation without disquiet. This signifies that there is both an inside and an outside, tension and a dynamic...the labyrinth: a uterus drawn out long, seven times convoluted, like the loops of the intestine. In much this way did people before the Enlightenment conceive of the birth canal.... But modern and enlightened people that we are, we know better: The birth canal is in reality short and straight; the labyrinthine, convoluted windings are the product of childish fantasy.... All the same, the labyrinth remains today a meaningful symbol of birth, not of the physical process but of psychic birth, the spiritual entry into the world, a symbol of emancipation and self-realization. (pp. 12-13)

The child leaves the mother's womb, which is the center of the labyrinth and begins the development of the ego. Jaskolski writes, "For 'development' we can also say 'unfolding,' in this case, initially, a process of unwinding, unwinding out of the umbilical cord, which is nothing other than the thread of Ariadne.... It reaches the exit and becomes a whole person." (p. 48) Jaskolski likens leaving the labyrinth as emancipation, liberation from childhood, the attainment of legal independence as a citizen, and spiritual autonomy. Hermann Kern relates the

labyrinth to psychic processes. Kern claims the labyrinth as a symbol of integration.

The labyrinth is thus also a symbol of integration, individuation, of the concentration of all essential layers, aspects, and levels of meaning of a human existence. It symbolizes, among other things, the process of maturation from a one-dimensional person, fragmented into a thousand separate functions, into a rounded-out personality, composed in itself, which has found its center. (p. 214)

Jaskolski also likens the labyrinth as a symbol for a prison, a sheltering, or a protective cave. Jaskolski writes, “Dark is the cave and narrow the convoluted passage through which the young creature must find his way in order to behold the light of the world.” (p. 45) Artress also believes the labyrinth to be a transforming spiritual tool as a person confronts darkness and light. For example, Artress claims, “...the imagination can serve in the purpose of the Light. Intention is key. We can guide ourselves through difficult periods of personal upheaval, when anger arises and we seek revenge.” (pp. 142-43) Artress is basically saying that we can develop our character by allowing ourselves to experience negativity as we journey inward in order to reach a positive state of being.

In my qualitative study of facilitating labyrinth walks, I research if any Christian symbols or contemporary archetypes influence spiritual experience. As an ethnographer, I fully participated in the labyrinth movement by becoming an active labyrinth walker and a certified labyrinth facilitator. (See Appendix H.)

The Labyrinth Journey from Darkness to Light

Walking the labyrinth is a journey into the darkness of one's unconscious, which is the unknown, and the process of arrival at self-awareness. In the Christian tradition, self-knowledge is vital to spiritual maturity as one allows Jesus Christ, the light of the world, to shine on one's darkness, such as anger, fear, or hatred. His light transforms the darkness, which separates a person from experiencing the love of God.

In his book, *The Coming of the Cosmic Christ*, Matthew Fox broadens an understanding of the journey through the dark to the light. Fox believes that the *via negativa* is left out of worship in the West. By the *via negativa*, he means allowing darkness, silence, and suffering to have its appropriate time and space. He believes that worship or liturgical services are an experience of a pseudo celebration that is not about the *via positiva*, which comes about by first acknowledging our personal and cosmic pain.

... worshippers are subjected to a pitiful positivism that attempts, by human-made balloons and homemade smiles, to render ritual alive again. Such efforts are doomed to failure for *what* we celebrate is nothing less than the cosmos and *that* we celebrate is directly proportionate to admission of shared suffering. Just as our joy is cosmic and ripe for celebration, so too is our pain cosmic and ripe for celebration. Living worship, placed in a living cosmology, represses no side of this dialectic between fullness and emptiness, joy and sorrow, light and dark. (p. 219)

Pettis states, “Opposite forms create an ordered form, which creates the potential for a transcendental experience, the creation of a new reality.” (p. 163) I argue that all that is most essential to the self is found within the labyrinth structure: the dark and the light; the seen and the concealed; the loneliness and the connection; the fear and the security; the defense and the openness; the battle and the peace; the struggle and the rest.

During preliminary sampling of my research study, while I was training to be a labyrinth facilitator, I collected dozens of anonymous comments that people wrote after their labyrinth journey. The following anonymous comment is used by permission of the Reverend Sarah Bentley, Ph.D from the New Life Institute in Austin, TX.

I have walked the labyrinth many times. This time I was aware of the interplay of light and dark on the path - places of knowing and not knowing, confidence and self-doubt, willingness to go on and resistance to the suffering our path inevitably brings. Depression has dogged me many times but this time I allowed it to become part of my journey, in imparting it into my faith relationship with God.

Similar collections of binaries come from my students and from the New Life Institute: focus/diffusion; time/space; clarity/noise; slow/fast; light/dark; surreal/familiar; familiar/unfamiliar; evident/proof-less; release/hold; relationship/stranger; burdened/liberated; peace/conflict; play/seriousness; peace/conflict; thoughtful/merciless; difference/sameness; decisive/risky; open/closed; amazement/indifference; and descent/ascent. During facilitator

training, Artress refers to labyrinth walking as a “walking meditation” or “body prayer.”

Accounting for the participant’s experience of the *via negativa* en route to the *via positiva*, she explains that the mind begins to quiet down because the body is moving and is releasing psychic energy that very possibly is restrained while sitting. When people walk in, they begin to release negativity such as anger, anxiety, or hurts. When a person walks into the labyrinth, she makes shifts of consciousness from the linear to the non-linear, verbal to non-verbal, analytical to sensory, and left-brain to right-brain. Intuition and creativity begin to merge as the ego recedes. Artress concludes that the contemporary idea, “let go and let God,” is a most difficult process to realize. By walking the labyrinth, it appears inevitable.

In context of my central argument that ritual and performance both share the concept of spirit—a developing consciousness towards self-knowledge, which is the journey to wholeness, I begin my study with a personal experience that addresses one example of *how* this journey happens. Throughout my study, I interject portions of my journal written during the time that I did field research to demonstrate my personal growth. In this chapter, as well as in chapters two and three, I utilize preliminary sampling. This sampling is a collection of anonymous comments that I collected during preliminary field research. I intersperse theoretical notions of ritual and performance with these comments in application

of the labyrinth ritual to these notions until chapter four which addresses in detail grounded theory, my methodology. Chapters five and six present my research study.

An Experience with the Dialectic of the Labyrinth

The following experience of bringing my students to the labyrinth illustrates a dialectical movement, whereby the *via negativa* (thesis) gives way to the *via positiva* (anti-thesis). As a result of experiencing this spectrum, a creative reality (synthesis) to inwardly and outwardly act in non-judgment surfaces in two students and me as we individually learn to trust the way of the labyrinth rather than our preconceptions. I had brought the students to two different labyrinths. One labyrinth was made of small rocks and the other was a painted labyrinth on pavement.

I brought a class of 15 college students to the rock labyrinth and was really worried because it was a very boisterous group. When I arrived there, they were smoking and loudly carrying on. The outdoor labyrinth is on the grounds of a very serene Episcopal Church and I was anxious about them causing a disruption. My annoyance with them made me sorry that I had even brought them.

As I walked the labyrinth with the students, I couldn't shake my anxiety and I found myself distrusting the power of the labyrinth. When I got to the center, I buried my head in my arms for quite some time. When I looked up, I noticed that their rowdiness was transformed into deep silence and peace. The ones who were finished went to write in their journals or reverently remain in silence tucked under a tree. I was amazed.

I realized that my anxiety walking towards the center was a reflection of my lack of trust. I didn't feel badly about myself because it was a good lesson to see how I need to simply trust the way of the labyrinth. My anxiety walking to the

center was transformed into peace on the walk out. The peace brought about patience as a teacher and I so longed to reach out to them.

I noticed two students alone sitting somewhat close but under two different trees. I knew they were hurt over something because they were so sad. One told me that he had high hopes that he would have a strong spiritual experience on the labyrinth like his personal friends have had with Jesus. He said he had no peace walking, as he wondered why God didn't answer his prayers. I had noticed that while he was walking the labyrinth, he wasn't following the path but going in any direction he wanted. I pointed that out to him to see if that was a reflection of something. He immediately acknowledged that he was stubborn and wanted to go his own way. I suggested that he walk again and go the way of the labyrinth. His brooding became lighter and with new inspiration he announced that he was going to walk again. I later caught him smiling and happy. He expressed how much he learned walking the second time and claimed that he knew God would answer his prayers.

The other brooding student felt very angry because she expected the labyrinth to have tall walls although in class I had repeatedly told the students there weren't any walls. She kept repeating that it didn't match her expectation. She also said that she had a burning sensation in the center of her chest. I simply asked her, "What's going on in your life?" She proceeded to tell me that her mother doesn't want her to major in theatre and that her mother won't acknowledge the love she has for the theatre. She also felt that she was not acknowledged in discussing family issues and how much her brother puts her down. Next, she told me that her best friend betrayed her. Then, she talked about how her parents never introduced her to any church. Finally, she said that she needed an operation for a tumor growing in her jaw.

I realized that the meditation on the labyrinth somehow triggered how broken-hearted she was feeling. As a teacher, not a therapist, (although I wished I had more skills in counseling at that moment) I suggested ways of navigating her education, of her valuing the integrity and discretion she has in her circle of friends, and of her having her whole life to explore churches on her own. As far as her impending operation, I offered her support and acknowledged that she is a courageous person and most capable of undergoing the surgery. This student was also motivated to walk the labyrinth again. After her second walk, she told me that expectations cause problems and that she was going to relax in dealing with herself and people.

The experience of taking the class to the labyrinth was exhausting but

rewarding in that I was able to experience a renewal of patience and trust in order to offer encouragement in ways I may never have had the opportunity. Visibly transformed into a picture of reverence, the once rowdy group of students thanked me for introducing the labyrinth to them and eagerly wanted to share their journal entries with each other at a favorite restaurant.

I also argue that synthesis is a spiritual movement towards contact with the creative reality of the Divine Other or Inner Life-force thereby making the process of detachment possible. Detachment is letting go of the ego whereby the mind's path clears to receive alternative transforming perspectives. The following experience of another student illustrates this notion. The student's journal account came as an anonymous letter in my faculty mailbox.

An Anonymous Letter

I came to the labyrinth today because I didn't know where else to go. I felt like the walls of my apartment were closing in on me. Today started off like any other day. I went to work, came home to my apartment, and called my parents. My dad answered the phone and I could tell immediately that something was wrong.

He informed me that my mother had left and wouldn't say where she was going or even if she'd be back. She's done this before, but it was a long time ago when she was really struggling with emotional problems. It's so upsetting when she does things like this.

Everything in my life was feeling so claustrophobic so I went to the labyrinth at the Lutheran church because it was lit. I took a friend because it is by a busy road. I walked slowly through the labyrinth and then sat silently in the middle for a long time. I remember being so anxious and worried going in.

However, when I got to the center, I had this thought just

pop into my head. It said, “You have to trust that everything will work out for the best.” I gave up all my worrying and just trusted. Sure enough, I felt better.

I went home immediately and went to bed because I had exhausted myself. Sure enough, my mom came home later that night. As for the rest of the stresses in my life, I am making a conscious effort not to waste my time worrying about them. Now if only my mom would realize how profoundly her actions affect those around her...

I argue that intuition, Spirit, or other forces, depending on a person’s spiritual belief, reveals and/or whispers to the performer, then fuses with the rational self “balancing” or making the person whole in *Union: Stage 3* of the labyrinth. I further label it as the synthesis of the binaries experienced (thesis and anti-thesis.) In the scenario above, the performer experienced the binary *worry*, which is the thesis, and *trust*, which is the anti-thesis. The synthesis is the participant’s *state of rest or empowerment* on her way out of the labyrinth. This synthesis led to her decision to physically rest and upon awakening to consciously not waste time in worrying over stresses. The dialectical journey made her whole. I discuss my notion of wholeness in chapter two. I further argue that upon entering the labyrinth, a person walks the symbol much like reading a text. In addition, I provide my reader’s response to the anonymous student’s letter.

Whether the labyrinth symbolizes the fear, liberation, or rebirth of the individual’s psyche, darkness gives way to light. Artress quotes Jung, “One does not become enlightened by imagining figures of light, but by making the darkness conscious.” (p. 142) Artress believes that spiritual practice is to work with the

darkness. Because the darkness is unconscious, Artress claims we need the loving kindness of others to direct our attention to it. The labyrinth journey serves as a gentle way to raise the terrifying impact of becoming aware of our own personal darkness. Artress explains the grace of the labyrinth in transforming darkness into light.

When we contact the Light within, we can become entangled in darkness because our shadow emerges and we are unprepared for its impact. Curiously, for most people who have a profound experience in the labyrinth that involves confrontation, it happens in the most loving way. The person is able over time to integrate it without much conflict. Such is the grace of the labyrinth. (p.135)

Winding one's way into the center is a time to look at the darkness called *purgation*; resting in the center is a time to receive enlightenment called *illumination*; and winding one's way back to the outer world is a time to unite with Divine Light, God's love, forgiveness, and empowerment, which is called *union*. The walking meditation offers a possibility for awakening, renewal, and change -- for transformation.

I next present the definition of terms. The following definition of terms is in part a cultivation of my personal experience or observation of others and in part a synthesis of study summarized in chapters one, two, and three.

Definition of Terms

The terms below are not definitive; rather, they are descriptive to my labyrinth research.

Performance elements are physical, sensorial, emotional, mental stimuli or internal or external actions inclusive of language (thought), speech, gesture, movement, and uses of space, time, objects, and music.

Spirit is the invisible life-giving energy of God, Goddess, one's inner life force, the Universe, or some form of transcendental Reality, which transports and/or transforms the body, mind, or soul into its fullest potentiality and meaning.

Spiritual means Spirit-filled, inspired by Spirit.

Soul is the immaterial or invisible part of a human being involving the will and the moral, emotional, and intellectual nature of a person.

Sacred is time, space, place, symbol, action, or idea, designated as hallowed—belonging to, devoted to, or empowered by Spirit.

Labyrinth ritual is a sacred performative event, walking along a unicursal path in three stages: (1) journeying inward towards the invisible center of the soul, as well as the visible center of the labyrinth (purgation or releasing); (2) resting in the center of one's soul, as well as in the circular opening of the labyrinth's center (illumination or receiving); and (3) journeying outward towards the visible world in union with the invisible action of Spirit, as well as leaving the center (union or empowerment).

Spiritual experience is the observation of awareness or the realization of action occurring in sacred time, space, or place for developing wholeness.

Wholeness is awareness of mind, body, emotions, and/or soul, whereby the awareness merges with action to realize potentiality or to produce transformation, such as pain into healing, disorder into harmony, or grief into joy.

The above definitions are contemporary perspectives of sacred labyrinth ritual and are substantiated in discussions in Chapters 1, 2, and 3.

Organization of Chapters

Chapter One, “Introduction,” includes an introduction to the qualitative study, background of the Chartres labyrinth and present day revival, the research question, and significance of the study to the field of performance studies.

Chapter Two, “Theoretical Approaches to Labyrinth Performance,” frames the research study as performance studies, an interdisciplinary field, which draws from theory and practice in the fields of aesthetics, theatre, religious studies, reader response theory, and other labyrinth research studies.

Chapter Three, “Conceptual Frameworks of Ritual and Performance,” discusses the links between ritual and performance and connects the labyrinth with attributes found in ritual and theatre. Locating spiritual experience as transformation, the element common to both ritual and performance, the chapter

also covers the labyrinth as restored behavior, flow and reflexivity, liminality and spiritual experience, and other research studies of spiritual experiences.

Chapter Four, “Grounded Theory and the Labyrinth,” explains in detail the methodology of the qualitative study as grounded theory. The general structure of the study covers grounded theory methodology, the focus of grounded theory, description of the contexts, research questions, research subjects, data collection, and data analysis.

Chapter five, “Application of Grounded Theory and Findings,” is a narrative of the data analysis collected from 32 interviews. The narrative generates a theoretical scheme explaining conditions, actions/interactions, and consequences as they pertain to the three stages of the labyrinth ritual.

Chapter six, “Looking Back and to the Future” is an overview of the significant findings of the study in light of the research question and theories discussed in previous chapters. The chapter includes implications of the study and recommendations for further research.

Summary

My study focuses on what ritual *does* by way of thought, symbolic action, space, time, emotions, the senses, embodiment, and agency. My central argument is that ritual and performance both share the concept of spirit—a developing consciousness towards self-knowledge, which is the journey to wholeness.

While a symbol derives meaning from a corresponding person, place, or thing, the labyrinth ritual derives meaning from the person “walking it.” Eliade states, “For it is through symbols that man finds his way out of his particular situation and ‘opens himself’ to the general and the universal. Symbols awaken an individual experience and transmute it into a spiritual act, into metaphysical comprehension of the world.” (p. 211)

Artress believes that making darkness conscious is the purpose of the labyrinth pilgrimage. When discovery of one’s darkness is denied, then it is projected outward onto others. Artress explains this projection.

The individually disowned shadow is the engine behind collective racial hatred, homophobia, and religious wars. As righteous aggressors we cannot see the hypocrisy of our actions. We kill in the name of God. (p. 142)

In contrast, the person who knows himself acknowledges the difference between light and darkness and the difference between the personal and universal.

Through grounded theory, I develop a set of propositions related through statements of relationship on what the labyrinth ritual *does* to participants. When I facilitate labyrinth ritual, I do not replicate any spiritual belief system or impose any ideology; rather, I present the potentiality of the three phases of the labyrinth ritual and emphasize that there is no fixed way to walk, experience, or interpret it. Upon entry to the labyrinth, performers of the ritual enter a liminal space, a ‘betwixt and between’ state of being, out of which spiritual experience occurs.

This study appraises how the medieval labyrinth ritual affects spiritual experiences in participants as a result of liminality.

The benefits of my research study to scholarship are to: (1) further the concept of Spirit in performance practice and scholarship; (2) evaluate labyrinth ritual as performance studies; (3) interpret the studies of spiritual experience and liminality and; (4) generate a performance-based theoretical framework for the medieval labyrinth. For the lay community, my qualitative research study offers insight into the kinds of spiritual experience one may encounter as a participant, enhances understanding of how the labyrinth works, and provides a meaningful guide in offering labyrinth events.

The following chapter focuses on theoretical approaches to the labyrinth, framing the research study within the field of performance studies. Drawing from scholarship and practice in the fields of aesthetics, theatre, religious studies, labyrinth research and reader response theory, I present labyrinth performance as an interdisciplinary study.

CHAPTER TWO: THEORETICAL APPROACHES TO LABYRINTH PERFORMANCE

The Aesthetic Field and the Work of Art

With its exquisite design based on sacred geometry, the labyrinth is also an example of experiential art and can be likened to the “aesthetic field” described by Arnold Berleant. In his book, *The Aesthetic Field*, Berleant argues that the art object cannot be seen existing in a world by itself divorced from a broad matrix of human experience. Berleant rejects aesthetic theories that judge art by their own central concepts rather than describing the actual occurrence of art, which he calls the “aesthetic field.” Berleant apprehends the characteristics of aesthetic experience through an empirical perspective by studying a person’s experiences of art in their characteristic setting. Essentially, my study does the same in apprehending the characteristics of spiritual experience by studying an individual’s response to the action of the labyrinth ritual.

Berleant’s account distinguishes four factors of the aesthetic field: (1) the creative factor, the artist or creator; (2) the objective factor, the art object; (3) the performative factor, the activator or performer; and (4) the appreciative factor, the perceiver. Berleant further explains that other factors condition the aesthetic field such as biological factors, psychological factors, material and technological factors, and social and cultural factors. Berleant claims, “It is differences in these variable factors that account for differences in aesthetic response and judgment.”

(p. 88) The use of grounded theory in my research study is a methodology that explores such variable factors.

Claiming that each factor influences and is influenced by all the others so that no one factor can be sufficiently examined apart from the other three, Berleant unifies these four factors by considering the field experientially rather than analytically. This consideration allows him to call it the aesthetic transaction.

Berleant claims that the various elements in the aesthetic field work together in creative interplay. Supporting the notion that performance is communication, I conclude that this creative interplay is performance because the “functional relationship” among the four factors—artist, perceiver, object, and performer—is communication. The labyrinth ritual is a performance of internal/external self-dialogue and/or between the self and Spirit as in a prayer, which is communication with Other, such as God, Goddess, or the Universe.

I argue that the labyrinth is an aesthetic field; however, it is historically and culturally demarcated as a sacred “field.” God underlies our human history and action of the labyrinth although in contemporary times, Goddess, Spirit, Universe, Life-force Within, or Ultimate Reality extends or replaces the Judaeo-Christian God of the original medieval labyrinth. In the context of Berleant’s aesthetic field, I argue that the “perceiver” and “performer” are one in the person of the labyrinth walker; consequently, I refer to the labyrinth participant as

“performer-perceiver.” To understand the “artist” of the labyrinth, Artress considers what the scholars at the esoteric School of Chartres studied between the sixth and twelfth centuries.

Artress states, “In addition to grammar, rhetoric, and dialectics, the scholars at the School of Chartres taught four ways of knowing the world: arithmetic (the science of numbers), geometry (the science of space and how to master it), astronomy (the science of mechanism learned through observation and reflection), and music (the science of universal harmony).” (p. 108-109)

Referring to these scholars as “brilliant masters of Spirit,” Artress contends that if the labyrinth was not created by these scholars, then at least the sacred knowledge was protected, utilized, and passed down to those who did create it. Sacred geometry, which is a quest for truth as it relates to Creation, was the foundation upon which the labyrinth was created.

While the modern world uses science and scientific laws to explain the cosmos, the paradigm used in the Middle Ages was numbers, geometry, astronomy, and music. Ferre explains the organizing principle of the Middle Ages.

Specifically, sacred geometry was originally the study of nature to find out the geometric building blocks that God used in creating the phenomenal world. It was assumed that in determining the size and shape of things, and how they move, grow, and orbit, God must have assigned certain values, numbers, and proportions. The Book of Wisdom, as well as St. Augustine and numerous others, exclaimed that God created in length, width,

and breadth. The basic building blocks of creation, therefore, are numbers. Knowing this, geometers can then create in the same manner as God, especially when building temples and cathedrals. In this process, different numbers and shapes take on specific symbolism. (1996, 2002: p. 20)

Sacred geometry has two components that the artist used -- transcendental numbers and the Golden Mean. West states the following explanation.

Transcendental numbers—such as pi (the ratio of the circumference to the diameter of a circle, or 3.1415...) and the square roots of two, three, and five—form the basis not only of sacred geometry but of sacred space and architecture throughout the world, including the labyrinth. The Golden Mean, called by many mathematicians the most essential pattern of wholeness found in creation, is an expression of relationship: a pattern whereby a smaller part of the pattern is in the same relationship to a larger part of the pattern as the larger part is to the whole. (p. 41)

West further explains that the Golden Mean, representing the unfolding of life and the invisible Sacred Pattern guiding transformative processes, is the matrix for organic spirals in nature, such as the uncurling of fetuses in humans and animals or distributions of seeds in plants and flowers.

This Golden Mean, invisibly spiraling in the labyrinth, invites us—even if we don't consciously know it—to participate in the unfolding of the world every time we walk its curves, birthing creation itself as we spiral to the center. In other words, the labyrinth was designed based on a mathematical system of number and relationship replicating universal order between planetary movements and the heavens and creating harmony among people, nature, and God. (pp. 41-42)

In suggesting how the labyrinth works, Ferre (p. 15) explains two theories. One theory suggests that power comes from within each walker as she or he takes on the roles of seeker in prayer or meditation or of pilgrim on a pilgrimage. He

stresses that the results of such spiritual practice are made *possible* by the labyrinth as a spiritual tool, but that results do not come *from* the labyrinth. The second theory suggests that power *does* come from the labyrinth itself whereby, earth energies and sacred sites embody the power to transport and transform. Today some labyrinth practitioners use dowsing rods to measure the distance of a person's aura before and after walking a labyrinth. Ferre explains aura.

Our bodies are surrounded by a subtle electrical field known as the aura. Certain types of photography can actually capture the aura, including its colors. Dowzers are able to use their implements to measure how far it extends from the body. In my case, it was about six feet or so. After walking the labyrinth, I had my aura dowsed again, and it was huge, extending some 20 feet from my body. Indeed, that is just how I feel after walking a labyrinth – very open and expansive. (p, 16)

The original artists of the labyrinth embodied the processes of God in creating a symbol of the cosmos and of nature's spiral. The performer-perceiver of the labyrinth ritual likewise embodies the processes of the artist and art object (labyrinth). I argue that the sacred "field," not only symbolizes wholeness as apparent in its circular design as discussed in Chapter 1, but also embodies the concept of Spirit, which is wholeness. Because Spirit suggests oneness, no dualities exist in Spirit. My research is an empirical study of a performer-perceiver coming into union, a time when binary experiences fuse into one or more discoveries of wholeness.

In *Art as Experience*, John Dewey likens the mutual organization of all the factors that create art as the interpenetrating of both action and reception. Dewey

rejects a distinction between the artist as the active creator and the audience as the passive recipient of art. The perceiver experiences art with active involvement. Likewise, the artist embodies in herself processes of the perceiver. In the artist's initial work of "making and doing" an art object, these processes include discrimination, comparison, and integration, which are the same for the perceiver. Dewey explains this dynamic relationship by distinguishing between the "work of art" and the "product of the art":

...here is a difference between the art product...and the *work* of art. The first is physical and potential; the latter is active and experienced. It is what the product does, its working.... The *product* of art is not the *work* of art. The work takes place when a human being cooperates with the product so that the outcome is an experience that is enjoyed because of its liberating and ordered properties. (pp. 162, 214)

Dewey's *work of art* parallels Berleant's *aesthetic transaction*. Dewey further treats unity of experience within the artwork by suggesting that matter and form are indistinguishable elements. Dewey explains the dynamic sense of form as an "...operation of forces that carry the experience of an event, object, scene and situation to its own integral fulfillment." (p. 137)

This is what it is to have form. It marks a way of envisaging, of feeling, and of presenting experienced matter so that it most readily and effectively becomes material for the construction of adequate experience on the part of those less gifted than the original creator. Hence there can be no distinction drawn, save in reflection, between form and substance. The work itself *is matter* formed into esthetic substance. (p. 109))

Dewey thus asserts that the connection of form with substance is inherent rather than imposed from without. In context of Dewey's theory that matter and form are not distinct and distinguishable elements, I argue that the labyrinth ritual is a dynamic operation of forces or of Spirit carrying the performer-perceiver into his own integral fulfillment, which is wholeness. For example, in *Labyrinth Walking*, Patricia Telesco (pp. 4-5) explains that ancestors who used labyrinths and other sacred designs trusted that power resided in the image or that energy could be invoked by the symbol. Telesco adds that labyrinth walking was part of initiation proceedings in some esoteric traditions. Because the whole person became a part of the sacred pattern, his or her spirit would be awakened as preparation for a following ritual. Regardless of any differences, Berleant and Dewey agree that a transaction occurs when the perceiver engages with the art object.

Because the labyrinth is sacred space, I label Berleant's *aesthetic transaction* or Dewey's *work of art* as spiritual experience rather than aesthetic experience. However, when I consider Ferre's first theory of how the labyrinth mystically works with Berleant's aesthetic field, I argue that the *artist* is distinguishable as an element. The artist of the labyrinth is Spirit, whose action the original geometers replicated and the spiritual transaction is between Self and Other.

I connect Ferre's second theory of how the labyrinth emanates power with Dewey's *work of art*. Form and matter are indistinguishable in that the labyrinth illustrates creation as a sacred whole pattern and the way of creating wholeness is to embody the pattern. In this sense, the associated meanings, such as the Golden Mean, ancestry, pilgrimage, and the cosmos, which are integrated in the labyrinth pattern, are dynamically coordinated with the performer-perceiver's sense of a spiritual self.

My First Engagement with the Labyrinth

The first time I gazed at the outdoor terrazzo stone labyrinth at Grace Cathedral Church in San Francisco, I was terrified at the complexity of the form, believing that I would get lost so I refused to walk it. The next day, a thirty-minute drive to the Cathedral turned into a two-hour nightmare driving on various highways. The labyrinth became a mirror for where I was in my life. I knew I had gotten lost because I was scared of walking the sacred path. In my perception, the labyrinth had suddenly changed from being a sacred space to a symbol of fear. When I did arrive at the cathedral, the service was held inside the church that also houses a woven-wool labyrinth.

I finally enter the cathedral. Live music is playing. Hundreds of votive candles light the Gothic cathedral. Candles surround the labyrinth. I gasp at the beauty. This is theatre of the highest form. Standing near the entrance of the labyrinth, I wonder why am I afraid? Thoughts mount in a growing panic. Am I afraid of God? Am I afraid of being known? By whom? I can't be known by the inanimate symbol. I am scared of finding out something about myself. I will fail.

Even worse, I am actually terrified that God won't give me anything on the labyrinth because I am unworthy. I am nothing. I can hardly believe that these thoughts are surfacing. Surfacing from where? Are these thoughts deeply seated in my unconscious just now arising from the sight of a strange and awesome symbol before me and a seemingly daunting task ahead of me?

"I am terrified of getting lost," I privately tell a facilitator. She responds, "Oh, don't be afraid because you can't get lost walking the labyrinth. There are no dead ends like a maze. You don't even have to think and you'll reach the center. Even if you did get lost, you'd end up back at the beginning or back in the center. Just trust the sacred geometry." "Geometry?!" I yelp at the facilitator. "But math is really really hard for me. I need help." She responds, "Look, it's not a high-risk activity. Just enter, turn left, then right, then left, then right, and so forth. Don't worry. The labyrinth is for the geometrically-challenged."

I smile and watch her walk away. I enter and fixate my gaze on the goal – getting to the center. I quicken my pace while repeating, 'I can do this.' I reach the center totally out of breath and look out. In shock, I see myself as I just was – traveling so fast around and around subverting the turns by leaping across paths. The mad vision leaves and I think so that's me! Rushing to the goal, dishonoring the process.

I make a commitment to walk slowly upon my return trip so that I learn from the process. To my horror, I discover that I do not walk. I dash. I walk so fast with thoughts not in the "here and now" but in the "there and then." I begin walking out of the labyrinth and digest that a great spiritual lesson awaits me. And so begins a long spiritual discipline—the practice of living in the present with patience. "Patience?!" I shout at God. "But patience is really really hard for me. I need help." I ponder how help comes by being able to receive. I shudder to think how a part of my heart has been closed to God believing that I am not worthy. I realize that such a thought is worth-less. I am not worthy? There's my darkness. I am loved by God! There's the light. "Lord, only say the word, and my soul will be healed." I exit the labyrinth.

The sacred space became a dynamic field of mutually determining forces.

Arnold Berleant captures this notion in his *participatory* model of environmental experience.

No longer a spectator, no longer even an agent, we join in the movement of things very much as a performer does in theater or dance, activating the conditions with which we live, integrating them with our bodies, and leading them to our own ends by a sensitivity to

their requirements. We recognize here the human environment as a continuity of person and place, as a unity of action and reception that is mutual and reciprocal. (1991: 89-90)

I experienced the three stages of the labyrinth: releasing (purgation); receiving; (illumination); empowering (union). In the first stage, fearful of getting lost and terrified that God wouldn't find me worthy to speak to, I walked the labyrinth aware of my actions, including rushing to get to the center. In the second stage, looking at the labyrinth from the center was a liminal time, whereby I was able to watch an instant replay of my walking to the center. My sensory self and cognitive self allowed me a profound insight as I watched myself taking those short cuts. In the third stage, my twice-behaved behavior (Schechner, 1985) of walking out of the labyrinth empowered me with a prayer for patience, a realization of my own self-worth, and a prayer for healing from self-doubt. The experience was an act of understanding. Even in the center of the labyrinth, I was not passive watching the instant replay of my performance into the labyrinth. I was engaged in a mental dialogue with the vision. Upon reflection on the way out of the labyrinth, the "work of art" initiated a transformative decision to slow down my life, be patient, and respect "receiving" as much as "acting."

The Labyrinth as a Happening

In reviewing Berleant's experiential approach to theory, Berleant argues that the art object cannot be seen existing in a world by itself divorced from a broad matrix of human experience. In *Art and Engagement*, Berleant considers Merleau-Ponty's spatial concept, which supports the work of the labyrinth and the power of embodiment.

For Maurice Merleau-Ponty, too, perception starts with the body; the presence of the body as *here* is the primary reference point from which all spatial coordinates must be derived. This leads to grasping the perceived object, not as a discrete material thing, but in relation to the space of the perceiver. I am *in* space; I live it from within. Space is continuous with my body, grasped from me as the starting point, the degree zero of spatiality. After all, the world is all around me, not in front of me. (p. 86)

Walking the labyrinth is also an embodied practice, a way in which the body can be liberated from recognizable forms of daily life to a state of powerful and new charges of insight and energy. Artress (p. 144) explains, "There is an objective inner world and a subjective outer world within each of us. The Immanent God is found in our inner, objective experience. To discover the voice of the inner world is to discover the voice of the soul."

Allan Kaprow also believes that the audience becomes a part of the total context. In 1959, he created an artistic event, which he termed as a "happening." Michael Kirby defined happenings as "...a purposefully composed form of theatre

in which diverse alogical elements, including nonmatrixed performing, are organized in a compartmental structure.” (p.11)

Kirby (p.21) explains elements of a happening are alogical because the artist orchestrates them according to her own private structure not accessible to the audience. In contrast, traditional theatre is logical because elements of plot, dramatic action, cause and effect exist as an information structure, which is accessible to the audience. Hence, there is a reversal of primacy of “art” over “life” as linearity and order move toward indeterminacy and disorder to create multiplicity of meaning.

Essentially, his concept of environment is representative of Berleant’s aesthetic field and his concept of a happening corresponds with Merlau-Ponty’s spatial concept. Kaprow called his first public showing of a happening, 18 Happenings in 6 Parts. Carlson describes the event as a “major new avant-garde activity.”

Audiences at Kaprow’s happenings were seated in three different rooms where they witnessed six fragmented events, performed simultaneously in all three spaces. The events included slides, playing of musical instruments, posed scenes, the reading of fragmentary notes from placards, and artists painting on canvas walls.... Nevertheless, 18 Happenings, like many such events, was scripted, rehearsed, and carefully controlled. (p. 96)

The primacy of space replaces the primacy over text and becomes a place of transformation for the audience just as a labyrinth ritual does.

John Dewey's experiential approach to theory, like Berleant's, applies to happenings with the perceiver actively engaged in processes of discrimination, comparison, and integration. John Cage's happenings are an example of audiences having to engage in these processes. Schechner (p.23) quotes Cage's description of 90 loops of tape and 13 machines.

The performance simply consisted of putting the loops on the various machines and taking them off. Doing this, a complex stage situation developed because we had to set up stands around which the tapes would go, and these things were overlapping. The number of loops made it fairly certain that no intention was involved in putting on one rather than another loop. The number of people and the number of machines also created a situation somewhat free of intentions. (Cage 1965: 57)

Because of the lack of intentionality, the text is being created while performers and audience share multiple possibilities of experience. Like Dewey, Cage rejects a distinction between the artist as active creator and the audience as the passive recipient of art. The happening exemplifies Dewey's "work of art" and "product of the art." Cage's "product of art" was physical and potential as Dewey suggests. The performers and audience mutually shared Dewey's processes of discrimination, comparison, and integration in the "making and doing" of the art object. Cage's "work of art" took place when everyone, including technicians, cooperated with the product, which is the process of Dewey's outcome of experience. Because the artists were outside of themselves, in the sense that they had no intention, a liberating and open experience was

possible. The following account reveals the unfolding of a liberating experience born from the lack of intentionality.

A Labyrinth Happening

The Second Time I Brought My Acting Class to the Labyrinth

(I arrive first at the Lutheran church and go to the church secretary. I very much want to put into practice what I learned the first time. I want to simply “be there” supporting the students and trusting the event which I knew would organically unfold. This conversation reflects a few minutes of the 2 hours spent there and does not include all participants. The names are pseudonyms except for my name.)

Nancy: Hello, I just wanted to let you know that students from my acting class will be arriving soon to walk the labyrinth.

Secretary: Oh that’s fine. If they need to use the restroom, they’re welcome. I’m leaving soon.

Nancy: Thank you.

(I begin to walk. A pick-up truck arrives and Ray jumps out and walks straight through the labyrinth to the center avoiding, not even recognizing, the path.)

Ray: Hi, I guess I’m the first one here.

Nancy: Ray, you’re not supposed to just walk straight into the center. I’ll come out and show you where the entrance is.

Ray: Oh, I didn’t know. I’ll tell you though that I’m skeptical and I’m not into any emotional thing. I know nothing will happen. I just came. I don’t know.

(I think about all the problems he’s been giving a few students and I know deep down he’s hurting and a few students in class do not want to speak to him. I decide to open myself up and model the directions because he did not go to the first class visit at the Episcopal Church.)

Nancy: I'm having a very hard time right now. I've got some decisions to make and I'm hoping to let my intuition speak to me so I'm going to walk slowly.

Ray: I can't make up my mind about anything. I want to do so many things, but I can't do everything.

Nancy: Well, let's both walk now because maybe our intuition will tell us something.

Ray: O.K. but don't count on me for any emotional experience or anything.

(Two other students arrive.)

David: Hey, you're already walking.

Ann: Hi, I brought my Bible with me.

Nancy: I'm going to walk out and show you both where to enter. I think I'm just going to sit on the bench and wait until others come. Go ahead and walk.

(I sit on the bench and watch and get distracted by some loud music that Trey is blaring from his truck. I say nothing and sit for awhile. Several other students arrive and approach me on the bench.)

Nancy: Hi, everybody. There's the entrance.

David: Well, I did it.

Nancy: What is your experience?

David: I've got a lot of stress and a lot of things going on. I didn't think anything could calm me down. I can't explain it, but in the center all the stress left me. I'm totally calm now.

Ray: I did it.

Nancy: What's it like for you?

Ray: I don't know. I felt something. I'll write it for you.

Nancy: Great. You're a good writer.

David: Is that your music playing. It's good. What is it?

Ray: Jungle.

Nancy: Do you think it's a little loud?

Ray: Oh, I can turn it down or off. Then, I may try the labyrinth again.

(Several other students arrive.)

Sherman: Hi Nancy. I don't want to walk now. I don't even want to walk it. I came because I know everybody was going. I want to show you some books I'm studying about the occult.

David: Look! Everybody sitting in the center is talking. Ray walked again. He's in the center with them. I don't see how they're concentrating. I couldn't do that. Can I use your skateboard?

Sherman: Go ahead.

Shelly: They're bonding.

Nancy: Yeah. Ray seems really happy with everybody. Did you walk?

Shelly: Yes.

Nancy: Well?

Shelly: It helped a lot like the last time. I told you how I can't stop ruminating.

Karen: This time I had a spiritual experience and that's weird because I'm not a spiritual person. The last time was the senses. I wrote it out. Here it is.

This experience was essential to my human growth. It was not only enlightening, but it was definitely an eye opener! This time was almost like the other one, except it taught me a valuable lesson. It taught me to try my patience. As you might already know, my level of patience is quite short. As I was walking in the labyrinth, my nose got stuffed up and all I could think about was, "When will this be over?" However, as a couple of minutes passed, my allergies seemed to disappear, my patience was balanced, and I was relaxed. I felt no tension, which I normally do in my life, and I did the labyrinth with high hopes. Also, the labyrinth inspires me to write better and to express myself by putting essential

words on a page. Even when I got somewhat distracted, I still kept my focus. I guess that's what the primary goal of an actor is - to keep focused even when all else fails in your life. I can honestly say that after the last labyrinth exercise, I had quite a bit of stressors in my life, doing this walk for a second time taught me to keep patience, have faith in what you can do, and to enjoy life because it is a true blessing from God that I am here today, and I thank him and you for that.

Ann: Wow that's great. At the very beginning of the labyrinth, I noticed that I was walking at a quick pace. I consciously made an effort to slow down and then continue at a very slow, methodical pace. Not very long after this, I began to sense that the labyrinth was symbolic of the pathway of my life. There were many different turns on the labyrinth that I had to take, just like the many different turns and paths that my life has taken over the years. I also noticed cracks throughout the concrete, long and short ones, running in various directions across the paths. For me, they represented the pain in my life - long and short periods of pain. I then began questioning why particular events have occurred in my life and why certain bad things have happened to me. I brought my Bible and I got this verse in the center about figuring out my life's purpose. Maybe it's for everybody. It's Jeremiah 29: 11. It says, "For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope." I then came to understand that all of the bad things happened for a reason and that one day, I'll be able to look back over my life and understand why. It was comforting to realize that I don't have to have an answer to all of my whys right now.

Shelly: That's real good. I'm having a really bad time right now. A friend of mine in a fraternity drank himself to death and I have to appear in court soon. I have a girlfriend who died in a car accident and another friend who died from an overdose of drugs. And I was in a car accident. That's why I haven't been in class, but I got a new therapist and psychiatrist. The walk was O.K. I have a headache. The last time I was able to stop ruminating but this time I don't know. I know if I walk again it will stop it.

Sherman: You'll be o.k. I guess I'll walk now.

Nancy: I'm glad you told us about all of this, Shelly. We can help support you.

(Three of us stay in dialogue with Shelly. Sherman is in the center and lets out a long and loud scream and then starts walking out. I choose not to be alarmed. The group in the center is still talking. When he gets back to our little group, he opens his bag. The bag is full of books.)

Nancy: Well, what happened? Why did you scream?

Sherman: I was in control.

Nancy: Oh, I know. I watched you. I knew you were O.K.

Sherman: I've got so much going on about life and then when I got to the center and everybody was chanting, "I believe," "I believe," "I believe," and I just screamed because there's so much to learn and what do they know and what do I know?! I'm just an initiate with all of this. I guess I can write you a poem about it.

Nancy: Oh, that would be great. You're so bright, Sherman. Look at all your books that you know so much about. What's that beautiful leather book?

Sherman: It's Hebrew. I'm learning Hebrew. You learn so much about words.

(There are several little clusters of "community" and everyone seems to be thriving. After a while, the Pastor comes out to greet us.)

Pastor: Hello, I'm told that an acting teacher is here with her class.

Nancy: Yes, hello. I'm the teacher.

Ann: I was just reading a scripture I got walking. Thank you for the labyrinth. I've been in the church my whole life, for forty years, and I never knew about the labyrinth. And Karen had a great experience.

Karen: Yes, but I'm not spiritual. Maybe the Bible's good for you. I mean I'll go to church for Easter, but I'm not into it.

Ann: Were you hurt?

Karen: Yes, and maybe some day I'll go back to church but not now.

Pastor: Don't let your doubt be the opposite of faith.

Ann: If I could just communicate how much love God has to fill you up with!

(They continue talking. I continue talking with Sherman.)

Sherman: I've got Tarot cards.

Nancy: Good. Do a reading of me.

Sherman: Cool.

(I can hear them all in a lively discussion while Sherman's doing my reading. I remain in a state of peace but can't help thinking about the wide representation of the many spiritualities, especially the dramatic contrast of a Lutheran pastor engaged in conversation on one side of me with an occultist student engaged in my tarot reading on the other side of me.)

Pastor: Well, I have to get ready for a service.

Nancy: Thank you for saying hello and letting us be here. The labyrinth is amazing.

Pastor: You know, it's right here on the highway and you would think that the noise from the highway would be disturbing but it's not. So many times if the traffic is backed up or there's an accident on the highway, people will pull in, park their cars, and walk the labyrinth and say that they're ready to go home and spend time with their kids.

Nancy: That's incredible! Again, thank you.

Shelly: Look they're all walking out of the center so quiet now. They're bonded and leaving now.

Nancy: Well, they're honoring the labyrinth by walking out on the path. I have never seen them absolutely silent. They do seem determined. Like they have a plan. I bet they're going somewhere together.

(When we met for the next class, I asked the students what they were talking about in the center. They said that they talked about God and it was great and that they all decided to go out to eat together.)

Artress believes that profound inner transformation of the individual can be achieved by eliding one's identity collectively with other human beings. The

“labyrinth happening” supports her premise. Sherman did write the poem about his labyrinth experience that he promised me. He calls it “In the Eye.”

I’m in the eye,
And I don’t feel right.
4 in the morning,
Couldn’t sleep last night.

So many pressures.
So many strains.
So many thoughts,
I’m going insane.

Not sure which
turns to take
Too many damn
decisions to make

I control my life
and the way the wind blows
Settle down with a wife
or line up some hoes.

In for the ride
wouldn’t care if I died
Just sit back
and flow with the tide.

Where will it take me
When will it break me
Lover of life
But it’s trying to shake me.

World’s in a spin
all around me
choices I’ve made
seem to have bound me.

Count down to destruction
But what’s the obstruction
What’s keeping me here

Nothing's my fear.

Should I just quit
Or rest a bit
Continue to go
But take it slow

I'm in the eye
And my life is so...
Son of a bitch
I just don't know.

Religious Studies

During this time period, I had also begun a performance study of St. Teresa of Avila of Avila, Spain (1515-1582). Reading her works and developing a performance script led me to a fuller understanding of action and reception. St. Teresa reformed the Carmelite Order of nuns and friars through her teachings on meditation and contemplation. Upon entering the Golden Age of Spain, the convents and monasteries of the Carmelite Order became centers of public discourse. St. Teresa of Avila, a Carmelite, intended to found one convent, which would return to the rule of solitary prayer.

However, her plan turned into a major reform of the order and became known as the Discalced Order of Carmelites because the nuns and friars wore sandals, and the Spanish word for "shoeless" is "discalced." St. Teresa secured the help of St. John of the Cross, also a Carmelite. Both saints have been given posthumous doctorates because of their profound explanations of prayer and mystical experience.

Reading Teresa's texts is part of my spirituality. Teresa's journey to God makes her a masterful teacher of enlightening minds, enlarging hearts, and expanding visions. Tessa Bielecki states, "Teresa outlines the spiritual dimension underlying every aspect of our lives: How do we set out on the spiritual journey? Or rather: How do we wake up and realize we're already on the royal road? What obstacles do we encounter? How do we overcome them?" (pp. 29-30) The labyrinth offers a visual and physical dimension for the spiritual journey. The following anonymous comment illustrates this premise.

When I entered the labyrinth, I was overwhelmed by the ambience: the quiet, the dark, the candle lights, and the chants. I was led into a meditative mood & a feeling of deep peace, calming down the anxiety of my day. The patterning of the path & the designs of the lunations & cusps & foils became my center of focus. Concentration was centered on walking carefully & steadily on the path. I had entered with a question: how can I find fulfillment & joy. Although I did not receive any express answer when I finished, answers have been coming to me for 2 days now. 1st day: find a way or ways to allow your creativity to break forth, don't keep it bottled inside where you feel tight & frustrated. 2nd day: realize you are a pilgrim like the medieval Chartres pilgrims, walking the soul's sacred path to God, which is our joy.
Sincerely, A seeker & grateful pilgrim

Teresa teaches that the spiritual journey is the "royal road to perfection," which is love. Prayer is essential food for the journey. Meditation is prayer based on the intellect. In this state, the mind is active, much like the first stage of the labyrinth ritual, purgation (releasing). When the mind is at rest, a person enters the state of contemplation, which is reception, much like the second stage of the labyrinth ritual, illumination (receiving). In addition, Teresa models that

contemplation is incomplete without a decision for ensuing action, much like the third stage of the labyrinth, union (empowerment).

My initial prayer for Divine help on the labyrinth brought me to the entrance of a spiritual journey that included the spiritual practices of labyrinth ritual and embodying St. Teresa for public performance. For me a journey to centuries past led to spiritual and personal transformation. In *The Future of Ritual*, Schechner (pp. 254-255) quotes Jerzy Grotowski.

The Performer, with a capital letter...is a dancer, a priest, a warrior.... Ritual is performance, an accomplished action, an act... One access to the creative way consists of discovering in yourself an ancient corporality to which you are bound by a strong ancestral relation... First, the corporality of somebody known, and then more and more distant, the corporality of the unknown one, the ancestor. Is this corporality literally as it was? Maybe not literally – but yet as it might have been. You can arrive very far back, as if your memory awoke..., as if you recall Performer of the primal ritual.... With the breakthrough – as in the return of an exile – can one touch something which is no longer linked to origins but – if I dare say – to *the origin*? I believe so. (Grotowski 1988: 36-40)

I relate Grotowski's call to ancestral roots to what I consider creative growth in my spiritual journey by way of performing the ancient labyrinth walk and embodying the writings of St. Teresa in performance. I am finding my spiritual roots. One day after interviewing a Catholic Teresian scholar, I decided to walk the labyrinth. The scholar had drawn a set of concentric circles as she was teaching me about Teresa's method of prayer. The pattern reminded me of the labyrinth so I went to walk it. As I entered, I began to ponder the relationship of Mary to the Catholic Church. After all, the medieval labyrinth was originally

created at a church dedicated to “Our Lady,” the English meaning of the Latin “Notre Dame” Cathedral. Why is she so honored in the Catholic Church? I began with Teresa’s advice to begin meditating on some part of Jesus’ life.

I enter the labyrinth with questions. What does meditation mean? What is the leap to contemplation? Who is Mary? I take slow, careful, and somewhat burdened steps as I walk. Would I ever truly understand the mystical life? My mind journeys to the time of the wedding feast where Mary, Jesus, and a few of his followers were invited. I ponder the moment when Mary realized the father of the bride had run out of wine and she turned to Jesus for His help. Jesus had not performed any public miracles at that point; yet, Mary asked Him to do something about the fact that there was no more wine. I lose a sense of time as I walk imagining the intensity of Mary and Jesus looking into each other’s eyes. Mary asks Jesus to do something. Jesus tells her, “No.” In response, Mary turns to the servers and tells them five words, which signify the greatest advice in all of the Christian church’s teachings – “Do whatever He tells you.” I press on walking, fixated on a vision of the gaze each had upon the other. What respect, love, and trust must have transpired! Jesus turns to the servers, directs them to fill the jars with water, and serve what the wedding guests considered to be the best wine saved for last. Changing the water into wine was Jesus’ first public miracle.

I am nearing the center of the labyrinth transfixed by a vision of Jesus’ eyes interlocking with Mary’s eyes and suddenly I see Jesus hanging on the cross looking down at Mary who is standing at the foot of the cross with Jesus’ disciple, John. Jesus tells John to behold his mother. In an instant, I realize that Jesus isn’t telling John to take care of Mary like he would his mother, but that Jesus is declaring Mary, mother of His church. I can hardly wait to step into the center of the labyrinth to rest and be fully in this revelatory moment. I sit in the center design of the canvass labyrinth, which is the rose symbolizing Mary and I recognize the Catholic perspective. Mary is the mother of the church, the body of Christ. I rest in awe and reverence. I begin my journey back out of the labyrinth and feel a deep kindred spirit to my new Catholic friends because I realize that Mary is my mother too.

Upon reflection of my experience, I came to understand that Teresa’s leap from meditation to contemplation is a state of liminality, whereby the mind is at rest and the deep intuitive part of my soul speaks. Images surface and I am transfixed until I discern some meaning. I believe that I discovered an ancestor,

Teresa, as Grotowski advocates through ritual. I also believe that I discovered an origin, as Grotowski suggests of my spiritual life, Mary, the mother of Jesus. Shortly after that experience, I met on my birthday two Discalced cloistered nuns from Seville, Spain, the city where I set my dramatic performance of St. Teresa. After giving me a profound teaching on St. Teresa's mystical experiences, we all sat with each other in amazement. I felt that St. Teresa personally came to visit me and assure me that I was on the right path. The nuns felt so encouraged that they had come all the way from a cloistered convent in Seville, Spain to find someone with whom they could talk about St. Teresa here in the United States. I also excitedly examined the nuns' habits, which are a slightly contemporary version of St. Teresa's habit from the 16th century. A costume designer was then able to build my St. Teresa costume (habit) from pictures that I took of the nuns.

One year later, I again met on my birthday two more Discalced cloistered nuns from Mexico. To their amazement, I donned my St. Teresa costume, and I looked just like them. As a blessing to me, one nun gave me her personal handmade rosary to use in my performance and the other nun made me an authentic cord for my waist. These meetings are extraordinary because Discalced nuns leave their convents only for exceptional reasons.

When I was telling another Teresian scholar about both experiences of meeting the nuns, she said that I was participating in the spiritual realm in my real life just like a labyrinth with unexpected turns and surprises. I had been holding a

white rose that the scholar had given me when I arrived. Suddenly, the room in which we were speaking and praying filled up with a most beautiful scent of roses. We examined the rose but realized that the strong room-filled scent could not have come from the rose. The scholar said very calmly and gently, “Our Lady is here.” We sat and felt her presence as we breathed in the beautiful scent of roses for several minutes. The smell was miraculous and undeniable. In a moment I realized that I had gone to the labyrinth in search of Mary and recognized her as mother. Then in that room, Mary visited me.

To be transformed, Teresa taught that we must strive after self-knowledge. Self-knowledge is the first step along the spiritual journey. Rowan Williams explains Teresa’s concept of self-knowledge.

Here is one of Teresa’s most striking clarifications. We are inclined to think of self-knowledge as the accumulation of ever more detail about our interiority. The modern reader will instinctively think of this in terms of the analytic and therapeutic processes we are so used to. But Teresa is, in effect, saying that the mistake is to confuse self-knowledge with being interested in yourself....none of this is unimportant or wrong, so long as it is held within the basic, undramatic awareness of being a creature on the road to full life with God by the help of his grace.

The soul’s self-awareness must be organized around the awareness of its true relation to God: it must acquire self-knowledge understood as humility and repentance. If the soul takes its stand here, on the recognition of its creaturely dependence and fallibility, it may from this vantage-point see the full range of its capacities and the different gifts it may receive from God as ‘existential’ possibilities in its process of growth, not just as ‘states’ of life or consciousness in the abstract. (pp. 115-116)

In the Christian tradition, this definition of self-knowledge is critical to the

spiritual journey of transformation into love. However, in the context of the labyrinth ritual, because the labyrinth is demarcated as a sacred place, both historically and in the contemporary worldwide labyrinth movement, *any* insight into self-knowledge is a component of the spiritual self. One glimpses such aspects as what strengths to cultivate, weaknesses to fortify, hurts to heal, faults to amend, choices to be seen, and/or decisions to be made. In *Regarding Wholeness*, Frank Briganti states, “Simply put, to be spiritual is to consciously grow into greater possession of yourself as a questioning person.” (p. 96) Briganti explains the notion of wholeness.

Becoming whole sums up, even if it does not exhaust, the fullness of meaning for the purpose of life.... Before you are whole, you are a coalition of differences some of which are opposites.... As you become whole, you become able to merge these differences and opposites into an harmonious and integrated oneness.... Your drive to wholeness impels you to consciously evolve all your healthy and creative possibilities, internal as well as external, invisible as well as visible into a cooperating oneness. (pp. 26-27)

Whether the spiritual journey be regarded as Briganti’s drive to wholeness or St. Teresa’s quest for self-knowledge, I argue that awareness (active reception) and decision (action) integrate to form spiritual experience.

Ritualistic Theatre and the Concept of Spirit

One of the most eloquent theatre artists who links theatre with the sacred is Peter Brook. In *The Empty Space*, Brook describes “Holy Theatre” as “Theatre

of the Invisible-Made-Visible.” Brook’s premise is that the stage is a place where the invisible can appear and take a deep hold on our thoughts, thus making the theatre a sacred space, where transformation can occur. The theatre creates a hallowed place where audiences can be liberated from recognizable forms of daily life to a state of powerful insight and energy. Likewise, Artress teaches that the labyrinth is a sacred space where people experience two worlds flowing into each other; the finite visible world of the symbol touches the invisible infinite world of the psyche or soul, where meaning is produced through the intuitive workings of the soul.

In the 1980’s, Brook staged the *Mahabharata*, based on the Sanskrit epic poem. Oscar Brockett describes the production. “Requiring more than nine hours to perform, its tangle of intertwined myths was essentially concerned with the loss of innocence and the catastrophes that stem from pride and love of power.” (p. 448) In his book, *The Shifting Point*, Brook explains the essence of the *Mahabharata*.

It brings back something immense, powerful and radiant-the idea of an incessant conflict within every person and every group, in every expression of the universe; a conflict between a possibility, which is called “dharma,” and the negation of that possibility....

Mahabharata does not attempt to explain the secret of dharma, but lets it become a living presence. It does this through dramatic situations which force dharma into the open.

...Here lies the responsibility of the theatre: what a book cannot convey, what no philosopher can truly explain, can be brought into our understanding by the theatre. Translating the untranslatable is one of its roles. (p. 184)

Theatre and spirituality are linked since both are processes making the invisible visible whether it be individual or collective. Brook challenges the artist – to be constantly ready to mean more than she realizes. I accept the challenge to offer people opportunities for spiritual growth and to contribute to academia a study analyzing the results. Brook returns responsibility to the spectator as well. He believes that if the spectator wants change in himself, his life, or his society, he needs the scorching searchlight of theatre. Any immediate liberation, which might happen to the spectator, must be accompanied with desire and a route for persevering.

Antonin Artaud believed in the spiritual function of a theatre that does not exist for mere entertainment but for real action with real effects on the real world. He believed that the spiritual power of theatre could influence change in civilization. The purity of his artistic vision called for a return to innocence by which a freshness and seriousness could withstand and override the darkness of society. This return to innocence meant restoring all the arts to a “central attitude and necessity” analogous to life itself. The double of theatre is life, the vital realities of everyday actions.

Artaud dismisses traditional masterpieces and exchanges safe theatrical traditions for what he calls the “Theatre of Cruelty.” He treats the spectators like “snakecharmer’s subjects” and leads them through magical images, inducing trances in them by which their physical and unconscious selves can apprehend --

through ugliness, brutality, and suffering -- the most subtle notions of social and individual change.

Jerzy Grotowski finds performance to be a spiritual function ministering to the collective unconscious. His “poor” theatre does not need “rich” technical means. Avoiding machinery and other technical aspects of design, Grotowski focuses on what the actor can create as a communion of spectacle between actor and audience alone by directing actors to depend upon themselves as resources for sound, sight, language, and movement. Grotowski addresses spectators as believers who have spiritual needs and actors as priests who perform ministering rituals. Focusing on meaningful, universal, and archetypal patterns in his scripts, Grotowski decided for each production how the audience should respond psychologically and then had the spatial arrangement of a large room designed to create the appropriate psychic distance for an inward journey to the unconscious toward liberation, much like a labyrinth journey.

Later in his career, Grotowski replaced these techniques with paratheatrical activities, such as ritualized relivings of myths and symbols including fire, earth, water, eating, dancing, playing, and planting, where participants are led back to elemental connections between people and their bodies, imagination, and the natural world, as well as each other. The labyrinth ritual reflects Grotowski’s work in that it is focused on an archetypal pattern, the circle, and, like his later work, focuses on a “paratheatrical” experience. Artress

states, “The circle, which expresses wholeness and unity, is the central archetype of the labyrinth. Once people become focused on the path, they see their whole life...in the metaphor of a journey. The language of the soul surfaces.” (pp.151-152)

Founding the Theatre Research Workshop (TRW) under the auspices of the National University in Mexico City, Nicolas Nunez explores the connections between theatre and ritual in order to tap into the transformative potential of performative experience. He uses theatre as a secular framework for ritual structures. After he studied Stanislavki’s method of acting with Lee Strasberg, and Grotowski’s actor training with Jerzy Grotowski, Nunez developed works, which incorporate holistic ritual activity within the confines of the dramatic structure of the theatrical event. I use a similar technique in the labyrinth ritual by creating a short dramatic performance before participants walk the labyrinth. In chapter three, I discuss Artress’ labyrinth retreats called “Theatre of Enlightenment,” which she holds in natural settings around the country and employs elements of theatre in the ritual.

As with Grotowski’s theatre and paratheatre, Nunez seeks audiences who are determined to explore their psychological, physiological, and spiritual compulsion to change. Middleton states that the work of TRW “...seeks to both enable participants to generate their own personal mythologies, and also to assist in a wider campaign to recover indigenous cultural symbols.” (p. 44) After he

was initiated into relative shamanic practices within their religious contexts, Nunez developed exercises, which have different psychophysical emphasis.

Although he follows shamanic models, Nunez does not intend to replicate their belief systems or to impose any ideology. By viewing the performer as healer, shaman, mythmaker, and “technician of the sacred,” Nunez bridges the worlds of theatre and ritual by allowing the participant to encounter, generate, and interpret her own experience of God, the spiritual world, Jungian psychology, or creative visualization. In concert with Nunez, I encourage labyrinth participants to interpret their own experiences.

Theatre and ritual as performance both seek to create community and to provide images, symbols, and languages to compel thought, intuition, emotion, and experience. Participants in the work of Grotowski and Nunez commit themselves to self/communal reflexivity, what Brook calls “the scorching light of theatre.” The community at large needs to encourage such active participation as spirituality with just as much vitality as formal modes of religiosity.

Reader Response Theory

In terms of assessing a participant’s expectations, assumptions, or strategies, I look to *reader response theory* because a performer-perceiver’s response in encountering the labyrinth is analogous to a reader’s response in

encountering a text. Meaning occurs in the consciousness of the reader at the time she is reading.

In *Truth and Method*, Hans-Georg Gadamer claims that during the process of experiencing a text, which is an act of interpretation, an open-ended dialogue exists as the text's historicity meets with the interpreter. The reader brings to the text her "horizons," but, as the "subject," does not cast away her life for the sake of analyzing the "horizons" of the text, which is the object. The subject and object "fuse," with each giving to the other. Meaning is determined only when text and reader equally co-exist or "fuse." At whatever historical and personal point the reader is, meaning becomes relative. Absolute and unchanging textual meaning is impossible because the reader brings and must depend on her "prejudices," which are her life experiences.

Gadamer claims that aesthetic experience is an interplay between the subjectivity of the work of art and the subjectivity of the spectator. For example, in the student's letter cited in chapter one, the labyrinth is not merely a perceptual object in the mind of the student but is also a subject, which is capable of expressing itself. Thus, the interplay creates a fusion in the functions between object and subject. The object becomes an experience of the student, and the being of the student is changed by experiencing the work of the labyrinth. I argue that this fusion process is precisely what happens between the performer-perceiver (subject) and the labyrinth (object).

My Reading of the Student's Anonymous Letter

It was during my preliminary research when the student wrote the letter, which greatly affected me. I initially brought to the letter my objectivity, which I label "reading the experience." However, a dialogue began to unfold as I encountered her text. (Gadamer: 1975) The letter (object) and I (subject) fused and the interplay between the functions of object and subject began. The letter became an experience for me, and I was changed by experiencing the letter.

(I place myself in the complex movement of journeying towards the center as I read.)

Text: I really prefer rock labyrinth, but I was more interested in not breaking my ankle on a stone.... I remember being so anxious and worried going in.

(I imagine the severity of her unbalanced state. She perceived the stone labyrinth to be literally dangerous. I feel her anxiety. A touch of panic overcomes me.)

Nancy: Good choice! Stay balanced on the path. Breathe.

(I hurt to imagine her anxiety and worry going in because the dialectical movement of walking towards the center abruptly turns away from the center close to the confusion of the outer world. I admire her bravery. She could have not followed the path but simply walked to the center and sat down. However, she honored the Sacred Space, the temple with no roof and no walls. I hurt to imagine the very real fear of her disorientation and claustrophobia.)

Text: I felt like the walls of my apartment were closing in on me.

(I ached when I re-read her first words.)

Text: I came to the labyrinth today because I didn't know where else to go.

Nancy: I admire your courage to take action. Walking the labyrinth is a great instinct.

Text: Everything in my life was feeling so claustrophobic so I went to the labyrinth.

(She trusted the healing power of spiraling into the Sacred Cosmos. I admire her wisdom in bringing a friend to support her in the darkness until she found the light.)

Nancy: The two of you be careful of the road and you won't even hear the sound of the cars.

(I pause for a moment when I read what precipitated her panic. It was the very real possibility of her mother abandoning her. Her fear drew her to the labyrinth, the symbol of the uterus. She symbolically journeyed back to her mother's womb. Yes, the archetypal womb. I admire her act as a spiritual prayer and remembering of her birth.)

Nancy: The labyrinth will take care of you! Trust and you will get free.

Text: ...when I got to the center, I had this thought just pop into my head. It said, 'You have to trust that everything will work out for the best.' I gave up all my worrying and just trusted. Sure enough, I felt better.

(Because she trusted the inward journey through the darkness, she received light—peace and trust).

Nancy: I admire your ability to hear the still small voice and do what it says.

(I witness the power of her empowerment and it raises my consciousness to listen and receive. She went to bed after her labyrinth journey.)

Text: I went home immediately and went to bed because I had exhausted myself.

Nancy: Oh, I'm so glad you are taking care of yourself. Another great choice plus you're in peace. Rest well! You did great.

Text: Sure enough, my mom came home later that night... Now if only my mom would realize how profoundly her actions affect those around her....

(I think about the art and science of Sacred Spacio-Temporal Geometry. I bet the beautiful and balanced number of right and left turns guided her back into the womb, affected the balance of her right and left brain and led her back out to society re-born with a healthy self-reliance and autonomy from her mother. I wonder if she will ever bring her mom to the labyrinth.)

Text: As for the rest of the stresses in my life, I am making a conscious effort not to waste my time worrying about them.

Nancy: Yes, you're integrating what you experienced into other parts of your life. You're learning so much. I'm so proud of you.

(I admire her faith because she could have spoken to an authority figure or simply talk to her friend, but they would still have been "exterior voices" helping her with the severe panic attack. By going to the labyrinth, she knew, whether consciously or unconsciously, that her "interior voice" would be the surest means of empowerment in dealing with the present crisis and of courage in facing her other stresses. I am overcome with a profound peace and thankfulness for the labyrinth.)

Stanley Fish calls his reader-response theory, "affective stylistics." For Fish, meaning does not lie in the formal features of the text or in the author's intention. The reader's response, therefore, is not controlled by the text she reads. For Fish, the text can mean anything because the reader's experience is socially constructed or affected by the "interpretive community" to which he or she belongs; consequently, there is no correct meaning. Reading can mean anything but stems from the shared beliefs of a group to whom the reader belongs. My research explores Fish's claim.

David Cole, a reader response critic, establishes a model of interpretation that lies in the mind of the reader rather than in the text. The reader participates in producing or creating meaning. Cole connects the relationships between reading

and acting whereby the terms actor and script are substituted for reader and book.

Cole (pp. 25, 27) presents his theory.

...first, that reading and acting are both forms of activity; and second that the particular activity that reading most resembles is an actor's 'realization' of a script. Readers are like actors because what an actor does to a script is what any reader must do to any text – 'realize' it, 'actualize' it, make it happen as an event.

Cole sees the work of an actor as a prototype for "active reading." The actor as prototype fills in the blanks of the text with imagined circumstances, but more importantly fills in the blanks of the role with herself. The actor makes the text an actual event. Cole notes that an active reader should not be solely defined as "active-minded." He believes that the act of reading has a connection to the body, which must be addressed as a "lost" physical dimension. Cole (p. 38) states, "When the active reader is not physically interacting with the text-as-other, he is likely to be physically acting upon the text-as-object." He does this as a transforming natural force, or as an artist endowing the book with an existence, or as the reader continually unfolding her identity.

Supporting this notion, Cole claims, "To be the thing he is, it appears, the actor must be (or at least must claim to be) the thing an author is—not merely some incidental thing authors are but the very thing that constitutes them as authors." (p.222) To be true to herself and the play, the actor must have authorial ambition. I add Brook's claim that true art is the art of possession where the character is making the artist rather than the artist is portraying character. The

following recollection of my performance of Teresa to a woman's spirituality event illustrates Cole and Brook's premises.

I found myself in a very small room with a very big table. Several women were seated around the table eating various cakes and drinking coffee. A woman sat me at the head of the table and placed in front of me a paper plate filled with cookies and cakes. The women continued to chat amongst themselves. Upon noticing the fluorescent lighting incapable of being dimmed, I nervously started eating the cakes thinking this performance is not going to work. Where would I even perform?

Suddenly, they were finished eating and someone announced that I should start performing now. As I swallowed what was to be my last cookie, I thought about how long it would take me to change into my habit. Where was I to change, anyway? By the time I finished traumatizing myself with these thoughts, the table was cleared and all the women were expectantly looking at me. I made a quick decision or the quick decision made me.

I put my straw suitcase on the table, opened it, and quietly showed them the folded habit. As I began to unfold the habit, my performance began to unfold. The energy in the room was filled with anticipation and everyone clearly revealed a reverence at the sight of the numerous pieces that I had to put on.

I relaxed and began to allow their energy to fill me and I began to cherish every moment of donning my habit. I quietly and simply explained the pieces as I put on the white chemise over my dress. One woman desperately wanted to help me put on 7 more articles of clothing. Spontaneous questions and comments followed. I let everyone touch the veils and garments. An interactive performance ritual of "becoming" Teresa was unfolding.

One woman unexpectedly asked, "Why does Teresa put down women by calling herself an ignorant woman?" I responded, "She was very emotional and was just upset because she was ignorant of Latin and was dependent on men for interpretation of Scriptures. But she was smart enough to travel all over Spain in a wagon radically changing a society of women and even seized the opportunity to reform a society of men." Dialogue spontaneously erupted. The more pieces I donned, a greater reverence filled the room, which was transformed into a sacred space. When I was dressed, I told them Teresa was going to sit in the corner and be with us.

I have never acted more purely and organically and in flow as I did for that short performance. I was once again "fusing" with the text and tears flowed

from my eyes at a moment of intense revelation. I was not aware of any technique or separation between myself as performer and the women as audience. Because we had bonded in the ritual of me getting dressed and because we were so close in that small space, we were co-creating a living event of experiencing text. It was as if Teresa was indeed speaking to a small group of beginner disciples. As Teresa spoke to them, tears were flowing from several pairs of eyes and others looked as possessed as I felt with Teresa's spirit.

When I finished, I began to take off the habit and a few women commented on the moment I became Teresa, how I was transformed, and how different I looked as Nancy. The women expressed their feelings and insights at particular moments of performing. I participated but mainly listened and observed. The event culminated with me dictating titles of Teresa's texts to read as they wrote them down. They profusely thanked me and I thanked them. I later found out that the group was going to do a seven week study of Teresian text.

For Wolfgang Iser, reader response is derived both by what the author of the literary text intended and by the reader's responses. However, the text always contains a number of "gaps" left in the text by the author's "unexpected twists and turns, and frustration of expectation." Iser explains that through omissions a story becomes dynamic. "Thus whenever the flow is interrupted and we are led off in unexpected directions, the opportunity is given to us to bring into play our own faculty for establishing connections—for filling in the gaps left by the text itself."

(Iser 1980: 55) Marvin Carlson comments on this analogy in reference to Iser's "gaps."

This process of definition between dramatic text and audience, a central feature of theatre, makes the reading process here particularly complicated. We might explore how the concretization of the dramatic text by a reader (in the traditional sense) relates to the concretization by a group of theatre artists and to the concretization by the audience-reader who witnesses their performance, asking whether performance in fact "fills or rejects" the same gaps as Iser suggests a normal reader does, or whether it fills some and leaves others or creates new ones of its own. (p.83)

Iser's reader (performer or audience) subjectively enters a gestalt state where the mind must create a meaningful and organized whole from points of indeterminacy. In this approach, the author's establishing limits to the objectivity of the text serves as an incentive for the reader to creatively add to the text. For Iser, the text is a living event. The process becomes a living event, co-produced partially by the author's limits and incentives and partially by the reader's imagination. I argue that the audience member or the performer-perceiver of the labyrinth, like the reader encounters the unknown where the cognitive faculties are tested and then co-produces meaning from indeterminacy by his or her imagination. I illustrate examples of this notion of creating a meaningful whole from points of indeterminacy in the following anonymous comment.

An Anonymous Comment

When I first walked up to the labyrinth, I was surprised. I couldn't understand how a few strategically placed stones could have such a spiritual effect on me. While walking through it, I began to realize what the labyrinth symbolized to me. When I reached the center I saw what that first part of the labyrinth represented. To me I saw it as the stages and the flow of life beginning with the straightaway that represented birth, through every turn and backtrack that represented every change that occurs in one's life. It goes all the way until you reach your goal or the peak in your life: the center of the labyrinth. While I was sitting in the center, I understood all these realizations about my own life, and all the changes I have been through, and how they fit into the labyrinth so well. I also realized that I have not reached the peak, or center of my life.

While I was walking back, I saw how the return to the beginning resembled one's descent into the final stages of one's life. The final straightaway this time did not represent birth, but one's passing. When I was finished I realized how at the beginning I started out so fast and eager to get to the center, but on my way back, I wanted to take my time and enjoy it. That too represents one's life. To me it all represented beginnings, endings, and changes, and how I have been through some of them, and how I am awaiting to go through the rest eventually.

My boyfriend and I walked through it a little ways apart, and he had an insight that I never realized. He saw it representing a person's relationships with his family and friends. He saw how at some points we were very close together, and at other points we were very far away from each other. He related it back to how sometimes he sees his family very often, and at other times he goes for years without seeing them. Also, it is like when you and a friend stop seeing each other and then years later reconcile the relationship. We went to visit family afterwards.

Other Labyrinth Research Studies

Vanessa Jane Compton is a labyrinth facilitator who submitted the thesis, *Experience and Meaning in the Cathedral Labyrinth Pilgrimage*, for the degree of Master of Arts in Curriculum, Teaching and Learning. Compton poses the question: "What is the personal experience of the labyrinth, and how does it

connect to social transformation?” (p. 6) After acknowledging the benefits of modernity, Compton identifies problems of the world that confront people individually and collectively, suggesting that these problems are not coincidental, temporary, manageable, or justifiable costs of progress.

Compton enumerates patterns of dysfunction as the state of modern life affecting “...the planetary, bioregional, community and individual spheres of life on Earth.” (p. 10) Compton argues that humanity is in a state of denial in response to the need for individual and communal transformation, claiming that denial is pervasive and encoded “...into the competitive language of a self-preserving individualism, embedded in the media, underlying and informing the philosophy and practices of governments subject to the trans-national corporations, so that the entire social discourse is distorted and dysfunctional.” (p. 16)

Examining how a culture in denial is analogous to the Minotaur of the labyrinth myth, Compton argues that myth serves as a model of the necessary transformation. Compton draws parallels between the ritual of walking the labyrinth and the undertaking of the metaphorical Heroic Journey. Compton observes underlying instinctual biological origins of archetype making an analogy between the spatial journey of the labyrinth, based on sacred geometry, and a developmental transition, the liminal stage in ritual. Claiming that people need to re-enact mythic and ritual forms, Compton uses her breakdown into tears while walking the labyrinth, locates epiphanal moments and uses her imagination to

illustrate connections “...between sense experience, the imaginal function, and language in making meaning from personal experience.” (p. 6)

Reasoning that ritual functions as a form or container in which humans enact a pattern that releases energy to transform resistance to change or habit, and to release creativity to learn, Compton views “letting go” as the characteristic of liminality when a participant undergoes ritual death and rebirth. In labyrinth practice, letting go happens because “...the repeated turns and runs have a pattern of concealed logic that subverts rational linear thinking—the mind ‘gives up’ to being lost and compelled through space.” Adjusting one’s pace and breathing is a shock causing strong emotions and realizations susceptible to emerge, but resulting in an energizing sense of relaxation.

During Compton’s walk, after her senses were stimulated by the sight of candlelight around the labyrinth, the smell of incense, the sound of music, and the sight of other walkers (some of whom had draped their heads with fabric), Compton broke down in tears, which she regards as an external sign of an inner loss of control. *Communitas*, which I explain in chapter three, happened when other walkers also broke down in tears, allowing a spontaneous collective unmasking, a type of public empathic sharing, to occur. Compton experienced a sudden consciousness that communal sorrow exists, one is not alone, and everyone can take action.

Compton also makes an analogy between the functioning of the brain and the layout of the labyrinth. The triune brain, vertically and laterally inter-connected, finds a supportive environment.

Parallel-processing in/of/between reptile-brain, limbic system, and neo-cortex 'entities' seems to be diagrammed by the layout of the labyrinth path itself: the concentric layers of the three trans quadrant circuits identifiable among what appears at first to be a jumble of twists and turn. It's possible that there is an analogy here as well to the images and experiences of emotion/feeling that arise on the stages of the path. The welling of emotion...came as I moved towards the centre. That part of the path I know to be located in the last and outer most, 'deepest' of the trans-quadrant circuits.

So I had walked through all the depths of the labyrinth. Perhaps I had simultaneously traversed the depths and lateral breadth of the three brain levels. Reptile-brain reported on the 'safety of the tribe,' the limbic system was full of compassion, the neo-cortex was vexed at my messy public behavior; I was 'trapped' and suspended in public exposure, yet, paradoxically, safe. (p. 48)

Compton asserts that there is coherence between left and right hemisphere patterning and product and concludes, "Body-knowing and concept-forming and rational/scientific description of the labyrinth experience overlay each other in alignment: 'The order was there before we were.' (p. 48) Compton suggests that her tears were a response to a home-coming and that both the private and social tears or un-masking is a necessary collective fear, which she labels "the dark side of the culture's brutal competitiveness (p. 48)." Compton concludes that the labyrinth is an education towards alignment whereby individuals and society can develop relationship "...with the pure Form of the unfolding of the Universal order..."(p. 66) Compton explains that the practice of geometry, which is

dividing the unity of a circle into complex forms, recapitulates the process of the creative unfolding of the universe.

The spatial, simultaneous pattern-seeking function of the right hemisphere is activated through the manipulation of patterns in space, while the left hemisphere, grasping the progress in development of this order in space through the sequencing of steps used to construct the figure, formalizes the concept... This would explain the physiological responses provoked in an encounter with an environment designed along these principles, when attention is rewarded by a relational engagement with a space caught at the moment of manifesting. (pp. 66-67)

Compton argues that while the labyrinth remains fixed, its underlying mathematical structure suggests a ‘circuitry,’ which the participant embodies, resulting in a relationship between human beings and the labyrinth environment as a dynamic and dialogic unfolding. Compton concludes with a challenge to educators to reconstruct or create a new education system that is holistic, based on the fundamental realities of nature, calling forth interdependence among life forms rather than global competitiveness. Considering the labyrinth as a metaphorical container for spiritual journeying, Compton still ponders the question: “How does a researcher go about documenting the mysterious relationship between undertaking that path, and the falling away of misconceptions, outworn narratives, inappropriate graspings, obstacles in the way of communication or authenticity or the destiny they were supposed to live out—all manner of Minotaurs—that people carry in with them?” (pp. 70-71)

Jane Sholem, another labyrinth facilitator trained by Artress, offers further research in answering Compton's question in her dissertation, *Listening to the Labyrinth: An Organic and Intuitive Inquiry*, submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Transpersonal Psychology. (See Illustration 8. The Seven-Circuit Cretan Labyrinth.) Exploring the experience of walking the 7-circuit or Cretan labyrinth as a tool for self-reflection, Sholem interviewed 8 middle-class women, ranging in age from 23 to 70, who participated in ritualized labyrinth walk included in a conference focusing on compassion. Sholem claims that all women possessed a high level of psychological sophistication and were involved in spiritual development.

Sholem first explores the labyrinth as archetype, symbolic spiral, walking meditation, spiral movement, and pilgrimage. Sholem provides 8 personal narratives revealing transpersonal themes. Analyzing edited transcripts of the interviews, Sholem presents the themes in two categories: *the trigger for the theme* and *the theme itself*. First, Sholem describes commonalities in the personal narratives by demonstrating what triggered insights or associations from experiences. She derives three triggers: (1) *spontaneous insights*; (2) *outside events that triggered an insight*; and (3) *insights or interpretations that stemmed from the pattern of the labyrinth or the journeying of it*. (pp. 136-137)

Sholem defines spontaneous insights as insightful experiences "...received at the intuitive level, coming in as *hits* or spontaneous perceptions in the form of

messages or images.” For example, an image of her father came suddenly with no prior thoughts or feelings about him. Another participant considered receiving an altered version of a prayer to Mary, the mother of Jesus, as a spontaneous gift. Second, outside events that triggered an insight occurred in one participant after seeing another woman in front of her dance out of the labyrinth. Another participant was touched and moved by the embrace of her daughter and her partner. Third, insights or interpretations that stemmed from the pattern of the labyrinth or the journeying of it occurred, for example, when one participant became conscious of “... how the labyrinth’s winding nature mirrored the circuitous path to goals in life.” (p. 137) For another participant, the labyrinth “... offered an opportunity to question her positions in life, to ask where she is and what is center for her.” (p. 137)

In deriving common motifs of the participants’ experiences through the three stages of the labyrinth pilgrimage: purgation, illumination, and union, Sholem writes, “I have envisioned the themes of purgation to be doubt, pain, expectations, trust, and silence or the absence of thought; those of illumination as mystery, prayer, presence, and dual consciousness; and the themes of union as healing, beauty, sensuality, group dynamics, connection with others, and connection with the divine.” (pp. 137-138)

Sholem concludes that the experience of walking the labyrinth is (a) a mirror reflecting inner process, (b) a container focusing attention and holding

potential for accessing intuition, and (c) a trigger stimulating insight. Sholem assesses that walking the labyrinth connects body to spirit, induces altered states of consciousness, inspires transformation and enhances self-reflection. Sholem suggests that her study be the foundation for future research and that the labyrinth be used for personal, political, and therapeutic uses.

Sholem studies the experiences of 8 women who use the labyrinth as a tool for their spiritual development and claims that novice walkers or those not on a spiritual path would not have similarly profound experiences as her participants. However, she leaves that question open to further research. Unlike Sholem who uses the 7-circuit Cretan labyrinth, my research includes novice walkers and employs the 12-circuit medieval labyrinth.

Margaret H. Muller adds research to scholarship concerning the 7-circuit labyrinth in her Master of Liberal Arts thesis, *The Classical Seven-Circuit Labyrinth As Transcultural Phenomenon*. Muller's thesis first documents a variety of examples of the Cretan Labyrinth, the 7-circuit unicursal labyrinth found not only in Crete, home of the famed Minotaur, but also around the world. Charting the labyrinth from the Hopi in the southwest of North America, to the rock engravings in the Camonica Valley in Italy, as well as other locations in Europe and the wider Mediterranean area, Muller focuses on the labyrinth's function as a cosmological symbol and explores solar mythology when she traces

the labyrinth to the coasts of Scandinavia. Including examples from the British Isles, Muller investigates other functions of the labyrinth as a dance template, as a prehistoric meander motif, as a protective field pattern in a number of diverse traditions, and as an image of contemplation and reflection in India and Ireland.

Because her subject is the 7-circuit labyrinth, which is found in both the Western and Eastern hemispheres, Muller draws associations from early schools of mysticism throughout the West and East around the sacred number of seven, such as the seven psycho-spiritual vortices of the body, commonly called chakras. Other links to the number seven include cosmological realms, planetary spheres, colors of the rainbow, architecture, vibrations, ancient mythology, and spiral vortex symbolism. Muller (p. 7) quotes, ‘So common is this concept of gradations of consciousness and substance that references to it can be found in Christianity, Theosophy, Buddhism, Yoga, Judaism, Rosicrucianism, Sufism, as well as in the teachings of ancient Greece and Egypt. It is also to be found in the Zoroastrian religion and the spiritual beliefs of the Polynesians’ (Tansley, p. 80).

Muller further links chaos theory to the labyrinth, which serves as an organizing principle to chaos. Explaining how the labyrinth activates a deeper sense of perception, Muller states, “This awareness gets developed by being in the midst of the labyrinth while sensing its wholeness; in other words, one accesses a kinesthetic inner awareness of the whole while reflectively treading each step.” (p. 10) Muller also presents the labyrinth with the following themes: as a means

of providing a visceral experience of organic movement; as a reflection of the brain, intestines, and the womb; as a form of a universal journey of birth and death; and as a key in relation to the ankh, the key of life, the Greek key design, and to the key of a musical scale.

These scholarly studies fortify my argument that the labyrinth is a sacred space. My research study adds to labyrinth scholarship not in one explanation of how it works but in the study of what it does.

Summary

I take up Artaud, Grotowski, Nunez, and Brook's urgent and challenging responsibility that audiences will not develop and devoutly assemble until artists capture people's attention and call them to spiritual awakenings, leading people to take active stands in their individual, communal, and universal growth. In exploring the means by which I could share my life with people in such a way that reflects the spiritual aims and means of the discussed artists, I create sacred spaces in performances of the labyrinth ritual to remind performer-perceivers of the creative potential and power of embarking on a spiritual path.

In *Theatre Audiences and the Reading of Performance*, Marvin Carlson explains that hardly any organized work has been done on "...what an audience brings to the theatre in the way of expectations, assumptions, and strategies which will creatively interact with the stimuli of the theatre event to produce whatever

effect the performance has on an audience and what effect the audience has upon it.” My goal is to contribute to Carlson’s challenge as I explore my dissertation research question in analyzing what the participants bring to the labyrinth ritual.

While Artress uses Christian and Eastern symbology, as well as contemporary metaphors, she describes the transformative experiences of labyrinth walkers in the context of Jung’s archetype of consciousness. My study differs from her book in that I focus on: (1) what the ritual *does* to the performer in relation to action, space, time, emotion, the body, and the senses much like what a rehearsal process does to an actor or what a performance does to an audience and (2) what the experiences of those components mean to the participant.

Walking the labyrinth is performative - like reading a text - because the performer-perceiver continually tests her capacities, boundaries, and ability for consciousness-raising. Postmodern texts and performances tend to be multivocal and multiperspectival; audiences search for connections as they engage in acts of interpretation. The act of establishing connections is “filling in the gaps” (Iser) left by the text or performance. Walking the labyrinth is fragmented by its multidimensional path and forces the perceiver-performer into a multiperspectival consciousness of “reading” his or her own performance while filling in the gaps in search of Self or Self and Other. The ritual process, like performance or reading,

is a search for a unified synthesis of experience. In the labyrinth, meaning and form are rooted in the sacred geometry of the cosmic frame of wholeness.

Chapter Three explores how action, interaction, space, body, emotion, and sensory dimensions intrinsically link ritual and performance. I argue that the profound intimacy between the roles of ritual and performance is the qualitative transformation that occurs in an individual and/or community. In contextualizing the labyrinth as sacred performance space, this qualitative transformation is spiritual experience.

CHAPTER THREE: CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORKS OF RITUAL AND PERFORMANCE

The Labyrinth Ritual and Performance

Although the labyrinth has a fixed form and originally was designed with fixed notions about the cosmos, the labyrinth revival is taking place in postmodern culture. I argue that elements of postmodernist performance can be found in labyrinth ritual. Perhaps the most fundamental change created by postmodernist performance is in perceptions about *what* we can know and *how* we can know it. The labyrinth ritual is a postmodern performance in that it generates a multi-vocality of meaning. Traditionally, it was thought that if one approached a script or production analytically, one could determine with some precision what meanings or insights it was seeking to convey. Contrarily, postmodernism suggested that art or performance does not project precise statements about reality, and consequently that there can be no single correct interpretation of any text or work of art. The labyrinth no longer has a fixed meaning; rather, the labyrinth is multi-vocal since it is interpreted in endless individual experiences.

Robert Wilson's performance works, for example, use media, culture, music, sound, and slow movement to create visual pieces with actors having little or no script. The performance event takes primacy over text. With nothing to

understand, only to experience, audience members construct their own meanings. I argue that the labyrinth path can be regarded as a basic script, which is the three stages of the walk: purgation (releasing); illumination (receiving); and union (empowering). Participants create their own meanings. The event takes primacy over the path and no one meaning is correct.

Richard Schechner notes Victor Turner's analogy between ritual and performance. "Turner saw the ritual process as analogous to the training-workshop-rehearsal process where 'givens' or 'ready-mades' – accepted texts, accepted ways of using the body, accepted feelings – are deconstructed, broken down into malleable bits of behavior, feeling, thought, and text and then reconstructed in new ways...." (1993: 257) Similarly, by walking along the circuitous labyrinth path, an individual's normal way of cognition is interrupted and a new act of understanding surfaces, as the following example suggests.

I looked at the labyrinth and took the next step and the one after in prayerful thoughts. I came with specific questions in my mind and heart to solve. What I found was the energy to take the next step out in the world of bumps, obstacles, and worry because I know the gentle curving, encompassing love of God. I used the labyrinth as a metaphor for my journey through life - carefully reviewing my life in stages from the beginning of memory to the present which was represented by the center. The way out represented the future. The revelation that God was and will be with me always was evident. The knowledge that I don't have about life, but so desperately want, was also evident. Result: making a greater commitment to accept the things I don't know. (Anonymous Comment)

I argue that the labyrinth is also a theatrical stage in that it serves as an environment connecting the subjective world with the objective world. Lindsey French comments on A.I Hallowell's view of the connection between the subjective and objective worlds in relation to environment.

In his essay Hallowell suggests that the world as experienced by any individual is shaped by several fundamental "orientations" of the self: to itself, to other objects outside itself, to the spacio-temporal dimension, to its motivational universe, and to the normative world (Hallowell 1955: 75-110). Through the combined influence of these different "orientations," the reflexive, experiencing self incorporates the external world into its sphere of understanding and action. The "objective" world is transformed into a "behavioral environment" within which certain actions are possible while others are ludicrous or dangerous, and certain emotions are meaningful while others make no sense. Through these basic orientations the "objective" world is endowed with significance; within this "behavioral environment" individual selves think, feel and act. (p. 76)

I argue that the practices of labyrinth ritual and theatre provide orientations enabling performer-perceivers and audience to experience self-reflexivity, in which the individual thinks, feels, understands, and acts as Hallowell suggests. In theatre, a performer fills the stage, along with the set design, props, and costume, with the inner life and physical actions of her character. Similarly, in the labyrinth, the performer-perceiver endows the space, as well as the design, props such as candles or handbells, and costume such as scarves, with her inner life and physical action.

Richard Schechner's "environmental theatre" serves as an example of

Hallowell's behavioral environment. In environmental theatre, performance also takes precedence over text. Schechner (pp. 81-85) considers text as material to be used, but it is not the start or destination of the performance. Space takes precedence over text. In addition, the performance may be completely improvisational, having no text, and leaving no text after the performance. For the actor, a visceral, body-oriented performance becomes more authentic than rational and intellectual textual analysis. The process and the experience between the performer and audience are more important than the outcome.

For example, Schechner's *Dionysus in 69*, a reworking of *The Bacchae* into a series of rituals, becomes a means of unity of experience whereby performers and spectators interact so that all the space is used both for the performers and for the audience. Audiences move around the space and learn that they can control the performance. Another aspect of environmental theatre is that space may be converted into an "environment," or a place may be accepted as it is and the production adapted to it. Performance, as environmental theatre, is the whole event, a search for transformative moments. Schechner uses the site of a performance as an integral part of the whole whereby performers and spectators interact as co-creators of the performance.

Like Kaprow's happenings, the process and the experience between the performer and audience is more important than the outcome. Schechner describes the use of space in Tooth and the active role that the audience took.

There were two interrelated spaces, which sponsored different dynamics between performer and audience. One space was private and intimate and performers had direct contact with the audience through adlibs and asides. The other space was public in that it featured intense rhetoric, bright general lighting, and an audience contest. The audience moved when the action changed locations and they positioned themselves from whatever perspective they wanted.

Instead of being in a predetermined relationship to the theater event each spectator was able to modify this relationship scene by scene. These modifications were usually not thought out. In moving, the spectator discovered his attitude regarding the play. He learned that he can control the performance, even if the performers control the theatre. (p.83)

Schechner's environment further challenges conventions of traditional theater by replacing sequences of scenes with simultaneity of scenes. The experience becomes one of social integration. The spectators choose the scenes they wish to see. Like Kaprow, Schechner uses space as an integral part of the whole whereby performers and spectators interact as co-creators of the performance. Likewise, a performer-perceiver co-creates her personal story through interaction with the labyrinth, herself, and others.

Calling a labyrinth performance, "Theatre of Enlightenment," Artress creates a mobile national stage for the labyrinth through retreats at beautiful natural places away from city distractions such as telephones, televisions, computers, and daily life. Focusing on the labyrinth as another model of spiritual transformation, Artress also brings the Theatre of Enlightenment to spiritual centers, monasteries, convents, and holistic healing centers. Artress focuses the retreats for people who are in transition, needing to locate where they are in their

life, what the next step is, and what direction to take. The retreats are also for people who are deeply injured by grief, loss, or illness.

In her article, “Theatre of Enlightenment,” written for *Source*, a publication of Artress, Colleen O’Connor states, “This movement springs from the sense of alienation that’s plagued the world since the advent of the Industrial Revolution.” (p. 10) O’Connor highlights the notion that modern constructs have suppressed what the body, nature, and sense of place have to offer people both individually and collectively.

Artress employs actors, artists, photographers, dancers, authors, musicians, and singers along with a variety of “props” for walking the labyrinth. Then in small group work, she uses such artistic mediums as collage, clay, or watercolors. For example, I attended a Theatre of Enlightenment in Texas, which is annually held in December on a woodsy edge of the Texas hill country. One night, Artress presented to us the “The Harmony Walk.” Having traveled to Switzerland, Artress explained how she arrived at her idea. While walking in the beautiful hills, she could hear the cacophony of deep cowbells in the pasture and the sheep with higher sounding bells. To Artress, the sound translated into handbells.

Artress puts at various places along the labyrinth path handbells for participants to randomly play, as well as provides large multi-colored see-through

scarves for participants to cover themselves if they choose. O'Connor quotes Mary Ann Reed's description of the Harmony Walk.

Lauren brought handbells, and the whole thing became for me a sort of potpourri of an embodied experience of the Divine.... First the healing, then walking the labyrinth, dancing on the labyrinth, ringing the bells, and feeling the vibrations in the air and in my body. There was a real body-centeredness to the weekend that got me out of my head and into my body. Body, nature, sense of place. (p. 10)

I first donned a scarf and walked the circumference of the labyrinth stepping into each of the cusps of the lunations. It was private and liberating as I journeyed listening to the harmonious sounds of the handbells others were playing. At one point, I felt as free as a child and that I was 'playing on the moon.' I next walked the labyrinth and intermittently picked up a handbell and rang it. With each harmonious sound, I could feel the vibration throughout my body but I could make no sense of it. I left the labyrinth with a resounding question in my inner being. It was as though the bells were awakening my soul for something to come.

My Labyrinth Engagement in the Middle of the Night

The labyrinth room was open all during the night and I found myself at 3:00 a.m. running through the woody grounds to the building housing the labyrinth.

I enter the labyrinth with trepidation and begin the winding journey. I reach the center and am filled with a restless impatience and immediately leave.

Upon leaving the center, I am captured by an urgency to get away from the center as quickly as I can. I feel nothing but a mounting panic as I wind my way out of the labyrinth. Stunned at my reaction, I tell myself to breathe deeply and walk again. Similar sensations both accost me and rise up from within me. I start to walk very quickly through the circuitous path.

When I finish, I begin again almost running. I run at such a pace that I actually feel the spiral of the labyrinth path. I experience a sense of depth as though I am journeying downward. The center feels as though it is drawing me like a magnet and when I reach it, I feel a fear overcomes me. Once again, I run away and once again, I reenter the labyrinth. I reenter and am determined to walk slowly not run. Again, the sensation of each step becoming a step downward filled me. By the time I reach center I feel swallowed up in the mouth of a cave. An overwhelming sense of loss grips me at the memory of my parents' deaths so many years ago.

I find no comfort and journey outward with great sadness. I do not leave the labyrinth when I reach the end but begin again. Surely, the center will relieve me of this sadness, I think. The downward sensations continue and I reenter the center feeling as though I am in a dark deep tunnel. Anger consumes me in the center with memories of other losses in my life, along with my participation in contributing to them. Time no longer exists. I am in a hellish state. I journey the path over and over. Darkness in the form of chaos, blame, wrongness, fatigue, constriction swallows me each time I reach center. Finally, I break down in uncontrollable crying stricken with a sense of no self-worth and depression that I cannot get out of this repeating cycle. I stop crying when deep emotional pain overcomes me with seeing mistakes and misfortunes repeated each time I walked the path.

I journey outward in dullness and collapse on a couch in another room. Staring into space, I hear the voice of another facilitator in training who says, "I couldn't sleep either." I look at him and say, "I just walked the labyrinth so many times that I lost count and nothing but pain exists." He replies, "You can overdo the labyrinth, you know, it's powerful." I burst out crying and tell him my experiences. "You've had a gestalt of some kind. Do you know anything about grief work? Do you know a therapist or counselor who can work with you? You must go through the grieving process. Your pain is grief and it manifested itself in all those negative emotions."

The labyrinth that night had become to me Artaud's Theatre of Cruelty.

Though terrifying at the time, my "gestalt" was a warring confrontation between my subconscious and consciousness. I did find someone to work with during the

course of a year and through prayer, counsel, and labyrinth walking, the pain gave way to light. I also walked the labyrinth with St. Teresa that year and came to know her as well as myself. To know is to experience. Her teachings led me to fruits of contemplative prayer and walking the labyrinth nourished my soul. Transformation did take place as self-knowledge gave way to humility, another doorway to embrace my own spiritual paradox — to lose Self is to find Self.

The labyrinth ritual provides a liminal state, which is an opportunity to exist in the insecurity of the unknown that allows for the creation of a new ordering of reality, if only temporarily, which is a transportation or permanently if reincorporated to daily life, which is a transformation. The following section discusses transportation and transformation.

Liminality and Spiritual Experience

Based on anthropologist Arnold van Gennep's three-stage process of initiation rites, which are separation, transition, and reincorporation, Victor Turner develops the following sequence of ritual action.

- (1) The subjects of the ritual are separated from day-to-day life and brought together,
- (2) the ritual takes them into the stage of liminality, a state of "betwixt and between," then
- (3) they are returned to the quotidian world. (101)

Turner claims that rituals affirm social order (structure), yet at the same time facilitate social disorder and liminality (anti-structure), which he also termed

communitas. *Liminality*, from the Latin word, *limen*, meaning threshold, is the state and process of transition in ritual. Turner describes the liminal period.

During the liminal period, the characteristics of the *liminars* (the ritual subjects in this phase) are ambiguous, for they pass through a cultural realm that has few or none of the attributes of the past or coming state. Liminars are betwixt and between. The liminal state has frequently been likened to death; to being in the womb; to invisibility darkness, bisexuality, and the wilderness. (1969: 94-96)

I argue that once a participant crosses the threshold of the labyrinth entrance, she enters the state of liminality, which allows spiritual experience to occur. Turner labels the threshold as a margin or limen, "...when the past is momentarily negated, suspended, or abrogated, and the future has not yet begun, an instant of pure potentiality when everything, as it were, trembles in the balance." (p. 44)

As soon as the participant crosses the boundary of ritual space, he enters ritual time. Turner explains that the liminal stage, 'betwixt and between,' is a state of transition and often one of transcendence and/or transformation. In referring to liminality, Turner also uses the term "anti-structure," meaning time and space outside the structure or organization of society but nonetheless an experience of community among all participants. Turner explains that *communitas*, which is another term meaning anti-structure, is a more liberated way of being socially human rather than being in active opposition to existing social structure. Because people are distanced from their social structure, they are

able to evaluate it with other disengaged persons. Turner identifies three forms of *communitas*: spontaneous, ideological, and normative.

Spontaneous communitas is a 'direct, immediate and total confrontation of human identities,' a deep rather than intense style of personal interaction.

Spontaneous *communitas* is magical. In a moment, the experiencer feels an endless power, which is a lucid mutual understanding on the existential level, and believes if only the group could sustain the intersubjective illumination *all* problems, not only her problems, whether emotional or cognitive could be solved.

An anonymous comment depicts spontaneous *communitas*.

This walk has been a new experience for me, a true blessing to me. It has given me much extra time to be quiet and think about my life that God has given me and cared for me through pain and joy. To be able to walk so closely with God in such a joy cannot be compared. The sound out of the silence makes my heart swell with love & praise & a sharing with the others.

Turner next explains, "... *ideological communitas* is a set of theoretical concepts which attempt to describe the interactions of spontaneous *communitas*."

(p. 58) Memory may distance the individual subject from the communal experience. Here, the experiencer may look to language and culture to mediate past immediacies. Turner adds, "Flow" may induce *communitas*, and *communitas* "flow," but some "flows" are solitary and some modes of *communitas* separate awareness from action—especially in religious communities." (p. 58) Here "*being*" together as a team in flow is quintessential,

rather than “*doing*” activities together. Another anonymous comment depicts ideological *communitas*.

What a sense of walking with others on our journey toward God! I was so aware of others, their pain, and their longing without seeing more than their feet. I felt a sense of validation, that the burdens will not be more than my shoulders will hold. Very strengthening!

Turner finally describes *normative communitas* as a subculture or group “...which attempts to foster and maintain relationships or spontaneous *communitas* on a more or less permanent basis....” (p. 58) When *normative communitas* becomes a group’s dominant social mode, charismatic and personal moments transform into an ongoing and relatively repetitive social system.

In terms of bridging any gap between the sacred and the secular, I claim that all performer-perceivers have a soul and that the labyrinth ritual is a performative act in which a performer-perceiver has the opportunity to order the soul by way of consciousness—becoming whole. This symbolic action is also transformative, which I later discuss.

In this study, when I speak of the *soul*, I mean a person’s total self: mind, heart, body. According to the American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, the word *spirit* comes from the Latin word, *spiritus*, which literally means *breath*, from *spirare*, to blow or to breathe. It can be either an *animating* or *vital principle to give life to physical organisms* or a *supernatural being or essence*. Hence, the word, *spiritual*, means *of, relating to, consisting of, or*

affecting the spirit, according to the American Heritage Dictionary. I argue that spirit breathes life into ritual as the word itself reflects, *spi-ritual*. I claim that the medieval labyrinth ritual is sacred, which means *pertaining to the spirit or soul*, and that experiences derived from it are *spiritual*.

In *The Future of Ritual*, Schechner claims that the barriers between sacred and secular are "...both extremely porous and culture-specific." (p. 228) He summarizes what rituals have been considered in five categories.

- 1) as part of the evolutionary development of animals;
- 2) as structures with formal qualities and definable relationships;
- 3) as symbolic systems of meaning;
- 4) as performative actions or processes;
- 5) as experiences. These categories overlap. (p. 228)

In contrast, Eliade, as discussed earlier, draws a sharp distinction between the sacred and the secular, which Eliade labels "profane." Of course, the labyrinth ritual fulfills most of Schechner's overlapping categories, but the question: "Does performing the labyrinth ritual produce spiritual experiences or simply experiences?" surfaces in the context of the various cultural and religious world-views that today's labyrinth walkers bring to the ritual.

In *Lonergan and Spirituality: Towards a Spiritual Integration*, Tad Dunne acknowledges the split between the sacred and the secular. Dunne examines processes that make up the soul such as experience, understanding, judgment, decision, feelings, imagination, and love, according to the analyses given by Bernard Lonergan, a Canadian philosopher, theologian, and economist most

preeminently known for his work, *Insight: A Study of Human Understanding*.

Dunne advocates possessing "...a single language about matters both sacred and secular...by describing what Lonergan calls "intellectual conversion." (p. 10)

Intellectual conversion is neither a religious conversion of turning to God nor a moral conversion, where the objectively good means more than the subjectively comfortable. Rather, it is learning how to think more clearly and effectively; how to shape human thinking towards decision-making and action; how feelings, memories, and conscience function to create a social order; and how to express "the finest work of the soul"—loving. Essentially, by grasping the ordering processes of the soul as functionally related to social and historical order, people can understand for themselves how "...the order of our souls functions as a source of the greatest of human achievements, likewise a source of the greatest disasters...."

The Cosmos...does not stand fixed. It moves. We should not imagine the actual 'order' of the universe as a fixed recurring scheme, nor should we expect that the most ideal 'order' imaginable must be the attainment of a state of equilibrium. The order of the universe is a dynamic process with an increasingly systematic character, and yet its concrete destiny remains open. We, the family of human incarnate souls, represent its profoundest achievement because we are the only realities capable of understanding, judging, and evaluating. But the very spirit of inquiry that can bring us to accept the Cosmos and cooperate with it can also turn against itself, reject the movement of the soul, and thereby become the only thing in the universe capable of Chaos. (Dunne: 68)

My premise is that an experience derived from the labyrinth ritual is an ordering process of the soul and is a spiritual experience if a performer-perceiver

understands, judges, and evaluates it as a spiritual experience, inclusive of attributing the experience to an outside Spirit Being or an inner Life-force. Spiritual experience is self-transcendence.

According to Lonergan and interpreted by Dunne, consciousness has four levels: (1) the empirical, when a person perceives or experiences data; (2) the intellectual, when a person understands the data; (3) the rational, when a person judges or reflects on the data; (4) and the responsible, when one decides to act on the resulting knowledge. Lonergan calls these the four levels of self-transcendence, meaning that they are the operations by which we transcend the solitary self and deal with the world through love. Naming these four innate processes “transcendental precepts,” Lonergan expresses how we then should live. Be attentive. Be intelligent. Be reasonable. Be responsible. Lonergan further uses the term, *authenticity*, to refer to the quality in a person who follows these norms. My research study is committed to such authenticity, which I later discuss in chapter six.

I next define spiritual experience as transformation, which Schechner employs in theatre. The labyrinth is a symbol of the Cosmos and as Dunne points out, the symbolic Cosmos does not stand fixed; rather, it moves when a performer-perceiver embodies it. Walking the labyrinth is an embodied practice, whereby a state of liminality is lived, providing embodied personal/social meaning or spiritual experience.

In *Stanislavski's Legacy*, Constantin Stanislavski writes, "When a spectator leaves the theatre he should be able to look at life and his times with deeper perception than when he came into the theatre." (p.129) Similarly, Richard Schechner locates "essential drama" as transformation.

...as a way to experiment with, act out and ratify change.
 Transformations in theatre occur in three different places, and at three different levels: (1) in the drama that is in the story (2) in the performers whose special task it is to temporarily undergo a rearrangement of their body/mind; (3) in the audience where changes may either be temporary (entertainment) or permanent (ritual). (1988: 123)

Schechner (1988: 120) makes the following comparison between ritual and theatre.

**EFFICACY
(Ritual)**

results
 link to an absent Other
 abolishes time, symbolic time
 brings Other here
 performer possessed, in trance

 audience participates
 audience believes
 criticism is forbidden
 collective creativity

**ENTERTAINMENT
(Theatre)**

fun
 only for those here
 emphasizes now
 audience is the Other
 performer knows what he's
 doing
 audience watches
 audience appreciates
 criticism is encouraged
 individual creativity

Schechner also differentiates as two kinds of performance—
“transformation” and “transportation.” In *Between Theatre and Anthropology*,
Schechner defines both performances.

I call performances where performers are changed
“transformations” and those where performers are returned to their
starting places “transportations”—“transportation,” because during the
performance the performers are “taken somewhere” but at the end,
often assisted by others, they are “cooled down” and reenter ordinary life
just about where they went in.... People are accustomed to calling
transportation performances “theatre” and transformation performances
“ritual.” But this neat separation doesn’t hold up. Mostly the two kinds of
performances coexist in the same event. (pp. 125-126)

Schechner explains that transportations occur both in ritual situations and
in aesthetic performances where change is temporary. For example, in ritual a
person may experience spontaneous communitas, fall into a trance, or, in the case
of an actor in theatre, participate in hours of performing a character. Schechner
claims that the person returns to his life the same as when he was at the entry
point of the performance. Schechner claims that transformations, such as in a rite
of passage or initiation rite, seldom occur in a person’s life. In the context of my
research, I investigate transportations and transformations as spiritual experiences
and explore to see if they are distinguishable.

Schechner claims, “Performing a ritual, or a ritualized theatre piece or
exercise, is both narrative (cognitive) and affective.” (p. 240) Turner claims that
meaning is grasped as the full relation of the part to the whole and involves both
retrospection and reflection. Turner states, “...meaning...arises in *memory*, in

cognition of the *past*, and is concerned with negotiation about the “fit” between past and present, whereas *value*...inheres in the affective enjoyment of the *present*, while the category of *end*... or *good*... arises from *volition*, the power or faculty of using the will, which refers to the *future*. (p. 75)

As Schechner suggests, I claim that the labyrinth ritual action is accomplished in the performer-perceiver’s experience. Utilizing four stages that reflect both the affective and cognitive domains, I argue that Schechner’s *transportation* occurs in the labyrinth’s performer-perceiver: (1) in the temporary experiences of her body/mind/spirit, which is Csikszentmihalyi’s “*flow*,” (described in the next section); (2) in understanding the experiences, which is Turner’s *meaning* and *self-reflexivity*, (also discussed in the next section); and (3) in judgment of the experiences, which is Turner’s *value*. Schechner’s *transformation* occurs (4) with *volition* in any decision to act upon the experience as a result of understanding and judgment. I also posit that *communitas*, which I discuss in the next section, may occur in any of the four stages.

I base these four stages on Lonergan’s philosophy on insight, which is “knowing”—a compound of experiencing, understanding, judging, and believing. I argue that liminality during the labyrinth ritual reflects this aggregate, which are the four stages outlined above. The unexpected twists and turns of the labyrinth ritual force the mind to rest, allowing the intuitive, pattern-discerning nature of the individual to *experience* the senses. Winding one’s way into the center is a

time to *understand* the experiences called “illumination.” To *judge* whether the understanding is true or not true is winding out from the center called “union.” *Believing* is the empowerment upon leaving the labyrinth to act upon the judgment in daily life. Performing the labyrinth offers a possibility for awakening, empowerment, and change depending on how each participant interacts with the stimuli at the performance site, as well as the labyrinth.

The Labyrinth as Restored Behavior

I argue that walking the labyrinth is performative in that it is a processual experience of shaping or negotiating meaning. Bert O. States (25) reflects my claim that walking the labyrinth is performative.

Here is what we might call the kernel of gene of performativity from which all divided forms of artistic performance spring: the collapse of means and ends into each other, the simultaneity of producing something and responding to it in the same behavioral act... and performance thereafter goes its cultural way toward endless forms of differentiation and intentionality....

Means and ends also collapse into each other in a literal sense, as well as figurative sense, since the labyrinth is a unicursal path – one goes in the same way one goes out. Experience is produced and responded to in the same act of walking. The following comment illustrates this notion.

At first I felt somewhat uncomfortable. So many thoughts racing through my mind. I could feel my heartbeat race. I asked for the Holy Spirit to fill me up and guide me. My heartbeat slowed down but the emotions came that I needed to release. Going in was real soul searching and God found those places.

The heaviness and burdens were there, but I was reminded that I did not need to take it all on by myself, as I usually try to do. We forget to turn it over. Coming out of the labyrinth was, a freeing lighter experience, it felt good to know once again that God will be here with me to take on my struggles. It just reminds me how much we don't take care of ourselves, and that we need to invite the Holy Spirit into our lives more than we do. (Anonymous Comment)

Performer-perceivers explore endless meanings and intentionality.

Labyrinth walking is performance. In linking the labyrinth with performance theory, I argue that the performance, which has a beginning, middle and end, is personal or social interaction within demarcated sacred space. The three-fold labyrinth path is a ritual of the unfolding of Self.

Schechner also describes performance as “restored behavior” or “twice-behaved behavior.” In *Between Theater and Anthropology*, Schechner discusses restored behavior.

Put in personal terms, restored behavior is “me behaving as if I am someone else” or “as if I am ‘beside myself,’ or ‘not myself,’” as when in a trance. But this “someone else” may also be “me in another state of feeling/being, as if there were multiple “me’s” in each person. (p. 36)

Schechner explains that understanding what happens during restored behavior is “...investigating the subjunctive mood that is the medium of these operations....”

Artress refers to the labyrinth ritual as pilgrimage and the participants as pilgrims. In *Image and Pilgrimage in Christian Culture*, Victor Turner writes, “A fully mature pilgrimage system, or ‘field,’ is comparable to a series of

overlapping, interpenetrating ellipses whose common area of overlap has the shrine at its center.... The road is thus two roads; the apt metaphor is an ellipse, not a straight line.” (p. 22) Pilgrims journeying on the road to the center and journeying back on the same road home is twice-behaved behavior.

As I walk I feel the weight lifting with each turn
and twist. I am leaving my baggage my burdens like litter
along the path. Soon my soul is unfettered and I am with less.
I have given the journey to God. I leave the center reluctantly
because there is incredible peace there. As I journey back along
the path I am struck by the incredible lightness of my step.
I have the desire to dance, to twirl and clap and laugh my way
back into the world. (Anonymous Comment)

The labyrinth pilgrim journeys to the center, which is purgation (releasing obstacles) and journeys back on the same path, which is union (returning empowered); hence, they perform twice-behaved behavior as illustrated in the above comment.

Flow and Reflexivity

In “Transformation of Consciousness,” Barbara Myerhoff (p. 246) states, “The invisible world referred to in ritual is made manifest and the subject placed within it.... Rituals are communicative performances that always provide a sense of continuity and predictably.” The labyrinth ritual offers continuity and wholeness in its three stages wherein the performer enters a state of liminality in which spiritual experiences may occur.

The labyrinth's ritual action has attributes of flow. Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi (1991) describes flow as a time when a performer becomes aware of his actions but not of the awareness itself. In *From Ritual to Theatre*, Turner (1982: 57-58) enumerates attributes of Csikszentmihalyi's theory of flow. The first attribute is a *merging of action and awareness* to the point that the actor, though he may be aware of what he is doing, cannot be aware that he is aware. Second, the only way action and awareness merge is by a *centering of attention* in which the consciousness beams in on the limited focus of *now* rather than anything from the past or future. Another attribute is *loss of ego* in which the "self" becomes irrelevant as a bargaining agent because the immersed actor accepts all rules and no longer needs to bargain.

A fourth attribute is the actor finding himself *in control of his actions and of the environment* by meeting the demands made on him by a ritual, art, or sport. As a consequence, the actor has an opportunity to build a positive self-concept through the accomplished action. Turner next explains that Csikszentmihalyi's flow "...contains coherent, *non-contradictory demands for action*, and provides *clear, unambiguous feedback* to a person's actions. The limiting of awareness to a restricted field of possibilities accounts for these coherent demands and clear feedback. The sixth attribute is that flow is "autotelic" in that *it seems to need no goals or rewards outside itself*. Turner (p. 58) believes that *communitas* (anti-structure), which I discuss in the next section, has something of a "flow" quality.

The following example, used by permission, by one of my students illustrates this notion. The elements also include basic conceptions, which I later discuss, about the purpose of surrealistic performance to reveal unconscious imagery and to make connections and associations that are not normally made.

I felt uneasy being ushered in one after the other, like cattle. I quickly fell at ease just at the sight of rocks. I love them! They tell me a story about where they have been. They are all different. Even if one is cracked into, to form another, they intrigue me with spots, holes, or lines in them. I cannot help but touch them to complete my urge. They are God's little works of art, his sculptures for me to find. The next one is always better than the last. So, as I walked along the path I began to feel a stirring inside of excitement, intrigue and curiosity of what was ahead.

Then, I began a focus on the energy of the others around me, and how I could feel everyone's concentration. I felt like we were birds flying around each other not really going anywhere, just passing very close, but never touching. In unison, without a purpose, I fell deeper, to a third level of silence.

I could feel and hear my breath. All outside things fell away, and all I could hear was a single bird singing and chirping a message like it was watching and approved of our flight as we understood their joy of motion, but with our feet. At this point, I reached the center where I found myself still, but stirring within, like a vortex of soothing warm water. Feeling motion within, while standing still is strange. It isn't physical anymore, so what is it?

I began to walk the path out and felt like I was going against the grain, reversing the motion. And when I reached the end, I wasn't relieved, happy, sad, or anything. The absence of emotion felt fulfilling, spiritual, and reverent. We were all one for just a moment.

In this example, the performer-perceiver experiences a flow state where coherent action and awareness merge as one. "Spontaneous" *communitas* occurs in a moment where the experiencer has a lucid existential understanding that the entire group is one.

The labyrinth ritual also has attributes of reflexivity. In *From Ritual to Theatre*, Victor Turner says, “To be reflexive is to be at once one’s own subject and direct object....” (p. 41) Walking through the spatial twists and turns of the labyrinth, the subject finds she is the direct object of her own world. For example, one labyrinth walker left the following comment.

Walking IN was quiet prayerful & focused. I asked for guidance. As I walked, I eased spiritually. I had a sense of love and life. God’s presence was evident to me. I began to heal. Images of a garden labyrinth kept floating in and out of my mind. Hedges, flowers, benches, sunlight were formed and shifted. I reached the center and felt release of tension, of concern, of worry. I knew I was God’s child. The love and light of Christ made me want to skip the labyrinth OUT! (Anonymous Comment)

The labyrinth ritual is *reflective* in that it shows people to themselves, but it is *reflexive* when people are self-aware, which is being conscious of their own consciousness. As heroes of our own dramas, Turner writes, “At once actor and audience, we may then come into the fullness of our human capability and perhaps human desire to watch ourselves and enjoy knowing that we know.” (Turner 1982: 75)

Regarding “flow” as the opposite of “reflexivity,” Myerhoff states, “But this leads us into a paradox: many rituals induce reflexive awareness just as they invite the fullest participation and concentration that brings about flow.” (p. 247) In *Between Theater and Anthropology*, Schechner acknowledges this paradox in context of what happens to the actor in theatre. Schechner (pp. 6, 118) points out Stanislavski’s paradox in training actors.

Never lose yourself on the stage. Always act in your own person, as an artist. You can never get away from yourself. The moment you lose yourself on the stage marks the departure from truly living your part and the beginning of exaggerated false acting. (Stanislavski 1946, 167)

Because the very best that can happen is to have the actor completely carried away by the play. Then regardless of his own will he lives the part, not noticing *how* he feels, not thinking about *what* he does, and it all moves of its own accord, subconsciously and intuitively. (Stanislavski 1949, 13)

Schechner explains that Stanislavski basically trained the actor to generate flow through a conscious process. Chaos was avoided by performing the exact score of what rehearsals, usually over a year, produced. Schechner claims, “He wanted a trained intuition.” (p. 118) In contrast, Schechner cites Bertolt Brecht who modeled the ideal actor as “...one who alternated between flow and reflexivity, between ‘being the character’ and speaking about the character...” in context of the events unfolding around her. This system of Brechtian acting is called *Verfremdungseffekt*, which is alienation effect.

In *By Means of Performance*, Victor Turner suggests that performance is a dialectic of flow and reflexivity “... spontaneous movement in which action and awareness are one, and ‘reflexivity,’ in which the central meanings, values and goals of a culture are seen ‘in action,’ as they shape and explain behavior.” (p.1) The following poem, by one of my students, reveals spontaneous communitas, defined below, and illustrates what Turner claims as a dialectic of flow and reflexivity in which a new creative action emerges. The student’s response to the

labyrinth also reflects how he fills in Iser's gaps, by using his faculties to make connections in the unexpected twists and turns as he "reads" his performance of the labyrinth ritual.

Circles

We all enter and wander around in chaotic circles
As we do in life from day one
Searching for our souls, looking for our
Sense of purpose
Twisting, turning setting ever so closely to what we believe is real
We start off following, then passing and sometimes
Walking alongside
Finding ourselves only further from our vision and drifting only
further apart
In a sudden brief moment as if transported we find our way to the
Heart
A candlelight shimmers and we meditate and absorb the moment and
Become one
Slowly one by one we pick up and continue back to the reality of which
We came
Now the circles are flowing and controlled
Their purpose realized
Not in control
We pass each other and walk alongside knowing
Our destiny
I am at peace and my feet no longer ache
As does not my soul

In discerning the relationship of the participant, who is both performer and audience, to the labyrinth, which is the "score," I argue that the disorderly order of the labyrinth's unicursal path provides what Stanislavski sought—a trained intuition through rehearsal in which a state of flow occurs. However, at the same time the labyrinth performer is in flow "being himself," he experiences Brecht's

Verfremdungseffekt as the perceiver “speaking about himself to his Self.” The following anonymous comment illustrates this notion.

I felt like time stood still. I feel much like I was a pilgrim in an unfamiliar land. But it was different because it seemed like time stood still. I felt like I was a leader and I had people following me. I felt like I was in control from beginning to end. I wonder if anybody else felt the same way. I'm glad I came over here because I have been very indecisive about my life and career. For me for the first time in a long time I felt like I could take somebody special out here and tell them how I feel. Maybe even propose to that person if the time is right. This a magical place and I feel the love of God here.

Liminal and Liminoid Phenomena

When Turner observed conflicts among the Ndembu of northwestern Zambia (Turner, 1975), he perceived them as social dramas, which followed a processual structure. Turner then reconstructed Van Gennep's model of *separation, transition, and reincorporation* into a ritual theory called social drama. Turner's social drama, consisting of units of aharmonic or disharmonic process, arising in conflict situations, has four main phases of public action. In *From Ritual to Theatre*, Turner (p.37-41) outlines the phases.

- (1) *Breach* of regular, norm-governed social relations;
- (2) *Crisis* during which the breach widens;
- (3) *Redressive action* to resolve the conflict situation;
- (4) *Reintegration* of the disturbed group or the legitimization of irreparable schism is recognized by opposing parties.

Schechner, who worked closely with Turner during Turner's later years, uses the word "transformances" as a way to relate performance to Turner's stages of ritual or social drama. Schechner recasts for theatre Turner's four phases of social drama to *gathering, performing, and dispersing*. In *Toward a Poetics of Performance*, Schechner writes, "Conflict is supportable (in the theater, and perhaps in society too) only inside a nest built from the agreement to gather at a specific time and place, to perform – to do something agreed on – and to disperse once the performance is over." (pp. 168-169) During the second phase of *performing*, Schechner sees Turner's *breach-crisis-redressive action-reintegration* phases being lived out.

Turner sees ritual as a means of acting out social conflicts. As social drama, a ritual gives form to the conflict as people experience liminality and *communitas*. Acknowledging that liminality is an ambiguous state, Turner explains that it may be the climax of insecurity, which is "...the breakthrough of chaos into cosmos, of disorder into order.... Liminality may be the scene of disease, despair, death.... It may be anomie, alienation, angst. In *From Ritual to Theatre*, Turner says, "The third stage, modes of redress, which always contained at least the germ of self-reflexivity, a public way of assessing our social behavior, has moved out of the domains of law and religion into those of the various arts." (p.10) Turner believes that social drama's redressive phase, which leads to resolution in either reconciliation or removal, is the origin of all performance arts.

I argue that the labyrinth ritual serves as a means of redressive action in that it is a time of self-reflexivity for transformation—judging the past and/or present for decision-making to be acted out in the immediate future.

In *On the Edge of the Bush*, Turner compares the ritual process and theatre in relation to the liminal. In ritual, Turner breaks down the liminal into three possibilities: (1) communication of the sacra; (2) ludic recombination and inversion; and (3) a. absolute authority between social categories and b. *communitas* within social categories. Schechner explains that theatre is like ritual by paralleling Turner's liminal categories: (1) communication of "sacred," "archaic," "mythical," texts as quasi-sacra such as gospel drama; (2) ludic recombination: experimental theatre, surrealism, comedy, clowning which develop rules and structures of subversion; (3) a. authority of director and b. "chorus line" *communitas*.

Parallel to the liminal in ritual and in theatre, the liminal in the labyrinth includes the same three liminal categories. For example, in accordance with the three liminal categories, the following comment illustrates: (1) communication of the sacred through prayer; (2) ludic recombination found in surrealism where: (a) truth is found in looking inwards; (b) the conscious and unconscious mind were divided; and (c) when the subconscious is freed, associations between contradictions beget perceptions of clarity; and (3) *communitas* occurs.

The walk was peaceful and truly felt like a journey toward "center." It was a constant journey of prayer. There was also a

power watching people that made me love being in community, which was a lovely, loving experience and yet everyone had their own solitary walk. My walk helped to reveal to me how uptight I am about many things that I didn't know were bothering me. Now I recognize them, pray about them and let them go. (Anonymous comment)

In developing his studies of liminality, Turner assigns Van Gennep's rite of passage found in tribal and pre-industrial rituals are *liminal* in that "...all these acts and symbols are of *obligation*. Even the breaking of rules *has* to be done during initiation." (1982: 42) Turner categorizes some ritual in post-industrial society as "...a genre of leisure enjoyment, not an obligatory ritual, it is play-separated-from-work, not play-and-work ludergy as a binary system of man's 'serious' communal endeavor." (1982:42) When optionality dominates a performance, Turner assigns the term *liminoid* to it. Turner claims that such genres as theatre, ballet, film, literature, music, art, and pilgrimage resemble the ritual liminal but are not identical with it.

Turner states, "Both 'liminal' and 'liminoid' mean studying symbols in social action." (p. 56) He claims that "one *works* at the liminal" during activities of churches, sects, movements, in the initiation rites of clubs, or fraternities. In contrast "one *plays* with the liminoid, which is often a commodity that one selects and pays for such as a Super-bowl game, a theatre play, a music concert, or art exhibition. In *From Ritual to Theatre*, Turner provides a delimitation of liminal and liminoid.

Liminal phenomena are the dominant forms in tribal and early agrarian societies relating to status. *Liminoid phenomena* flourish in societies with “organic solidarity,” bonded by contractual relations following the industrialization, mechanization, the transformation of labor into a commodity, and the appearance of social classes.

Liminal phenomena deal with calendrical, biological, social-structural rhythms or with crises in social processes. Turner considers them “natural breaks” in the natural flow of natural and social processes. Although they are enforced more out of necessity, they have the potentiality for forming new ideas, models, or beliefs. *Liminoid phenomena* may be collective but are characteristically more individual products and are assigned to “leisure” activities rather than in work settings.

Liminal phenomena form a complete whole representing negativity and subjunctivity as they are integrated into the total social process. *Liminoid phenomena* are separated from economic and political processes. They are “...plural, fragmentary, and experimental in character.” (p. 54)

Liminal phenomena have a common intellectual and emotional meaning for all the members of a group. Although they are collective in character, they are often reversals, inversions, disguises, negations, antitheses of quotidian. *Liminoid phenomena* are more idiosyncratic and are generated by individuals in

particular groups. Their symbols are more personal-psychological rather than objective-social.

Liminal phenomena, even when they appear ‘inversive’ for the working of the social structure, work without too much friction. However, *liminoid phenomena* are more social critiques that expose “...injustices, inefficiencies, and immoralities of the mainstream economic and political structures and organizations.” (p. 55)

Artress refers to walking the labyrinth as pilgrimage and participants as pilgrims, in the model of the original 13th century walkers. Turner (1978: 34) categorizes pilgrimage as a liminoid phenomenon because it is voluntary, “not an obligatory social mechanism to mark the transition of an individual or group from one state or status to another within a mundane sphere.” However, Turner acknowledges that pilgrimage has some liminal phase attributes in passage rites.

...release from mundane structure; homogenization of status; simplicity of dress and behavior; *communitas*, both on the journey, and as a characteristic of the goal, which is itself a source of *communitas*, healing, and renewal; ordeal; reflection on the meaning of religious and cultural core-values; ritualized reenactment of correspondences between a religious paradigm and shared human experiences; movement from a mundane center to a sacred periphery which suddenly, transiently, becomes central for the individual, an *axis mundi* of his faith; movement in general (as against stasis), symbolizing the uncapturability and temporal transience of *communitas*; individuality posed against the institutionalized milieu; and so forth. (1978: 253-54)

In Turner's conception of liminal and liminoid phenomena, the labyrinth ritual would be a liminoid activity in that it is voluntary and performed during leisure time. Performer-perceivers also experience a common form of "play." As discussed above, leisure from work provides a freedom from normal organization to generate new symbolic forms and transcend social structural limits. Performing the labyrinth certainly presents such a time for ludic recombination of the seeming disorderliness of the labyrinth path.

However, "work" exists in the labyrinth ritual as the performer-perceiver fills in the gaps with personal and/or communal order in discovering self-knowledge, listening to the Divine, or finding one's place in various social processes. Turner acknowledges that in the study of pilgrimage, "...one finds that play and solemnity are equally present." (1978: 37) Based on Turner's differentiation that "...liminal genres put much stress on social frames, plural reflexivity, mass flow, and shared flow, while liminoid genres emphasize idiosyncratic framing, individual reflexivity, and subjective flow," (1982: 52) I argue that labyrinth walking is a liminoid activity with the liminal attributes, which I quote above, that Turner assigns to pilgrimage.

In fulfilling part of my requirements for certification as a labyrinth facilitator, I created a performance for the participants before they walked the labyrinth. Turner states, "The solitary artist *creates* the liminoid phenomena, the collectivity *experiences* collective liminal symbols." (p. 52) The performance

included several actors performing accounts of other labyrinth walkers. I performed my account of the first time I walked the labyrinth. In addition, there were musicians and a singer who sang an invocation to the Holy Spirit for guidance along the spiritual path. My intent was for the artists to be collective liminal symbols of previous participants so that the audience, who would soon enter the labyrinth, would *experience* the collective experiences of previous participants. The performance event took place at night in a church field where the rock labyrinth is. I thought I had everything under control when an unexpected “social drama” occurred. A “crisis” struck when there was a downpour of rain. Performers sought shelter inside the church while the audience sought shelter under a huge carport in front of the church.

The “redressive phase” quickly followed as numerous alternatives to solve the problem spontaneously erupted from the artists, the hosts from the church, and audience members. The pastor of the church suggested putting chairs in the front of the church under the carport to perform there. I decided to do that but wait until the rain somewhat subsided. To my amazement, no one left and no one spoke. All there was “waiting,” watching and listening to the rain. What had started out as my attempt to create liminoid phenomena unexpectedly turned into a liminal experience created by nature or as I saw it, the Divine. A mass and spontaneous flow occurred as the collective of performers and audience fluently united in a surreal or mystical peace that all would be well. Paradoxically, the

crisis of the rain presented an opportunity for a true liminal state to occur during the time of redress whereby performers and audience could embrace a personal silent liminoid experience. “Resolution” occurred as the rain subsided and the sun shone through the clouds. Performers and audience reverently took their places and the performance, though not on the labyrinth as I had planned, took place under the carport with the fresh scent of rain water, a symbol of cleansing expectations.

After the performance, the rain had completely stopped and “reintegration” occurred as I escorted the participants to the entrance of the labyrinth. I directed them to write their comments after they walked the labyrinth on sheets that I had provided. During the course of the evening, I wandered to the table with the comment sheets only to discover that not one person had made any comments about the performance. I felt bewildered, embarrassed, and a little insulted as I thought about all the work that had gone into preparing the performance. People were still walking the labyrinth and others were congregated on the grounds observing so I decided to walk the labyrinth to soothe my frustration.

My Engagement with the Labyrinth after a Labyrinth Performance For my Research Study

In a very pre-occupied frame of mind, I nod hello as I pass several people while walking to the entrance of the labyrinth. I enter and begin silently whining, ‘Why didn’t anyone write about the performance? The performance was clear. It

was about true personal stories. The music was beautiful. The singer was powerful. The ensemble of actors were lovely. Why? Why? Why?’

I reach the center of the labyrinth and crawl on a rock with my head down like a teen-ager crawling into bed after throwing a party that flops. Gradually I look up and stare at the sight. It is so beautiful. Magical. The stars are out and the moon is too and I think I see a constellation. Luminarias are burning brightly around the circumference of the labyrinth. People are sitting in small groups staring at those who are still walking by candlelight. They look like pilgrims from medieval times as they journey holding their candles. I see the dark and light. Such profound silence. Mystic night and light. People winding in and out journeying this very second into the depth of their individual beings. Yet, here we are in community. It is a spiritual dance and the silence is the music.

The white rocks of the labyrinth path glisten next to the fire of the luminaries. Air, earth, sky, fire, trees, rocks, the field, and precious souls. I know God is here. The labyrinth is a church without walls. I wonder how many angels have come to visit. Suddenly, I see it. Walking the labyrinth is the performance!

People are performing themselves and each individual is his or her audience. What a benevolent gift to perform on such a stage! I have no knowledge of the drama going on inside their minds and hearts but just the sight moves my heart to love them, to renew my love of life, and to care for this wonderful earth. I say to myself, ‘Does everyone feel this love? That’s what this life is about. Love.’ I think about the loving genuine comments that I hastily read looking for approval of my performance. Sigh. Another labyrinth lesson. ‘Focus on process rather than outcome,’ I tell myself. ‘It’s not approval for the work that’s the reward; it’s the love of doing the work.’

I forgive myself and leave the center journeying outwards to interact anew with the world. Truth is here. The labyrinth wouldn’t have it any other way. It’s a real world. A sacred world. I walk in a joyous calm all the while pondering how the labyrinth is a place where the invisible-is-made-visible.

This personal spiritual experience showed me that no tension between meaning and form exists within the labyrinth in and of itself. In its circular form, it rests whole and sacred. The labyrinth waits to be embodied by the person entering its wholeness with his or her contexts. I learned that I could create a liminal event by cleaning and decorating the labyrinth, but that I could not create individual liminoid experience.

This study explores “flow” and “reflexivity” as they relate to Schechner’s two kinds of performance--transportation and transformation. I argue that the processes of flow, reflexivity, and *communitas* are imbued with meanings and associations, (Turner 1982: 59) which the labyrinth symbol either generates as sacred space or is channeled by Spirit.

Other Research Studies of Spiritual Experiences

In her dissertation, *Phenomenology of Spiritual Experience*, Kim Ann Cornish interviewed twelve participants who were asked to describe when they were aware of or felt spiritual. Cornish first categorized the situational contexts of participant experiences. Cornish (p. 54) concludes, “Spiritual experiences take place in the realm of everyday human experience.” The experiences were situated in contexts involving other people, the world around the participants, their bodies, and time. God was made known to people in such events as in the giving of a book to another person, being at the right place to help someone, marrying a soul mate, and enduring the death of a father.

Other occasions included a women’s retreat, a woman’s conference, a men’s group, a consciousness raising group, and meeting during a prayer experience. Cornish (pp. 55-56) finds that four participants described unusual auditory and visual experiences, such as the voice of an older woman comforting one participant after being raped and God’s voice directing another participant

during morning prayer. Seven participants reported experiences relating to others in the context of worship or special religious contexts.

Experiences involving places included canyons, deserts, mountains, the ocean, sitting on rocks in a stream, sitting by a pond, and in a church. Experiences involving body (self with others) included sexual experiences, facing mortality in life-threatening situations, and the birthing of babies. Experiences involving time were discovered in four descriptions such as being emotionally and physically lost. Other experiences involved the suspension of time.

In relation to themes, Cornish states, “Phenomenologically, spiritual experience described by participants had one overriding theme that permeated all of their interviews: connection.” (p. 59) The first theme was *awe/wonder* under which two sub-themes emerged: *powerful/disturbing* or *comforting* and *peaceful/comforting*. The second theme was *knowing*, which is an awareness and understanding of both life and God. Two sub-themes emerged: *awakening* and *mystery/ineffable*. Cornish explains, “Awakening was described as being ‘aware,’ as a ‘way of seeing,’ of things coming ‘together,’ of having a sense of’ something, and of knowing things ‘instinctively.’” (p. 62) The sub-themes, *mystery/ineffable* refer to ways of knowing not attained through cognitive means.

Naming her third theme as *possibility*, Cornish characterizes it as time “...opening up to new experiences, new ways of thinking about themselves or others, and opened to new experiences, new ways of thinking about themselves or

others, and opened to new directions in their lives.” (p.64) Sub-themes included participants feeling ‘different/changed,’ and ‘open.’ Cornish concludes because contemporary spiritual experience is relational, revealing a healthy affirmation of the human capacity for constructive growth in connecting to others and the world around them, psychologists do not need to make theological assumptions about clients who have spiritual experiences; rather, they should utilize these experiences in the course of therapy.

In his dissertation, *A Phenomenological Study of Spiritual Experience*, Timothy Joseph Pare interviewed six participants for a phenomenological analysis of reported spiritual experiences. Interviewees were asked to describe the immediate, or pre-reflective level, of experiences that they determined were spiritual experiences. Results suggested that the experiences varied from mildly altered to profoundly altered states of consciousness. Adapted from the four-step phenomenological methodology of A.E. Giorgi (1985: 10), Pare (p. 83) interviewed participants, then: (1) read through the transcripts to get a *sense of the whole*; (2) identified *meaning units* from a psychological perspective; (3) transformed the meaning units into *themes*; and (4) synthesized the transformed meaning units into the *structure of experience*, which is a consistent statement regarding the subject’s experience.

Pare states, “Ten different ‘states of awareness’ were identified as follows: *Beauty/Awe, Harmony, Light, Connectedness, Love, Presence of Other, Energy, Guiding Intuition, Expanded Consciousness, and Vision/Trance.*” (p. 87) Pare provides numerous tables identifying portions of participants’ texts and the researcher’s interpretation of the text alongside each of the ten states of awareness. Pare then formulates a generalized interpretation of each state of awareness using both common and uncommon characterizations. Pare then combines the descriptions of the ten states of awareness into a composite state, which he calls *unity consciousness*.

In a secondary study, Pare focused on how the spiritual experiences translate into belief and action. Referring to the results as *impact themes*, Pare discusses that the most common theme was “...a belief that there is ‘something beyond’ the world of physical appearances, something much greater and more profound than they could even imagine.” (p. 172) Pare conceptualizes the “reflective level” of the experience as “...what transpires for the individual once the immediate experience has passed.” (p. 193) Participants were left with: (1) an enhanced sense of meaning and purpose in their personal life; (2) a sense of more stability in their lives; (3) a powerful feeling of love and compassion; (4) a sense of responsibility to serve others; (5) and a sense of responsibility to take care of the planet.

Pare claims, "...the experiences seem to lead to a shift in the experiencer's identity such that their concern moves beyond the boundary of a 'small self' to include a more universal or shared identity." (pp. 193-94) Pare concludes with suggestions of how transpersonal therapists can facilitate the emergence of spiritual states that could lead to health and recommends further research on induced altered states as a method of psychological treatment. Pare (pp. 205-6) also concludes that interpretation of one's spiritual experience may be influenced by the language and conceptual framework of the surrounding culture.

Summary

As preliminary study and sampling before my formal research began, I engaged in multiperspectival theory and practice of premises and means in discovering and balancing human, cultural, and divine realities. The journey is spiritual – the essence of self-actualization – which is wholeness. The labyrinth is a liminal symbol of redressive action in the various individual and social dramas performer-perceivers bring to it. As Turner suggests, the origin of all performance genres lies in redress, a process of conflict resolution. The labyrinth ritual is performance or as Schechner perhaps would label "transformance"— a liminoid experience of transportation and/or transformation.

Utilizing four stages that reflect both the affective and cognitive domains, I argue that transportation occurs in the labyrinth's performer-perceiver: (1) in

the temporary sensory experiences of her body/mind/spirit, which is *liminality* and *flow*; (2) in understanding the experiences, which is *meaning* and *self-reflexivity*; and (3) in judgment of the experiences, which is *value*.

Transformation occurs (4) with *volition* in any decision to act upon the experience as a result of understanding and judgment. I also posit that *communitas* may occur in any of the four stages.

The major function of Chapters 2 and 3 is to aid with the development and interrelatedness of conceptual categories or strategies for coding information found in the data of the thirty interviews that I collected after creating seven labyrinth ritual events. Answering my research question: (does performing the sacred labyrinth ritual help to create a spiritual experience and if so, what performance elements contribute to that experience and how does an individual interpret the experience?) using grounded theory methodology, theory is emergent and is to be found solely in the data. As I begin to analyze the data, I ask, “What is happening here?” I look to the performer-perceivers for answers.

CHAPTER FOUR: GROUNDED THEORY AND THE LABYRINTH

Grounded Theory Methodology

To study how people act and react to a phenomenon using *grounded theory methods*, researcher John W. Creswell states, "...the researcher collects primarily interview data, makes multiple visits to the field, develops and interrelates categories of information, and writes theoretical propositions or hypotheses or presents a visual picture of the theory." (1998: 56) Ian Dey (1-2) summarizes the main tenets of grounded theory, which were identified by Creswell (1998).

- The aim of grounded theory is to generate or discover a theory.
- The researcher has to set aside theoretical ideas to allow a "substantive" theory to emerge.
- Theory focuses on how individuals interact in relation to the phenomenon under study.
- Theory asserts a plausible relation between concepts and sets of concepts.
- Theory is derived from data acquired through fieldwork interviews, observations, and documents.
- Data analysis is systematic and begins as soon as data becomes available.
- Data analysis proceeds through identifying categories and connecting them.
- Further data collection (or sampling) is based on emerging concepts.
- These concepts are developed through constant comparison with additional data.
- Data collection can stop when new conceptualizations emerge.

- Data analysis proceeds from “open” coding (identifying categories, properties, and dimensions) through axial coding (examining conditions, strategies, and consequences) to selective coding around an emerging story line.
- The resulting theory can be reported in a narrative framework or as a set of propositions.

Grounded theory methodology was developed by two sociologists, Barney G. Glaser and Anselm L. Strauss. In *Basics of Grounded Theory Analysis*, Glaser explains that grounded theory is a general methodology where analysis linked with data collection is used to systematically generate an inductive theory about a substantive area. Glaser states, “The research product constitutes a theoretical formulation or integrated set of conceptual hypotheses about the substantive area under study.” (p, 16) Strauss and Juliet Corbin in *Basics of Qualitative Research* define *theory*: “A set of well-developed concepts related through statements of relationship, which together constitute an integrated framework that can be used to explain or predict phenomena.” (p. 15) Statements of relationship explain the who, what, when, where, why, how, how much and with what results an event or phenomena occurs. (Strauss & Corbin: 22)

Grounded theory is emergent. The intent of grounded theory is appropriate to a performance-based theoretical background for the medieval labyrinth ritual because grounded theories “...are drawn from the data, are likely to offer insight, enhance understanding, and provide a meaningful guide to action.” (Strauss & Corbin: 12) Areas of common ground among the processes

and approaches to theory in performance, ritual, art, reading, and grounded theory methodology are participation and change. Change in grounded theory can be analyzed in terms of the interplay among conditions, actions, and consequences much like analysis of performance in terms of the interaction among text, author, performer, and audience. (Dey 1999: 155)

Parallel to the emergent quality of performance, the emergent quality of grounded theory continually depends on interplay. The interplay exists between the substantive data (text), the researcher's competence (performer's competence), which yields the discovery of a set of propositions or theory about the phenomenon under study (audience's interpretation of a set of circumstances in a given context). My role as interpreter of the research is participatory as I enter the data with the question: What is happening here?

Focus of the Research Study

Because my research is a performance study, I focus on what walking the medieval labyrinth symbol *does* to the performer-perceiver. As discussed in chapter one, my research question asks if the performer-perceiver indeed has a spiritual experience, then what performance elements contribute to the experience and how does the person interpret the experience? Creswell adds the following sub-questions to a grounded theory study.

- What are the general categories to emerge in a first review of the data? (open coding)

- Given the phenomenon of interest, what caused it? What contextual and intervening conditions influenced it? What strategies or outcomes resulted from it? What were the consequences of these strategies? (axial coding) (p. 103)

In answering the questions, data generates substantive theory rather than formal theory. Glaser and Strauss distinguish “substantive” as an empirical area of sociological inquiry in contrast to “formal” as a conceptual area of sociological inquiry. (1967: 32) According to Strauss and Corbin, a substantive theory evolves “...from the study of a phenomenon in one particular situational context.” A formal theory evolves “...from a study of a phenomenon examined under many different types of situations.” (1995: 174) For example, my study focuses on the phenomenon of spiritual experience walking replicas of the medieval Chartres labyrinth symbol, which is spiritual experience in one particular situational context. Therefore, emerging theory is substantive; it is empirical because it is rooted in observation of the data.

Glaser and Strauss explain the aims of grounded theory, which fit the goals of my contribution to the field of performance studies. “...(1) to enable prediction and explanation of behavior....” I predict and explain possible types of behavior that performers of the labyrinth ritual may experience. “...(2) to be useful in theoretical advance in sociology....” My study generates theory that accounts for participant responses in the performance of ritual, which is useful both to performance studies and anthropology. “...(3) to be usable in practical

applications—prediction and explanation should be able to give the practitioner understanding and some control of situations....” (1967: 3) As a trained facilitator of labyrinth walking, I, along with other labyrinth facilitators, learn how to relate in dialogue with participants to further their insights and how to strengthen our support and leadership in creating labyrinth events. Results are relevant to scholars of various viewpoints, such as psychology, religious studies, and sociology, as well as theatre, anthropology, and performance studies because it makes connections among conditions, interactions, and consequences of similarities and differences in human behavior. Results are also workable for significant laypersons in constructing, participating in, and following up on public ritual/social action. “...(4) to provide a perspective on behavior—a stance to be taken toward data....” Substantive theory fits an “ever-changing, everyday reality” (Glaser and Strauss, 1967: 239) and is therefore relevant to a broad scope of emergent situations and qualities more so than formal theory. Because grounded theory inductively generates theory rather than deductively verifying theory, verification “cannot be divorced from the process by which it is generated,” (Glaser and Strauss, 1967: 5) and therefore is adequate, and reliable. “...(5) to guide and provide a style for research on particular areas of behavior....” My research explores the body, emotion, senses, action, time, and space in response to the performance process similar to the process of theatre rehearsal or the process of literary reading. Researching these performance

elements offer a concretization for “filling in the gaps” during an act of understanding or interpretation of meaning.

The theory should provide clear enough categories and hypotheses so that crucial ones can be verified in present and future research.... Theory that can meet these requirements must fit the situation being researched, and work when put into use. By “fit” we mean that the categories must be readily (not forcibly) applicable to and indicated by the data under study; by ‘work’ we mean that they must be meaningfully relevant to and be able to explain the behavior under study. (1967: 3)

Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations in this research study include assessment of participants’ potential risks and benefits, confidentiality of participants, and informed consent.

During the facilitator training, my research study took on qualities of ethnographic study primarily because I took on the role of participant observer, immersing myself in several overnight weekend labyrinth retreats, which Artress calls “Theatre of Enlightenment,” and two overnight weeklong facilitator training sessions.

In “Ethnography and Ethnographic Representation,” Barbara Tedlock (p. 165) states, “Experience is meaningful, and human behavior is generated from and informed by this meaningfulness.” Upon reflecting on her statement, in the two-year process of achieving certification, I had many meaningful learning experiences that shaped my behavior in becoming self-reflexive and adept in

interaction with other labyrinth facilitators and the hundreds of participants whom I led numerous times through a labyrinth.

One vital relationship that emerged was interacting with a Wiccan woman, who was also in facilitator training. Artress teaches that as facilitators we are to engage with people of all religions because the labyrinth embraces and unifies all people regardless of their religious bases. The Wiccan woman and I found Artress' challenge in one another. At first, our interaction was intimidating because of the cultural history of mistrust between Wiccan and Christian faiths. Although we felt stretched beyond our psycho-historical heritage, we committed ourselves to respectfully learn from each other and work together in completing requirements and documentation for facilitator certification. To our surprise and joy, we grew as friends and collaborators, and she was an invaluable help in conducting the seven performance events for this study. As our interaction emerged in our everyday lives, we indeed learned that as facilitators, we could "...better understand the beliefs, motivations, and behaviors..." (Tedlock: 166) of the people we lead on labyrinth walks.

Equipped from my ethnographic participation with a new social reality—deepened human understanding in seeing, thinking, feeling, and acting in my being for the world, me, and others. I realized that I had an ethical and moral responsibility to my research subjects. Someone could experience major distress as I had. A potential for negative effects also existed during the interview

because my exploratory questions could become too personal or a person could relive a difficult time experienced journeying the labyrinth. I also realized that I needed to guard against sharing my personal experiences, in order to avoid forcing my spiritual tradition on them. Yet, at the same time, I had to be able to relate at least generic personal experiences.

I realized that I needed to trust all that I had studied about labyrinths, to trust my personal experiences, to trust creativity in planning a labyrinth event, to trust myself in leading others with the eye of a director of a drama and with a soul that cares for the souls of others.

Perhaps, a participant would be emotionally or psychologically moved by sharing with me personal moments. I would exhibit empathy in silence and allow the participant to continue at his or her own pace or stop if necessary. If a person recalled a traumatic event and could not get calm, I would suggest that we stop immediately. I would not give any counseling or make any suggestions for the person to secure a therapist or counselor. If some major trauma did happen, I would suggest that the participant call his or her doctor and/or call 911.

In terms of relating potential benefits, I stated in the letter of recruitment, “Your insights, at whatever stage your participation and/or understanding of the labyrinth and your spiritual journey are, can be very helpful to others who are searching for spiritual tools and are considering the labyrinth for spiritual practice.

You may also receive further insight as to your spiritual experience in walking the labyrinth as we talk.” (See Appendix A. Letter of Recruitment.)

Before I began my study, I submitted a review to the Institutional Research Board at the Office of Research Support and Compliance and gained approval for research involving the use of human subjects. Informed consent of each participant was necessary at each interview. (See Appendix B. Informed Consent.) I allowed time for the person to read it and then answered any further questions. After the interviewee signed the form, I informed him or her that I would make a copy of it and mail it or if preferred I would hand deliver it. A data sheet included a space for the use of a pseudonym to keep the identities of the participants anonymous. (See Appendix C. Data Sheet.) To further secure their confidentiality, I explained at the interview that after I transcribe our interview, I would destroy the audiotape. However, I would ask the participants if they preferred that I give them the audiotape after I transcribed it. I would also give them copies of my transcription of the audiotape so they can check for accuracy.

Data Collection

Fulfilling requirements for my facilitator certification allowed me an opportunity to do preliminary sampling from which I could develop initial interview questions. Areas of observation also offered me experience from which

I could derive concepts. However, Strauss and Corbin explain that preliminary work must be discarded because the preliminary sample is not “real data.”

Strauss and Corbin (205) add, “Nevertheless, early concepts often provide a departure point from which to begin data collection, and many researchers... find it difficult to enter the field without some conception of what it is they are going to study.”

For example, I presented the labyrinth at a church to a visiting women’s spirituality group. I reflected upon this event as performance with its own embodied characteristics. I presented the history and guidelines for the labyrinth walk; the participants experienced an “open walk,” with no more verbal communication; and the group reconvened to share experiences if they were open to communicate them. The event proved once again to move people to transformative experiences. When we returned from the labyrinth walk, people were profoundly touched by the walk, which they claimed was heightened by my initial presentation. Amidst their tears and recollections, I reflected on another aspect of Lauren Artress’ teaching. Artress claims, “When people walk the labyrinth, many sense that it is a form of communal prayer. The connection between inner and outer becomes the great-grandmother’s thread, and we see that we are all connected through the thread to form the web of creation.” The metaphor of the spiritual journey brought to personal consciousness extends to a maturation of human consciousness in relation to God and others. Artress says,

“When you join the natural flow in yourself, you can join the cosmic dance with others.” (p.152)

As I listened to the women’s transformative experience, I jotted down in the order that they presented “essences” of their stories. My writing took on a poetic form and when they finished speaking, I read it back to them. I note here that it was raining that day but the women still walked and had a glorious time interacting with the rain. I call the poem, “Flowers Blooming in God’s Reign.”

Listening it’s that simple.

Stay
on the path in the love & strength of this
Powerful Universe.

Let go
of my attachment to
resistance!
Love myself as I am loved.

Seek
The beauty amidst destruction.

Spring
of epiphany tears
waters compassion.

Wake-up
Feel
See
the green tree celebration.

Questions...
cleanse.
I have everything I need.
I can trust myself.

Feeling lost...I am connected.
Compassion, thank you.

Forgiveness...mercy...
little girl playing,
Surrender
to your innocence.

Don't resist
Listen
Just know.

Relax
Take Spring Break
Nap
in the rain, just great.

Overwhelmed...
Just my spiritual journey
along the way
Love,
Compassion,
Gifts,
"You're here," the Spirit of God
enveloped ME
Over-Whelm-ing
LOVE.

Reflecting back on their shared experiences through the poem proved to deepen their embodied experiences as a communal prayer. In return, they sang a song to me. It was sung with such an outpouring of love that it was almost difficult to receive. After the event, a few people from the group offered to perform for one of my labyrinth events.

I realized that tapping into one's deep intuitive nature is so vast a field. By literally embodying a symbol, a person's intuitive nature becomes field

dependent. Walking the labyrinth simplifies meditation. One just walks the path and the mind is stilled long enough for a person to relax and hear the still small voice within. It is a process of mutual and incessant modification, which is a “union of performer and spectator.”

I continued preliminary sampling by bringing several friends to the labyrinth. Here in the “safe container,” the “behavioral environment,” the “sacred space,” the “holy theatre,” I likened the experiences to Grotowski’s later work known as the “Theatre of Roots.” Grotowski gradually eliminated any distinction between actor and spectator by gathering participants in natural settings. Amidst nature, one’s elemental roots, there is no need to hide one’s shame or fear or true self in contrast to the many parts one plays as society imposes.

Each time I brought an individual, I gave no presentation. I simply said, “Here’s the labyrinth, do you want to go first, or shall I?” Generally, the person would take a deep breath or look a little nervous or eagerly enter the labyrinth. We shared the walking of the labyrinth path without any presentations or stories or scripts. Performance existed in the immediate action of a spiritual nature, and I could not place the shared interaction in any taxonomy. I just let the experience be the experience. Sometimes, a person would spontaneously reveal what his or her experience was, and I would reciprocate.

For most participants, however, there was no shared expression, and I had to force myself not to ask what their experience was. Upon completing the walk, I could visually tell that a person had a transformative experience and was expecting me to say something. I would simply say, “Did you like it?” The question would be answered by silent nods, hugs, tears, a sense of levity, or a verbal response to the effect that the walk was “profound.” Communication occurred in the silence. One common element was that the shared walk always brought a deeper intimacy between the person and me. A few people emerged to either offer assistance or perform for my research study.

During that time, I was in a book club that met very close to the labyrinth site. Since the group was just beginning, I suggested walking the labyrinth. They all readily agreed. I very informally conveyed the three stages of the path as releasing on the way in, receiving while in the center, and renewing on the way out. They asked a few questions and I spontaneously responded. Then we all walked the labyrinth. We drove back to our original meeting place and discussed the book. No one said a word. I just kept reminding myself to be quiet and let shared expression unfold if it was meant to be.

However, during the break for refreshments, people began to open up about their experiences and a chain reaction of exuberant communication began to unfold. One woman experienced a physical response. She said, “I had a physical experience on the labyrinth. I began to walk and found myself increasingly

winding up. The tensions built and I got a migraine headache. I sat down in the center to meditate and said a prayer. I stood up and suddenly my sinuses cleared up and my headache went away. I walked out in amazement.” Relationships grew as people revealed what surfaced to them while walking the labyrinth. A few people emerged to either offer assistance or perform for my internship performance.

I also brought numerous groups of my college students and visited churches sponsoring labyrinth events. I collected approximately 100 comments from people after they had walked the labyrinth and employed them in chapters one, two, and three. Preliminary sampling included metaphors of their life journey, feelings and thoughts of walking in silence alone or with others on the labyrinth, emotions, sensory and kinesthetic experiences, reactions to time and space, intentions, prayers, answers to prayers, as well as special insights into whatever was going on in their lives.

These preliminary areas of observation relate to a performance, which focuses on emotion, sensory and body experiences, space, time, action, creativity, and meaning. Similar to a performance process, embodied cognition and creativity surfaces from intuition or awareness, reflection, and understanding or some form of application to living. I then proceeded to develop my interview questions.

Part One basically asks the subject what, if any, spiritual experience he or she had during the labyrinth ritual. If the interviewee would say he or she did not have a spiritual experience, I would still proceed with the interview because I knew from experience that further insight would be gained as a result of processing whatever did or did not occur. Out of thirty-two interviews, one person said that she did not have a spiritual experience. I am not using her data. Part Two asks questions that trigger understanding the experience. Part Three considers questions for reflection on the subject's experience and understanding, as well as asks if the subject has decided to make labyrinth walking a regular part of his or her spiritual practice.

Questions

Directions: The following is a follow-up of your labyrinth experience. In my dissertation, I am attempting to discover whether you perceive walking the labyrinth to be a spiritual experience and if so, what elements contributed to that spiritual experience.

Please note that some of your answers may overlap. As you reflect on these questions, consider in detail specific elements that may have acted as triggers to your experience.

Feel free to elaborate as much as you wish on any question. All your responses will remain anonymous.

Part One

1. What expectations, assumptions, or strategies about the labyrinth did you have before you arrived at the labyrinth to walk?
2. What physical, emotional, or mental state were you in before walking the labyrinth?
3. Did one of the three stages of the walk—the path toward the center; arriving and being in the center; the path out from the center—have especially strong meaning for you? Briefly describe that meaning.

Part Two

1. Did you have a direct sense experience—seeing, hearing, feeling, tasting, or smelling anything? What were they and in what ways did these contribute or interfere with your experience?
2. Did you have a kinesthetic sense experience—a body experience such as an interior movement of the muscles? What was it and in what way did this contribute or interfere with the experience?
3. Did you experience a sense of balance in any way? What was it and in what way did this contribute or interfere with the experience?
4. Did you have any mental images not pictures of reality but more like a diagram or geometric design? What were they and in what way did this contribute or interfere with the experience?
5. What was there during your labyrinth that triggered an inner or spiritual experience such as an awareness, realization, or insight?
6. What was there that triggered an emotion such as a sense of excitement or fear?
7. Did you have an emotional memory? What was it and in what way did this contribute or interfere with the experience?

Part Three

1. What physical, emotional, or mental state were you in after walking the labyrinth?
2. Reflecting on your labyrinth journey, do you judge that it connected with your own spiritual journey? How or how not?
3. Does walking the labyrinth appeal to you as a spiritual practice? Why?
4. If you had to explain the labyrinth to someone, how would you describe it?
5. Would you say that you had a spiritual experience?

In deciding how to present myself at an interview, I demonstrated mutual inquiry with participants. In an informal and spontaneous manner, I believe I gained trust by sincerely being interested in their lives, and by focusing heavily on our shared appreciation of labyrinth walking. Fontana and Frey explain “... the

researcher must be able to take the role of the respondents and attempt to see the situation from their viewpoint, rather than superimpose his or her world of academia and preconceptions upon them.” (2003: 78) My role was not one of academic teacher, rather, one of learner. I, therefore, had to listen intently. Knowing how difficult it is to communicate spiritual or phenomenological experiences, as well as share personal life histories as background to these experiences, I engaged participants with a conversational quality. Denzin advises, “...a good listener share his or her own experiences, thereby transforming the traditional interviewer-respondent situation into a conversational interaction. When an interviewer only listens, without sharing, this can create distrust in interviewees.” (2001:66) At the same time, I had to be careful not to share something that would influence their meanings and understandings, not to impose my interpretation, and not to direct the interview to fit any preconception that might arise in me.

Denzin states, “The researcher must alter the phrasing of the questions and the order in which they are asked to fit each individual interviewed.” (2001: 66) Because the nature of the interview was about personal, “meanings, understandings, and interpretations” (2001:66), I had to establish a flexible rapport in which the questions did not seem standardized, sterile, or insensitive. Very often, I found myself asking questions to clarify their oral expression, which created a feedback reassuring them that I was indeed listening and learning. I

deemed the interviews as successful because each respondent was so sincerely appreciative of our conversation.

Research Subjects

I interviewed thirty-two participants, which complies with a standard number of participants for grounded theory research, and audio-recorded their responses. See the following base data chart of subjects. Names of the subjects are pseudonyms. I interviewed only people who had participated in labyrinth rituals that I had facilitated. In securing sites for my research study, I used the outdoor labyrinth at Hyde Park Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) at 610 East 45th Street in Austin, TX. I had been instrumental in developing a dedication service with the Pastor when the labyrinth was completed. The pastor and congregation offered me use of the labyrinth, which is open to the public 24 hours a day and 7 days a week, any time I desired to use it.

Subjects	Performance Event	Age Range	Gender	Race	Religion	Education
Ambro Bryant	Summer Solstice	40-49	Male	Caucasian	Christian	Master's
Ann Berkeley	Easter Walk	60-69	Female	Caucasian	Methodist	Associate's
Annabelle Webb	Easter Walk	30-39	Female	Caucasian	Methodist	Secondary
Barbara Autumn	Night Journey	50-59	Female	Caucasian	Wiccan	Bachelor's
Callie Bailey	Night Journey	20-29	Female	Caucasian	Catholic	Bachelor's
Davenol Groves	Retreat Walk	50-59	Male	Caucasian	Unitarian	Master's
Denah Jones	Summer Solstice	30-39	Female	Caucasian	None	Associate's
Gabrielle Cara	Pilgrimage	30-39	Female	Caucasian	Eclectic	Doctoral
Giselle Evans	Pilgrimage	20-29	Female	Caucasian	Christian	Associate's
Heidi Wilson	Night Journey	30-39	Female	Caucasian	Unitarian	Bachelor's
Holly Maguire	Day Walk	30-39	Female	Caucasian	Non-Denomination	Bachelor's
Janis Brooks	Retreat Walk	60-69	Female	Caucasian	Unitarian	Master's

John Roberts	Pilgrimage	30-39	Male	Caucasian	Presbyterian	Bachelor's
John Wilson	Day Walk	20-29	Male	Caucasian	Non-Denomination	Associate's
Kalaya Rebecca	Sacred Path	30-39	Female	Caucasian	Christian	Associate's
Lagan Brown	Summer Solstice	20-29	Female	Caucasian	Wiccan	Associate's
Lindy Benjamin	Sacred Path	50-59	Female	Caucasian	Unitarian	Bachelor's
Lou Weeks	Summer Solstice	60-69	Female	Caucasian	Unitarian	Bachelor's
Mari Weaver	Pilgrimage	50-59	Female	Caucasian	Pagan-Unitarian	Master's
Maria Rochelle	Sacred Path	60-69	Female	Caucasian	Jewish-Unitarian	Master's
Maria Terry	Pilgrimage	30-39	Female	Caucasian	Episcopalian	Doctoral
Marie Alvarez	Pilgrimage	20-29	Female	Hispanic	Catholic	Associate's
Olivia Rivers	Retreat Walk	50-59	Female	Caucasian	None	Doctoral
Ozma Williams	Sacred Path	40-49	Female	Caucasian	Pagan-Unitarian	Bachelor's
Paul Stevens	Summer Solstice	40-49	Male	Caucasian	Unitarian	Bachelor's
Phred Phelps	Summer Solstice	50-59	Female	Caucasian	Unitarian	Bachelor's
Ruby Hoover	Summer Solstice	50-59	Female	Caucasian	Non-Denomination	Bachelor's
Sally Mitchell	Summer Solstice	30-39	Female	Asian	Catholic	Bachelor's
Schuyler Williams	Night Journey	30-39	Female	Caucasian	Christian	Associate's
Susan Harkness	Day Walk	50-59	Female	Caucasian	Episcopalian	Associate's
Sylvia Sparrow	Night Journey	20-29	Female	Caucasian	None	Associate's
Vangi East	Easter Walk	60-69	Female	Caucasian	Methodist	Associate's

I also used participants of labyrinth walks at the First Unitarian Universalist Church of Austin at 4700 Grover Avenue in Austin, TX. I had been invited by their Religious Education Committee to guide their labyrinth walks, teach a class, preach a sermon, and collect data for my dissertation research. Another labyrinth facilitator, Linda Webster, and I rented a portable canvas labyrinth and set it up at the church each time that I held an event there.

I secured two letters of permission, which granted me permission to hold labyrinth walks for the church and general public at Hyde Park Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and the First Unitarian Universalist Church of Austin. I

presented a template letter of permission modeling what each church authority should state in a letter on church letterhead to my review board. (See Appendix D. Letter of Permission.) Interviews, the source of my data, were not to be conducted at either church, rather at my home or the participant's home. However, comment sheets would be written at the time of the labyrinth walks and left at either church, which I would collect.

Comment sheets on tables to be filled out voluntarily and anonymously after a participant walked the labyrinth included the questions: What were your expectations for the labyrinth walk? Have you walked the labyrinth before? Describe your experience. Do you have other comments or suggestions? I asked participants who were especially eager to speak with me after completing their comment sheets if they would be interested in an interview for a study that I was conducting. If they expressed interest, I secured their email address for future contact.

Copies of flyers for each labyrinth ritual that I created were distributed with permission on various bulletin boards throughout the city as well as on various email lists of friends and friends of friends. (See Appendix E. Model Flyer. I provided programs for guests, which included the following guidelines as mandated by Veriditas, Artress' non-profit organization that granted me facilitator certification. Guidelines were secured during facilitator training.

This labyrinth has only one path so there are no tricks to it and no dead ends. The path winds throughout and becomes a mirror for where we

are in our lives; it touches our sorrows and releases our joys. So walk it with an open mind and open heart. There are three stages of the walk: *Purgation* is a releasing, a letting go of the details of your life.

This is an act of shedding thoughts and emotions. It quiets and empties the mind. *Illumination* is when you reach the center. Stay there as long as you like. It is a place of meditation and prayer. Receive what is there for you. *Union* is joining God, your Higher Power or the healing forces at work in the world. Each time you walk the labyrinth you become more empowered to find and do the work you feel your soul reaching for.

Clear your mind and become aware of your breathing pattern. Allow yourself to find the pace your body wants to go. You may “pass” people or let others step around you whichever is easiest at the turns. The path is two ways. Those going in will meet those coming out. Do what feels natural.

At the labyrinth events, in addition to providing the comment sheets, I asked participants to sign their name and write their email address in a guest book noting that I possibly would be contacting them. As a courtesy to the hosting church, I compiled the comments in a notebook and gave it to the church so that members or guests could read and learn from the labyrinth experiences of others.

As the labyrinth facilitator, I, along with the assistance of Linda Webster, constructed seven labyrinth ritual performances. Five men and twenty-seven women either personally offered me their services or agreed to volunteer when I contacted them from the guest book. Several people who participated in my preliminary fieldwork either helped me with event planning and/or volunteered to do an interview after walking the labyrinth during one of the seven ritual events. Each event was of course similar in that the focus was walking the labyrinth with a public community. I named the seven events: Pilgrimage; Sacred Path; Summer Solstice; Night Journey; Day Walk; Retreat Walk; and Easter Walk.

Sacred Path, a two-day event, and Retreat Walk, a morning workshop, were held at a Unitarian Church on two separate occasions. Easter Walk was a morning workshop held at a Methodist Church. The remaining events were at the outdoor labyrinth and lasted between two to four hours. Variations of the contexts included short performances of poetry readings, sacred text, and/or music appropriate to the theme of the walk. Individual candles were given to participants to carry along the path at Pilgrimage, Night Journey, and Summer Solstice, which were all at night on the outdoor labyrinth. One hundred and twelve luminarias, representing the 112 lunations, encircled the labyrinths at all events except Retreat Walk because a woman was allergic to the candles although we put some candles around the labyrinth when she completed her walk. The guidelines for walking the labyrinth were either orally presented or written in the programs. No further directions, other than the guidelines, were given to participants.

My procedures for recruitment of subjects included contacting participants who had signed the guest book, who had personally spoken to me at an event and positively responded to my invitation for a follow-up interview, or who were friends with a particular interest in making a contribution to the study. In speaking with potential participants, I either gave them the recruitment letter or orally explained what was in it, especially regarding informed consent,

confidentiality, and potential risk or benefit. My research study involves no deception and no debriefing was necessary.

Delimitations and Limitations

A delimitation I imposed on the study was to analyze data from participants who regarded their experience walking the labyrinth as spiritual. “Spiritual” implied no relationship to a religion, denomination, or sect. A participant did not have to attribute the spiritual experience to God or Jesus; the experience was spiritual if the participant said that it was. Another delimitation was to perform, before an audience of Methodists, St. Teresa’s teaching meditation and contemplation as she walked the labyrinth. After the performance, the audience walked the labyrinth. I did the performance because the population knowing that I perform St. Teresa asked me to do so before they walked the labyrinth. I had no preconceptions about what my performance could reveal.

One limitation to the study is that I secured more women than men. For this, I had no control because more women volunteered for an interview. My study, therefore, reflects no implications of gender to walking the labyrinth. The study is also limited to a Caucasian population. I was unable to secure any more variance as to religious affiliation of participants other than the variety to whom I had access.

Data Analysis and Grounded Theory

Strauss and Corbin (p. 13) state, “Analysis is the interplay between researchers and data.” They claim that it is both science and art. It is science because of the rigor required in grounding the analysis in the data. It is art because of the creativity needed “...to aptly name categories, ask stimulating questions, make comparisons, and extract an innovative, integrated, realistic scheme from masses of unorganized raw data.” (Strauss and Corbin: 13) This research action involves three processes: open coding, axial coding, and selective coding. To facilitate the arranging and retrieval of codes within categories, as well as memos created for them, I used a qualitative analysis software program, N6 Student NUD*IST (non-numerical data indexing, searching, and theorizing.) I chose this software solely for the purpose of retrieval and storage of data in an attempt to avoid the use of large poster boards, color-coded markers, numerous index cards, and file shoeboxes. Through the use of memoing, I kept notes about possible emerging theory or hypotheses.

For open coding, after reading and re-reading the corpus of interview text, which consists of nearly two-hundred single-spaced pages, I undertook a question-by-question analysis to find units in the form of incidents, ideas, events, and acts. These units of the text are made up of individual words, phrases, and/or sentences. I gave the units a name or code. The code name was developed by

conceptualizing through imagery, meaning, connotation, denotation, or “in vivo codes” (Glaser and Strauss: 1967), which are the exact words of the interviewee. This technique is called *naming or labeling*. Strauss and Corbin (105) explain the next detailed step, “As we continue with our analysis, if we come across another object, event, act, or happening that we identify through *comparative analysis* as sharing some common characteristics with an object or a happening, then we give it the same name, that is place it into the same code.” This technique is called *dimensionalizing*. Then systematically comparing and contrasting each interview, I narrowed down the codes yielding inclusive categories. When I completed this process, I did not deem it necessary for persons not involved in the analysis to verify my conclusions or make additional suggestions in arranging, rearranging, or editing categories.

The second step was axial coding. This process rearranges data in new ways by making connections between a category and its subcategories. By asking who, when, where, why, how, and with what consequences, a researcher relates *structure*, which is conditions that set the stage or create the circumstances for a phenomenon to arise, to *process*, which denotes the actions/interactions of the participants as responses to problems and issues triggered or created by the conditions. (Strauss & Corbin, p. 127) Strauss and Corbin explain the need for a paradigm that link process with structure.

If one studies **structure** only, then one learns **why** but not **how** certain events occur. If one studies **process** only, then one

understands **how** persons act/interact but not why. One must study both structure and process to capture the dynamic and evolving nature of events. (bold in original, Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 127)

However, structure and process are not the language of cause and effect.

Grounded theory is emergent, so Strauss and Corbin (1998: 129) warn analysts not to code with terms such as conditions, actions/interactions, and consequences, rather, to code for explanations and to gain an understanding of phenomena. Again, to prevent the analyst's "possible distortion of meaning," Strauss and Corbin urgently warn the analyst to "...validate his or her interpretations through constantly comparing one piece of data to another." (p. 137) Basically, codes and categories are sorted, compared, and contrasted until they are saturated, which means that analysis produces no new codes or categories.

Axial coding is the process of linking. Dey summarizes how linking is accomplished by analyzing:

1. Change in conditions influencing interaction over time.
2. The interactional response to that change.
3. The consequences that result from that interactional response.
4. How consequences become conditions influencing the next interactional sequence.

This "in-depth" analysis involves capturing such aspects as:

- What leads to changes in conditions?
- How do responses vary as conditions change?
- What is the pace of change?
- What is the direction of change?
- How do variations in context (of time and place) affect the rate and degree of change?

Dey adds, “Change can also be conceptualized in terms of “steps, phases, or stages.” (p. 151) This involves identifying key “turning points” in the process. This concept of change is most appropriate for walking the labyrinth in its three stages of purgation, illumination, and union, which involve time and movement. Dey notes that the turning points “...can be conceptualized as a “progressive” movement toward a particular result.” (p. 151)

As an example of progressive change, Strauss and Corbin cite their work on “coming back.” This refers to the process of returning to a satisfactory way of life after a chronic illness, which they conceptualize as involving various stages “through which one must progress in order to reach come back” (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, pp. 153-4). But according to Strauss and Corbin, change need not display such a progressive movement through phases. As an example, they cite the management of a chronic illness, which requires a process of constant adjustment to changing conditions where the whole aim is to keep the illness as stable as possible. (p. 151)

Since preliminary sampling suggests change, using grounded theory methodology is analogous to Schechner’s restored behavior or in the case of personal social drama Turner’s stage of redressive action, as well as transportation and transformation in ritual process.

During the processes of open coding and axial coding, I maintained the process of memoing. Writing analytic memos involved questions, insights, ideas, observations, or speculations about evolving theory or a preliminary set of hypotheses, emerging categories, or aspects of possible connections or themes among categories. Glaser (1978) explains that memo writing is not detailed description. He states, “Although typically based on description, memos are

aimed at *raising* that description to a *theoretical level* through the conceptual rendering of the material. Thus the original description is *subsumed* by the analysis. Consisting of a sentence, a paragraph, or a few pages, memoing has the following goals. One or more of these results is adequate.

- (1) It raises the data to a conceptualization level.
- (2) It develops the properties of each category which begins to define it operationally.
- (3) It presents hypotheses about connections between categories and/or their properties.
- (4) It begins to integrate these connections with clusters of other categories to generate the theory.
- (5) Lastly, it begins to locate the emerging theory with other theories with potentially more or less relevance.”

Through the constant comparative coding, analyzing the data, and memoing, a core category emerges. Glaser states, “Since a core category accounts for most of the variation in a pattern of behavior, it has several functions for generating grounded theory: integration, density, saturation, completeness, and delimiting focus.” (1992)

At this point, I began selective coding, which is identifying a “story line” or the core category. The story line integrated the categories in the axial coding. I systematically related it to other categories, validated those relationships and filled in categories that needed further refinement and development. (Strauss &

Corbin, 1990) Utilizing the memos and selective coding, a set of propositions and affirmations of existing theory emerge.

CHAPTER FIVE: APPLICATION OF GROUNDED THEORY AND FINDINGS

The Performance Rituals and Subjects

I created seven labyrinth performance events at two different sites using one outdoor medieval labyrinth built from small rocks and one canvas medieval labyrinth, which has the path painted in purple. To secure ethical treatment of my research subjects, as well as the two host churches allowing me to produce the events, I received approval from the human research board at my university. (See Appendices for formal documents.) I interviewed 32 volunteers whom I telephoned from my guest book at each performance or to whom I personally spoke at a performance. All guests received either in writing or orally the guidelines for walking the labyrinth. (See Appendix G.) The following table lists with a corresponding number each respondent for easy reference in chapters five and six. I then describe the seven performance rituals and provide base data for each respondent.

TABLE 1. Performances and Respondents

Performance	Numerical Order
Pilgrimage	Respondents 1-6
Gabrielle Cara	#1
Giselle Evans	#2

John Roberts	#3
Mari Weaver	#4
Maria Alvarez	#5
Maria Terry	#6
Summer Solstice	Respondents 7-14
Ambro Bryant	#7
Denah Jones	#8
Lagan Brown	#9
Paul Stevens	#10
Lou Weeks	#11
Phred Phelps	#12
Ruby Hoover	#13
Sally Miller	#14
Day Walk	Respondents 15-17
Holly Maguire	#15
John Wilson	#16
Susan Harkness	#17
Sacred Path	Respondents 18-21
Maria Rochelle	#18
Kalaya Rebecca	#19
Lindy Benjamin	#20
Ozma Williams	#21

Easter Walk	Respondents 22-24
Ann Berkeley	#22
Annabelle Webb	#23
Vangi East	#24
Night Journey	Respondents 25-29
Callie Bailey	#25
Heidi Wilson	#26
Schuyler Williams	#27
Sylvia Sparrow	#28
Retreat Walk	Respondents 29-32
Davenol Graves	#29
Olivia Rivers	#30
Janis Brooks	#31
Barbara Autumn	#32

Performance # 1: Pilgrimage framed the labyrinth walk with a pre-performance of actors who performed labyrinth testimonials from my preliminary sampling and a song inviting Spirit to be with us. The performance was held at sunset and night fell by the time guests were ready to walk. 112 luminarias encircled the outdoor labyrinth with 28 luminarias in each labyrinth quadrant symbolizing the 28 lunations in each quadrant of the Chartres labyrinth. I

individually met labyrinth walkers, whom I label “performer-perceivers,” at the entrance of the labyrinth and gestured an individual into the labyrinth at intervals wishing him or her a blessed journey while one of the actors gave them an unlit candle with directions to light the candle when he or she had reached the center. The center of the labyrinth included a large candle from which performer-perceivers could light their unlit candle. One of the actors spontaneously felt called to remain in the center and facilitate the lighting of individual candles. A flutist and violinist played live music during the walk. Performer-perceivers included the following 6 guests.

Gabrielle Cara	30-39	Teacher	Eclectic religious background	Doctoral degree
Giselle Evans	20-29	Chef	Christian	Associate’s degree
John Roberts	30-39	Chef	Presbyterian	Bachelor’s degree
Mari Weaver	50-59	Indexer	Pagan-Unitarian	Master’s degree
Maria Terry	30-39	Teacher	Episcopalian	Doctoral degree
Marie Alvarez	20-29	Chef	Catholic	Associate’s degree

Performance # 2: Summer Solstice framed another labyrinth walk. The performance was also held at sunset on the outdoor labyrinth. Bouquets of flowers adorned the center of the labyrinth and 112 luminarias, representing the 112 lunations of the Chartres labyrinth, encircled the labyrinth. Guests gathered early spontaneously playing an active role in preparation for the ritual. For

example, the guests placed luminarias and lit them. Some guests folded programs and passed them out. They also assisted in preparing a table of refreshments and placed the guest book on it. Two actors, the other labyrinth facilitator, and I gathered the group in a circle reading poetry to them from the program that highlighted the summer solstice and the spiritual journey from darkness into light. Two actors stood on either side of the entrance to the labyrinth presenting and lighting a candle to each guest for his or her labyrinth journey. Performer-perceivers included the following 8 guests.

Ambro Bryant	40 – 49	Teacher	Christian	Master’s degree
Denah Jones	30-39	Chef	No religious affiliation	Associate’s degree
Lagan Brown	20-29	Chef	Wiccan	Associate’s degree
Paul Stevens	40-49	Software Programmer	Unitarian	Bachelor’s degree
Lou Weeks	60-69	Technical Writer	Unitarian	Bachelor’s degree
Phred Phelps	50-59	Nurse	Unitarian	Bachelor’s degree
Ruby Hoover	50-59	Doctor’s Assistant	No religious affiliation	Bachelor’s degree
Sally Miller	30-39	Social Worker	Catholic	Bachelor’s degree

Performance #3: Day Walk framed another labyrinth walk at the outdoor labyrinth. This event was obviously held during the day so no candles were needed. I gathered the group and orally explained the guidelines to walking the labyrinth. After answering a few questions about the history of the labyrinth, the

group lined up in a cue at the entrance of the labyrinth. I ushered at intervals each performer-perceiver into the labyrinth wishing him or her a good journey.

Performer-perceivers included the following 3 guests.

Holly Maguire	30-39	Full-time mom & Substitute teacher	Non-denominational religious background	Bachelor's degree
John Wilson	20-29	Chef	Non-denominational religious background	Associate's degree
Susan Harkness	50-59	Chef	Episcopalian	Associate's degree

Performance #4: Sacred Path framed another labyrinth walk at a Unitarian church with an indoor canvass labyrinth. At a service preceding the labyrinth walk another labyrinth facilitator and I taught: the history of the labyrinth; lessons from our own labyrinth walking narratives; the guidelines for labyrinth walking; and the potentiality of journeying from darkness into light in a metaphorical sense. We gave the assembly a collection of poems in the name of that theme and a church member sang a song in relation to the theme as well. Immediately after the service, people cued up to walk the labyrinth, which was laid out in another large room. Meditative music played on a stereo system while guests walked the labyrinth. Performer-perceivers included the following 4 guests.

Kalaya Rebecca	30-39	Chef	Christian	Associate's degree
Maria Rochelle	60-69	Retired Teacher	Jewish-Unitarian	Master's degree
Ozma Williams	40-49	Social Worker	Pagan-Unitarian	Bachelor's degree
Lindy Benjamin	50-59	Housewife	Unitarian	Bachelor's degree

Performance #5: Easter Walk framed another labyrinth walk. This performance event was held at a Methodist Church with an indoor canvas labyrinth. The event was held on Holy Saturday morning, which commemorates the traditional Christian belief of Jesus' death by crucifixion and His resurrection from the dead on Easter Sunday, the following day. The theme of the labyrinth walk was prayer. Donning my habit as St. Teresa of Avilla, I performed on the labyrinth a teaching on contemplative prayer that includes seven progressive "mansions" or levels of growth based on St. Teresa's writings. The audience participated in the performance in that they joined Teresa praying sacred text from her writings printed in the program. Although it was daylight, candles surrounded the indoor canvass labyrinth. After the labyrinth walk, the performer-perceivers visited St. Teresa in an adjoining room to ask her questions about Christian mysticism. This performance was improvisational. As St. Teresa, I responded to their questions in the first person. Performer-perceivers included the following 3 guests.

Ann Berkeley	60-69	Retired State Worker	Methodist	Associate's degree
Annabelle Webb	30-39	House-sitter	Methodist	Secondary Education degree
Vangi East	60-69	Retired Accountant	Methodist	Associate's degree

Performance # 6: Night Journey framed another labyrinth walk at the outdoor labyrinth. 112 luminarias surrounded the labyrinth. Participants were given programs including the guidelines to walking the labyrinth. Medieval music played from a boom box in the field. A bushel of candles was at the entrance of the labyrinth. As each performer-perceiver approached the entrance, he or she lit a candle with my assistance and at intervals, I gestured each one into the labyrinth. Performer-perceivers included the following 4 guests.

Callie Bailey	20-29	Marketing Coordinator	Catholic	Bachelor's degree
Heidi Wilson	30-39	Mother	Unitarian	Bachelor's degree
Schuyler Williams	30-39	Chef	Christian	Associate's degree
Sylvia Sparrow	20-29	Chef	No religious Affiliation	Associate's degree

Performance # 7: Retreat Walk framed the last labyrinth walk. This performance was held in a Unitarian church on a Saturday morning using an indoor canvass labyrinth. The group first gathered in a separate room from the labyrinth. Another labyrinth facilitator and I gave an overview of the Chartres labyrinth and the seven-circuit labyrinth. We had both labyrinths available to

walk. Before the ritual, each member of the group shared a personal need, such as freedom from worry. Because one woman was allergic to candles, we did not surround the labyrinths with any candles. Meditative music played on a stereo system. Each time a performer-perceiver entered or exited the medieval labyrinth, we rang a soft bell. In the center of the medieval labyrinth, we placed a basket of affirmations. Performer-perceivers included the following 4 guests.

Davenol Groves	50-59	Retired English teacher	Unitarian	Master's degree
Olivia Rivers	50-59	Humanities	Pagan-Unitarian	Doctoral degree
Janis Brooks	60-69	Financial Planner	Unitarian	Master's degree
Barbara Autumn	50-59	Teacher	Wiccan	Bachelor's degree

Pre-Data Analysis: A Personal Memory

In one of my acting classes during my work toward a Master of Fine Arts in Acting, an acting teacher was reprimanding an actor for being “nice” on stage. I remember the shocked and forlorn look on the actor’s face as the acting teacher shouted, “You are too nice on stage. No one in the audience wants to watch *nice*. They came to the theatre for an *experience*. Otherwise, they are going to wish they spent their \$65 on a new hat.” Although the atmosphere was tense, I must admit that I did chuckle at the thought of the audience leaving and buying new hats, but I quickly settled down to ponder the teacher’s declaration and apply it to my own growth as an actor.

As the teacher worked for a long time with the actor, times when various acting teachers sternly coached me resurfaced in my mind. One teacher shouted, “I just want to know what you are *feeling*. I don’t care where you get the feelings. Just get them.” Another acting teacher admonished, “You are stuck in your emotions. What is it you want? Your super-objective is your *intention*. Live it.” “You are acting from your neck up,” proclaimed another teacher. “Your *body* must be in unity with your emotions, breath and intention. Let your body tell the story.” Another teacher urgently advised, “You must play opposites. Drama is *conflict*. I see no conflict.” After performing a scene, another acting teacher held his head in his hands as he complained, “You are playing emotions and not following-through with the *action*.” Likewise, another exasperated teacher warned, “You must act moment to moment. You are anticipating what is ahead. You must be as vulnerable as a drunk who doesn’t know what is going to happen from one second to the next.” Another memory of painful feedback came to mind when a teacher firmly said, “Do you have any emotional memory to make your *sensory* perceptions ring true?” The most brutal blow came the time when a teacher matter-of-factly responded, “You performed dissipated energy. *Acting* is *doing*. You simply haven’t figured out what you are doing on stage.”

As I sat in the class pondering my own growth as an actor, I was thinking how difficult it is to teach and perform human experience. Sitting in my graduate acting class pondering these previous lessons, I vowed to create experience on

stage as a *fusion* of my mind, will, emotions, internal organs, outer body, energy, breath, heart and soul while encountering outer forces, circumstances, contexts, and other characters. I committed my time to rehearsing and mastering every dimension of experience that I could apprehend. In time, I received the feedback for which I had been working so hard. One teacher said, “You are acting in *flow* now living moment to moment effortlessly.”

Open Coding

As I begin *open coding* -- searching the entire text until all 32 interviews had been reviewed for descriptive categories -- I once again struggle with the paradox of dissecting experience. Approaching my research as a performer, I discover emerging from the text those elements of experience I had worked so hard to master: *feelings, intention, states-of-being, emotional memory, the body, the senses, conflict, action, the breath* and interaction with the *given circumstances, such as time, place, setting, inanimate objects, other life forms, situations, and relationships with other people*. I refine these elements into categories by seeking examples of them until there is no new information or meaning. This process helps me meet the challenges of grounded theory’s inductive approach by focusing on what is in the data rather than on theories suggested in my preliminary study. I conclude that I would balance such induction with deduction when it came time to interpret the data organized by grounded theory’s methodology.

The labyrinth subjects are the performers, the *doers* of the action—walking the three-fold path of the labyrinth. I approach them during the interviews as acting teachers or directors so often approached me asking, “What was your experience?” I navigate my subjects’ responses with questions about the elements of experience as I had learned them.

According to the “constant comparative method” of Glaser and Strauss (1967), I constantly compare the texts of interviews to verify and refine each category by seeking examples until the interview texts show no more categories. During the process of *categorizing*, I discovered a similarity in meaning. Feelings, emotional states, the body, the intellect, spirituality change from one phase of the ritual to a second phase then a third phase mirroring the three-fold path of the labyrinth. I utilize another coding operation that constitutes what I call the *content* of the subjects’ experiences. The content includes thoughts or beliefs *about* the labyrinth as expressed in the interview.

To discover categories, I build an integrative framework around which my analysis could develop ultimately leading to an answer to my original research question and to a labyrinth performance theory. Adhering to advice from Strauss and Corbin, I do not quickly assign categories nor do I label text as conditions, strategies, interactions, or consequences. Rather, after reading the open coding many times, I asked the following question to build my axial coding. What is the

essential performance element in the subjects' spiritual experiences? The answer is *change* in body, emotion, thinking, doing, and/or acting upon.

Dey states, "Glaser suggests we consider a range of theoretical options of which the proposed paradigm is only one." (p. 107) Sensitive to "the myriad of implicit integrative possibilities in the data" (Glaser, 1978, p. 73), Dey adapts from Glaser's coding families, a range of theoretical codes that vary but are not meant to be mutually exclusive from which the analyst can draw theoretical perspectives. Dey includes the following inset box.

TABLE 2. Glaser's Coding Families

<i>Family</i>	<i>Examples</i>
<i>Six C's</i>	Causes, contexts, contingencies, consequences, covariances, and conditions
<i>Process</i>	Stages, phases, progressions, etc.
<i>Degree</i>	Limit, range, intensity, etc.
<i>Dimension</i>	Elements, divisions, properties, etc.
<i>Type</i>	Elements, divisions, properties, etc.
<i>Strategy</i>	Type, form, kinds, styles, classes, etc.
<i>Interactive</i>	Mutual effects, reciprocity, mutual trajectory, etc.
<i>Identity-Self</i>	Self-image, self-concept, self-worth, etc.
<i>Cutting Point</i>	Boundary, critical juncture, turning point, etc.
<i>Means-Goals</i>	End, purpose, goal, etc.
<i>Cultural</i>	Norms, values, beliefs, etc.
<i>Consensus</i>	Clusters, agreements, contracts, etc.
<i>Mainline</i>	Social control, recruitment, socialization, etc.
<i>Theoretical</i>	Parsimony, scope, integration, etc.
<i>Ordering or Elaboration</i>	Structural, temporal, conceptual
<i>Unit</i>	Collective, group, nation, etc.
<i>Reading</i>	Concepts, problems, & hypotheses
<i>Models</i>	Linear, spatial, etc.

Source: Adapted from Glaser (1978, p. 81).

(Dey p. 107)

I use the different types of codes that Glaser presents as conceptual tools. Finally, I assign Glaser's coding family, *Process*, as my "core category." Glaser (1978, p. 93) asserts, "...the generation of theory occurs around a core category." Dey (p. 109) confirms the primacy of a core category.

The primacy of a core category is justified in terms of both ends and means. In terms of ends, the goal of grounded theory is "to generate a theory that accounts for a pattern of behavior.... The aim of producing a grounded theory that is relevant and workable to practitioners requires conceptual delimitation. The focus on a core category provides a means of achieving this by ensuring "relevancy and workability" (Glaser, 1978, p. 93).

Axial Coding

After organizing the subjects' spiritual experiences as *process* occurring in three stages, I developed an *axial coding* for the data – assessing the data for how categories and subcategories relate to each other. Strauss and Corbin (1998, p. 124) state, "The *purpose* of *axial coding* is to begin the process of reassembling data that were fractured during open coding." In assigning my core category as *process*, I could account for the essential performance element of the subjects' spiritual experiences discovered during open coding—change in body, emotion, thinking, doing, and/or acting upon. Next, I developed the categories: stage one, stage two, and stage three as the *process* of change.

I then follow Strauss and Corbin's suggestion of "...an in-depth examination of and incorporation of changed action/interaction into analysis, as this varies over time in response to changes in condition." (1990, p.147) I search

for conditions or circumstances influencing the subjects' interaction within the three-fold labyrinth path, which at this point, I label *structure*. Strauss and Corbin define *structure* and *process*.

Structure: The conditional context in which a category (phenomenon) is situated

Process: Sequences of action/interaction pertaining to a phenomenon as they evolve over time (p. 123)

By combining *structure* with *process*, I code subcategories according to their properties or dimensions in relation to the phenomena of the participant's progression through the three separate stages. Strauss and Corbin state, "In looking for phenomena, we are looking for **repeated patterns of happenings, events, or actions/interactions that represent what people do or say, alone or together, in response to the problems and situations in which they find themselves.**" (1998, p. 130 bold in original text) Strauss and Corbin explain their approach to coding for stages.

What is important to us is that process be related to structure, that is, the alignment of actions/interactions to conditions, how these change from one stage to another, variations within a phase, and how the outcomes of one set of actions/interactions feed back into the context to become part of the conditions influencing the next set of actions/interactions. (1998, p. 169)

To look for explanations and gain an understanding of phenomena, I analyze: (1) both why and how causes and conditions fuse into an interactional response of change walking to the center of the labyrinth; (2) the consequences that result from that change in or near the center of the labyrinth; and (3) how the

consequences become the conditions for a particular result leaving the center of the labyrinth. I then conceptualize *change* as a progressive movement having a result of either *transport* (temporary change) or *transformation* (permanent change). (Schechner 1985: 125-126)

The consequences become the means or condition by which the participant arrive at a goal, end, or new beginning. Strauss and Corbin explain that context is not a simple language of cause and effect; rather, a context is a set(s) "...of conditions that come together to produce a specific situation...that explains what is going on." (Strauss and Corbin, 1998, p. 130) In accordance with Strauss and Corbin, I purposefully look "...at action/interaction and note movement, sequence, and change as well as how it evolves (changes or remains the same) in response to changes in context or conditions." (1998, 167)

In an attempt to explain *change*, I build a coding paradigm to account for: (1) causes and conditions, which answer to the questions *why, where, how come, when*; (2) actions/interactions, which are represented by the questions *by whom, how*; (3) consequences, which are represented by questions as to *what happens as a result* of those actions/interactions or "the failure of persons or groups to respond to situations by actions/interactions, which constitutes an important finding in and of itself" (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 128); and (4) results from the consequences. I describe components of the coding paradigm through the following definitions.

Descriptions of Coding Paradigm Components for the Central Core

Category: Process

- Process: “sequences of evolving action/interaction, changes in which can be traced to changes in structural conditions.” (Straus & Corbin, 1998: 169)
- Agency: (1) performer-perceivers—whose needs must be as a condition for any kind of change in any area of life; (2) actors—who invest in labyrinth ritual roles and identities such as a musician or singer; (3) agents—who collectively share the labyrinth ritual and influence stability or change simply by being there such as a facilitator, (Adapted from M.S. Archer, 1995, pp. 118-119) and (4) Spirit—to whom a person attributes phenomena.
- Conditions: “sets of events or happenings that create the situations, issues, and problems pertaining to a phenomenon and, to a certain extent, explain why and how persons or groups respond in certain ways.” (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 130) Conditions answer the questions why, where, how come, and when. “These together form the structure, or set of circumstances or situations, in which phenomena are embedded.” (p. 128)
- Causal conditions: “sets of events or happenings that influence phenomena.” (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p.131)
- Intervening conditions: sets of events or happenings that mitigate or otherwise alter the impact of causal conditions on phenomena. (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p.131)
- Contextual conditions: sets of events or happenings that have their source in causal (and intervening) conditions and are the product of how they crosscut to combine into various patterns dimensionally. (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p.132)
- Actions/interactions: strategic or routine responses made by individuals or groups to issues, problems, happenings, or events that arise under causal, intervening, or contextual conditions. (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p.128)

- Strategic actions/interactions: “purposeful or deliberate acts that are taken to resolve a problem and in so doing shape the phenomenon in some way.” (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p.133)
- Routine actions/interactions: acts that are taken to resolve a problem tending to more habituated ways of responding to occurrences in everyday life. (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p.133)
- Consequences: “outcomes or results of action and interaction.” (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 106)
- Stage 1: causes & conditions and action & interaction fuse into responses.
- Stage 2: consequences that result from the responses.
- Stage 3: how the consequences become the condition for a result.
- Result: what finally happens.
- Content: thoughts about the labyrinth, participation, and experience.
- Context: given circumstances or properties & dimensions of a performance event (time, place, setting, structural factors, and agency factors).
- Transport: phenomena as temporary change within the labyrinth ritual.
- Transformation: phenomena as permanent defined as change beyond the labyrinth ritual.
- In Vivo Codes: words from the respondents themselves. (Glaser & Strauss, 1967)

For each of the seven performances, I next create axial coding charts for all interviewees based on the above components. In so doing, I establish and validate the stages of the labyrinth ritual by coding all interviews for *process*.

The following chart is a demonstration of axial coding comparing three interviewees.

**TABLE 3. Demonstration of Comparative Findings
for Core Category Process**

PROCESS (Core Category)	Annabelle #23 “Easter Walk”	Phred #12 “Summer Solstice”	Lindy #20 “Sacred Path”
Pre-ritual Expectations & state-of-being	Open-mind, excited, No expectations Relaxed, prayerful, open-minded because she had just finished a devotional to God about creating a clean heart in her.	She was stressed from working the week. She felt fatigued, “but excited because I knew I would feel differently after I walked the labyrinth.” [14-17]	No expectations [5] Melancholic [11] Grieving [11]
Stage 1 Cause(s) & Condition(s) <i>(why, where, how come, when)</i> + Action(s)/Interaction(s) <i>(by whom, how)</i> =Response (s)	“When I first stepped into the labyrinth, I was no longer in the building that we were in.” [20-21] Aware that she was “literally transferred” from one place to another. And it was a completely different world like I could have been walking in a garden.” [20-24] Walks very slowly and prays. [24] Responds thanking God for all the good things in her life. [27-28] Keeps walking and “...events, circumstances, images came up.” [61] Remembers suddenly her grandfather who died. Sees him in the coffin after 4 years of not seeing him. Feels very sad but relives fun times with him. [61-72]	She left her negativity out before she went into the labyrinth. Aware that she is anticipating something to happen and not paying attention to the moment. [18- 27] Aware of the weeds in the rocks thinking how nice they were. Keeps a non-hurried pace even though people are behind her. Keeps wondering where she is as she walks. [94-99] Seeks to focus on going “inwards physically and spiritually.” Avoids paying attention to anyone else. [122-124]	Grieves dad’s death. [11] Grieves children going to college [11-12] Stresses over marital problem & husband’s stressful job. [13-14] Aware of all the blessings she has & wonderful marriage [15] Steps into the labyrinth into another world “...a place that’s just you. You can’t do anything wrong. Real world is out there where people make judgments.” [30-32] Walks surprisingly slowly but her mind is racing. [21-22] Responds to facilitator’s question to group “What do you seek?” [34-35] Seeks to let go. [35-36]

	<p>Responds to vision of him knowing that "...he had walked through that gate...was home...and reunited with his family. It was amazing." [91-95]</p> <p>Keeps walking which opened "...windows, no, avenues, no, paths of burdens that I really needed help with and that's what I was doing—longing and searching. I suffer terrible depression. I was feeling depressed." [104-108]</p> <p>Becomes aware that she had been sealing up a thick layer of an unresolved issue instead of dealing with it. "Walking the labyrinth opened that up..." [108-112]</p>		<p>Tries to empty mind & release thoughts. [34-35]</p> <p>Responds to almost physical vision of son's face. [36]</p> <p>Tries to accept his growing up. [36-37]</p> <p>Walks close to center and realizes she must let go of the block to passion with her husband. [41-46]</p> <p>Relives how she and her husband used to be a couple but they are not anymore. [54]</p> <p>Keeps walking to center reliving all the family has done together. [61-62]</p> <p>Attempts to "cut apron strings—hanging on to the past. loved being 'a stay at home mom.'" [62-63, 67-68]</p> <p>Thinks of a good family project to continue making good memories. [63-64]</p>
<p>Stage 2 Response (s) bring about Consequence (s) <i>(What happens)</i></p>	<p>Accepts seeing her pain because she "...could see what I needed to do."</p> <p>Chooses to be thankful for everything past and future. [121-122]</p> <p>"When I got to the center, it was kind of a like peace. I didn't stay there very long." [28-29] "...that peace was like fresh air coming through the windows." [123-124]</p> <p>Judges what she learned was that she is worthy. "To think I have lived so long</p>	<p>Calls in the four directions when gets to the center to create a place of safety and I saw that light criss-crossed at the top like a dome." [209-211]</p> <p>Sees secondary phenomena. "I loved the outline of the candles because what it did was to help focus this light I saw more because the light was going up in a lazy swirl around and criss-crossed around the top. It was a protective dome." [108-112]</p> <p>Accepts that what is happening in the labyrinth would be for the good and "I could trust what was happening in there."</p>	<p>Walking into the center, "I felt like I was floating. I was amazed. In the center, I felt like Jell-O. Usually, I'm aware of how tight my jaw is. I felt like I was drunk." [91-100]</p> <p>Walks into the center pleading for something out there to take her in. "It was please come in." [73-74]</p> <p>Receives sudden vision of her dead mother who says "hi." [74-75]</p> <p>Responds with gladness</p>

	<p>without knowing that. But now I think for whatever reason that was God's purpose for me to find out...that I'm worthy. Now I know what it means to be dressed in the full armor of God." [135-140]</p>	<p>[112-113]</p> <p>Accepts the darkness of the night with the light from the candles as a way to safety because she connected to her Catholic childhood. "The candles & community made me connect to Our Lady of Fatima, the Blessed Mother. I connected with the mystery of all the people and how that all the time and the space/time continuum...well I thought somebody is doing this for me. Night candles stimulated all this." [161-167]</p> <p>Chooses to observe in the center. [124]</p> <p>She felt a burden lifted related to her busy commitments.</p> <p>Adopts trust. "That I wasn't going to carry that burden alone that people would come." [147-148] She is planning to create a labyrinth at her church and has been overwhelmed at all the resources and help needed.</p>	<p>and crying to the vision because mom was so wonderful. [109-112]</p> <p>Accepts that she needs a female deity because patriarchal church damaged her. [107-109]</p> <p>Receives vision of her husband when mother's face leaves and asserts she wants to "...journey with him." [75-76]</p> <p>Selects a message from a basket the facilitator created for the walkers.</p> <p>Accepts the message she picked that read "You will find relief."</p> <p>Accepts relief from "...fear, sorrow, grief, my headache, tension—relief from all the shoulders, relief from anger." [79-82]</p> <p>Submits to letting go and feels peaceful. "The center was great peace." [102]</p>
<p>Stage 3 Consequence (s) + Contextual Conditions =Result</p>	<p>Walks slowly out of the center and responds singing praise hymns "...without even thinking. "I was able to go through all that sadness and let go and then give God thanks for everything and then I was at peace and I left with joy." [29-33]</p> <p>Receives vision of walking a garden sensing the presence of God and knowing that it is within her. [38-48]</p>	<p>Attempts to read people's faces on the way out. "Generally speaking, there were people who looked sad, some were having a good time, some looked lost, and some were looking at me. I passed people but that was just part of walking the labyrinth." [115-122]</p> <p>Adopts a keen observance on the way out. "Going out of the center I was noticing more and more and going out of the labyrinth, I turned around. I was like, wow, look at that slow moving clock." [125-126] Heard a distinct voice when she left the labyrinth which said, "Wait a minute. Stop. Turn around." [140-141]</p>	<p>Characterizes her walk out as a transcendent experience.</p> <p>"Whatever I was thinking or feeling was OK. I was accepted and carried. I don't have to carry my burdens alone." [137-138]</p>

		<p>Dismissed the four directions and sat down on the grass.</p> <p>Investigates the balance that was happening on the way out when she was out of the labyrinth.</p> <p>"I was out and looked at it. It became the clock cogs on the wheels of time on a clock. It would be easy to imagine 1,000 years ago. It didn't upset me. It was astounding. This is not what I expected. I wanted verbal inner clarity.... this clock image was a big surprise." [131-138]</p> <p>Judges that because "I was aware of the time thing I was thinking people have been doing this for thousands of years and I really have to trust the wisdom that I get."</p>	
Result	<p>"It was affirming. It set me on a new path. I knew that some things I was doing were correct and I knew that some things in my life needed to be changed so my life plans were revised from the labyrinth walk.... So, everything was settled. I knew what to do. [127-131]</p>	<p>Subscribes to that moment months after it happened.</p> <p>"I'm really earth-based in my spirituality and that connection to earth...I can bring that feeling back. When I'm stressed, when I'm taking time in my day, for a brief meditation, I can feel my body relaxed because I can visualize that moving clock of people, the feeling that I had and my feet are rooted in the earth visually. So for me that was a pretty powerful experience for me that's lasted for months now." [150-155]</p> <p>At work, I look at people working, I tend to see who they are and what they're doing in a more balanced way. It's allowed me to really observe things differently and not be judgmental.</p> <p>Promotes "The wisdom that I</p>	<p>Shares with her husband and they start a dialogue to heal their marriage. [56-59]</p>

<p>Post-ritual State-of-being</p>	<p>Crying with joy that she is worthy [135-136]</p> <p>Refreshing to listen to St. Teresa [177]</p> <p>Advocates labyrinth walking to be part of her spiritual practice. [142-144]</p>	<p>got from this was that you need to pay attention to what people are doing but you also need to observe balance because that's when you are going to know what to do next." [177-180]</p> <p>Balance instead of worry. [181] I don't have to be responsible for everything. [224]</p> <p>Safety like being a child at home [219];Calmer [200]</p> <p>Advocates labyrinth walking to be part of her spiritual practice. [229]</p>	<p>Peace. Safe. [88] "A little sad it was over. Like vacation blues." [127]</p> <p>Advocates labyrinth walking to be part of her spiritual practice. [134-135]</p>
<p>Content-Spiritual Experience</p>	<p>The performance of St. Teresa "...led us through prayers of surrender and that was my preparation...." [151-152]</p> <p>Promotes that because of these group prayers God was there and it became a very Spirit-filled place. "I mean the room was powerful."</p> <p>Declares she had a spiritual experience and that angels were there. [166]</p> <p>"I mean if you went back in time to that room and stripped off a layer to the spirit world, you would see it full of angels, you would know that heaven had come down there. I mean heaven was there with us." [166-169]</p>	<p>"The pageantry triggered my mind in a sway that it's never engaged. Safety of being home as a child. Trees, wind, crickets, candles, night, listen you are going somewhere. When I think about it now, I see the people robed. I don't know them. Now I think of them as people of deep spirituality of a 1,000 years ago. This is a true thing. Something I can trust. Balance, see truth and where my role is. The labyrinth is a walking meditation that allows you to be open to whatever it is...that you need to pay attention to." [231-232]</p>	<p>Judges she had a spiritual experience in the center. "Not so much in my head but the spirituality was physical. I was being carried."</p>
<p>Interview Assessment Transport (temporary change)</p>	<p><u>Transformation</u> (Self-affirmation—worthy of God's love; self-direction in life planning)</p>	<p><u>Transformation</u> (Self-trust and faith in others; self-balance)</p>	<p><u>Transformation</u> (Self-validation; liberation from psychological burdens)</p>

or Transformation (permanent change)			
--	--	--	--

The axial coding of all interviews as represented above allows me to generate questions for making constant and theoretical comparisons. Strauss and Corbin (1998, p. 136) state, “A category is considered *saturated* when no new information seems to emerge during coding, that is, when no new properties, dimensions, conditions, actions/interactions, or consequences are seen in the data.” I first examine the category of content in an attempt to determine if the respondents believe they had a spiritual experience.

Thirty-one out of *thirty-two* respondents claim they had a spiritual experience. Sylvia adamantly declared that she did not have a spiritual experience because she is “not spiritual.” For her, the labyrinth walk is merely for relaxation like a “cool down after a workout” and there is “no realization” of any kind. Consequently, I exclude any data acquired for Sylvia. Among the 31 spiritual experiences, 14 (45%) respondents have expectations before walking the labyrinth while 17 (55%) claim they have no expectations and/or are open-minded. Of the 14 having expectations, 50% expect a spiritual experience. Among the 31 respondents, 30 advocate making labyrinth walking a part of their spiritual practice. A slight variation exists because 2 respondents advocate making labyrinth walking a part of their “mental” practice rather than spiritual practice. Although claiming that she has a spiritual experience, one respondent

justifies not making labyrinth walking a part of her spiritual practice saying, “I grew up with no spiritual practice. It was scorned in my family.” [#18: 73-74]

Determining that temporary or permanent change is the *essential element of the labyrinth ritual*, I identify *process* as the core category as indicated by the stages in Table 3. I also analyze the properties of spiritual experience in order to find out what makes the subjects characterize their experiences as spiritual. In locating the *character of the spiritual experience*, 5 properties emerge from the data. The following table provides dimensions for each of the 5 properties.

TABLE 4. Properties and Dimensions of Spiritual Experience

Properties	Dimensions	Subject
Relating to the Divine	1. Meditatively walking towards center where God is.	#3
	2. Walking to her center and becoming centered in the arms of God.	#17
	3. Journeying to center for intimate & profound time with Jesus.	#24
	4. Praying to God for personal spiritual reflection.	#25
	5. Walking a prayer talking to God and thinking.	#5
	6. Walking a prayer trusting in God.	#7
	7. Inviting God to be there through prayer and surrendering to His presence.	#23
	8. Hearing the Holy Spirit.	#14
	9. Being physically jolted by the Holy Spirit.	#14
	10. Being physically carried.	#20
	11. Becoming one with Essence, Life-force, and God.	#29
	12. Co-creating transformation with Divine Goddess and inner Self.	#21
	13. Connecting to the earth which is sacred.	#4, #9, #13
	14. Receiving Divine intervention.	#32
Finding Self	1. Listening to my own inner knowing.	#4
	2. Walking a meditation of my inner self.	#11
	3. Drawing me to go within.	#15
	4. Leaving the world's reality to be lost in myself.	#16
	5. Realizing self-discovery is inside you.	#25

	6. Finding my spiritual self symbolic of journeying to the labyrinth center. 7. Getting to the center to get centered for self-insight, self-discovery, transcendence. 8. Centering for my own spiritual journey in the labyrinth where there is no judgment.	#2 #19 #32
Walking in Sacred Space	1. Walking in a sacred site set apart for meditation. 2. Walking in a sacred space. 3. Being in a sacred space in which you are the the movement—opening, letting go, receiving. 4. Walking in sacred space because you feel other energy forms. 5. Walking is sacred like the sacred history of others walking. 6. Trusting sacred history of others walking the same path.	#10 #25 #9 #3 #24 #12
Gaining Meaning	1. Experience spiritual as intense meaning. 2. Experience spiritual as intellectual meaning. 3. Experience comes from something spiritual in the mind. Mind and spirit are one.	#31 #6 #30
Creating Intention	1. Experience was spiritual because of my intention for it to be spiritual. 2. Labyrinth is sacred because of intention so the experience is spiritual.	#1 #7

While categorizing for spiritual experience, I note two subcategories of spiritual experience.—liminality and secondary phenomena. Limen, space, time, and body emerge as the properties of liminality. Limen is the point of entrance to the labyrinth. Table 5 illustrates the properties and dimensions of liminality.

TABLE 5. Properties and Dimensions of Liminality

Properties	Dimensions	Subject
Limen	"...like going through a door." "... a sensation of stepping through a doorway, archway or portal." "... like walking through an archway....like a rite of passage like crossing a bridge and you're entering—crossing." "I feel I'm going through a door."	#6:69 #7:24-25 #10:35-38 #13:40

	<p>“The labyrinth is a gateway. I’d describe it as a doorway and once you walk through that door, the rest is up to you.”</p> <p>“...sensation of passing like I was in an ancient place.”</p>	<p>#16:227, 243</p> <p>#18:34-35</p>
Space	<p>“When you step inside the circle, you leave the world. You are between two worlds.”</p> <p>“I was no longer in the building we were in....it was a completely different world....”</p> <p>“Quality between the worlds.”</p> <p>“I felt I was between two worlds.”</p> <p>“You are between two worlds.”</p> <p>“I didn’t think time and space existed in there.”</p> <p>“I was completely in an altered state. I wasn’t aware of anyone else.”</p> <p>“Everything was connected.”</p> <p>“Entering a space. A very sacred or revered space. It’s protected, enveloped, it’s a sanctuary....being in a suspended space.”</p> <p>“It felt like an invisible line...like walls, safety, everything around you, no one can get you—because it’s all closed in even though in reality they can because it’s just an open space.”</p> <p>“I entered a sacred space. A place without time or barriers or walls, a very special place.”</p> <p>“...a powerful Spirit-filled place.”</p> <p>“You step over and into a place that’s just you. Like stepping into another world.”</p> <p>“It’s a step into.”</p> <p>“I was crossing into a new experience, another realm.”</p>	<p>#11:135-136</p> <p>#23:20-23</p> <p>#7:40</p> <p>#17:43</p> <p>#32:92</p> <p>#16:123-124</p> <p>#25:186</p> <p>#17:139</p> <p>#27:25-28</p> <p>#28: 91-94</p> <p>#32:38-39</p> <p>#23:164</p> <p>#20:30-32</p> <p>#24:57</p> <p>#30: 97-98</p>
Time	<p>“It was like I put in a whole day.”</p> <p>“Sort of like the world stopped for a short period of time.”</p> <p>“Time sort of stands still. You are in this gap, this cocoon.”</p> <p>“Time stands still. It could have been 2 hours I was in there. You don’t have to worry about time.”</p> <p>“...time out, time could have been any time... time goes away....”</p> <p>“Time and space are outside somewhere. Inside they didn’t matter.”</p> <p>“It was this automatic slowing. Time almost stopped. It was just in another zone.”</p> <p>“I wasn’t aware of time.”</p>	<p>#8:315</p> <p>#32:93</p> <p>#6:67</p> <p>#9:170-171</p> <p>#7:42</p> <p>#16:125</p> <p>#17:51-53, 171</p> <p>#24:60</p>
Body	<p>“I felt zoned.”</p> <p>“I felt lighter on the way out.”</p> <p>“...when I reached the center and out, my pace was slower and more relaxed.”</p> <p>“It’s heavy walking in and lighter walking out.”</p> <p>“I didn’t even feel my body. It’s like I was walking but I didn’t feel like I was walking.”</p>	<p>#3:92</p> <p>#2:90</p> <p>#7:90-91</p> <p>#13:70</p> <p>#16:70-71</p>

	<p>"I floated. No sense of walking."</p> <p>"A gentle tingling starts to flow from the top of my head, then behind my eyes. I feel my face relaxing. The sensation goes to under my chin and down my neck. My whole body, from the shoulders down, relax as the warm sensation travels down my back."</p> <p>"My body starts to become less. I start to feel light.... I felt things dropping away. I felt loftiness....your body is starting to surface at a different place not in the earth world."</p> <p>"By the time I left the labyrinth, the knots in my neck were gone and the pain was gone."</p> <p>"I was in physical pain, bronchitis, back problems, and arthritis but I was not in pain when I was walking."</p> <p>"I feel spiraling inward in my whole body. I go into a non-verbal state. I'm walking the spiral into my heart."</p> <p>"I felt like I was floating. I wasn't in my body. There was no effort. In the center, I felt like Jell-O."</p>	<p>#17:152</p> <p>#17:263-266</p> <p>#25:41, 63-66, 81-82</p> <p>#3:46-48</p> <p>#18:23-24</p> <p>#13:47-49</p> <p>#20:91-93</p>
--	--	--

The second subcategory to emerge while categorizing for spiritual experience was secondary phenomena. Secondary phenomena are extraordinary happenings that may or may not be linked to the phenomena of processual change. Properties that emerge in this subcategory are seeing, feeling, smelling, and hearing. Table 6 illustrates the properties and dimensions of secondary phenomena.

TABLE 6. Properties and Dimensions of Secondary Phenomena

Property	Dimensions	Subject
Seeing	"People had an aura around them."	#10:130-131
	"...this light I saw was going up in a lazy swirl around and criss-crossed around the top. It was a protective dome."	#12:109-112
	"There was almost this pearlesque light that lit up the labyrinth...It was emanating from the labyrinth."	#21:49-51
	"I saw smoke. It was like clouds....wasn't misty, not dense, but opaque."	#25:183-189
	"I saw smoke when I was going in and going out. It extended quite a ways around. It reached down to the floor and up. It was thinner higher up."	#30:29-35
	"I did see auras around people in the center—around them."	#27:85-92

	It starts out as white light and then different people will radiate out the light. It extends out different distances then it becomes the color indigo, then purple. It was just beautiful to see all the auras.”	
Feeling	“I was kind of walking through a field of resistance. It was almost palpable.” “I can feel my own aura only a couple of times. It was much further reaching than when I went in.” “It feels like I’m living under water...like going down into a well—narrow and Goddesses are there. It definitely feels cleansing.” “When I walked through the center and felt a breeze, it was a jolt. There was a sense of touch. I felt pulled—pushed in—simultaneous jolt and it gave me goose-bumps.” “It was just like an infilling of love in the center.” “I felt something physical. It suddenly came to me as I approached the center.”	#21:12-13 #27:96-100 #11:105-110 #14:147-151 #24:39 #20:39-41
Smelling	“I’ve just gotten back with an ex-boyfriend...and along comes a breeze with his scent. He wears a combination of different essential oils and it was just like a sign for me this is where I need to be going right now.” “...moving through the dark following the scent of water in the center.”	#2:82, 32-35 #13:120-121
Hearing	“I think I distinctly heard, ‘Wait a minute. Stop. Turn around.’ Then I saw the labyrinth as a visual clock—a moving clock of people.” “Be happy. Find inner peace.” “I will comfort you. I will always be there for you. I will be your shelter.” “I am here. I am with you.”	#12:140, 154, 126-134 #14: 62-64 #3: 109-113 #22: 80-81

Comparing dimensions for the properties of pre-ritual states-of-being with post-ritual states-of-being provides evidence of positive change as a result of spiritual experience. Table 7 presents dimensions of positive change.

TABLE 7. Dimensions of Pre-ritual to Post-ritual States-of-being

Subject	Dimensions Pre-ritual	Dimensions Post-ritual
#3 #5	Nervous Nervous	Peaceful, calm, thankful to God At ease with self-growth

#8	Nervous	Relief
#26	Anxious	More relaxed, ease, peace
#30	Agitated	Lighter in body
#19	Frustrated	Amazed, thankful to Higher Power
#9 #11 #12 #14 #21 #22 #25	Stressed Stressed Stressed Stressed Stressed Stressed Stressed	Relief Sobered Safe, calm Empowered Complete Wonderful, relief, refreshed Calming
#31 #32	Low Down	Great sense of peace Wowed
#20	Grieving	Peace, sage
#7	Sense of unknowing	More relaxed
#17	Self-conscious, doubt	Calmness, peace
#18	Physical pain	Feeling very good
#24	Dying from cancer	Uplifted
#2	Needing to work through things	Connected, loving
#6 #13	Meditative Meditative	Relief Lighter
#23	Prayerful	Crying with joy
#4 #10 #27 #16	Expectant, general excitement Expectant, excited Expectant, excited Expectant to find something	Profound, self-acceptance, thankful Connectedness, peace, security Welcomed, acceptance Self-knowledge
#15	Relaxed	Fulfilled
#1	Curious	Heightened loving and heightened perception of beauty
#29	Tense	Disappointed

To summarize, twenty-one out of thirty-one respondents, 68%, report they were in a negative state-of-being before the ritual. The three respondents who are meditative or prayerful change to a more positive state because they receive an answer to their quests. The 6 respondents who are not in a negative state but are expectant, relaxed, or curious also change to a more positive state of fulfillment. Only one of the twenty-one respondents does not change to a positive state-of-being after the ritual; rather Subject #29 becomes “disappointed.” Considering Davenol Groves’ #29 experience as a variation, I explore what happens to account for it.

Early in his walk, Davenol sees smoke. Davenol reports, “But I just walked on. Logic couldn’t explain it. It was whitish grey and thinnish. There wasn’t any visual movement. It was like a haze. [47-49] Davenol does not have an interpretation of the haze. Having assumed the haze is in his head, he is surprised when Barbara #32 announces to the community after Davenol mentions the haze that she also saw the smoke near the same location on the labyrinth. Davenol does not allow the intervening condition of the haze to affect him and keeps walking. Approaching the center, he relaxes.

I had been tense in my back, shoulders, jaw, lower part of my head. [63-66] Maybe it is a letting go. You’re walking. You can’t choose which way to go because there’s only one way to go. Turning around isn’t an option..... So what do have left? Your feelings, your intentions. It’s like letting go of stuff that clutters up one’s life.... There’s nothing to do but relax like the metaphor lifting weight off your shoulders and lighter. [64-78]

Balancing along the rows of the labyrinth path interferes with Davenol's relaxation. However, like the smoke, he does not interpret anything from the relaxation or lack of balancing. What Davenol makes relevant is the design of the labyrinth. Internalizing the quadrants of the labyrinth, Davenol says, "I felt like I was going from one quarter of my life to the next." [90-93] Davenol likens walking through the quadrants as a metaphor for his life.

My early midlife, I'm actually carrying a lot of baggage from my childhood, but I'm also carrying with me characteristics and projections of my later middle life and I have effects of decisions I made earlier, the feelings that I have, the baggage I haven't let go. It felt like that. [94-99]

Connecting the twists and turns of the labyrinth to feelings that accompanied changes during his lifetime, Davenol values the feelings. "Feelings represent the changes in my life. It was like stripping off the stuff and getting to the feelings. I'm hoping for more of that as I go through labyrinths." [115-117] Claiming that it is difficult for him to feel or accept emotions from surfacing, Davenol says, "From a child, I learned to bury my emotions.... I'll probably work on this for the rest of my life." [134-136] However, Davenol feels like he is regressing when the path leads him through one quadrant onto another quadrant but leads him back to the previous one. Identifying the quadrants with regression, Davenol admits, "I didn't reach the center." [141-142]

I think there is the possibility of fear getting to the center. Fear, worry, anger from childhood crops up and I don't always know it.... That's why I lost my balance. I was always looking ahead and looking back—the regressing—I was so angry. [144-156]

When Davenol realizes that he is not going to reach the center, he turns around and walks back out of the labyrinth. “Exiting I felt disappointment that I was coming out instead of staying in. Not a sense of accomplishment. A sense of loss.” [168-170] Recognizing that his fear of being in the center also connects to his fear of being still in life. “I think my life will change when I can be still in the center.” [181] Evaluating walking the labyrinth as a spiritual experience, Davenol judges that his labyrinth journey connects to his own spiritual journey.

I see my spiritual journey as at-one-ness. Becoming one with essence, life-force, God and that means stripping away static and the labyrinth helps me do that by leaving it at the entrance, guiding me along the path as it makes ‘stuff’ irrelevant. As I grow more accustomed to it, it will help me get closer and be a check on how I’m doing when I leave stuff at the entrance and the extent at being comfortable in the center. All this is indicative of my spiritual journey. [194-200]

Although Davenol’s state-of-being at the end of the walk is disappointment, he remains hopeful that one day he will be able to rest and be still in the center. “If that happened to me, I would love it. The labyrinth will be taking my pulse.” [184-185] Because Barbara #32 experiences the same smoke during the same performance event, I reexamine her walk to find comparisons and contrasts.

Barbara and Davenol both see the smoke, a secondary phenomenon happening shortly after entering the labyrinth and both determine that there is no logical explanation for it. In addition, they both decide to ignore it, pass it, and continue walking the path. Davenol and Barbara both lose their balance turning

the corners of the path. Davenol fears the center because he will have to be still and accept who he discovers himself to be, who essence, life-force, or God may be, or how he must receive love and self-acceptance. However, to get to the center, Davenol must “regress” back to his childhood as he passes through the quadrants en route to the center. Although Davenol acknowledges that the labyrinth is a guide in “stripping” himself of “stuff” and “static” from negative life patterns, he allows fear and worry about confronting his childhood to keep him from entering the center so he turns around and exits the labyrinth without a sense of accomplishment only a sense of loss and disappointment.

Likewise, Barbara must face her negative life patterns that sabotage her happiness. Her childhood is manifested with the presence of a little boy walking ahead of her on the labyrinth. Barbara considers the little boy to be her guide and holds both admiration and fear of him. At first Barbara feels inadequate when she sees him because she considers the little boy to be spiritually ahead of her. She also feels inadequate because she did not start her spiritual path when she was a child. In addition to inadequacy, Barbara is afraid that she will somehow interfere with the little boy’s walk. “I was afraid that I would harm his path that he couldn’t get past me.” [79-80] However, Barbara holds onto her admiration of him because she is learning from him. “It was very powerful like he knew what he was doing.” [50-61] Consequently, Barbara has a new childhood to literally focus on while Davenol remains stuck in his psyche’s replay of his old negative

childhood. For Barbara, the real boy instills courage in her and she keeps walking to center. For Davenol, the memory of himself as a boy causes fear to abound and he gives up walking to center.

Still, Barbara perceives making a mistake as she approaches the center. Firmly believing that she did not get to the center correctly, Barbara feels unwelcome in the center and leaves. "I was afraid that I wasn't doing it right and that's why I had the fear because I had been so conditioned that if I'm not doing something right then I have to get out or I'm not welcomed." [22-25] Feeling her pattern of rejection, Barbara somehow walks out of the labyrinth altogether when she leaves the center.

You know when I walked out of the labyrinth by mistake, I didn't realize I was out. What a metaphor that was! So then I put myself back in the path and I tried to cover up for my mistake, which is another thing in life we do. It's like in the world sometimes you get yourself in a mess and then you get out and you don't realize you're out and you put yourself right back in another mess.... I went all the way back to the center and all around again until I got out. And that's when I realized, out there, this is what I did in the past. It takes more time and energy and it's going to be boring because you don't have to go back....

I realized I did that in the past and I realized it on the spot. That's what I like about the labyrinth. There was no delay, maybe seconds, but I didn't have to go through six months of processing. The processing is immediate on the labyrinth. I just didn't know I had gotten out. I didn't realize it. And that's what I did in the other world, outside the labyrinth. I would get into somebody else's path. I would walk right back in it or the mess that was going on because I hadn't realized that I was already out that I had walked out. Now I can realize so fast that it's scary. In fact yesterday I had a similar experience and I caught it immediately and walked out and stayed out and it was lucky.

Because Barbara perseveres through her life-long condition of negative self-judgment and shame, she is finally free from making poor judgments that leave her vulnerable to the power of others. “I will always know that when I’m out, now, I don’t have to go back to ignorance.” [138] Moreover, she finally experiences self-love. “Yes, yes, I do love myself....I was able to find myself.... Now I get to have what’s real....All the clutter that was in my life before I entered the labyrinth blocks reality at times like a polluted lake.... The other stuff wasn’t me.... I get to see that pure blue and white lake and it has dignity.” [113, 107-117] Especially since Barbara is able to make an application of her labyrinth lessons to her real life by getting out of a harmful situation, the result of Barbara’s spiritual experience is *transformation*—self-love, self-validation, self-protection, and freedom from judgment.

In contrast, Davenol remains bound unable to conquer his childhood fears although some “baggage” and “static” from his past is stripped away during his journey preparing him for the next time he walks the labyrinth. I characterize the result of Davenol’s spiritual experience as *transport*—self-awareness of childhood blocks but not ready to fully realize liberation from them.

During the axial coding, I am able to focus on the stages or core category of process. The following comparative memo demonstrates further investigation of the stages or progression of movement during the labyrinth ritual. I base the following memo from interviewees: Sally, Denah, and Paul. I separately discuss

Stages 1, 2, and 3 as the process of evolving action/interactions by tracing changes in the conditions or set of circumstances in which phenomena are embedded. Strauss and Corbin refer to conceptualizing the process as “personalizing.” In keeping with my research question—the phenomena of spiritual experience while performing the labyrinth ritual, the interviewee is personalizing his or her spiritual experience. (Straus and Corbin: 1998, 173)

Storyline Memo

Stage 1 Sequence

Cause(s) & Condition(s) (*why, where, how come, when*)
+ Action(s)/Interaction(s) (*by whom, how*) = Response(s)

(*Bolding identifies potential categories, properties, and dimensions.*)

Sally, Denah, and Paul characterize their labyrinth walks as spiritual experiences. While Sally attributes her **spiritual experience** to “**being touched by the Holy Spirit**” [159] in the Catholic tradition, heightened by a **secondary phenomenon of being pushed into the labyrinth’s center by the Spirit’s force**, Denah judges that her experience was **spiritual because of self-discernment for her life choices** “spiritual for me, not so much about God, but about the path, my path that I am on” [253-254]. Claiming that the labyrinth is a **sacred space**, Paul evaluates his walk as “**a profound insightful meditative spiritual experience**” [174-175] because he **spiritually, emotionally, and physically connected himself to the earth, universe, and community**.

Causal conditions consisted of ongoing situations of **family intimidation, independence from parents in career choice, and divorce**: (1) Sally's upcoming visit to her in-laws where she has been intimidated by her mother-in-law for years; (2) Denah's decision to leave or stay in college and to gain independence from her family; and (3) Paul's living in emotional turmoil for two years because of his divorce. In **Stage 1**, process was related to structure in the alignment of their actions/interactions to the following **contextual conditions: the limen or entrance of the labyrinth, the hand-held candle, an outer edge luminaria, the labyrinth path, the rocks, the twists & turns, other walkers, and an intervening condition, the breezy weather.**

Preoccupied with her **causal condition** in a **stressful and fearful state-of-being**, Sally encounters the **limen**, labyrinth entrance, with **nervousness**. Her **interactions** with the **twists & turns** prompt a **response of spontaneous thoughts seeking answers to questions about her roles as a mother and daughter-in-law**. As she **observes others** on the path, she **wonders** what they are thinking about and when they get **close** to her, she **becomes anxious to maintain her pace, which secures her space for freedom of thought**. Wary of **others** as she keeps walking through the **twists and turns**, Sally **develops self-doubt** as a mother, wife, family member, and church community member when an **inner conflict surfaces**. In spite of the fact that her life has so much more than others, she **seeks "Why aren't I happy?"** [51]

Preoccupied with her **causal conditions** of deciding **to stay in or leave college** and her need **to gain independence** from an apparently stifling nuclear family, Denah approaches the **limen** with an even **higher state of anxiety** than the **nervous state** she already has. When the **actor gives a lighted candle** to light her way through the dark path, Denah encounters several contextual conditions with which she must interact.

Denah **enters the labyrinth hyperventilating** as though she is **taking off in a plane that is going to “crash and burn.”** Immediately, Denah **identifies the candlelight as her inner light**. Responding to the “**candle flame flickering**,” Denah **tries to keep it lit thinking that her light would go out**. This action is “**scary**” because she **responds to the candle flame as her own inner light**, “I can’t see my light....I give off light to other people but I don’t see it in myself.” [36-39] **Fearing the breeze, an intervening condition**, Denah **protects the light of the candle with her hands because if the flame went out, her light would go out**. She holds the candle so tightly that the candle bottom breaks adding to her anxiety that the flame would go out.

In addition to the candlelight, other **contextual conditions** include: the **path as a whole, rocks, weeds, the twists & turns, and other walkers**. Denah **initially receives the path as her life because she cannot always see it and makes wrong choices**. **Tripping over rocks** not in alignment with the path line as well as **tripping over weeds** are **interactions** that Denah likens her life

because she is **not watching out for obstacles**. Denah responds to the **twists & turns by hyperventilating** because she **fears getting lost or not making the right decisions** like she does in life. Denah says, “I wanted the right path and see my own light.” [52-57]

Consumed both with **self-doubt and self-survival**, **other walkers add to her to fear** with the possibility that they **could blow out her candle** when in proximity to her. Admittedly, Denah **protects herself from other people disliking that they are there** in the same way she dislikes her family’s influence against which she must guard herself. Denah **asserts, “I want my own space.”** [121-122] Denah associates **walking the path with staying in college and moving to Alaska as far from her family’s influence and dependence as she could go**. Her **inner conflict between self-doubt and independence erupts as self-defense**. **Committing to her decision—staying the path of college, Denah battles her inner conflict**, “I can see the way. The path was right there. I’ve never taken the path that I wanted and now I have and God forbid if anyone steps in my way because I’m going to walk right over you.” [258-260]

Although Paul has been **living in both negative and positive emotional turmoil** for the past two years, he is **excited** about the labyrinth event. Paul states, “It sounded **powerful with candlelight.... Candlelight made it a ritual.**” [8-10, 12-21] Appreciating the **opening performance** by labyrinth actors, he **values** their performance as setting “**a tone about something profound**” [8-10]

that would happen for him. Ironically, his pre-existing emotional turmoil and the value he accords candlelight prove to fuse causal, contextual, and intervening conditions into tumultuous action and interaction during Stage 1.

At the **limen**, Paul becomes aware that entering the labyrinth is “**like a rite of passage, like crossing a bridge and you’re entering—crossing.**” [37-38] Although he is aware of his **emotional turmoil**, Paul responds in confidence because “**the labyrinth focuses all that.**” [17-22] **Contextual conditions** were the **candle flame, the path, rocks, twists and turns, and other walkers.** **Intervening conditions** were the **breeze** and an outer edge **luminaria**. Because Paul values the **candlelight** as being sacred ritual, he **obsessively worries** about the candle going out. Paul **keeps walking dismissing the worry**; however, the **candle does go out.**

A **conflict** suddenly emerges and Paul questions **what to do**. In the emergency, Paul makes a **strategic action** that later shapes phenomenon. “I actually **left the path** to get the candle lit with the luminaria on the edge of the labyrinth. And then the **luminaria went out** and so then I had to **figure out how to try and relight that.**” [53-65] The **intervening conditions** were the **breeze blowing out his candle** and **Paul causing the luminaria to blow out**. “It was almost a **scary experience.**” [75-76] Paul responds to his **interaction** “as a **metaphor for life** in general and the candle going out is a part of that, an **unexpected thing.**” [67-69]

As Paul **keeps walking through the twists and turns**, he likewise responds to them as a **life parallel “not knowing what or who is coming next.”** [43-49] Paul **interacts with other walkers in a state of nervousness**. Paul again attempts a **strategic action by pretending to fix a rock so the walker behind him could pass** because he was **uncomfortable increasing the speed of his pace**. “I kept adjusting my pace because it **bothered me so much.**” [113-115] Paul solves his conflicts with self-resourcefulness.

Stage 2 Sequence

Response(s) brings about Consequence(s)

Getting closer to the center, Sally’s thoughts **shift to happiness**. The state of Sally’s mind **suddenly** turns from **thinking to reception** when she walks through the center and feels **a breeze**. “**It was a jolt. There was a sense of touch. I got goose-bumps. I was also drawn into the center. It was like a punch.... I felt pulled—pushed in...simultaneous jolt.**” In addition to the sensory experience of touch, Sally **hears a message from the “lightning jolt.”** “**Be happy. Find inner peace.**” [62-64] Sally attributes this experience as being “**...touched by the Holy Spirit.**” This lightning jolt is a **turning point** for Sally as she closes her eyes and values the Spirit’s message by **choosing to confront her conflicts**.

Sally **accepts that she is not going to actually solve the issues** with her mother-in-law berating her as mother and wife because her mother-in-law has had

a sheltered life that limits a woman's place to being a submissive wife and over-protective mother. Sally's **judgment of her mother-in-law's judgment of her vanishes and Sally concludes that her mother-in-law is wonderful.** In addition to her mother-in-law, Sally **weighs the burden of her depressed brother-in-law's negative modeling** for her children and **chooses to become active in helping her brother-in-law conquer his depression.** Sally also releases her over-protectiveness of her own children by adapting to the fact **that the children will never do everything she tells them to do and by appreciating them as a blessing.** Next, Sally **chooses to communicate with her husband because he is not able to read her thoughts.** Finally, Sally **accepts that she is over-committed with church activities but will not be letting God, other women volunteers, and the church community down if she gives up some of her volunteer activities.** Conflicting attitudes and values change when she gathers that the Spirit **"...was saying that it's in you—let go. Let go of all that tightness—that restraint."** [142-144] Sally evaluates that **solving each issue was not how her conflicts would cease; rather, "...change in me was needed. I didn't have to live with judgment or fixing anything. Just go with it."** [167-170] Sally's **condition changes from conflict to clarity as she gains self-empowerment by letting go of the need to control outcomes.** [184]

Consequences for Denah in Stage 2 **leave her in a state of danger as she holds on to the candle "...so tight that the candle at the bottom had broken in**

two pieces.” Although Denah is terrified that the broken and used candle would go out leaving her without means of finding her way out of the labyrinth, she **finds some relief in the center** “...knowing that I was halfway done.” [64] Denah’s **conflicts brought on by self-doubt due to her stifling family shift as she enters the center of the labyrinth.** The shift is one of **intention and commitment.** The **sight of others as she looks out from the center** of the labyrinth **builds self-assertiveness as she criticizes others for “...acting like ants moving back and forth.”** Denah **evaluates that she does not want her life to be like that “...even though those people had places to go they were still going around in circles. I’ve been doing that my whole life. Going around in circles.”** [91-94]

Movement into the center of the labyrinth also brought Paul into a new perspective as he places value on his previous action/interactions during Stage 1. Paul **weighs his decision to relight his candle by himself.** “I could have relit the candle with another person instead of seeing myself as an **isolated walker...having an individual experience.**” [80-89] Criticizing **himself for not asking for help when needed, Paul proposes to break free of his fearful isolating rule—“Don’t mess up the structure.”** [95-96] Paul relates his living in **emotional turmoil to his isolation and need for community.** The **stress of unexpected twists and turns** during Stage 1 mirroring the **emotional conflict of the unexpected in his life vanishes in the center as Paul faces the four**

directions, stops, sits, and meditates on his response to the fear-producing emergency when his candle and the luminaria went out. The stress vanishes and **peacefulness becomes his changed condition.** “It was peaceful.” [100]

Although he **loses sense of time in the center**, he perceives his time is up and chooses to leave not wanting to take up “...more than my time in the center.” **A shift in attitudes and values happens when he sees himself in relation to another. Instead of interacting under pretense** as he did in Stage 1 by pretending he was fixing a rock when someone wanted to pass him, Paul **engages in a “community act”** by waiting for the person ahead of him to leave the center and then he left.

Stage 3 Sequence

Consequence (s) + Contextual Condition(s) = Result (*What happens*)

Walking out of the center, Sally **feels empowered and relieved** knowing that she would be able to integrate her change—letting go of her judgments and manipulation of outcomes—with her life situations. After **evaluating her relationships**, she now characterizes them with **compassion and communication.** **Walking out of the labyrinth, Sally is “in awe with a new inner peace” and promotes that the community of labyrinth walkers is an incredible sight.** [179-180]

In the interview Sally specifies that life solutions were not the foundation of her happiness; rather, change in her attitudes and values were needed by flowing with life situations instead of controlling them. Sally confirms that people have noticed changes in her, that she did not have any problems with her in-laws during her visit, and that her husband recognizes her change with him and the children. Confirming that her spiritual experience was “enlightening,” the **result** of Sally’s spiritual experience during the labyrinth ritual is one of **transformation—rebirth of the Self into a non-judgmental woman free of the judgments of others and able to be happy**. Sally wants labyrinth walking to be a part of her spiritual practice.

During Stage 3, Denah **trips on the rocks** while walking back out of the labyrinth and **judges that she must keep her eyes on the path**. **Noticing that she looks down when she trips, she perseveres to look ahead so she walks slowly focused on “things in the future.”** [96-102] **Persevering along the path back to the world with her “light” still burning, Denah’s condition is now one of freedom deciding to be whatever she wants to be.** “I realized that my family can start coming to me. I’ve been going to them my whole life. If they want to find me, all they have to do is follow my light.” [226-230] Achieving **clarity with her inner light reflected by her burning candle, Denah walks back out with her conflicts resolved**. When Denah **steps out of the labyrinth, she feels safe with a relaxed body and is able to breathe at her normal rate**.

During the interview, Denah specifically informed me that a **childhood fear of fire induced by her father is gone** and she is **now able to always keep a candle lit to remember her labyrinth walk**. Confirming that her experience was spiritual, Denah says, “It was all spiritual for me, not so much about God, but about the path, my path that I am on.” [253-254] The **result** of Denah’s spiritual experience is **transformation—self-discovery and independence from her family, along with validation for her decision to stay in school and continue her life goals**. Denah may walk the labyrinth again as part of her spiritual practice.

During Stage 3, Paul **feels more at ease on the way back out of the labyrinth** and is “...**not worried about the candle or who was where in the labyrinth**.” [120-121] **Although it was dark on the labyrinth, Paul asserts that people had an aura around them “like a campfire” glow**. Paul assesses that **others on the path are no longer strangers to him**. “I feel a real connection with them not like the individual I was when I came in.” [133-134] **With a new sense of belonging, Paul feels sad to leave the labyrinth because on the labyrinth he is spiritually, emotionally, physically connected to himself, the earth, the universe, and the community**. “It’s comforting.” [106, 167-171] The **result** of Paul’s spiritual experience is one of **transport—a time of community, peace, and comfort**. Paul wants labyrinth walking to be part of his spiritual practice, especially in light of the fact that his church is building one.

In building theory, the demonstration chart and storyline memo are representative of my research process in looking for indicators—events or happenings—to compare relevant concepts for sameness or variation. Finding that I am able to chart all interviews according to the three stages, I discover that behavior progresses from simple levels of acting/interacting to more complex levels of behavior. In addition, the actions/interactions during each stage tend to develop towards a change of attitude, value, or belief system.

At this point in my research after coding for stages—conditions, action/interaction, consequences, and results—in the 31 interviews, I argue that the essential element of the spiritual experience is change characterized by levels of learning in the affective domain.

Saturating the data with the theoretical construct shown in Table 3 along with comparative memoing, I discover that behaviors can be classified according to the taxonomy of educational objectives in the affective domain. In *The Taxonomy of Educational Objectives: The Classification of Educational Goals Handbook 2: Affective Domain*, Krathwohl, Bloom, and Masia search for a continuum to order different kinds of affective behaviors to develop educational objectives “...dealing with interests, attitudes, values, appreciation, and adjustment.” (p. 24) I argue that Krathwohl’s *et. al.* continuum reveals its progressive ordering of behaviors during the three stages of the labyrinth. Krathwohl *et. al.* describes the progression of levels along the continuum.

Thus the continuum progressed from a level at which the individual is merely *aware* of a phenomenon, being *able to perceive it*. At a next level he is *willing to attend* to phenomena. At a next level he *responds* to the phenomena with a *positive feeling*. Eventually he may feel strongly enough to *go out of his way* to respond. At some point in the process he conceptualizes his behavior and feelings and *organizes* these conceptualizations into a structure. This structure grows in complexity as *it becomes his life outlook*. (p. 27)

Krathwohl, Bloom, and Masia's work taxonomy is known as either Bloom's taxonomy or Krathwohl's taxonomy. For this study, I use the name "Krathwohl's taxonomy." I argue that Krathwohl's progression parallel Straus and Corbin's approach to analyzing data for process. Furthermore, my data provides evidence of the progression. Examining my data for how action/interaction changes throughout the labyrinth ritual and in response to contingencies, I discover patterns relating the process to the structure of Krathwohl's continuum. Krathwohl's categories and subdivisions are a hierarchical order, arranged along a continuum of internalization from lowest to highest. "The taxonomy is ordered according to the principle of internalization. Internalization refers to the process whereby a person's affect toward an object passes from a general awareness level to a point where the affect is 'internalized' and consistently guides or controls the person's behavior." (Seels and Glasgow, 1990, p. 28)

The categories and their subdivisions are:

- 1.0 Receiving (attending)
 - 1.1 Awareness
 - 1.2 Willingness to receive
 - 1.3 Controlled or selected attention

- 2.0 Responding
 - 2.1 Acquiescence in responding
 - 2.2 Willingness to respond
 - 2.3 Satisfaction in response
- 3.0 Valuing
 - 3.1 Acceptance of a value
 - 3.2 Preference for a value
 - 3.3 Commitment (conviction)
- 4.0 Organization
 - 4.1 Conceptualization of a value
 - 4.2 Organization of a value system
- 5.0 Characterization by a value or value complex
 - 5.1 Generalized set
 - 5.2 Characterization

Krathwohl (pp. 49-50) acknowledges that relations exist between categories in the taxonomy in the cognitive domain and categories in the taxonomy in the affective domain with subdivisions overlapping between the two domains.

Parallel steps in the two continua are:

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1. The cognitive continuum begins with the student's recall and recognition of <i>Knowledge</i> (1.0) | 1. The affective continuum begins with the student's <i>Receiving</i> (1.0) stimuli and passively attending to it. It extends through more actively attending to it, |
| 2. it extends through his <i>Comprehension</i> (2.0) of the knowledge, | 2. his <i>Responding</i> (2.0) to stimuli on request, willingly responding to these stimuli, and taking satisfaction in this responding, |
| 3. his skill in <i>Application</i> (3.0) of the knowledge that he comprehends, | 3. his <i>Valuing</i> (3.0) the phenomenon or activity so that he voluntarily responds and seeks out ways to respond, |
| 4. his skill in <i>Analysis</i> (4.0) of situations involving this knowledge, his skill in <i>Synthesis</i> (5.0) of this | 4. his <i>Conceptualization</i> (4.1) of each value responded to, |

knowledge into new organization,

5. his skill in *Evaluation* (6.0) in that area of knowledge to judge the value of material and methods for given purposes.

5. his *Organization* (4.2) of these values into systems and finally organizing the value complex into a single whole, a *Characterization* (5.0) of the individual.

Krathwohl explains that the cognitive domain deals "...with the recall or recognition of knowledge and the development of intellectual abilities and skills."

(p. 7) The second part of the taxonomy is the affective domain that "...describes changes in interest, attitudes, and values, and the development of appreciations and adequate adjustment." Krathwohl recognizes that "...human behavior can rarely be neatly compartmentalized in terms of cognition and affect." (p. 85) I also recognize this fact and argue that Krathwohl's taxonomy in the affective domain still offers a means of creating structure in the labyrinth process.

In the labyrinth ritual, process relates to conditions and causes, while structure relates to action and interaction. I argue that *process* is the movement through conditions of the labyrinth ritual's three stages and *structure* is the manner and level of action/interaction expressing new or changed attitudes, values, or beliefs. In essence, the *structure* of the labyrinth becomes the individualized story comprised of each performer-perceiver's actions as he or she journeys from simple to complex behavior.

Selective Coding

Having identified *process* from Glaser's Coding Families as my core category, I begin *selective coding* -- "the process of integrating and refining theory." (Strauss and Corbin, 1998, p. 143) I align process and structure in the following theoretical model: (1) to relate behaviors in the affective domain to my core category "process" and (2) to show at what points the behaviors fuse with the labyrinth stages.

TABLE 8. Process and Structure of the Labyrinth Ritual					
<u>Structure:</u> Hierarchy of Affective Action/Interaction					
<u>Process:</u>	1.Receiving	2.Responding	3. Valuing	4.Organization	5.Characterization
Causes and Conditions					
Stage 1: Cause(s) & Condition(s) (<i>why, where, how come, when</i>) + Action(s) /Interaction(s) (<i>by whom, how</i>) =CONFLICT (Purgation)	"Contextual/ intervening conditions relate to causal conditions.	Aligns actions/ interactions to conditions.			
Stage 2: Response (s) bring about Consequence (s) (<i>What happens</i>) =REDRESS/ WHOLENESS			Outcomes of actions/ interactions	feed back into the context to become part of the conditions	

(Illumination)					
Stage 3: Consequence (s) + Conditions+ Action(s)/ Interaction(s) =INTERNAL- IZATION (Union) Result: Transport or Transforma- tion				influencing the next set of actions/interactions	towards a result.”

Quotation (Strauss & Corbin: 1998, p. 169)

Utilizing the memoing presented for subjects Sally, Denah, and Paul, I demonstrate that Stage 1 integrates behaviors of receiving & responding; Stage 2 integrates behaviors of valuing & organization; and Stage 3 integrates the behavior of characterization of a value set.

TABLE 9. Working Model of Comparative Findings for Structure and Process

Sally	Structure: Hierarchy of Affective Actions/Interactions				
Process: Causes and Conditions	1.Receiving	2.Responding	3. Valuing	4.Organization	5.Characterization

Stage 1 Purgation Twists & turns =contextual condition regarded as family problems (CONFLICT)	Feels stressful, fearful, & nervous at limen. Aware of others. Wonders what they are thinking about and what she should be thinking about. Keeps walking aware of twists and turns as though they are thoughts.	Responds to twists & turns with spontaneous questions about issues being a wife, mother, daughter-in- law. Responds with self-doubt and conflict. Questions why isn't she happy?			
Stage 2 Illumination Intervening condition= force of the Holy Spirit causing consequences (positive change from conflict) =REDRESS/ WHOLENESS			Feels a physical jolt like lightning pushing & pulling her into center. Attributes jolt to Holy Spirit. Hears message, "Be happy. find inner peace." Adapts to upcoming visit with in-laws knowing she cannot change them only her response to them. Releases judgment of her mother-in- law. Releases over- protective- ness of her children.	Creates plan to communicate with her husband. Gathers that to be happy is to let go of her need to control and judge self, others, and circumstances. Adopts new attitude of compassion towards husband's family, including his depressed brother. Prioritizes volunteer time at church with family and self needs.	

Stage 3 Union (INTERNAL- IZATION) Result: <u>Transformation:</u> Liberation from self-judgment & judgment of others and birth of an empowered woman at peace with her circumstances and happy with life.					Feels empowered and relieved that she can let go of judgments and manipulation of outcomes in her life. Characterizes her walk out as a state of awe and new inner peace. (People note changes in her since walking.)
--	--	--	--	--	---

Denah

Structure: Hierarchy of Affective Actions/Interactions

Process: Causes and Conditions	1. Receiving	2. Responding	3. Valuing	4. Organization	5. Characterization
Stage 1 Purgation Contextual condition= labyrinth path regarded as her life Rocks, weeds, twists & turns, candle, people = intervening conditions (CONFLICT)	Feels fear and is hyper- ventilating. Receives the labyrinth path as her life.	Responds to the candle as her only means to see the right choices on the path & in life. Trips over rocks & weeds like life not watching where she is going. Fears twists & turns in getting lost like not making the right decisions in life. Protects herself and space from other walkers			

		<p>like she does with her family.</p> <p>Battles her inner conflict-keep her light (candle) lit so she can see her path (staying in college and planning independence from family.</p>			
<p>Stage 2 Illumination</p> <p>Self-determination in liberating Self = consequence</p> <p>(Positive change from conflict as resolution) REDRESS/ WHOLENESS</p>			<p>Remains in fear that her light will go out, but finds some relief knowing that she is halfway done.</p> <p>Accepts she is on her path, commits to staying in school, defends her choices, and threatens anyone who may try to block her path.</p>	<p>Criticizes others as she observes them on the path calling them ants going around in circles.</p> <p>Evaluates that she will never be like them going around in circles anymore like she has her entire life.</p>	
<p>Stage 3 Union (INTERNAL-IZATION)</p> <p>Result: <u>Transformation:</u> Self-discovery that she can conquer doubts and fears along her path towards independence and self-reliance.</p>					<p>Trips on rocks and reaffirms her commitment to move slowly ever watchful and think carefully about the future.</p> <p>Promotes her self-reliance and independence from family claiming that she can be whatever she wants to be empowered and liberated by her burning light.</p>

Paul

Structure: Hierarchy of Affective Actions/ Interactions

Process: Causes and Conditions	1. Receiving	2. Responding	3. Valuing	4. Organization	5. Characterization
Stage 1 Purgation Breeze blowing candle out = intervening condition (CONFLICT)	<p>Aware of rite of passage like a bridge or crossing at the limen.</p> <p>Trusts the labyrinth to focus his emotional turmoil accumulated over the past two years.</p> <p>Identifies with the candle flame as inner and outer light and obsessively worries that it will go out.</p> <p>Like his life, an unexpected conflict arises when the candle goes out and he must figure out a way to relight it.</p>	<p>Responds to others with nervousness and keeps adjusting his pace to avoid others.</p> <p>Tries to relight the candle by leaving the path to reach a luminaria on the outer edge.</p> <p>Responds to new conflict when the luminaria goes out.</p> <p>Manages to relight both the candle and luminaria.</p> <p>Keeps walking to the center.</p>			
Stage 2 Illumination Center of the labyrinth= causal condition for self-reflection (consequence) REDRESS/ WHOLENESS			<p>In the center, assesses his decision to relight the candle by himself.</p> <p>Criticizes himself for not asking for help from others when he needed it.</p>	<p>Accepts himself as a member of the community of walkers.</p> <p>Chooses peace over emotional turmoil sitting in the center.</p> <p>Cooperates with Another in sincerity rather than pretense by allowing him to leave</p>	

				the center before he does.	
Stage 3 Union (INTERNAL- IZATION) Result: <u>Transport:</u> (Revision of himself as an isolated individual but a member of community)					Shares connection with people. Sees auras around them. Proposes that people are not strangers. Walks back out with ease. Feels comfortable and not as worried about the candle or where anyone on the labyrinth is.

To validate my theoretical scheme, I explore the three stages of process, which reveal contextual, causal, and intervening conditions, in relationship to structure, which reveals action/interaction. I go back and compare the theoretical scheme against the raw data, doing what Strauss and Corbin (p. 159) call a type of “high-level comparison analysis” in order to validate if the stages correspond with Krathwohl’s hierarchy of 5 levels of behavior in the affective domain. Interpreting the actions/interactions of the respondents to the three stages, I derive verbs that exemplify each level of the hierarchy in order to illustrate the progression of simple behavior to more complex behavior.

Stage 1 corresponding with Level 1—Receiving includes key behaviors such as: *aware of; identifies; views; sees; receives; listens; and follows*. Stage 1

also corresponding with Level 2—Responding includes key behaviors such as: *responds; asserts; seeks; keeps; tries; perseveres; questions; leaves; sheds; gives; detaches; relives; asks; grieves; remembers; protects; dislikes; fears; anticipates; and attempts.*

Stage 2 corresponding with Level 3—Valuing includes key behaviors such as: *chooses; influences; prefers; accepts; criticizes; validates; surrenders; joins; submits; releases; and weighs.* Stage 2 also corresponding with Level 4—Organizing includes key behaviors such as *judges; adopts; resolves; assesses; compares; relates; formulates; adapts; evaluates; and proposes.*

Stage 3 corresponding with Level 5—Characterization suggests internalizing a new value or belief system that controls behavior. Key behaviors include: *commits; internalizes; integrates; promotes; and suggests.*

The labyrinth's twists and turns as a contextual condition affect 32.3% of the 31 subjects; the path of the labyrinth as a contextual condition affects 67.7% of the 31 subjects. In Table 10 located at the end of this chapter, I describe the comparative findings of 10 subjects affected by the contextual condition of the labyrinth's *twists and turns* according to each of the three stages. The number of the subject is listed next to the finding and is repeated at each stage. I then repeat the procedure of comparative findings for 21 subjects affected by the *path of the labyrinth.*

This simple division reveals the attitude of the performer-receiver to *receiving* the condition he or she encounters, which is the first level in Krathwohl's hierarchy. *Responding* to the twists and turns or to the path, which is the second level in Krathwohl's hierarchy, reveals the first stage of the labyrinth ritual—*purgation*. Some form of inner or outer conflict emerges as the major characteristic of this stage. Causal conditions for conflicts are either needs or problems from inner and/or external forces that subjects bring to the labyrinth or from receiving and responding to an intervening or contextual condition. Subjects who are affected by the path tend to experience intervening conditions arising from candles, rocks, ants, people, or affirmation cards in a basket left in the center of the labyrinth. Secondary phenomena play an integral role in conflict resolution for both groups as performer-perceivers near or enter the center of the labyrinth, Stage 2.

The second stage of the labyrinth ritual—*illumination* reveals a change or progression from conflict into some form of wholeness, such as conflict resolution, personal growth, spiritual fulfillment, or satisfaction as a member of the community. The performer-perceiver acts in accordance with Krathwohl's third and fourth levels of *valuing* and *organizing* the change through the agency of the inner Self, Life-force within, or the external Divine Other. The third stage of the labyrinth ritual—*union* marks Krathwohl's highest level of behavioral change as the performer-perceiver *characterizes—acts consistently with the*

internalization of a new or renewed appreciation/value/belief that is expansive and empowering in his or her life.

The descriptions of changes in values along Krathwohl's continuum are the stories of the performer-perceivers along the labyrinth path through the twists and turns. I label the results of a performer-perceiver's journey as transport or transformation signifying his or her adjustment to change of interest, attitudes, values, appreciations, or beliefs as *transport* (temporary)—experienced only during the labyrinth walk—or *transformation* (permanent)—experienced as an integral part of his or her life after the labyrinth walk. My research study does not follow up on this determination over the course of time; rather, I make a judgment based on the interview. I discover in the comparative findings coded in Table 10 that labeling the results as transport or transformation has no bearing upon the themes that emerge in the stories of the performer-perceivers. Regarding their stories as spiritual experiences illustrated in Table 4, the performer-perceivers perform—imagine, live, represent—three kinds of values that become a part of their character: (1) *spiritual development*; (2) *personal development*; or (3) *social development*.

Spiritual Development

Eight (25.8%) of the thirty-one performer-perceivers describe stories of spiritual development. I derive three themes for spiritual development: (1)

seeking union with God; (2) asking for Divine help; and (3) journeying to find Self.

Seeking Union with God (9.7%, 3 Subjects #'s 3, 22, and 24). These subjects attribute causation to their desire or need for God or Jesus Christ and attribute their fulfillment to God's agency. All three subjects experience secondary phenomena that are an integral part of their stories promoting that God is in the center of the labyrinth representing their heart. They also journey through the three-fold process of the labyrinth ritual—conflict in purgation; wholeness in illumination; and internalization in union.

Receiving the twists and turns as *distractions*, John #3 nervously and tensely perseveres by concentrating on his feet, breathing, hearing, smelling, feeling the ground and trusting that the center "...is home with Jesus and the will is the twists and turns of the labyrinth or distractions." [177-180] Feeling like God's hands were cradling him like a sleeping baby in the center, John hears a message from God. "God was saying, 'I will comfort you. I will always be there for you. I will be your shelter.'" [109-113; 24-26] John felt "zoned." [92] Walking back out of the center, John accepts that he no longer has neck or back pain and commits to his sense of peace, rest, and thanksgiving by meditating on the words of the Lord's prayer. Because John promotes the labyrinth as a

meditative walk to experience union with God, I label his change as transport, a time of renewal in God's security.

Identifying the twists and turns as *painful shifts in her life*, Ann #22 walks in despair, heaviness, and loneliness to the center giving Christ "...my every concern, my family, every concern on my heart, needs, prayer requests, where I am in my life, whatever my children or grandchildren are going through, the war, where our church is..." Grieving from the overwhelming pain on the walk in, Ann falls on her knees in the center. "I just felt so heavy. It was very powerful, emotionally and physically." Describing the center Ann says, "I felt this warm bright light encompassing me and it just felt like the hand of God, the touch of God upon me, just warmth." [74-77] Ann accepts an "overwhelming sense of His presence...a sense of being loved," [18-21] and she hears a message from God, "I am here. I am with you. [80-81] On the way back out Ann says, "I felt so relieved...knowing that God knows the concerns of my heart and will be able to nourish me and to be a part of the solutions that I can't see but that I trust He can." [52-55, 125] I label her story as transformation because on a daily basis she asks God to remind her of her labyrinth lesson—that He is the one in charge. [125-126] Ann often feels that she can "visualize" her experience and promotes, "The labyrinth experience is a lasting picture of the whole spiritual process." [138-139]

Like John and Ann, Vangi #24 identifies the path as *the pathway to the center where God is*. Contemplating the death of Jesus and her own death that is near because of having cancer, Vangi responds to the path as a “magnet” drawing her to “God’s bonds of love” in the center. Aware of her surroundings, she responds to people as other pilgrims but finds them a little intrusive. Nevertheless, in gratitude she immediately kneels in the center and receives a profound, intimate, and physical “warming of the heart” accompanied with a feeling of being blessed. Internalizing this experience as an answer to her prayer, “to be loved and uplifted by Him,” [76] Vangi claims that her walk back out was “...a wonderful freeing experience.” [15-16] I label her story as one of transformation because she promotes it as a “...wonderful affirmation and it never leaves you.” [54]

Asking for Divine Help (9.7%, 3 Subjects #'s 2, 21, and 23). These subjects attribute causation to a need for a sign, a desire for authenticity, and a desire for a clean heart. They attribute fulfillment to the agency of God or co-creation among the labyrinth, self, and Goddess. All three subjects experience secondary phenomena that contribute to change. They also journey through the three-fold process of the labyrinth ritual—conflict in purgation; wholeness in illumination; and internalization in union.

Because Giselle #2 identifies the twists and turns *as a way to detach*, Giselle finds no conflict arising from contextual conditions; rather, her conflict is a causal condition—deciding if she should or should not reunite with her ex-boyfriend. Based on her intention and trust in the labyrinth ritual, Giselle enters the labyrinth fully expecting God to give her a sign. She receives a powerful one. Giselle accepts a secondary phenomenon of smelling her boyfriend's scent, a unique combination of oils, as a sign to reunite with him. "Along comes a breeze with his scent. So I felt he was there with me." [81-83] Giselle then chooses to remember a joyful time with her boyfriend experiencing a "sigh of relief like weight lifted off me." [85-86] With the boyfriend issue solved, Giselle responds to the center of the labyrinth with a sudden memory of her 14 year old friend who died. Accepting the peacefulness and beauty of the center, Giselle kneels down and says a prayer for him. Giselle resolves her friend's death with thanksgiving for his life ready to go back out to the world. Having found her spiritual self which is the path of knowing, Giselle walks back out feeling comfortable, connected, and loving to the community. I label her story as transformation because of its life-changing resolution to reunite with her boyfriend.

Ozma #21 identifies the labyrinth path *as energy forms*. On her 40th birthday seeking a transformative experience for "more authenticity for those in

her life,” Ozma is immediately aware of resistance when she enters the labyrinth. “It was almost palpable....like walking through a warm mist of resistance.” [12-13, 19-20] Because she is a spiritual person, Ozma feels confused by the labyrinth’s lack of acceptance. She keeps walking and tries to focus on “...what I wanted to give up as I approached the center.” [16-17] The struggle lessens and when the mist of resistance is over, she accepts as a sign of purity “...this pearlesque light that lit up the labyrinth as I was walking.... It was emanating from the labyrinth itself.” Although Ozma is “a little tired like I had been on a journey,” [21-23] Ozma feels very at ease in the center and sheds “...some aspects, layers that I felt were the main factors, which prevented me from growing. They were barriers.” [93-94] Assessing that she completed the release, Ozma prays for a “genuine life.” “It was cleansing. It was a new birth....I became free to love and be loved.” [71-72, 100] Ozma internalizes her experience on the way out by chanting in cadence with her steps on the way back out, “I am innocent. I walk without shame, I am beloved.” Ozma promotes that the labyrinth is a tool for her to co-create with deity, Goddess, a manifestation she seeks. I label Ozma’s story as transformation because she now feels pure and cleansed although challenges in life still arise. Ozma is also at “...a comfortable place with my age now and who I am as a woman.” [74-76]

I describe the story of Annabelle #23 in Table 3.

Journeying to Find Self (6.4%, 2 Subjects #'s 6, 13). These subjects have no causal conditions; rather, their stories solely emerge from contextual conditions. One subject has a secondary phenomenon. Subject #6 senses a Presence and attributes it to God. Although their intention and initial reception of the labyrinth path is the same, the two subjects enact opposite stories. Subject #6 does not arrive at a conclusion; however, Subject #13 journeys through the three-fold process of the labyrinth ritual—conflict in purgation; wholeness in illumination; and internalization in union and attributes her experience to her Higher Power.

Anticipating a meditative spiritual experience, Maria Terry #6 enters the labyrinth “like going through a door.” [69] Viewing the twist and turns *as the unknown in life*, Maria receives other people on the labyrinth as uncomfortable and detractive to her meditation because she does not want to block or pass them. Her discomfort is heightened in response to the twists and turns en route to the center. “Moving towards something and away from something creates a problem—how do you think about your life.” [48-50] Maria responds to not knowing where the center is as a metaphor for her life. “You just don’t know how close you are to that center circle and how you don’t really know what that circle is.” [43-45] Maria accepts the center as a “special more spiritual place” but feels self-conscious in assessing what the center means. “You’re not moving and

suddenly you have to be so quiet and figure out why you're there.” [53-56] Maria proposes that she feels a Presence while moving along the path rather than in the center and that the center is “...like life never knowing where your relationship to death is, where your relationship to God or to Spirit because you just come upon it.” [83-92] Assessing that her experience was spiritual because she was thinking about God, death, and her relationship to other people, Maria suggests that labyrinth meditation is gaining intellectual meaning about “...where I am or where I am going.” [138-140] Feeling a little bit of relief on the way out, Maria evaluates how she will integrate her present spiritual state-of-being back out to the world. Although Maria “may have figured out where to look in relationship to center,” [98] she cannot remember any insights or realizations. Maria suggests, “I think you pray for conclusions.” [111] I label Maria’s story as transport because she does not appear to have any permanent change.

Like Maria, Ruby #13 is aware of “going through a door” when she enters the labyrinth and similarly identifies the path *as a spiral inward to her inner center*. In contrast to Maria, Ruby receives other people as “really wonderful” because they bring about a sense of community—a “shared experience.” Also in contrast to Maria, Ruby positively responds to not being able to see where she is going or how she will get to the center. Unlike Maria, Ruby criticizes herself for always figuring out her life direction. Ruby sheds what she deems as a belief of

American culture that says, “We’re the shapers of our destiny.” [125-127]

Arriving in the center with a “free feeling,” Ruby accepts that because she is on this path, she is on the right path because “Higher Power is going to make use of me as I move along the path however it likes.” [103-111] Ruby also rejects a belief with which she was raised “...that God has plans for you and it’s up to you to figure out what that is and what to do with it....” Judging that this belief “blocked her consciousness,” Ruby adopts a new belief. “I just have to put one foot in front of the other and realize that I don’t know and it’s OK.” In contrast to the heaviness in her body on the walk in, Ruby feels lighter on the way back out. Internalizing the freedom from figuring out a spiritual direction for her life, Ruby celebrates on way out, “Opening my heart, letting my light shine sort of renewing my inner flame then feeling stronger so I can give it out the world.” [56-58] I label Ruby’s story as transformation because of her renewal in her spiritual nature and revision of faith and trust that her Higher Power will use her wherever she is rather than any perception of where she should be.

Personal Development

Fourteen (45.2%) of the thirty-one performer-perceivers describe stories of personal development. I derive three themes from personal development: (1) *releasing judgment of self and others*; (2) *gaining self-assurance*; and (3) *facing childhood pain*.

Releasing Judgment of Self and Others (16.1%, 5 Subjects #'s 4, 14, 30, 31, and 32). Two subjects experience secondary phenomena; however, only Subject #14 finds that the phenomenon is integral to her change and attributes the phenomenon to the Holy Spirit. Subject #32 experiences the physical sight of smoke but chooses to ignore it. However, she attributes conflict resolution and her transformation to Divine Intervention. Causal conditions include conflict with family for Subject #14 and inner conflict over grief in family death for Subject #31. Subject #31 attributes conflict resolution and transformation to the process of the labyrinth ritual. Conflict surfaces from contextual conditions as Subjects #4 and #30 interact with the labyrinth. Subject #4 attributes conflict resolution and transformation to her inner knowing co-creating with the Divine, while Subject #30 attributes conflict resolution and transformation to the design of the labyrinth. All subjects also journey through the three-fold process of the labyrinth ritual—conflict in purgation; wholeness in illumination; and internalization in union.

Mari Weaver #4 identifies the labyrinth path *as walking the path with pilgrims* at the Chartres Cathedral in addition to participating in my performance events. At Chartres, Mari is aware that original pilgrims from hundreds of years ago are present in spirit and she feels like she is walking with them. Mari

experiences a timelessness that she identifies as “between two worlds.” However, people presently in the labyrinth distress her because they press around her. “I started to feel almost claustrophobic....I felt like I was too fat to be on the labyrinth. Felt like people were having trouble getting around me.” [82-97] Aware of the conflict her body issues bring her, Mari perseveres to the center. In the center, Mari considers the possibility of getting into the rhythm of people around her because she knows that hundreds of people in the past walked at one time and managed the labyrinth. From the center, Mari evaluates the shifting patterns of people’s movement and formulates a plan for her own movement. On the way back out, Mari says, “I got into a wonderful rhythm. It was a sacred dance. Then the walk was over so fast as opposed to the interminable way it felt going in....I was bereft to leave.” [99-102, 130] Mari integrates her experience with her life. “I have body and size issues. It was profound to be comfortable with myself at the end of the walk. It was very healing.” [107-109] In appreciation, Mari walks around the outside of the labyrinth and says thank you. I label Mari’s story as transformation because she is free from the self-judgment that she does not fit into people’s circles. Mari attributes her healing to listening to her own inner knowing and listening to the Divine outside of her. Mari further integrates her story with her life by becoming a labyrinth facilitator and gaining recognition from others that she beautifully walks the labyrinth as though she is in a sacred dance.

I describe the story of Sally #14 in the Storyline Memo as well as in Table 9.

Aware that she is crossing into a new experience or a new realm, Olivia #30 regards the path *as shifting patterns*. Responding to people with the belief that she is in their way, Olivia keeps walking to resolve issues about her job. As Olivia nears the center, a burden of guilt from having two abortions 33 years ago suddenly and unexpectedly lifts from her. Bearing guilt and trauma that has led to a life-long depression, Olivia says, “It was like a breath stirring through my head. It was like a weight lifting off my shoulders. I was aware of it.... It was relief....” [51, 58-61] In the center, Olivia kneels. “I felt almost in awe. I felt that I should kneel before the awe...I felt glad. And the impulse to kneel was in thankfulness. I was in shock at the awe.” [31-33, 72-73] On the way back out, Olivia enjoyed walking the patterns and “felt peace.” Olivia attributes her experience to the labyrinth and “something beyond the mind.” “Maybe it’s because I have gone round and round in my head so much about what I had done and the labyrinth was an unwinding of the going around and around. This was in a different direction.” [68-70] I label Olivia’s story as transformation because she had carried the weight of her burden so long. Olivia promotes, “My body felt lighter and since then. It really did stick for the last 2 weeks which is remarkable since I carried it for so long and felt so bad about it.” [74-78]

Janis #31 identifies the twists and turns of the labyrinth *as a way to focus*.

Upon entering, Janis receives the labyrinth as a sacred space without time, barriers, or walls. "I didn't feel any distraction. The ritual of the labyrinth is a controlled ritual with a start, middle, and end. The turns help to focus you because you have to figure out where your feet are going to go and that dismisses everything else. When you get to the center, then your mind is already working on what's inside.... The ritual form facilitates an altered state. It does it." [142-151] As Janis walks to the center, she grieves over the fact that she had the right to put her sick cat asleep, but she couldn't do the same for her dying mother. Janis still feels guilty that her mother had to terribly suffer until she died. In the center, Janis is able to weigh her actions. "The center was important. My focus was on the deaths and I felt sad, but I was comfortable that I made the right decision. It was the best thing I could do. The labyrinth was very affirming." Other people on the labyrinth seem to disappear and Janis claims she was "gone." "I just turned inside out....and then I had a peace come over me. Then I picked up an affirmation card.... The card that I picked up said something like everything is going to be all right. This was the message I was supposed to get.... I knew I could let go and finally go on with my life." [58-60, 83-86] With the conflict of self-judgment resolved, Janis walks back out feeling settled. "I was at peace with my decisions and now I was ready to go with the rest of the world." [62-63] I

label Janis' story as transformation because of her liberation from self-imposed guilt, which allows her to get beyond that season of her life and onto the rest of her life.

I describe Barbara's #32 story as transformation earlier in this chapter in comparison to Davenol's story.

Facing Childhood Pain (9.7%, 3 Subjects #'s 5, 7 and 29). Excluding Davenol # 29, Subjects #5 and 7 journey through the three-fold process of the labyrinth ritual—conflict in purgation; wholeness in illumination; and internalization in union. All subjects attribute their spiritual experience to intention and God. Causal conditions stemming from childhood affecting adulthood surface on the labyrinth for all subjects. Subject #5 and 7 also encounters conflict from contextual conditions. Only Subject #29 experiences a secondary phenomenon but chooses to ignore it.

Maria Alvarez #5 receives that path *as a hard journey*. Seeking a message concerning the future of her romantic relationship, Maria feels nervous all the way to center. She fears tripping over rocks and being disrespectful to people if she passes them. Nervousness made her walk faster resulting in more fear that her candle would go out. The candle represented her which she calls “my spark.”

Unexpectedly, childhood pain surfaces during her difficult walk. Maria chooses to make peace with her childhood just before she reaches the center. In the center, Maria adapts to peace and safety. “I was really relaxed about my childhood and Chris in the center. I know since then I have felt at ease with myself.” [125-126] Although Maria felt emotionally tired on the way back out, she commits to positive thoughts about her life direction and the future of her relationship and journeys in a relaxed state. I label her story as transformation because she is liberated from her childhood interfering with her present Self.

Ambro #7 identifies the path *as walking through life’s darkness*. Ambro also brings to the labyrinth cause for conflict resolution. Receiving the labyrinth like one walking through a “doorway, archway, or portal,” Ambro feels tenseness because he has a need to understand the relationship between him and his father. His discomfort with crowds heightens the tenseness. Ambro keeps walking to the center also persevering on his interior journey to his soul center where God is. “I had tears and crying release or purgation. Personal. Emotional content, welling up, releasing, cleansing, letting go.” Ambro assesses that reaching center is a “...moment of space created for possibility, opportunity of joy to fill that empty space. Healing brings freedom or joy.” Ambro evaluates that in the center he had an understanding about the “...relationship between myself and my father and I cried. It affected me at a spiritual level.” Although he experiences joy from his

healing on the way back out, Ambro is conscious that he is on a longer journey of purgation but internalizes the process as one of “...trust in God, trust in intention, openness to having that momentary space created” where joy fills the emptiness of what once was pain. I label Ambro’s change as transformation because of the healing he chooses to receive in understanding his father.

I describe #29 Davenol’s story in comparison to Barbara’s story earlier in the chapter. Although Davenol does not reach the center because it means facing his childhood pain, he knows where to access it on the labyrinth and commits himself to further labyrinth walking.

Gaining Self-assurance (19.4%, 6 Subjects #’s 8, 9, 15, 16, 17, and 20).

Subjects #8, 9, 15, 16, 17, and 20 have causal conditions such as family issues, depression, and compulsiveness and contextual conditions bring them to surface. No conflict emerges for Subject #18 because she immediately receives a secondary phenomenon of being temporarily healed from chronic body pain possibly due to an infusion of light. Subjects #15, 16, 17, 18, and 20 place heavy emphases on being in an altered state of mind. All subjects except for Subject #18 journey through the three-fold process of the labyrinth ritual—conflict in purgation; wholeness in illumination; and internalization in union.

I describe #8 Denah's story earlier in the chapter in the Storyline Memo as well as in Table 9.

Lagan #9 identifies the twists and turns of the labyrinth *as a way to focus*. Although she tires from walking the twists and turns because she concentrates very hard on not getting lost, Lagan claims, "It helps you focus. That's comforting. I get release from getting away from everything, by myself, in God's land." [83-98,155-156] As Lagan walks to the center, she unexpectedly relives the night she gave birth to her daughter and how upset she was that night as an unwed teenage mother. When Lagan reaches the center, she chooses to release grief, sorrow, relief and happiness. "By the time I got to the center, I was crying and I guess I was sad because I was very happy.... My daughter brought me to a place where I am graduating college." [133-134] On the way out of the labyrinth, Lagan says, "I felt relieved because I'm leaving the stuff I dealt with." [178] Lagan evaluates the labyrinth as a container where she can release her stresses. In addition to gaining self-assurance that she has come a long way in making progress in her life, Lagan proposes that she needs to walk again soon because "...there's a lot of stuff yet that needs to be resolved." [152-153] I label Lagan's story as transformation because Lagan no longer sees her child as a liability but as a living force to her own maturity and success.

Holly #15 identifies the path *as the paths of her life*. When Holly would make turns “like right angles,” she would get a sudden flash of times in her marriage that were difficult. The flashes included “...how we work them out and compromise.” Holly keeps walking and when she hit straight places along the path, the marriage thoughts would pass. Walking with her little boy, Holly reaches the center and imagines that “...we were in a heart, a peaceful quiet inner space.” [26-27] In the center, Holly evaluates that as she gets older, she submits to change better. Walking back out, Holly feels fulfilled and successful. “I felt successful because we’ve been able to work through these things. And me as a person, I guess I was patting myself on the back as I walked feeling fulfilled.” [75-77] I label Holly’s story as transport because of her self-validation in viewing herself as a successful wife.

Aware of the path *as representing his life*, #16 John responds to people ahead of him as people ahead of him in life and the rocks out of place on the path as roadblocks he must fix. John also feels as though he is at times walking on a narrow bridge and may fall off of it. At a certain point along the path, John enters a deep meditation. “The labyrinth is my mind and I’m traveling through my own mind...I wasn’t conscious of my body... I didn’t feel like I was walking... I didn’t think time and space existed in there. [80-83, 124-132] Reliving his past when he was in depression, John reaches the center and validates himself as

capable of overcoming depression. John judges that the center is an end goal and that walking back out is the opening up of a new labyrinth, which is his future. Feeling a little anxiety about walking back out, he evaluates that “I could handle anything I came across.” John adapts to walking back out like he was “...moving backwards...but actually moving forward,” suggesting that “...in life we sometimes don’t know if we are going in the right direction.” [148-149, 46-49] I label John’s story as transformation because of his claim that he gained self-knowledge and self-confidence more than what he had when he first entered the labyrinth.

Susan #17 identifies the twists and turns of the labyrinth *as places in her life*. Feeling very self-conscious and full of her usual hyper-energy, Susan keeps walking and growing in awareness of her steps, rocks, ants, the sky, and birds. Losing awareness of other people, Susan was “going into” herself. “Self-reflection. It took me from the outer to the inner. Letting go didn’t happen consciously though.” [140-143] Like Lagan, Susan allows catharsis to happen in the center. Resolving problems and stresses, she assesses that she is at one with natural world, self, and others. A new inner peace and calm fills Susan as she walks back out of the labyrinth although she did not want to leave. “I think something came in that took over and replaced that hyper compulsive energy. It changed 180 degrees. I floated out of there. No sense of walking, no sense of anything but sounds, air, birds, breeze. Even the sun itself. It wasn’t hot. Warm.

It was the brightness—a light—soothing. You could feel it. [160-165] I label Susan’s story as transformation because it is the first time that she feels liberated from her compulsive hyper self and that she regularly visualizes her walk whenever she needs to calm herself during daily activities. “And now I carry it with me. If I get stressed, I could see myself doing it. It takes away the bad, stress, and the negative.” [207-210]

I describe the story of Lindy #20 in Table 3.

Social Development

Nine (29%) of the thirty-one performer-perceivers describe a story of social development. I derive three themes from social development: (1) *integrating the movement of the labyrinth, the natural world, people, and the Self as unity*; (2) *accepting the individual self as a member of community*; and (3) *sharing life and work with people*.

Integrating the movement of the labyrinth, the natural world, people, and the Self as unity (6.5%, 2 Subjects #1 and 18). Subject #1 experiences no conflict through which she internalizes this value because it was her intention not to bring conflict into her spiritual experience but to maintain beauty and love as the defining factor.

Aware of the path *as a symbolic journey of loving*, Gabrielle walks to the center aware of patterns of light in the darkness from the luminarias, sun, moon, and candles. Gabrielle receives the ancient pattern of the labyrinth as a connection to ancestors and earth's patterns. Walking to the center, Gabrielle puts rocks in place, acknowledges the ants, listens to dogs and birds, takes off her shoes to feel the ground, and looks at the sky. Gabrielle suggests that ancestors knew that patterns symbolize beauty and change rather than contemporary spiritual suffering. Gabrielle chooses to reject the process of the labyrinth ritual as purgation, illumination, and union. In the center, Gabrielle chooses to believe there is more meaning moving in and out of the center than being in the center so she does not stay in the center. The walk back out is most profound for Gabrielle because "...moving out of the labyrinth is moving into community, coming home—a resting place, receiving people or being received by people." [70-80] Gabrielle promotes a heightened perception of beauty and a heightened recognition of loving at the end of her walk and assesses her walk as a spiritual experience because it was her intention to make it one. I label Gabrielle's story as transport because her walk was an affirmation of her spiritual self and values and no significant change emerges other than heightened awareness.

Maria Rochelle #18 is aware of the labyrinth path *as a sensation of passing into an ancestral space*. Walking into the labyrinth at the Chartres Cathedral is “sacred.” While looking at light coming through a window, Maria feels as though she is being infused with the light. Maria suffers arthritis and walks with a cane. However, Maria is acutely aware that she is free from the chronic pain in her legs as she walks the path. In the center, Maria assesses the significance of her first spiritual experience that walking the labyrinth path is a sacred act and that she will be able to teach others what a spiritual experience feels like. Maria internalizes the walk out as a sacred dance in which she embodies the spirits of the ancient pilgrims who once walked the same labyrinth. When she exits the labyrinth, she comes back to her body in all its pain and needs people to help her walk. No conflict emerges during Maria’s walk. Although her freedom from body pain is temporary, I label her story as transformation because it was her first truly spiritual experience. Maria also gains self-assurance that she is capable of having a spiritual experience and confident that she can teach others about it.

Accepting the Individual Self as a Member of Community (12.9%, 4 Subjects #’s 10, 25, 26, and 27). Subjects #10 and 26 experience a secondary phenomenon—seeing auras around people’s heads. All subjects arrive at their lessons in response to contextual conditions. Subject # 10 contends with an

intervening condition as well. Subject # 7 has a causal condition because she suffers from agoraphobia. All subjects journey through the three-fold process of the labyrinth ritual—conflict in purgation; wholeness in illumination; and internalization in union.

I describe the story of Paul #10 in the Storyline Memo as well as in Table 9.

Aware of “stepping into something,” Callie #25 identifies the path *as a walk through life*. Feeling nervous anxiety, Callie goes in and out of the twists and turns and relates them to how her brain and thoughts work. Feeling as though she is going to fall off the outer edges, she compares it to racing through life “...when we keep going and going.” [16-20] Like Gabrielle, Callie asserts that she is not working anything out and that she does not live in the past because “...life is too short. So when I was walking I said to myself that I am going to have this experience in the present now. That’s what I intended.” [99-101] When the labyrinth leads her closer to the center, Callie reports, “I felt a sense of relief.” [71-73] In contrast to Gabrielle, Callie experiences union with others in the center. “I felt the union with people.... I said a prayer of thanksgiving for being with people. I was flying high.” [89-94] Walking back out of the center, Callie feels impatient with herself when she feels like she is tilting off the edge. Callie weighs the difference between her uncomfortable walking and being in the calming center. “I kept thinking that this isn’t healthy. I need to watch it and

bring myself into a calming place. The labyrinth gave me a chance to pull myself into a calming place. I got to see contrast because it forced me to the center. That's the trick for real life—finding that force. I forget to reach out to God. Now I depend on a glass of wine to do it for me.” [120-129] Further comparing her walk to her life, Callie suggests that when she is not in a calm space, she makes rash decisions. Callie assesses that she is neglecting spending time with God at church or by herself in order to access that calm in her life. I label Callie's story as transport in that her labyrinth walk provided self-awareness of the union that exists in community and her need for time with God.

Aware of entering a “very sacred or revered space” Heidi #26 identifies the path *as a protected, enveloped sanctuary, a suspended space*. “Upon entering, I tried to dump everything I was stressed about.” [12] Aware of people as she walks, she notices that they are concerned about their candles. “I wasn't worried if it dripped or went out....I liked having the candle. The symbol of the flame and the light contributed to my sense of spirituality.” Heidi keeps walking and thinking about her friends also walking the labyrinth until she “gives into the path” and becomes open. Feeling a little “mechanical and teetery” from a lack of balance, Heidi keeps walking to the center thinking about the struggles she is having as a mother but keeps noticing the movement of individuals on the same path which triggers a “message coming into my head like community.” In the center, Heidi felt secure and safe. “I didn't want to leave.” In the center, Heidi

hears a message, “We are all in this together, for one another.” [77] “When I got the message about community, I was surprised, then really grateful for people even though I didn’t know most of them. It was very special that we were all on the path that night at that time. I felt openness to everyone.” [107-110] At that point, Heidi accepts seeing auras around people. “I saw auras around people in the center—around them. I was amazed that there were so many auras in the center circle.... I could see some who had small auras but some had huge ones and it was just beautiful to see all the auras.” The auras start out as white light that radiate out at different distances. The white light then becomes the color indigo then purple. Heidi could feel her own aura and it grew “...much further reaching than when I went in.” [99-102] Walking back out of the center, Heidi feels gratitude and appreciation for the message about community. Heidi internalizes the message when she notices a plant on the way back out. “There was a plant in the middle of the path coming out and it made me smile. It was very healthy. It was on the way out and I was thinking of community. People kept walking around it. There was a looking out for the plant just like we’re looking out for each other.” [70-75] Heidi assesses that at the beginning, people were individuals. “At the end, there was continuity, becoming supported and renewed by the universe. [121-123] When she is aware of community, she can focus and “...know that I’m safe, not alone in my struggles. I can then open up and let go and receive what I need to hear.” [137-142] On the way out, Heidi has perfect

balance. I label Heidi's story as transport because of a renewal in the security and wonderment of community. Essentially, Paul #10 and Heidi both learn they are not isolated individuals and they both see auras around people as a manifestation of community.

Schuyler #27 identifies the path *as her life*. Upon entering, Schuyler feels like she is crossing an invisible line "...like walls, safety, everything around you, no one can get you—because it's all closed in even though in reality they can because it's an open space." [91-94] This perception is important to Schuyler because she suffers agoraphobia. Schuyler bravely sets a goal to reach the center and feels nervous from anticipation. She responds to flickering luminarias and candles in the distance as guides similar to life when one does not know from where guidance will come. Schuyler skips over rocks so as not to lose balance and tries to slow down to enjoy her journey. Like life, she passes by some people and some people pass her. People passing trigger a picture of a lost best friend she had in the military. Her friend could not bear to say good-bye to her so she picked a fight and chose to remain angry at Schuyler. Permanently saying good-bye to people is a painful pattern in Schuyler's life. As she keeps walking to the center, Schuyler notices a couple of classmates from her college and responds in pure joy at their silent recognition of her. Because of her agoraphobia, Schuyler views herself as an isolated individual who must overcome immense obstacles in

connecting with people outside of her home. In the center, Schuyler validates her achievement of reaching her goal as “self-confirming” that she can lead a normal life. Assessing that she accomplished her goal and people along the path recognize her, she chooses not to stay long in the center because she wants to find the other people again. Schuyler proposes that walking out is the most profound stage. “When I was walking out, I was passing people going in and seeing people I had seen in the beginning going out or crossing as I was passing them.... That’s like life when you haven’t seen people in a long time and all of a sudden you saw that person again and you give a wave and you’re glad you’ve seen them again.... It’s a strong connection like community.” [17-22, 162-164] Schuyler promotes that as she becomes more open to the labyrinth, she has a spiritual realization. “You cannot be realized unless you have realized and acknowledged others. You can’t be realized until you have taken in other people’s views because there’s no way to see who you are. I don’t want to go through life and see that I lived only in my own little world.” [210-220] I label Schuyler’s story as transformation because of her realization in light of her agoraphobia and because it was healing for her to leave her house, join a group of strangers, feel welcomed, appreciated, and safe in a strange place.

Sharing Life and Work with People (9.7%, 3 Subjects #’s 11, 12, and 19). All subjects also journey through the three-fold process of the labyrinth

ritual—conflict in purgation; wholeness in illumination; and internalization in union. Subjects #11 and 12 experience secondary phenomena. Subject #19 emphasizes being in an altered state of mind.

Lou #11 identifies the path *as a means of getting rid of distractions or walking meditation* to get to her “essential” Self. Upon entering the labyrinth, Lou says, “When you step inside the circle, you leave the world. You are between two worlds.” In response to the path walking to the center, Lou replaces bad tapes with good tapes, sees others as “flickering” like when people move in and out of her life, views the dark and featureless looking walkers like people during a primitive time, tries to look at visible and invisible patterns, and sees a flow of meeting and parting. Walking the twists and turns triggers faces of people once in her life that she has left and feels guilty passing people along the labyrinth path. “When people pass me, it doesn’t bother me. The whole thing was profound.” Preparing for center means peeling off layers “like an onion.” When Lou enters the center, she kneels. “I stopped to rest. I went down on my knees. Other people were too. I felt connected with them for a short time.” [84-86] Lou accepts that she is co-creating with the labyrinth and feels like she is “...living under water...going down into a well and Goddesses are there. It was really refreshing.... I can feel cross air currents like I can jump from one to another.” [105-110, 114-116] Because Lou is leaving her job of 15 years, she thinks about

all the people she will once again be leaving. “Some I’ll never see again.”

Remaining in an altered state on the way back out of center, Schuyler commits to acknowledging and appreciating people more in her life. Integrating her labyrinth walk into her life, Lou says, “I have been looking at people more especially at work since I walked. I’m talking to people more. I feel more loving towards people. I am just more aware of people now.” [130-132] I label Lou’s story as transformation because she is developing a life practice of awareness and appreciation of people.

Phred #12 identifies the labyrinth path *as going inwards physically and spiritually*. Walking to the center, Phred sees beauty in the weeds and rocks, keeps a non-hurried pace, avoids paying attention to anyone else, and anticipates that something is going to happen. When Phred enters the center, she calls in the four directions “...to create a place of safety and I saw a light criss-crossed at the top like a dome.” [209-211] Comparing the night candles and the dome of light above the labyrinth to the safety of her Catholic childhood, Phred assesses that someone Divine is doing this for her. “I could trust what was happening in there.... The candles and community made me connect to Our Lady of Fatima, the Blessed Mother. I connected with the mystery of all the people and how that all the time and the space/time continuum, well I thought somebody is doing this for me. The night candles stimulated all this.” [112-113, 161-167] Phred chooses to observe in the center. Adopting a keen observance on the way back out of the

center, Phred says, “Generally speaking, there were people who looked sad, some were having a good time, some looked lost, some were looking at me. I passed people but that was just part of walking the labyrinth.” [115-122] Phred also feels a solid sense of balance on the way out. When Phred is ready to leave the labyrinth, she hears a voice saying, “Wait a minute. Stop. Turn around.” [140-141] Phred dismisses the four directions and sits down on the grass to gaze at the labyrinth with people still walking the path. The sight surprisingly became an astounding clock to her—the wheels of time. Phred then felt a burden lifted from her. Phred has been planning to build a labyrinth at her church and has been overwhelmed at all the resources and help she needs. However, the burden being lifted is the adoption of trust—“that I wasn’t going to carry the burden alone that people would come.” [147-148] I label Phred’s story as transformation because she gains a valuable lesson—to trust others in sharing her responsibilities. I further discuss Phred’s story in Chapter 6.

Kalaya #19 is awestruck at *the design of the path*. Causal conditions for Kalaya include being frustrated with college and questioning if she should quit. In addition, she feels betrayed by a close classmate whom she judges as having done something immoral. Aware of her anxiety walking to the center, Kalaya attributes this anxiety to the group because her classmate is unexpectedly walking the labyrinth, along with several other students from her college. Kalaya keeps

walking questioning if all of life is a series of betrayals. Trying to manage her anxiety, Kalaya keeps her space as free from other people as possible. However, she is acutely aware of how much anxiety she has. “The anxiety was almost too much.... I have anxiety to the point of a panic attack.” [48, 51] Kalaya fears that she may leave the labyrinth like she does in real life—“just step out.” [49]

However, Kalaya senses that there is something in the labyrinth that “made me keep going. It made it not so overwhelming.” [50-51] Although at points she feels lost, Kalaya keeps putting one foot in front of another and something within her tells her things will work out. Just before reaching the center Kalaya’s response becomes one of anticipation as she walks in a rhythm with an open-mind. “I think that the closer I was getting to the center, things were lifting off of me.” [23-24, 138-139] Kalaya surrenders to the labyrinth. Claiming that giving in is not normal for her because she is so controlling, Kalaya says, “It put me into a trance not religiously but spiritually within myself.” [63-64] When Kalaya reaches the center, she lets go of the issues that are destroying her equilibrium. Kalaya says, “I felt peace and triumphant that I had let go...tears of joy and tears of relief that I was able to let go. It was wonderful.” [103-107] Accepting the “rest and peace” as she sits in the center, Kalaya assesses, “You really need a spiritual life.... I entered a state I’ve never experienced to that degree. I didn’t do anything but walk the labyrinth.” [167-169] Kalaya commits “...to accept people for who they are and not let them bother me. I have fought it my whole life.”

[155-157] As Kalaya walks back out of the center, she is very emotional because she does not want to leave the labyrinth. Kalaya also commits to staying in school because it is her dream and to begin a spiritual path by searching for a church with whom she can share her life. “It was amazing. I came out realizing how much more open I can be and wow this is just the beginning.” [149-151] Kalaya attributes her release from control and her change in accepting others to her Higher Power and is very thankful. I label Kalaya’s story as transformation because she promotes, “Ever since I walked the labyrinth, my life has been falling into place.... It connected me to a spiritual journey. It was a safe place to let go, very calming on the whole. If I think about it, a calm comes over me just remembering it.” [100-101, 161-163] Suggesting that her experience was one of transcendence, Kalaya adds, “I’ve been to see several psychologists, psychiatrists, therapists. I could never get my point across. It’s too difficult. I think the labyrinth as a whole gave more insight to myself then all those times combined that I went for professional help.” [32-42]

Next, I present a brief summary of findings followed by the section, Labyrinth Performance Theory.

Summary of Findings

Thirty-one out of thirty-two subjects, 97% claim they had a spiritual experience. Twenty-one out of thirty-one subjects, 67.7% claim to have been in an altered state including fourteen subjects who claim they experienced secondary

phenomenon. Twenty-eight out of thirty-one subjects, 90.3% journey through the three-fold process of the labyrinth ritual and 9.7% or three out of thirty-one subjects do not although they experience a heightened awareness of loving and unity, a state of transcendence and oneness, and increased self-knowledge.

Transport results for ten subjects and *transformation* results for twenty-one subjects. See Table 10. Conditions, Consequences, Results for descriptions of transport and transformation.

Eight (25.9%) of the thirty-one performer-perceivers describe stories of *spiritual development*. Three themes emerge.

Seeking Union with God	9.7%	3 Subjects #'s 3, 22, and 24
Asking for Divine Help	9.7%	3 Subjects #'s 2, 21, and 23
Journeying to Find Self	6.5%	2 Subjects #'s 6, 13

Fourteen (45.2%) of the thirty-one performer-perceivers describe stories of *personal development*. Three themes emerge.

Releasing Judgment of Self and Others	16.1%	5 Subjects #'s 4, 14, 30, 31, and 32
Gaining Self-assurance	19.4%	6 Subjects #'s 8, 9, 15, 16, 17, and 20
Facing Childhood Pain	9.7%	3 Subjects #'s 5, 7 and 29

Nine (29%) of the thirty-one performer-perceivers describe a story of *social development*. Three themes emerge.

Integrating the Movement of the Labyrinth, the Natural World, Ancestors, People, and the Self as One	6.5%	2 Subjects <i>#1, 18</i>
Accepting the Individual Self as a Member of Community	12.9%	4 Subjects <i>#’s 10, 25, 26, and 27</i>
Sharing Life and Work with People	9.7%	3 Subjects <i>#’s 11, 12, and 19</i>

Only three out of thirty-one subjects reveal variations to the labyrinth ritual process occurring in three stages. However, these subjects have spiritual experiences and structure their experiences according to Krathwohl’s taxonomy as illustrated in Table 10. Subjects *#1, Gabriella* and *#18, Maria Rochelle* do not experience any conflict. Their journeys are awareness to heightened awareness of loving, unity and oneness. Subject *#18* also experiences secondary phenomena with an infusion of light pouring in from a window that should not allow light rays to pierce it and with a temporary cessation of arthritic pain in her body, which continuously gives her problems while walking. Davenol *#29* does not reach the center and turns back. Davenol also experiences secondary phenomenon, which is a cloud of smoke on the labyrinth, and he chooses to ignore it. However, Davenol commits to walking the labyrinth as part of his spiritual practice to free himself of childhood pain and fully experience self-love. Gabriella would make walking the labyrinth a part of her spiritual practice only if there is a labyrinth in a community to whom she belongs. Maria Rochelle does not advocate walking the labyrinth as a spiritual practice because she does not

want to align herself with any kind of spiritual practice, which is how she was raised in her family.

The other twenty-nine subjects advocate walking the labyrinth as part of their spiritual practice.

Labyrinth Performance Theory

In searching for spiritual experiences by performing the labyrinth ritual, I looked for repeated patterns of happenings, events, or actions/interactions that represent what people do, think, and feel in response to walking the labyrinth's chaotic-looking scheme of twists and turns and the labyrinth's three-fold path—the journey to the center, the rest in the center, and the journey back out from center. People are performers in that they *do* the *walking* of the three-fold unicursal path; this in essence is the main activity of the labyrinth ritual. However, when they enter the labyrinth, they find themselves in a world that makes the familiar strange. In response to the anti-structure of the design in that it is one requiring strange, unpredictable, and circular walking movements rather than familiar, planned, and linear ones, people *perform* more than the activity of walking the path. In all its capabilities, each body performs by imagining, living, enacting, representing, or mirroring his life in reaction to the given circumstances or *conditions* of the labyrinth. Perceiving reactions or making-the-strange-familiar becomes a key element for the performer. In essence, each individual

becomes the performer and audience member of her own performance—encountering the familiar-made-strange transforming to the strange-made-familiar. Hence, the labyrinth walker is a performer-perceiver demonstrating her ability to respond to and/or shape the contextual situations of the labyrinth in which she finds herself. The labyrinth walker becomes a *performer-perceiver* participating in a *process*. My research study suggests the following testable propositions.

1. Each performer-perceiver *becomes* the potentiality for a new reality to emerge as he aligns or misaligns his actions/interactions with the conditions that he perceives in the labyrinth. Hence, practicing the strange walk becomes an *embodied practice*, which is the performer-perceiver's *performance*.

2. When a labyrinth facilitator presents the guidelines for walking the labyrinth as a meditative journey in a church or on the grounds of a church, performer-perceivers whether they are or are not religious members of a particular religion or denomination perceive this *process* as a *spiritual experience*. They perceive the spiritual experience as: (1) *relating to the Divine*—God, Goddess, Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit, Spirit, Essence, or the Universe; (2) *finding Self*—inner knowing, inner Self, life-force, or center of Self; (3) *walking a sacred space*—demarcated space for meditation, design of ancestral tradition; or historical Christian tradition; (4) *gaining meaning*—intellectual and emotional

clarity of events, life-plans, problems, or situations; or (5) *creating intention*—co-creation with energy forms or natural world.

4. This *spiritual experience* begins at the threshold of the labyrinth or *limen* with a *sensation of*—(1) stepping into; (2) passing into; (3) going through a door, archway, portal, or gate; (4) entering another world; (5) crossing; or (6) entering sacred space. Once inside the labyrinth whether immediately aware of, gradually aware after walking a distance, or acutely aware nearing the center or in the center, performer-perceivers experience liminoid characteristics throughout their walk and at times beyond the walk. Performer-perceivers identify—(1) *space as*—between two worlds; suspended; another realm; or a container without walls just safety; (2) *time as*—non-existent; non-worrisome; insignificant; the world stopping; standing still; outside somewhere; another zone; a whole day; or automatic slowing; (3) *the body as*—non-existent; heavy then light; loftiness; free of pain; a fast pace to a slow pace; spiraling inward; floating; Jell-O; cleansed; weight-lifting; shedding layers; or things dropping away; (4) *the mind as*—zoned or gone; and/or (5) *secondary phenomena such as: seeing* auras around people’s head; a cloud of smoke; light emanating from the labyrinth; or light above the labyrinth; *feeling* personal aura; unity; connection; the heart warming; Divine touch; an infusion of light; an infusion of Divine love; energy forms; or ancestral spirits; *hearing* a message; and/or *smelling* a body scent not present; or the scent of water.

5. Performer-perceivers describe the sequence of their walk as (1) in the beginning; (2) in the middle; and (3) at the end. This breakdown reflects the process of movement through the three stages of the labyrinth: Stage 1—purgation—walking to the center; Stage 2—illumination—resting in the center; and Stage 3—union—walking back out from center. The essential element of the sequence or process is *change*. This change may be permanent or temporary.

6. Change does not solely occur because of the sequence or stages of the labyrinth but also because of the manner in which the performer-perceiver acts/interacts with the event of each stage through his feelings, appreciations, values, motivations, and attitudes. Therefore, the performance process is described not only as the stages of the labyrinth ritual but is also examined in terms of the emotional nature of the performer-perceiver's action/interaction. The stages of the ritual mark *where* change occurs while feelings, appreciations, motivations, values, and attitudes mark *what* changes. *How* change occurs depends on the thoughts, emotions, and behaviors of the performer-perceiver: first in receiving and responding to *conditions* in Stage 1; second in accepting or valuing the new consequences that arise from that reception and response; third in organizing or assessing the *consequences* in Stage 2; and fourth in internalizing whether temporarily or permanently a new reality or value that emerges during Stage 3 as a *result* of her assessment in Stage 2. According to Krathwohl's hierarchy of behavior in the affective domain, receiving, responding, valuing,

organizing, and internalizing represent a continuum of simple to more complex behavior to process and structure for acceptance or rejection feelings, appreciations, motivations, attitudes, and values. In other words, *what* change occurs depends on *how* the performer-perceiver structures the process.

7. The performer-perceiver becomes the living *structure*, or perhaps the embodied cognition, for the labyrinth ritual *process*. The process occurs in three stages. Of course, because the interplay between the living structure and the process is variable, each performer-perceiver's performance of the labyrinth ritual becomes its own unique story.

8. In Stage 1 traditionally named Purgation, inner or external conflict emerges as the performer-perceiver receives and responds to contextual conditions. Despite the anti-structure of the labyrinth, the three-fold path—beginning, middle, and end—is an ordered form but the performer perceives disorder in the *contextual conditions* of the labyrinth such as coping with the unpredictable design of twists and turns and/or happenings on the path such as: relating to other walkers; lighting a candle and keeping it lit; listening to music; ringing a bell; covering the head with a scarf; reading a text; tripping over rocks; losing balance on the narrow path; getting lost; staying in the center a long or short time; becoming aware or unaware of surroundings; being in an altered state of mind; or encountering an extraordinary phenomenon. Contextual conditions trigger *causal conditions* such as: (1) cultural or religious needs; (2) family problems; (3)

depression; or (4) personal issues to surface. Negative emotions such as fear, worry, anxiety, and stress are felt or heightened if the performer-perceiver begins the walk in such a state.

As the performer-perceiver walks, she fills in the gaps of disorder by: (1) *Receiving*—identifying the disorder as a personal unsolved life problem or situation related to one or more areas concerning *spiritual development, personal development, and/or social development*; (2) *Responding*—questioning new concepts or ideals to fully understand the problem or situation; and (3) *Submitting* to a secondary phenomenon that presents an additional model to understand the problem or situation. The secondary phenomena are *intervening conditions*, which usually occur just before the performer-perceiver reaches the center or in the center.

9. In Stage 2 traditionally named Illumination, a performer-perceiver recognizes through involvement new possibilities for resolution to a conflict, a means to redress a personal problem, or an intervening secondary phenomenon to enlighten an issue. The performer-perceiver continues to fill in the gaps by: (4) *Valuing*—accepting a belief that would solve the problem or meet the needs of the situation; (5) *Organizing*—creating a plan for responsible behavior in solving the problem or situation in order to meet the needs and/or desires of community, family, and/or self. Self-fulfillment or its potentiality affects the performer-

perceiver with a sense of wholeness as a positive emotional state replaces his or her negative emotional state.

10. In Stage 3 traditionally named Union, the performer-perceiver internalizes the solution as a new or renewed part of his or her life. The performer-perceiver continues to fill in the gaps by: (6) *Integrating*—revising judgments and changing behavior in light of the new belief; and (7) *Internalizing*—committing on a daily basis to practice the change.

In addition to experiencing a changed value and emotional state, the performer-perceiver may experience his or her body as lighter walking back out of the center in contrast to its heaviness while walking to the center.

11. The *result* of the process or spiritual experience is the personal story in the attainment of values, attitudes, motivations, and/or appreciations related to one or a combination of the following themes: (1) seeking union with God; (2) asking for Divine help; (3) journeying to find Self; (4) releasing judgment of self and others; (5) facing childhood pain; (6) gaining self-assurance; (7) finding unity and oneness with natural world and others; (8) accepting the individual self as a member of a community; and (9) sharing life and work with others.

12. Evidence reveals examples of disorder/order when performer-perceivers initially receive the twists and turns as: (1) distractions of the will in meditation; (2) the unknown center Self or the unknown in life; (3) issues in life; (4) places in life; and (5) a way to focus on a problem in life. Because the action/interaction of

the performer-perceiver moves according to the behavioral process presented above, disorder transforms to order in such examples as: (1) separation/union; (2) pain/comfort; (3) indecision/decisiveness; (4) isolation/community; (5) insecurity/safety; (6) guilt/exoneration; and (7) stress/peace. Likewise, evidence reveals performer-perceivers initially receive the labyrinth path as: (1) a hard journey; (2) her/his life; (3) patterns in life; (4) pathway to center where God is; (5) a walk through life; (6) a spiral inwards to the center Self; (7) a sacred space/world. Again, when performer-perceivers fill in the gaps of disorder with behaviors along Krathwohl's continuum, evidence reveals additional examples of change from disorder to order such as: (1) shame/freedom; (2) fear/independence; (3) self-destructiveness/self-love; (4) despair/hope; (5) turmoil/success; (6) self-constraints/liberation; (7) worry/trust.

13. Pre-ritual and post-ritual states-of-being also provide evidence suggesting a new positive reality. Pre-ritual states-of-being include: nervous, stressed, anxious, agitated, frustrated, low, grief-stricken, and doubtful. Post-ritual states-of-being include: peaceful, calm, thankful, relief, safe, empowered, relaxed, connected, uplifted, and loving.

In Table 10, I align action/interaction of the performer-perceiver, which is the structure of simple to more complex behavior, to conditions, which is the process of walking through the three stages of the labyrinth ritual; present how these change from one stage to another; and represent how the outcomes of one

set of actions/interactions feed back into the context to become part of the conditions influencing the next set of actions/interactions.

TABLE 10. Conditions, Consequences, Results		
Process:	Structure: Actions/Interactions	
Stage 1: Contextual Condition & Intervening Conditions	1. Receiving and 2. Responding	Subjects
Labyrinth's twists & turns Candle blows out	Identifies twists & turns <i>as distractions of his will</i> interfering with achieving union with Jesus and is nervous & tense. Perseveres with trust towards the center.	#3
	Views twists & turns <i>as the unknown center of her Self</i> and feels uncomfortable. Questions where she is in life in relationship to God.	#6
	Identifies twists & turns <i>as the unknown in life</i> and is obsessively worried. Leaves the labyrinth to relight his candle suddenly burning out.	#10
	Sees twists & turns <i>as issues in her life</i> and is nervous. Questions her abilities as wife, mother, daughter-in-law.	#14
	Receives twists & turns <i>as places in her life</i> and is reflective. Sheds her outer hyper self to lay hold of her inner Self.	#17
	Identifies twists & turns <i>as shifts in her journey</i> through life that are painful. Gives concerns such as the war, church issues, and problems of her grown children to Jesus.	#22
	Follows twists & turns <i>as a way to focus</i> . Detaches from distractions to grieve the losses of her mother and cat.	#31
	Follows twists & turns <i>as a way to focus</i> . Relives how upset she was the night her daughter was born.	#9
	Follows twists & turns <i>as a way to detach</i> and feels anxious, tense, & scared. Asks herself and God if reuniting with her ex-boyfriend is the right thing to do.	#2
	Stage 2: Consequences	3. Valuing and 4. Organizing
	Chooses to meditate in the center and accepts union with Jesus and submits to His security.	Subject
	Proposes that the center is a time to assess where her relationship to God is.	#3
	Weights his decision to relight his candle by himself. Submits to being a member of the community rather than an isolated walker. Meditates and feels peace and connection.	#6
	Accepts a physical jolt from the Holy Spirit pulling her into the center. Chooses to let go of self-judgment and judgment of others. Feels amazed.	#10
		#14

Affirmation Card In the center basket	Allows catharsis to happen in the center. Resolves problems and stresses. Assesses she is at one with natural world, self, and others.	#17
	Submits to Divine impulse to fall on her knees in the center. Accepts an overwhelming sense of God's presence & love and a message of comfort & trust.	#22
	Evaluates in the center her handling of her mother's illness and death. Judges that she did the best she could for her mother and chooses to end her guilt & grief.	#31
	Chooses to release emotions (crying, grief, sorrow, relief, and happiness from stress over her pending parents' divorce & a fight with her girlfriend, from appreciation of her baby, and from recognizing her individual needs.	#9
	Accepts secondary phenomenon of smelling her boyfriend's scent in the breeze as a sign to reunite with him. Submits to sudden memory of a 14 year old friend who died by kneeling and praying for him. Resolves loss with thanksgiving for his life.	#2
Stage 3: Results	5. Characterizing	Subject
<u>Transport</u> (Renewal of security in God)	Commits to peace with God's message that He will be a comfort, presence, & shelter to him. Feels peaceful, calm, & free from neck pain.	#3
<u>Transport</u> (Renewal of spiritual connection and security in God)	Suggests that the labyrinth center is a tangible place of heightened awareness of a spiritual connection to God and safety. Suggests on the way out how to bring her calm & peace out to the world.	#6
<u>Transport</u> (Revision of himself as an isolated individual but a member of community)	Suggests people are not strangers on the labyrinth; rather, they are connected with one another. Sees auras of people as he walks out with ease & peace.	#10
<u>Transformation:</u> (Liberation from self-judgment & judgment of others and birth of an empowered woman at peace with her circumstances and happy with life)	Adopts power of Holy Spirit to release self-judgment and judgment of others. Integrates empowerment and new inner peace to her roles of wife, mother, daughter-in-law and volunteer church member.	#14
<u>Transformation</u> (Liberation from hyperactive Self to a centered Self)	Suggests that light or God's love replaces hyper compulsive energy she has always known. Integrates memory of her walk when she gets hurried to regain connection & oneness with nature, others, & world.	#17
<u>Transformation</u> (Trust to turn over her concerns to God on a daily basis)	Promotes living her life knowing God will nourish her daily in love and will be a part of solutions to problems. Feels warmth from the hand of God upon her, relief, and refreshment.	#22
<u>Transformation</u>		

(Liberation from grieving over mother's & cat's death)	Promotes the labyrinth as a spiritual tool for life's direction and resolution of problems. Feels peace & freedom from guilt over handling her mother's illness and death and is ready to go on with her life.	#31
<u>Transformation</u> (Liberation from problems & self-doubt)	Promotes the labyrinth as a sacred container where she can bring her problems and leave them in the labyrinth. Reunites with her friend and appreciates her baby as her life inspiration rather than shame.	#9
<u>Transformation</u> (Resolution to reunite with ex-boyfriend)	Suggests that her peaceful time in the labyrinth replenishes her spirit to go back to the world having life direction.	#2
Process:	Structure: Actions/Interactions	
Stage 1: Contextual Condition & Intervening Conditions	1. Receiving and 2. Responding	Subjects
The path of the labyrinth Rocks Ants People Sun Moon	Aware of the <i>path as a symbolic journey of loving</i> . Aware of patterns of light in the darkness from the luminarias, sun going down, the moon & candles. Aware of ancestors and what they knew about walking and patterns symbolizing beauty & change rather than contemporary spiritual suffering. Responds to natural world like putting a rock in place, acknowledging the ants, taking shoes off to feel the ground, listening to dogs bark, looking at the sky. Feels unity with natural world, people, patterns & materials that make up the path.	#1
Path Stones Candle	Identifies <i>path as a hard journey</i> and was shaking, tripping over stones, losing balance on twists and turns, trying to protect her candle, which is her literal light and spark within so she could literally see as well as see the past and future. Grieves over her childhood and questions where her relationship is going.	#5
Path Luminarias Candles Rocks People	Identifies <i>path as her life</i> . Sets goal to reach the center and feels nervous from anticipation. Responds to flickering luminarias in the distance as guides and candles blowing out like life when one wonders where guidance is going to come from. skips over rocks so as not to lose balance like getting past something in life. Tries to slow down to enjoy her journey. Prevents herself from taking a spill around the turns like life not knowing which corner turn to take. Passes people on the path like in life.	#27
Path Rocks Turns Candle People	Identifies the <i>path as her life</i> where she can't always see and makes wrong choices. Feels hyper tense about reaching the center goal. Trips over rocks and weeds like life when she isn't watching where she is going. Fears getting lost by making the wrong turn like in her life. Dislikes people around her like her family because she wants her own space and freedom to move at her own pace. Protects the flame of her candle which not only helps her see the path but is her inner light.	#8
Path Turns Rocks & bushes	Follows the <i>path as the paths of her life</i> . Remembers difficult times in her marriage when she walks through turns. Identifies rocks & bushes as times when she and her husband compromised and worked things out. Keeps a slow pace for balance. Keeps walking in peace & relaxation during times when the path is easy and marriage thoughts would disappear.	#15

Path People Rocks	Aware of the <i>path as representing his own life</i> . Responds to people ahead of him as people ahead of him in life. Responds to rocks out of place as roadblocks in his life. Remembers 5 years ago when he suffered depression as he puts rocks back in their place relating how he had to pick himself up and keep going during his depression. Feels like he is walking a narrow bridge on the path and if he falls off or gets lost, he will have to start over like he has in life. Responds to people as shadows walking past him as he gets more zoned out on the path getting into himself.	#16
Path Smoke	Identifies the <i>four quadrants of the path as quarters of his life</i> . Responds to quarters as one carrying a lot of baggage from childhood. Keeps walking past a cloud of smoke.	#29
Path Smoke Little boy People	Identifies <i>path as patterns in her life</i> . Keeps walking past a cloud of smoke. Responds to a little boy ahead of her with personal inadequacy because she did not have opportunity to begin her spiritual life as a child. Fears she will harm his path but accepts him as a role model of non-judgment for her. Fears offending people if she passes them because she doesn't belong but then accepts herself as one of them because she is on the same path.	#32
Path People	Identifies the <i>path as the pathway to the center where God is</i> . Responds to the path as a magnet drawing her to God's bonds of love. Meditates on the death of Jesus and herself dying from cancer. Responds to people as other pilgrims but a little intrusive.	#24
Path Candle	Identifies the <i>path as walking through life's darkness</i> with a little light within symbolized by the candle. Grieves over his relationship with his father by crying so he can release, cleanse, & let go.	#7
Path Twists & turns People	Identifies the <i>path as a walk through life</i> . Aware of going in and out of the twists & turns like the constant pace she lives her life. Responds to the outer edge of the path like she is tilting as her mind races. Responds to walking near the center with calm. Responds to passing people like life with some people slowing her down, some passing, and some she must pass. Responds to the night, the cold, the people as spiritually walking through life with people.	#25
Path People	Aware of the <i>path as patterns & the way the patterns shifted like a breath stirring through her head</i> . Tries to resolve issues about her job. Responds to people believing she is in their way and feels uncomfortable.	#30
Path Candle People	Identifies <i>path as sacred, revered, protected, enveloped & suspended space</i> . Names the space a sanctuary. Tries to dump everything that she is stressed about along the path. Aware of people passing and looking worried about their candles. Responds to candle as a symbol of her spirituality with no need to worry.	#26
Path People	Aware of the <i>design of the path</i> in awe at the thought of the love put into building it. Responds to the group with severe anxiety attempting to keep her space between people. Struggles with a moral issue and betrayal of her close friend who also is walking the path. Questions if all of life is a series of betrayals. Questions if she should leave the path like she does in real life because of her panic. Responds to an unknown something that keeps her on the path. Keeps putting one foot in front of another and feels a growing excitement as she confronts two issues—staying in school and her friend's betrayal.	#19
Path Vision of son Vision of mother	Identifies the <i>path as a non-judgmental world</i> where you cannot do anything wrong. Seeks to let go. Tries to empty mind & release thoughts. Responds to vision of son's face and tries to accept he is leaving for college. Keeps walking and realizes that she must let go of block to passion with her husband. Relives how she and her husband used to be as a couple but they are not now. Accepts vision of deceased mother and hears her say that she will be OK.	#20
Field of resistance	Identifies <i>path as energy forms</i> . Aware of the path as field of resistance. Feels confused at the labyrinth's lack of acceptance of her. Keeps	#21

Pearlesque light emanating	walking and path becomes less of a struggle. Responds to a pearlesque light emanating from the labyrinth as a sign that her resistance is over and feels safe in the light. Identifies light as purity. Seeks more authenticity in herself so she can be more to those in her life.	
Path	Identifies <i>the path as a heavenly world</i> . Thanks God. Keeps walking this opens up paths of burdens that she needed help with. Seeks help when the labyrinth opened up a seal to an unresolved issue deep within her.	#23
Path	Identifies the <i>path as going inwards physically and spiritually</i> . Sees beauty in the weeds and rocks. Keeps a non-hurried pace although people are behind her. Wonders where she is on the path. Avoids paying attention to anyone else. Anticipates something will happen and stays focused in the moment.	#12
Path People	Aware of <i>path as a spiral inward to her inner center</i> . Body feels heavy. Sheds outside world as she walks. Tries not to resent people passing because it distracts from her interior experience by acknowledging that they are on their spiritual path moving at their pace.	#13
Path People	Aware of sensation that she is <i>walking the path with pilgrims hundreds of years ago</i> . Distresses over so many people pressing around her. Feels claustrophobic and too fat for the labyrinth. Feels people have trouble getting around her.	#4
Path Window light	Aware of <i>sensation of passing like she was in an ancient space</i> . Aware of dark corners in the Chartres Cathedral. Sees blue glow of light coming through the window. Questions how any light is coming through because she was told the window was designed to prevent light. Feels infused with the light. Keeps walking with her cane but is aware that she has no pain from arthritis, bronchitis, and back pain.	#18
Path People Dark Twists & turns	Identifies <i>path as means of getting rid of distractions</i> in order to get to her “essential me.” Replaces bad tapes with good tapes as she walks. Responds to others walking as “flickering” like life when people are in and out of your life. Responds to the dark and featureless looking people as a primitive time. Tries to look at visible and invisible patterns and sees a flow of meeting and parting. Responds to twists & turns of the path in a melancholic state with people’s faces from her past popping up. The turns meant people leaving. Feels guilty passing people.	#11
Stage 2: Consequences	3. Valuing and 4. Organizing	Subject
	Chooses to believe there is more meaning moving in and out of the center than being in the center. Proposes that the movement along the patterns is an opportunity to connect with people and the natural world and experience a heightened beauty and love for others within the labyrinth and to bring back to the outside world. Chooses to make peace with her childhood. Assesses the center as peaceful because she can rest from everything in the past. Evaluates relationship with son is good.	#1 #5
	Accepts self-confirmation that she is capable of attaining her goals. Judges that she shouldn’t stay long in the center because she wants to meet up with people along the path. Feels welcomed now. Compares the safety of the labyrinth to the safety of her room as a child.	#27
	Accepts relief in the center knowing her journey is half-way done. Assesses that if her candle went out, she would ask no one for help but she would help someone else if he asked. Evaluates people moving like ants back and forth and proposes that she won’t live her life going around in circles anymore because she has a path now.	#8
	Assesses how much she has changed and grown as she meditates in the center about looking back at her marriage when she was walking in.	#15

Validates himself reaching the center. Assesses the center is an end goal and theorizes about his future as he prepares to complete a new labyrinth on the journey out.	#16
Assesses that he doesn't reach the center because of fear walking through a quadrant of the labyrinth that symbolizes his childhood. Balances the disappointment with hope for future labyrinth walks.	#29
Walks into the center but believes she didn't do it right. Leaves center and mistakenly walks out of the labyrinth. Relates the mistake to her life pattern of getting out of something detrimental only to go back in. Accepts liberation from the destructive pattern. Assesses that she is now worthy to be a part of the labyrinth and reenters it to complete the walk correctly and freely.	#32
Surrenders herself to an infusion of God's love in the center by kneeling. Assesses the physical and spiritual warming of the heart as a wonderful affirmation of God's never ending presence.	#24
Assesses the lighting of the candle in the center as a symbol of illumination which is finding inner light to take out to the world. Submits to infusion of God's purity & clarity that clears away the clutter. Formulates an understanding of his father.	#7
Surrenders individual concerns from walking the single narrow path and joins other people in the center because they are in the same place now. Integrates the unifying of herself with others as a prayer of thanksgiving for being with people.	#25
Accepts an unexpected weight from having two abortions lifting off her shoulders and her body feels lighter from relief. Kneels in awe.	#30
Accepts a message of community in the center so she need not feel alone in her struggles with motherhood. Integrates message with openness to people as she sees auras around them.	#26
Surrenders to the center in an inner spiritual trance. Surrenders outrage with her friend and school and regains equilibrium from panic. Adapts mind to tears of joy & relief and rest & peace.	#19
Surrenders to floating into the center. Pleads for help. Judges that a vision of her dead mother assuring her she will be ok is a sign that letting go of her son and a healing in her marriage is forthcoming. Accepts relief from fear, sorrow, grief, anger, tension.	#20
Surrenders internal barriers preventing her from growing into a genuine life.	#21
Accepts revelation of unresolved deep-seated issue and formulates what she needs to do. Assesses that she is now worthy of God's love and Accepts infusion of His peace & love like fresh air coming through a window.	#23
Sees a light criss-crossed at the top of the labyrinth like a protective dome. Compares the night candles to the safety of her Catholic childhood. Assesses that someone Divine is doing this for her and that she could trust that what is happening in the labyrinth would be for the good.	#12
Submits to other people walking the path as a wonderful sense of community rather than as a distraction. Integrates not being able to see the path's design with shedding American culture's view that claims, "We're the shapers of our destiny." [125-127] Assesses that	#13

	<p>because she is on the path, Higher Power is going to make use of her wherever she is rather than trying to figure out what God's plans are for her. Relinquishes that concept because it is a block to her consciousness.</p> <p>Formulates a plan for fitting into the rhythm of all the people so that she doesn't feel too fat to be walking the path. Assesses her plan with the knowledge that hundreds of people used to be on the path in the middle ages.</p> <p>Assesses the significance of her spiritual experience—walking the labyrinth path is a sacred act—is that she will be able to teach others what a spiritual experience feels like. Relates feeling to a passing into the ancient pilgrims' spirits and being infused with light.</p> <p>Joins in the unity of others in the center by kneeling. Accepts that Goddesses were there, that she was cleansed & refreshed like going into the water of a well, and that she could feel air currents crossing to such an extent like she could jump from one to another.</p>	<p>#4</p> <p>#18</p> <p>#11</p>
Stage 3: Results	5. Characterizing	Subject
<p><u>Transport</u> (Self-affirmation of oneness with natural world and people)</p> <p><u>Transformation</u> (Liberation from childhood pain & from worry over the future)</p> <p><u>Transport</u> (Self-confirmation that she is able to reach a goal and that she is likable to be accepted by others)</p> <p><u>Transformation</u> (Self-actualization into adult life)</p> <p><u>Transport</u> (Self-validation of successful growth as a wife)</p> <p><u>Transformation</u> (Self-knowledge gained & self-confidence renewed from past depression)</p> <p><u>Transport</u> (Self-discovery of childhood baggage he maintains and of how to approach healing through the labyrinth)</p>	<p>Internalizes heightened sense of beauty & heightened recognition of loving as she walks back out ready to "come home" to the real world of receiving people and being received by people.</p> <p>Resolves childhood pain and integrates peace & safety in the center with freedom from worry about future self-direction and lets down her candle.</p> <p>Promotes walking out as the most profound part of walking the path. Internalizes the accomplishment of her goal—getting to center with self-assurance & excitement and walks back out assessing how far others have walked the path to center.</p> <p>Internalizes self-assurance through independence from family and commits to academic career choice and life plan.</p> <p>Internalizes the focus and peacefulness from the center as being successful in her marriage and commits to applying the focus & peace to her daily life.</p> <p>Promotes that he knows more about himself than before he had gone to the labyrinth because he saw things "in the fifth dimension" deep inside. Internalizes confidence that he could handle anything he came across on the path back out, which is to him a new labyrinth.</p> <p>Promotes walking the labyrinth path as vital to his internal healing of his past. Though not arriving in center, manages to derive a benefit—no longer feels past was lost time. Promotes more walks to overcome his childhood pain.</p>	<p>#1</p> <p>#5</p> <p>#27</p> <p>#8</p> <p>#15</p> <p>#16</p> <p>#29</p>

<u>Transformation</u> (Liberation from self-deprecation & judgment to self-love)	Internalizes non-judgment & freedom from shame with the recognition that there is no wrong way to walk the labyrinth.	#32
<u>Transformation</u> (Intimate unique & everlasting union with Jesus)	Promotes walking back out of labyrinth as a freeing & uplifting time to God's faithfulness in answering her prayer in the center. Internalizes the infusion of His love from the center as something that never leaves you.	#24
<u>Transformation</u> (Healing from pain in understanding his father)	Promotes his walk into the center and time in the center as a "primal archetypal response due to the labyrinth's connection with the earth and the summer solstice." [119-121] Commits to the power of understanding his relationship with his father received in the center while walking out even though at times there were breaks in intention from other walkers.	#7
<u>Transport</u> (Self-awareness of unity in community and her need for unity with God)	Suggests from walking the path unbalanced and in need of creativity that she must consistently reach out to God but neglects to take time to do so. Promotes walking the labyrinth path as a prayer to reflect about God, clear your head, and experience union with others.	#25
<u>Transformation</u> (Relief from guilt held for 30 years)	Internalizes the peace and patterns of the path on the way back out. Integrates her body feeling lighter ever since her walk that brought her relief from carrying the burden of her abortions.	#30
<u>Transport</u> (Release of loneliness in the security of community)	Avoids walking on a plant in the middle of the path on the way out of the labyrinth and observes other walkers doing the same. Integrates looking out for the plant with her experience of community in the center that everyone is looking out for one another.	#26
<u>Transformation</u> (Liberation from self-judgment & judgment of others; renewal of her spiritual life)	Internalizes the peace & deliverance from outrage & judgment in the center with gladness & control walking out. Supports that ever since she walked the labyrinth her life has been falling into place and that she now needs a church community.	#19
<u>Transformation</u> (Liberation from possessiveness over children & renewal of communication with her husband)	Commits to peace and sense of letting go of her stress as she continues to float on the path while walking out feeling secure that she is not alone. Commits to new communication with her husband and reports the relationship is going better.	#20
<u>Transformation</u> (Liberation to love and be loved)	Chants as she walks back out, "I am innocent. I walk without shame. I am beloved" in cadence with her steps and her body feeling lighter. Proposes that she co-created her transformation—the realization of other energy forms—with the labyrinth and attributes it to Goddess. Feels relief, sense of peace, and quiet elation on the way out. Internalizes the transformation on a daily basis.	#21
<u>Transformation</u> (Self-affirmation that she is worthy of God's love & healing; new self-direction in life planning)	Internalizes affirmation through singing praise hymns to God that she is setting out on a new path. Revises her life plans knowing she is worthy and senses God's presence within her.	#23
<u>Transformation</u> (Self-trust & balance; faith in others to take on shared	Integrates feelings of empowerment and relief with solutions to life problems. Adopts a keen observance of people on the path back out and hears a voice at the limen saying, "Wait a minute. Stop. Turn around." Responds to sight of the labyrinth as a balanced clock with awe and inner peace. Integrates wisdom from the labyrinth walk with brief meditations at work sometimes reliving her labyrinth walk to arrive at balance so she	#12

responsibilities)	knows what to do next free from worry & judgment and free to relinquish some responsibility to others.	
<u>Transformation</u> (Renewal of her spiritual nature and revision of faith that her Higher Power will use her wherever she is rather than where she should be)	Assesses that not knowing where you are going is all about faith and having faith. Renews her inner flame, letting her light shine for others on the way back out to the world.	#13
<u>Transformation</u> (Re-visioning of her body as capable of movement in various circles of people)	Integrates her body movement to the rhythms of the path and people in a graceful manner like a dance. Promotes her experience as a healing and is now often complimented on her movement walking the labyrinth.	#4
<u>Transformation</u> (First transcendent spiritual experience)	Internalizes the labyrinth walk as a dance where she was free from many body pains. When she exited the labyrinth, she came back to her body in all its pain and needed people to help her walk and go down the Cathedral steps. Internalizes her walk on the labyrinth as being one of the pilgrims from long ago.	#18
<u>Transformation</u> (Awareness & appreciation of people in her life)	Internalizes silent figures walking on the path with people who are now in her life. On a daily basis, she is talking to people more and feels more loving towards them.	#11

CHAPTER SIX: LOOKING BACK AND TO THE FUTURE

Introduction

I marvel at the individual stories of spiritual experiences told to me in the thirty-one interviews I conducted. Using grounded theory methodology leads me to parallel challenges that the subjects encounter: facing the unknown; coping with fragmentation and disorder; committing to the process; allowing intuition, emotions, thought, and imagination to shape my creative interplay with the data; listening and responding to difficulties; accepting consequences as they unfold; ordering the disorder; and waiting for a moment of possibility that defies time, suspends judgment, diffuses all thought yet generates an associative answer with the full impact of a creative revelatory force. In essence, I also engage in a labyrinthine ritual. Along with my own labyrinth walking, grounded theory methodology provides me an insider's view in my field analysis as I engage in the research subjects' "lived experiences."

This chapter explores my process as the interpreter of the research and the original research question: does performing the sacred labyrinth ritual help to create a spiritual experience and if so, what performance elements contribute to that experience and how does an individual interpret the experience? Essentially, I provide the answer to this question in the previous chapter on results; however, I expand on the findings by relating the results to literature that I present in earlier

chapters. The literature focuses on my central argument that ritual and performance both share the concept of spirit—a developing consciousness towards self-knowledge, which is the journey to wholeness.

This discussion also addresses the major concerns of my research, which distinguishes the field of performance studies as inquiry into *what* performance does to the performer/audience and *how* performance in a given situation does so. I further expand on the *what, why, where, and how* of the phenomena of transforming spiritual experiences occur in labyrinth ritual performance by applying Csikszentmihalyi's three steps in transforming disorder to order: (1) unselfconscious self-assurance; (2) focusing attention on the world; and (3) the discovery of new solutions. (pp. 203-207) I also discuss implications for performance studies.

My Role as Interpreter of the Research

As I write this chapter, I keep getting flashes of all the people I have ushered onto the labyrinth. The artist in me always wants my guests to be so touched by love—that they would be forever changed. I can see and feel right now so many expectant faces waiting in line to enter what I regard as the sacred stage in all its beauty and grace. The moment before they enter feels like the moment before I go onstage as an actor entering a new world, willing myself to

live moment by moment, then abandoning myself to the commitment. This act is a leap of faith and my guests are ready to jump.

I feel both responsible and excited for these precious souls. I know they bring their pain, their problems, their stress, their turmoil, their disappointments, their hopes for relief, for liberation, for self-hood, for God/Goddess/Spirit/Life-force as they take the step into the sacred space where I pray they receive the blessing of a truth that will cause them to recognize their true Self. In that moment, the transference of their energy to me is almost too much and I immediately surrender my desire and responsibility for them. Living my part as a labyrinth facilitator has been a great journey in learning to trust—to trust God, to trust wisdom, to trust the geometers and artisans who created the labyrinth design, to trust the labyrinth, to trust energy forms, to trust whatever individuals bring, know, and feel about life and Spirit, and to trust the collective collaborating in creativity.

What never ceases to astound me is the joy upon people's return. Sometimes the joy manifests as an exuberant "thank you." Sometimes it is a quiet nod coming from a face lit with clarity and serenity. Sometimes it is a silence so profound that it feels quite tangible to me. When they are gone, I clean up considering it a privilege—an act of thanksgiving and know deep within that all the preparations for the performance are a mere cost for the richness of the event. There is always help from another labyrinth facilitator or guests. In reverence, we

go about caring for the labyrinth knowing that it cared for so many souls. Then like every performance in its ephemeral way the labyrinth ritual is over.

However, my research study keeps alive some performances because that is what writing ethnography does. I have the privilege of apprehending slices of the ephemeral performances. I am so aware of this notion during the interviews with my subjects. I recall the warmth in their greetings and eagerness to share their stories. Perhaps the performer-perceivers telling their stories completes their spiritual experiences because the telling is an affirmation of its happening.

During the time of the interviews, I grappled with understanding Lonergan's program of insight into self-knowing and self-realization. In *What is Lonergan up to in Insight?*, Terry J. Tekippe offers definitions of all the mental activities Lonergan presents in his continuum of the "drive to know" ourselves, which also are Briganti's basis for attaining wholeness.

Experience is that mental activity which provides the initial materials for cognitional process.

Sense experience is that mental activity by which we first apprehend the world, through sight, hearing, smell, taste, and touch (and any related senses).

Consciousness is that mental activity by which we are aware of object, act, and self.

Imagining is that mental activity by which we re-present the apprehensions of sense or consciousness.

The question for understanding is that mental activity which addresses the experience of sense or consciousness, or an image, and moves cognitional process toward fully human knowing.

The insight is that mental activity which grasps a pattern in the previously disorganized data of sense, consciousness, or imagination.

Conception is that mental activity which addresses insight and concept with an, Is it so? Is it true?

Weighing the evidence is that mental activity which assesses the sufficiency of evidence for a prospective judgment.

Judgment is that mental activity which ends one moment of cognitional process, and in which the knower takes a stand by asserting something to be the case. (p. 87)

I brought these notions to the interviews knowing that such cognitional processes are not static but dynamic. Combining my concern with what performance *does* in terms of time, space, context, conditions, body, emotion, will, and thought, I would grasp the meaning of the respondent's experience and apprehend insight by aiming towards discovery of Lonergan's elements: experience, sense experience, consciousness, imagining, understanding, conception, and judgment.

As the basis of reflection in the interview, I know Lonergan would urge me to find out a simple yes or no to the question: did you have a spiritual experience? Reflection for Lonergan asks the question: is it so? The interview then becomes a question for understanding—inquiring *who, what, when, where, why, or how*. As I stated in the introduction, this line of questioning is the work of performance studies. For example, below are a few responses from Lagan Brown in one of my early interviews.

Nancy: Is walking the labyrinth a spiritual experience for you?

Lagan: Oh, yes, definitely. I don't think I can describe it... It's what makes you focus, what makes you think connects to you.... It's really cool. You're like a one-person play. You don't even need an audience.

Nancy: Do you think you have a conversation with the labyrinth?

Lagan: Yes, definitely, having a conversation maybe not with words but with actions, body, emotions, breath, and the way you walk, thought.

Nancy: What about time?

Lagan: Time stands still. It could have been 2 hours I was in there. You don't have to worry about time in there.

Nancy: What about space?

Lagan: The labyrinth space is like a container.... I don't get release from punching a pillow. I get release from getting away from everything, by myself, in God's land. I can be totally selfish and that's the place for me. Just to be me, not to be someone's mom, sister, friend—to be just me—and it's ok to be me.

Nancy: Did you have a sense of balance?

Lagan: Physically, I lost my balance. So many twists and turns and where am I going? Equilibrium gets thrown off. I felt my knees go weak; my body is giving out, kind of scary even though only a third of a mile.... Something like that because you're using your mind and body at the same time because if you don't use your mind in the right way, you're going to get lost even though you may end up back at the beginning or back at the center, you still can get lost. So you have to pay attention to that. So that's how it brings your mind together with the physical. That's how the labyrinth works. It helps you focus. That's comforting.

Nancy: When you walk the labyrinth, do you feel like you're reliving something from the past?

Lagan: Yes, very much so. Major events or petty fights come up in your head. Things that make you happy, sad, make you think about decisions you made in the past. Things come up in your head like in a movie. Helps you let go or just to face it. So, it's all a part of healing, the three movements. Every step gets you there. You had to go to the center to

get out. That's another thing in life. You have to take everything in your past to get to your future. Can't skip the bad stuff. It's metaphorical with life.

When I got there I had some ideas about what I was going to think about in the center or when I was walking, pre-determined ideas of stuff. I was thinking what do I need? I wasn't thinking about my daughter and I ended up thinking about the night that I gave birth. By the time, I got to the center I was just crying and I guess I was sad because I was very happy. Thinking that I was upset the night that I had the child! How the hell did that pop up? It was weird. I don't know. That's just how the labyrinth works. It makes you think about your life.

It's really challenged me. Like my daughter brought to me to the place I am graduating college! I probably would never have finished high school if it weren't for my daughter.

Nancy: How did you feel when you left?

Lagan: I felt relieved because I'm leaving the stuff I dealt with.

Nancy: How would you describe the labyrinth?

Lagan: The labyrinth is my life! I think the labyrinth connects to my life a lot. It's a beginning. It's got its twists and turns. It's got its bumps, stones in the middle flowers. It's got pretty grass, weeds, and all sorts of stuff. I can go up and down hill almost like a roller coaster. I think that makes me feel more spiritually inclined to something because in my religion we worship the earth. For one thing, it's on the earth and is made of earth of stones...and I can link that to my spiritual grounding because my religion is my life and I have to link everything to that. And I have to practice it every single day. One thing I've been taught is you practice everyday and that's how you stay focused and so I think that's why I can link the labyrinth as a spiritual place because I can see it as life. And it brings life and represents life.

Using Lonergan's program as my performance elements for analysis, my questions for understanding her experience lead to insights. (I highlight

Lonergan's processual steps.) I especially like grounding my notion of the labyrinth walker as performer-perceiver in Lagan's judgment that walking the labyrinth is a "one-person play" not even needing an audience. Although Lagan is in a one-person play with no audience, she has a relationship with the labyrinth through conversation via her "actions, body, emotions, breath, and the way you walk, thought," which are the very elements of performance. In Lonergan's first stage, Lagan has an *experience*.

My concept of the labyrinth ritual as performance gains momentum as Lagan readily responds to my questions concerning the performance elements: time, space, context, conditions, body, emotion, will, and thought. Lagan also confirms Lonergan's *sense experience* in her sensorial imagery of the labyrinth as a container just as Lauren Artress proposes. Lagan also has an archetypal response to the labyrinth being the birth canal because she literally remembers giving birth to her daughter and has no idea of how that night came to surface in her *consciousness*. Re-living the past also coincides with Schechner's notion of restored behavior, which I discuss in chapter three. The labyrinth ritual brings to the surface of her consciousness how upset she was the night she gave birth. *Imagining* herself in that past state of shame, guilt, and burden from being an unwed teen mother brings *understanding* to her life then and now as she addresses the image. Gaining *insight* as Lagan grasps meaning in her disorder, Lagan re-conceptualizes the sorrowful event as she *weighs* her life now as a successful

college student and makes the *judgment* that her daughter brings meaning, purpose, and focus to her life. The interview also alerts me to the fact that the labyrinth triggers this transformation in Lagan and further causes her to assert that the labyrinth ritual process “brings life and represents life.”

I progress in finding meaningful correlations in the data through grounded theory methodology. At one point, I find Lonergan’s structuring of insight to be limited in description to the mental activities of the cognitive domain and transfer the structuring of my subjects experiences to Krathwohl’s affective domain finding correlations to Strauss and Corbin’s core category of process, which I discuss in depth in chapter five. Creativity is the result of processes in the affective domain. Essentially, the heart of performance and ritual is creativity.

I cannot help but abide in the creativity of my subjects’ experiences. The generation of new ideas or the regeneration of old possibilities in these lived experiences is the working of creativity. Creativity is the substance fueling the process and shaping structure. Creativity is soul-power; the psyche; the nature of the Divine Other; and the substance of the true Self wherein Spirit generates and regenerates in cooperation with the body and mind. Results of this research study suggest that a person critically and creatively thinks and acts with body, mind, *and* spirit.

Performance of the labyrinth ritual not only provides process and structure for the generation of new values and actions through combining, changing, or

readapting existing ones, but also includes an attitude of sacredness. Evidence suggests that this attitude of sacredness manifests in the motivations, intentions, willingness, flexibility, commitment, and satisfaction in apprehending the Divine Other as an end in itself; co-creating with the Divine Other in the manifestation of new possibilities; and/or reaching the true center Self to actualize new ideas and behavior all resulting in connection and unity with others, the environment, and Spirit. Performer-perceivers engage in creative acts in this attitude of sacredness and perceive their experiences as spiritual.

The Research Question: Spiritual Experiences

The first part of the research question asks: does performing the sacred labyrinth ritual help to create a spiritual experience? Initially conceived through Lonergan's method of insight, I search for a yes or no. One subject flat out says, "No," so I respond in conversation and disengage the interview from my research analysis. Another subject reluctantly says, "Yes," emphasizing that spiritual means "something" in union with the mind and I include her in the study. The remaining thirty respondents answer in some emphatic way, "Yes. Yes. Definitely." I therefore have thirty-one subjects in my research study.

Using grounded theory methodology, performing the labyrinth ritual reveals: (1) spiritual experiences as: relating to the Divine; finding self; walking in sacred space; gaining meaning; and creating intention; (2) spiritual experiences

transform performer-perceivers through spiritual development by: seeking union with God; asking for divine help; and journeying to find Self; (3) spiritual experiences transform performer-perceivers through personal development by releasing judgment of self and others; gaining self-assurance; and facing childhood pain; (4) spiritual experiences transform performer-perceivers through social development by integrating the movement of the labyrinth, the natural world, others, and the Self as unity; accepting the individual self as a member of community; and sharing life and work with others; (5) spiritual experiences may be accompanied with secondary phenomenon by seeing, hearing, feeling, and smelling persons, places, and things; and (6) spiritual experiences may have liminoid characteristics regarding the entrance of the labyrinth (the limen), space, time, and the body; and (7) spiritual experiences transform negative states-of-being to positive ones.

Because the performer-perceivers regard the labyrinth as a spiritual place where they can relate to the Divine; find self; walk in sacred space; gain meaning; and create intention, stories of spiritual, personal, and/or social development result either temporarily in context of the ritual world or permanently in context of their world outside.

The Research Question: Performance Elements

The second part of my research question asks what performance elements contribute to that experience and how does an individual interpret the experience?

Returning to an earlier citation in *By Means of Performance*, Victor Turner (p.1) suggests that performance is a dialectic of flow and reflexivity “... spontaneous movement in which action and awareness are one, and ‘reflexivity,’ in which the central meanings, values and goals of a culture are seen ‘in action,’ as they shape and explain behavior.” I propose that *reflexivity*, as a performance element, is the progression of behavior along Krathwohl’s continuum as evidence suggests in Table 10. I also propose that *flow*, as a performance element, exists within the liminality that the ritual nourishes as evidence suggests in Table 5.

Performer-perceiver John Wilson illustrates the dialectic between flow and reflexivity.

The walk was spiritual because I got lost in myself away from this reality. That’s spiritual because you’re not here. You don’t see or hear things the same way. You feel things deeper than you do in the world. ...for anybody as long as you’re willing to open your mind up and your heart up and be able to receive the things that the labyrinth gives you.... We don’t give the labyrinth meaning; the labyrinth already has meaning. We just have to figure out what that meaning portrays to us.... Nobody takes the same path. Everybody has to figure out what their path means to them and where they want to go from that path.” [165-168, 175-182]

The dialectic of flow and reflexivity co-existing explains how social conflict is resolved in Turner’s ritual of social drama and sheds light on *how* the

labyrinth works. Csikszentmihalyi (p. 119) states, “Contrary to what we tend to assume, the normal state of the mind is chaos.... Entropy is the normal state of consciousness—a condition that is neither useful nor enjoyable.”

Csikszentmihalyi discusses “dissipative structures,” a term he attributes to Ilya Prigongine, a Nobel prize-winning chemist who defines dissipative structures as “...physical systems that harness energy which otherwise would be dispersed and lost in random motion...” (Csikszentmihalyi, p. 201)

Essentially, a dissipative structure is a force of disorder. Claiming that the psyche operates as its own dissipative structure transforming forces of disorder into something it can use, Csikszentmihalyi explains that people “...who know how to transform a hopeless situation into a new flow activity that can be controlled will be able to enjoy themselves, and emerge stronger from the ordeal.” (Csikszentmihalyi, p. 203) Csikszentmihalyi proposes three main steps that seem to be involved in such transformations. I propose that the labyrinth is a dissipative structure serving the psyche. In this discussion, I adapt Csikszentmihalyi’s three steps to the labyrinth ritual process, which answers the performance studies inquiry into what the labyrinth ritual performance *does* to the performer-perceiver.

The first step is *unselfconscious self-assurance*. Csikszentmihalyi explains that this person has faith in his own resources to determine his fate in a disordered environment. He is self-assured but ego is absent because his energy

is bent on finding a way to function in harmony with his environment rather than to dominate it. When he no longer sees himself in opposition to the environment, he acquires a sense of humility whereby he tries to do his best within the environment playing by a different set of rules from preferred ones or subordinating his goals to a greater entity. In context of the labyrinth ritual, the performer-perceiver is both unselfconscious and self-assured. She becomes unselfconscious or ego-absent when she enters what Turner calls the anti-structure of ritual. The performer-perceiver finds a way to function in harmony with the labyrinth's disordered environment.

In terms of performance, the performer-perceiver is in relationship to the labyrinth. The labyrinth plays a part—the Brechtian role of alienation. In *Systems of Rehearsal: Stanislavsky, Brecht, Grotowski and Brook*, Shomit Mitter (p. 44) explains that Brecht dislocates habitual frames of reference “...through a critical counterpoint designed to provoke a need for reappraisal.... The utility of estrangement...teaches insight.” Brecht's goal was to give the spectator a chance to change by interposing judgment to gain perspective in all of the disorder. Since the performer of the labyrinth ritual is also the spectator, she interposes judgment to gain perspective as evidence reveals in Table 10.

Stage one of the labyrinth path is the *via negativa*. Mitter states, “In Grotowski, *via negativa* is a means of emptying the self so that it may be filled by a ‘force’. In Brook too there is an attempt to partake of a mysterious power....”

(p. 120) As discussed in chapter two, Brook trains his actors to be open to the invisible-made-visible. Mitter explains, “The word ‘open’ recurs in Brook as an adjective which describes that condition of alert acceptance, the product of systematic dispossession, which facilitates contact with the otherwise unreachable world of the spirit.” (p. 120)

In context of the labyrinth, Heidi Wilson reflects Grotowski and Brook’s notions as well as the sentiments of other performer-perceivers. “It opens you to whatever message you’re needing. I think it’s because it’s revered as a sacred space and that *you are the movement*. You are just watching at where I am, not ahead, letting go and being open in a sacred space.... Life within a ritual—that openness for me—a letting go, and life is meaning and receiving within a ritual.” [127-130, 132-134]

Grotowski’s function of art is to “realize ourselves.” Mitter explains Grotowski’s goal.

...that the exalted self is synonymous with the real self where both are opposed to the unreality of social masks...the authentic condition of our existence is that we are inauthentic. What we really do is to conceal our real selves. Grotowski’s art attempts to assist in the transcendence not of self generally but of inauthentic being. (Mitter, p. 91)

Although Stanislavski, Brecht, Grotowski, and Brook’s means may differ, they essentially have the same goal—to train the performer to reveal the authentic Self by removing blocks or social masks and to achieve the same for their

audiences through truthful performance. Mitter (p. 111) notes what Brook states in *The Shifting Point*.

A real person is someone who is open in all parts of himself, a person who has developed himself to the point where he can open himself completely—with his body, with his intelligence, with his feelings, so that none of these channels are blocked.... This is the ideal image of a real person. And it is something that nothing in our world makes possible, except certain traditional disciplines. (Brook, p. 232)

The labyrinth ritual is such a tradition. The performer-perceiver enters demarcated sacred space. Time is irrelevant and/or feels suspended. Time within the ritual is liminality, a state that is according to Turner ‘betwixt and between’ the previous social state and the yet to be completed new social state. My subjects refer to this state as “another world” or “between two worlds.” Evidence of this state is the liminoid characteristics that the subjects experience displayed in Table 5.

As in any performance, action is a major performance element. The ritual process begins and the performer-perceiver receives the conditions. Stories begin to unfold with a continual structuring and re-structuring of his or her consciousness by behaviors along a continuum: receiving, responding, valuing, organizing, and internalizing. Like Iser’s reader, the performer-perceiver subjectively enters a gestalt-like state where she must create a whole from points of indeterminacy—“filling in the gaps” laid bare by the conditions of the labyrinth. Like Iser’s text becoming a living event for the reader, the labyrinth

becomes a living event for the performer as she acts and perceives her actions/interactions.

Upon receiving the conditions of the labyrinth, internal or external conflict surfaces to the performer-perceiver's consciousness as she responds to the conditions triggered by one or more of the causal conditions that she brings to the labyrinth or experiences because of something about the labyrinth. Causal conditions are what the performer-perceivers bring to the labyrinth: cultural beliefs; religious beliefs; family problems; work concerns; and personal problems such as depression, relationship problems, or life-decisions to make.

In the labyrinth, performance elements such as setting, characters, and properties are contextual conditions: the twists and turns of the labyrinth; the path as a whole design; other people walking; indoor and outdoor elements such as the décor of a room; or the outside field upon which a labyrinth is built with its environment including rocks, ants, birds, the sky, sun, moon, candles, and luminaries. Degrees of anger, sadness, fear, stress or anxiety are primary emotions. The body feels heavy and/or burdened.

Csikszentmihalyi claims that *focusing attention on the world* is the second step involved in transforming oneself in a dissipative structure. Csikszentmihalyi suggests that as long as attention is focused on ego, one's psychic energy is absorbed by the ego's concerns and desires. In contrast people who do not expend all their energy satisfying their needs or worrying about socially

constructed and conditioned desires focus their attention on being alert to the environment “...constantly processing information from their surroundings.” (Csikszentmihalyi, p. 204) In essence, the labyrinth forces performer-perceivers to concentrate on the environment to such an extent that they are enabled to get out from under their problems or to allow blocks that keep them blind to self-identity and actualization to surface.

Mitter (p. 82) points out that for Grotowski wholeness is a state of internal integration, an antidote to the condition in which society lives. In *Towards a Poor Theatre*, Grotowski (p. 91) explains, “...civilization is sick with schizophrenia, which is a rupture between intelligence and feeling, body and soul.” Because Grotowski’s objective is for theatre to reveal or “destroy” social masks and roles so that performer and spectator can achieve truthful self-realization, the individual performer must first as Grotowski says, “...peel off the life-mask.” (Grotowski 1969: 21) In the labyrinth ritual, Susan claims, “There’s a peeling, a stripping, of being naked.” [212] Kalaya claims, “I think that the closer I was getting to the center, things were lifting off of me.” [138-139] Lou says, “I want to peel off like an onion all the layers by the center.... It definitely feels cleansing.” [92, 110] Ozma claims, “The labyrinth helped me to shed old habits, old roles. It was cleansing. It was a new birth.... It allowed, the experience, allowed me to shed some aspects, layers that I felt were main factors, which

prevented me from growing. They were barriers.” [71-72, 92-94] Mitter interprets Grotowski’s ‘struggle with one’s own truth.’ (Grotowski, p. 21)

The abrogation of the inauthentic façade results in a state of being in which appearance and substance are one. Herein lies the connection with wholeness: pure being is a condition of unaffected resonance between inner and outer. Self-possession is a condition of concord, of integrity in internal indivisibility.... Thus the *via negativa* promises wholeness in proportion to the extent to which actors are able in rehearsal to obliterate internal obstacles and surrender to the synoptic benevolence of the spirit which surrounds them. (Mitter, pp.82, 95)

For Ozma and the other performer-perceivers, the labyrinth is a means to achieve authentic selfhood. Ozma declares, “I need more authenticity from myself for those in my life. In the center, I completed the release, and prayed for a genuine life. I became free to love and be loved.” [109-110, 100]

Being in a state of liminality and receiving secondary phenomenon both manifested through the senses and in the body may not only be intervening conditions for enlightenment but also signs or means of reducing their stress and fear. All but one subject, Davenol, keep walking through their barriers and blocks. Grotowski, Brook, Brecht, Stanislavski, and Artaud all give their performers challenging physical exercises in various environments to liberate them and to overcome fear. Mitter explains why the master directors demand so much from their performers.

The loss of fear in turn assists in the dissolution of the social mask, the cause of inauthenticity: as the actor gains confidence by passing private barriers, the need to present a façade in society becomes less pressing. As actors master the unfamiliar and prevail

over formally formidable tasks, they render themselves more able to be themselves. The glow in the aftermath of their exertions, like that of athletes, is the satisfaction of those who can now accept themselves (and therefore be themselves) in this condition of self-transcendence. (p. 117)

As participants near the center or enter the center circle of the labyrinth, they face the *consequence(s)* of their responses in interaction with the labyrinth and/or actions of receiving secondary phenomena. Although performers in training and rehearsal and audience members during a performance are challenged, they remain in the safety of the theatre space. I propose that the power of the labyrinth ritual as a dissipative structure lies in its design with a beginning, middle, and end and in the fact that it is a unicursal path where one cannot get lost as in a maze.

The labyrinth is a gentle way for performer-perceivers to encounter challenges yet remain safe. Many subjects note the safety, which not only represents the gentle physical challenge of walking but also the sacredness of the space. Kalaya asserts, “It connected me to a spiritual journey. It was a safe place to let go—very calming on the whole. If I think about it, a calm comes over me just remembering it.” [161-163] Another reason that emerges from the data to account for the safety is that the subjects assert there is no judgment in the labyrinth although they may bring judgment from the outside world. Barbara claims that in the labyrinth, “The ego doesn’t have to get defensive. That’s what I

like about the labyrinth because it brings me back to that centering.... There is not judgment there. It becomes what it is.” [121-124]

Csikszentmihalyi claims that *the discovery of new solutions* is the third step involved in transforming oneself in a dissipative structure. Csikszentmihalyi questions how one goes about discovering alternative strategies.

The answer is basically simple: if one operates with unselfconscious assurance, and remains open to the environment and involved in it, a solution is likely to emerge.... We will never become aware of other possibilities unless, like the painter who watches with care what is happening on the canvas, we pay attention to what is happening around us, and evaluate events on the basis of their direct impact on how we feel, rather than evaluating them exclusively in terms of preconceived notions. (p. 208)

As I quoted Turner in chapter one, “...liminality is not only *transition* but *potentiality*, not only ‘going to be’ but also ‘what may be’.... (Turner 1978: 3).

In stage two of the ritual, the performer-perceiver determines the outcome of her responses in stage one by consciously weighing a new possibility, idea, or value to create meaning. I propose that a new possibility arises because the will or ego is no longer engaged in preconceived notions. The labyrinth in its unexpected twists and turns defies holding onto them. I also propose that once performer-perceivers begin to trust the path as they near the center and surrender to the peace in walking the path, they are able to receive new possibilities. Susan explains how she was able to receive change.

I didn’t see how it would happen but it did. I say this with a smile on my face when I think how stupid I felt going around

and around in these little lanes. Maybe the first labyrinth was divine action. It's not normal to walk around and around these turns. But after awhile there were no lanes. You just did it. I mean you are just not conscious of it. [115, 145-150]

After considering new order arising from the disorder, the performer-perceiver in stage three of the ritual re-structures her consciousness through organization. By judging, comparing, proposing, formulating, or resolving, the performer-perceiver relates the new possibility, idea, or value to that which she already holds and brings the conflict into a harmonious new appreciation, value, or resolution internally consistent as a new way to be, act, or think—a new model of reality.

Evidence also reveals performer-perceivers experience “connection” or “unity” with others. I propose that once conflict is resolved within the individual self, the performer-perceiver is able to turn attention outward and embrace a sense of community. In Zbigniew Osinski and Tadeusz Burzynski's *Grotowski's Laboratory*, Grotowski is quoted.

At the moment when the actor...discovers himself...the actor, that is to say the human being, transcends the phase of incompleteness, to which we are condemned in everyday life... [T]he reaction which he invokes in us contains a peculiar unity of what is individual and what is collective. (p. 55)

Heidi says, “At the beginning, we were individuals. At the end, there was continuity, becoming supported and renewed by the universe.” [121-123] On the way back out of the center, back to the real world, the performer-perceiver

experiences *empowerment*—heightened positive attitude and emotion experienced in the center as she begins to adopt or internalize the new value preparing herself to act consistently in her everyday world. Janis states, “I left the sacred space. You are between two worlds. Sort of like the world stopped for a short period of time. I got off. Then I got back on again. It was like a vacation.” [92-94] Many subjects report that they did not want to leave the center of the labyrinth after they reached wholeness and although the walk out was indeed a sense of empowerment, they report being sorry the walk was ending. Lindy says, “A little sad it was over like vacation blues.” [127] Susan says, “Then I just didn’t want to leave.” Mari says, “I was bereft to leave.” [130] Many subjects note that they “floated out of there” or that they “felt lighter.” Lindy says, “The spirituality was not so much in my head but physical. I was being carried.”

Process relates to structure illuminating the labyrinth like Berleant’s aesthetic field, which awaits creative interplay upon the arrival of the performer-perceiver.

Performing a ritual, or a ritualized theatre piece or exercise, is both narrative (cognitive) and affective.... The affective states aroused by ritual are necessarily nested within a narrative frame. But from within—the experience of a person performing—the narrative frame dissolves, the action is just “done,” not thought about. Schechner (1993: 240)

Performer-perceivers also leave the labyrinth in a positive state-of-being. The relationship between the process and structure also serves as an example of Dewey's relationship between the product of art and work of art discussed in chapter two. The work takes place when the performer-perceiver interacts with the labyrinth "...so that the outcome is an experience that is enjoyed because of its liberating and ordered properties." (Dewey, pp. 162, 164) Pre-ritual and post-ritual states-of-being in Table 7 attest to the liberating enjoyment of the subjects' outcomes.

Implications for Further Research

Further research study in labyrinth ritual may include philosophical perspectives or theological perspectives about the Divine, religion, spirituality, humanity, and the nature of consciousness, truth, beauty, connection, harmony, or oneness. Data also implies that a study of movement and the body is appropriate to labyrinth ritual. In addition, therapeutic uses of the labyrinth ritual may be profitable to the field of psychology. Further implications for labyrinth research study include: re-interviewing performer-perceivers after a year to study if or how they sustained realizations from their labyrinth walks; investigating if gender differences exist in walking the labyrinth; and studying what happens to the brain while walking the labyrinth.

Lauren Artress attempted some biofeedback work complete with strapping a machine to walkers. Although it was an awkward study, Artress informally

spoke at a group function raising the issue of the need to study what happens to the brain. Schechner (1993: 240) offers two theories of brain activity in affective states of flow by Barbara Lex and Victor Turner.

Exposure to manifold, intense, repetitive, emotion-evoking stimuli ensures uniformity of behavior in ritual participants.... Rituals properly executed promote a feeling of well-being and relief, not only because prolonged or intense stresses are alleviated, but also because the driving techniques employed in rituals are designed to sensitize or “tune” the nervous system and thereby lessen inhibition of the [neocortex’s] right hemisphere and permit temporary right-hemisphere dominance, as well as mixed trophotropic-ergotropic excitation, to achieve synchronization of cortical rhythms in both hemispheres and evoke a trophotropic rebound.

(in d’Aquili *et al.* 1979: 120, 144-5)

Or, as Turner put it:

the rhythmic activity of ritual, aided by sonic, visual, photic, and other kinds of “driving,” may lead in time to simultaneous maximal stimulation of both systems, causing ritual participants to experience what the authors [d’Aquili *et al.*] call “positive, ineffable affect.” They also use Freud’s term “oceanic experience,” as well as “yogic ecstasy,” also the Christian term *unio mystica*, an experience of the union of those cognitively discriminated opposites typically generated by binary, digital left-hemispherical ratiocination. I suppose we might also use the Zen term *satori* (the integrating flash), and one could add the Quakers’ “inner light,” Thomas Merton’s “transcendental consciousness,” and the yogic *Samadhi*.

(1983:230)

The sacred geometry with its twists, turns, and circular movement is the driving technique of the labyrinth. If possible, a neurological study somehow monitoring changes in the brain would benefit labyrinth research as well as ritual studies. At times during the interviews, I wished that I were a psychologist,

therapist, or spiritual director because I so much wanted them to be “healed” of their hurts. However, I went to the interviews seeking what the performance of the labyrinth ritual provided in terms of the subject’s spiritual experience. The interview in a sense removed the subject from subjectivity so that we both could objectively study his or her experience. Especially mindful that I was studying elements of experience, I again felt the relationship to the training and rehearsal processes of a theatre actor. Schechner expresses how Turner also saw the ritual process as analogous to training and rehearsal processes “...where “givens” or “ready-mades” –accepted texts, accepted ways of using the body, accepted feelings—are deconstructed, broken down into malleable bits of behavior, feeling, thought, and text and then reconstructed in new ways, sometimes to be offered as public performances.” (1983: 257)

I functioned as the director of the rehearsal or acting teacher in the traditions of Grotowski, Brook, and Stanislavski asking not leading but key questions aimed at self-reflexivity in order to facilitate the subject’s awareness and realization of uncovering her authentic self. I felt as though I was an extension of the labyrinth “peeling the onion” or “shedding the layers” like my subjects had spoken of what the labyrinth did. Although I had planned questions, the questioning became processual—another experience. I was very aware that another performance was happening—a performance of reflexivity. In a

discussion of performance as reflexive, Turner explains that in performing a person reveals himself to himself.

This can be done in two ways: the actor may come to know himself better through acting or enactment; or one set of human beings may come to know themselves better through observing and/or participating in performances generated and presented by another set of human beings. In the first instance, reflexivity is singular though enactment may be in a social context; in the second case, reflexivity is plural and is based on the assumption that though, for most purposes, we humans may divide ourselves between Us and Them, or Ego and Alter, We and They share substance, and Ego and Alter mirror each other pretty well—Alter alters Ego not too much but tells Ego what both are! (Turner 1987: 81)

As I discussed earlier, the performer-perceiver plays the dual role of actor and audience in his individual labyrinth drama. Then in the interview the individual performance becomes a social performance. Turner makes reference to Erving Goffman's work "in the presentation of self in everyday life." Turner (1987:81) explains, "Self is presented through the performance of roles, through performance that breaks roles, and through declaring to a given public that one has undergone a transformation of state and status, been saved or damned, elevated or released." In essence, the subjects of my study came to the labyrinth in their everyday individual/social roles, were disassociated from those roles in the labyrinth ritual process which further "unmasked" their "role-playing" leading them to a transformative level of process by which they could structure reflection and change. Then through the interview, participants declared to the public in context of the research study their transformed states and transforming actions.

A major implication of this study to the fields of performance studies, communication studies, and anthropological studies of performance is the need for the researcher's active engagement with audiences, participants, and groups in field studies. Grotowski, Artaud, and Brook's goals were not only for actors arriving at individual wholeness but also for actors making contact with the audience for the purpose of social consciousness and harmony. The spirit of their work was sacred and healing. A central common issue for research in the above-mentioned fields is to include the notions of the sacred, spirit, and healing. My evidence suggests that individuals are spiritually hungry, may be alienated from patriarchal churches of their childhood, and need to acknowledge spirit in their daily activities and self-growth. As researches of performance whether for theatre, communication, or anthropology, we must open ourselves to subjectivity. Turner explains performance in terms of postmodernism.

Performances are never amorphous or openended, they have diachronic structure, a beginning, a sequence of overlapping but isolable phases, and an end. But their structure is not that of an abstract system; it is generated out of the dialectical oppositions of processes and of levels of process. In the modern consciousness, cognition, idea, rationality, were paramount. In the postmodern turn, cognition is not dethroned but rather takes its place on an equal footing with volition and affect. (Turner, 1987: 80)

My research includes the performance elements of volition—the will surrendering to or co-creating with Spirit and of affect—emotion, attitude, and thought fusing into new value systems. Mitter (p. 124) quotes Brook in an

interview with Jean Richards as to the purpose of theatre, which can be of direct value to the above disciplines.

As fewer people retain the will to avail of the inspiration of traditional piety, the arts must celebrate their latent sacramental ability. If the ambition of art is to remove the randomness that characterizes the natural presence of wholeness in our lives, then the theatre, as a medium of meeting, is better able to do this than most. If theatre is to serve a society sadly 'not rooted in any form of shared and generally accepted wishes, beliefs, affirmations,' it can do so by providing what people most need—companionship on the basis of their being.

(Richards, 1971: 19, 52)

Perhaps this “companionship” or social reflexivity helps meet the challenge that Turnbull sets out for researchers dealing with the concept of Spirit for personal development and proper evaluation of fieldwork as I discussed in chapter one. Another implication for further research is to create a study of the effects of the labyrinth in a community as social or cultural performance. My research further brought me to a place of companionship, social harmony, and social reflexivity in two situations.

In the first situation, I discovered that Paul, Phred, and Heidi belonged to the same Unitarian church. As I earlier recounted, Phred had been burdened by the fact that she was unable to share responsibilities with others. One such responsibility was building a labyrinth at her church. Because of her labyrinth experience at my performance event, Phred knew that people would come to her aid, that she would not have to bear the weight of the responsibility alone, and that she would communicate or share her needs with others. Paul and Heidi both

experienced being individuals when they entered the labyrinth but left as members of the community and internalized a profound value as to the importance of community. As a result of their individual experiences, Paul and Heidi later volunteered to help Phred when she had made her needs known to the community. After securing a labyrinth committee, they did not know what to do next so Phred called me. I attended their first meeting and recognized that the community wanted a unique design for a labyrinth to meet the needs of their community. I then secured the help of a labyrinth designer who indeed ended up designing a marvelous outdoor nine-circuit Cretan labyrinth. Connection with the designer was the part that I played and it was most rewarding.

The building of the labyrinth became a catalyst of change for the church community. Everyone in the community had a role to play even the children. The day of dedication was an incredibly active and coherent historical time for the church. In an effort to preserve the history of the community's "performance" from the conception of the labyrinth to dedication day, members of the community wrote a detailed account of their story for the Internet called "The Live Oak Labyrinth Project."

In the second situation, I made a small attempt to study community in testing Fish's affective stylistics that I earlier discussed in chapter two. For the Easter Walk at the Methodist church, I performed on the labyrinth some of St.

Teresa's teaching on contemplation. I was present as St. Teresa getting things ready for the walk as participants came into the room.

The performance included audience participation as I intermittently guided them in reading her prayers from the program. Because we shared the same beliefs about Jesus and Teresa as a master teacher of contemplation—active reception and union with the love of Christ, we were Fish's "interpretive community," which indeed offered a social construction of our experiences. As I earlier recounted in chapter five, Ann and Vangi experience a state of what Teresa would call ecstasy—union with Christ, a warming of the heart, and transcendent sense of His presence. Annabelle also had a similar experience and a profound realization of something that was unresolved deep in her unconscious for which she would have to make a life change. In this performance of the labyrinth ritual, liminality occurred as participants first encountered St. Teresa. The following interview passages reveal the potency of the performance of Teresa on the participants.

Nancy: What do you think triggered your experience?

Annabelle: It was St. Teresa's prayers that we said with her in the performance. It was the prayers because when two or three are gathered in His name, He is definitely there and it was His Spirit inside me and we were all there in His name and the power of being on the labyrinth all together with other people and obviously a very powerful Spirit-filled place. I mean the room was so powerful.

Nancy: So, you would say that you definitely had a spiritual experience?

Annabelle: Oh yes! There were definitely angels in that place. I mean if you went back in time to that room and stripped off a layer to the spirit world, you would see it full of angels. You would know that heaven had come down there. I mean heaven was there with us.

Nancy: You said that after your walk, you were in a state of joy and then you went to the small room to hear St. Teresa answer questions and talk to the group. What was your reaction?

Annabelle: It was really good. It was so well done. It was kind of odd in a way. I mean you were St. Teresa, like you channeled her. When I stepped out of the labyrinth, I definitely came back to the real world and then I listened to St. Teresa talking about her life and that was refreshing joy. It was refreshing to listen to St. Teresa.

My performance was a profound experience of flow and reflexivity. After the performance on the labyrinth, I stayed in character and took a place in the line to walk the labyrinth. When I finished, I went to a smaller room to greet the performer-perceivers as was directed by the host of the performance event. I had planned on answering questions *about* St. Teresa, but a performer-perceiver asked in direct address to Teresa a question about contemplative prayer. Her question plunged me into a new state of liminality. I looked at the audience sitting in front of me so eager to hear my answer. In a moment, I realized that I could not respond as Nancy. As researcher, I took one more leap into the world of subjectivity—of spirit.

The next thing I knew was that I answered the question in the first person. Belief of course was suspended as in a traditional theatrical performance because I was not Teresa. Objectively speaking, we were living a theatrical improvisation

that had real consequences—spiritual instruction. The dialogue went on for thirty minutes as the audience continued to ask Teresa questions about how to pray. It was very natural and no one thought twice about the fact that I was “acting.” The audience was so moved that they soon began a community study of one of Teresa’s books. It was a wonderful honor when they invited me back as Nancy to teach some parts of the book that they did not understand.

Grotowski and Brook in their later work abandoned performance of actors and spectators becoming more interested in audience participation. My research study provided me with the same opportunity. I am convinced that as researchers we must make participation a priority in field practices to: (1) access the spirit of an individual or group; (2) allow subjectivity and affective processes to flow along with objectivity and the cognitive realm; (3) consider our subjects as a powerful creative element in our research; and (4) not only report dimensions of fragmentation in individuals and social structures but also through spirit unmask the opposite—wholeness.

Maria Cristina Gonzalez proposes a break in the practice of traditional ethnographic methods by utilizing a “meditative practice of ethnographic observation.” Gonzalez explains her methodology.

I explain this methodology as being one of surrender, of practicing a disciplined and well-developed detachment from intentional and conscious acts of interpretation, allowing for openness to a more purely subjective, intuitive, and spiritual reading. What makes it subjective is its location within the observer. The intuitive nature is due to its nondeductive derivation. The spiritual based on the intentionality of

connectedness to an unnamed source or oneness, which permeates and infuses subjectivity if so allowed, leads to intuitive insights.... What I am describing, however, is the *intentional practice* of this form of insight as a methodology of meditation, as methodology for insight while in the midst of observation or listening, even reading.... the result of the meditative practice of ethnographic observation is “this is what I see, when I am willing to suspend my preferences and preconceived notions of who I am, what I know, what I want, and so forth.” In a sense, we are asking for a development of observation with a sense of a bracketed ego. Because of this, one’s insights may often not be palpable socially, personally, or politically, because they are not in service to ego. (in Glenn, *et al.* 2003: 498-499)

I pause for a moment and meditate on “ego.” My mind shifts to St. Teresa. I realize she calls ego, *the will*. Teresa teaches as the basis of meditative practice that to gain self-knowledge one must *surrender the will*. In contemporary terms the concept is *to let go*. The performer-perceivers of the labyrinth ritual let go of “preconceived notions of who I am, what I know, what I want” and paradoxically found authenticity. Teresa would say Gonzalez is talking about passive recollection not active recollection. Passive recollection implies “making room” extending our capacity to hear, feel, see, taste, and touch through a willingness to just *be*. In other words, if *I* am not doing the talking and the doing, then Spirit is.

As researchers, the key question is are we willing to invest time and discipline in increasing our capacity for the affective realm of Spirit rather than rely on our reasoning and logic or external sources of diagnosis and measurement? I especially hope that my research inspires performance scholars to actively engage with audiences in exploring the impact of our art on spiritual

capabilities for transforming fragmentation to wholeness while respecting multiperspectival and multivocal levels of response. I have learned that such research is a most rewarding labyrinthine journey connecting me to hundreds of people as an individual and member of my research community.

Conclusion

The spiritual experiences of the subjects overwhelmingly support Lauren Artress' claim that participants of labyrinth ritual journey through the processes of purgation, illumination, and union. I characterize purgation as *conflict*, illumination as *wholeness*, and union as *empowerment*. Ultimately, the spiritual experiences in my study bring meaning and purpose in the everyday life of the performer-perceivers by generating ways to fill fragments in their psyche concerning self-actualization, family, work, and community, along with their worthiness in receiving the peace of Divine love found interiorly or exteriorly. Labyrinth ritual flow and reflection enables performer-perceivers to structure in multidimensional ways the performance elements of space, time, matter, language, persons, body, thought, emotion, and will. This enabling creates as many stories as there are individuals but the result is consistently the generation of a new unity of meaning and spirit as performer-perceivers reenter the world empowered with insights, appreciations, motivations, and values in relationship to self, the cosmos, others, and the Divine.

After writing this last sentence, I close my eyes. In spirit, I can now access the labyrinth. I move in the stillness.

I enter the labyrinth. I am tired but blessed. What a long and life-changing journey this has been. The path is comforting although my mind races with thoughts. I think of Maria's challenge to embrace ethnographic research as spiritual practice. This requires patience—to observe by stilling the mind and waiting for spirit.

I hear St. Teresa. She tells her flock, "Patience. Patience. Determined determination. Courage." I keep walking spiraling inward. Spiritual practice does take patience. I reconnect with the meaning of determined determination and shutter in fear. This leap into the spiritual is a moment of trust—laying aside the mind or will or ego and waiting as if to be caught after jumping off a cliff. No wonder Teresa continually said, "Courage, my daughters, courage." I keep walking unmindful of the twists and turns or where I am going. I comfort myself, 'It's OK. It's about love. Without trust there is no love!'

I see Teresa again. She is directing a friar on how to direct his sons. "And finally," she says, "You must teach more by works than by words." I'm so tired right now that I cannot imagine any more work so I rush into the center and sit upon the rock. The labyrinth paths swirl around me and I feel safe. No one can reach me. It's such a long way to here. I can rest.

What was I just thinking? Oh, yes, I smile thinking of Teresa's wisdom. I hear her whispering in my ear a reminder that contemplation is not about rest but action. "Receive and do," she tells me. Perhaps I better get up, but I don't.

I think of all the stories I gathered and all those faces. Greeting people when they return from walking the labyrinth is like a curtain call. I want to applaud as I focus on their beaming faces. I thank the labyrinth.

How vast the soul is I think. Humility is the key to the interior of the soul. To lose is to find. I get up and start to walk out of the center. Yes. I didn't know what Teresa meant when I first started my research. My pace picks up energy. I feel energy. I practically run back out of the labyrinth feeling the spiral round and round. What did Teresa say? I open my eyes and pick up her book, The Interior Castle. It's at the beginning and end, pages 35 and 196.

"I don't find anything comparable to the magnificent beauty of a soul and its marvelous capacity. Indeed our intellects, however keen, can hardly comprehend it. There are many rooms and in each of these are many others, below and above and to the sides with lovely gardens and fountains and labyrinths...."

Illustration 1: The Chartres Labyrinth

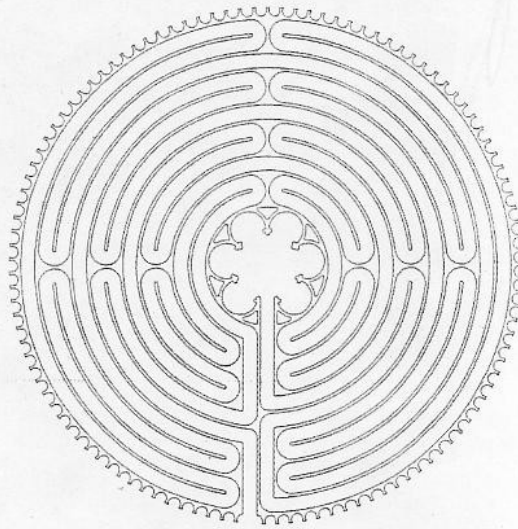


Illustration 2: The Medieval Labyrinth

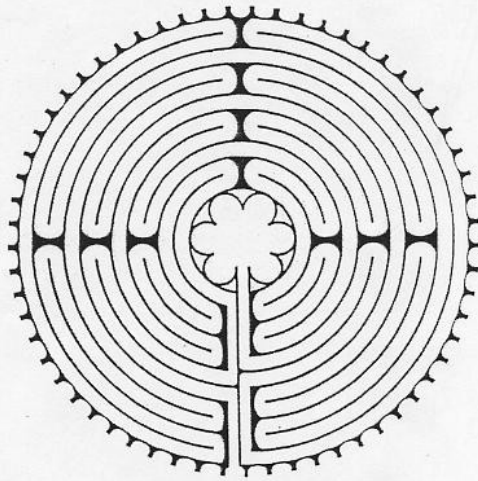


Illustration 3: The Outdoor Medieval Labyrinth



Illustration 4: Canvas Labyrinth



Illustration 5: Labyrs



Illustration 6: Labyrres

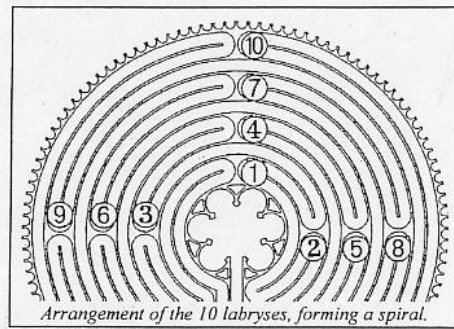


Illustration 7: Lunations

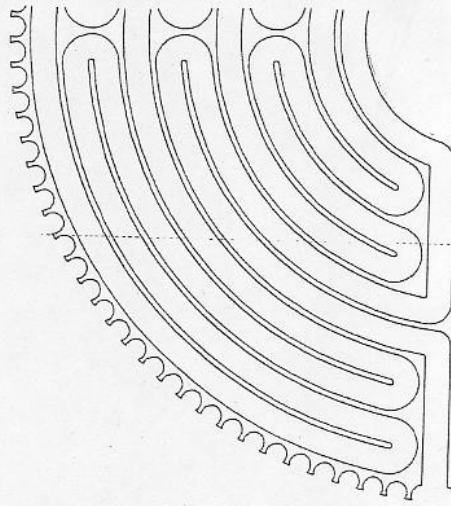


Illustration 8: The Seven-Circuit or Cretan Labyrinth



APPENDIX A

Letter of Recruitment for Subject

Dear Labyrinth Walker:

I am a doctoral student at the University of Texas at Austin in Communication Studies. I am researching two basic questions: Do people have a spiritual experience walking the labyrinth? If so, what aspects of the walk contribute to the spiritual experience?

I am requesting you to share with me during an interview your experience(s) walking the labyrinth. Your insights, at whatever stage your participation and/or understanding of the labyrinth and your spiritual journey are, can be very helpful to others who are searching for spiritual tools and are considering the labyrinth for spiritual practice. You also may receive further insight as we talk.

If you decide to participate, please read the consent form then sign and date it. There is no risk since your comments will be anonymous and an audiotape of the interview will be destroyed after I transcribe it. Names and other information will be changed, when I write the dissertation, to ensure your anonymity and confidentiality.

We can meet at my home or your home for about an hour. I will take notes to help me remember our discussion in addition to tape-recording it. I will send you the transcripts so that you can review them for accuracy if you want me to do so.

Many books have been written about the labyrinth and the intent of my dissertation is to contribute to scholarship how Spirit communicates with us as we perform the labyrinth ritual.

I am hopeful that you will help me in my project. After you sign and date the attached consent form, I will make a copy of it for you. If you have any questions, please call me at (512) 323-0145. My email address is bandiera@mail.utexas.edu.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Nancy Bandiera

APPENDIX B

Letter of Permission from Church

I grant permission for Nancy Bandiera to use our church and human resources during the course of her research to coordinate a labyrinth event(s) for the church and others who may wish to walk the labyrinth. I understand that Ms. Bandiera will have participants sign a guest book with their email address and that she will contact them to interview them upon their signed consent.

I grant permission for Ms. Bandiera to leave comment sheets, which participants will anonymously fill out and leave with her. If she would like to return the comments after her analysis of them, she is welcome to do so, but it is not necessary. I understand that she would like to compile the comments in a notebook so that members and guests can read the labyrinth stories of others.

I understand that Ms. Bandiera will offer participants who write comments to contact her via email if they are interested in participating in an interview.

Date_____

Printed Name of Authority_____

Signature_____

APPENDIX C

Informed Consent of Subject

The purpose of this study is to interview 30 people who have walked the labyrinth in order to gather understandings of their spiritual experiences if indeed they had one. After collecting their responses, the Principal Investigator will write the results based on theories of ritual and performance. This study will be presented as a dissertation.

There should be no risks or discomforts. You will be asked interview questions. You will remain anonymous in written documentation. You will use a pseudonym. This will not cost you anything. You will not receive compensation for your participation in this study. Participation in this study is entirely voluntary. You are free to refuse to be in the study, and your refusal will not influence current or future relationships with The University of Texas at Austin.

The benefit to you will solely be the satisfaction of participating in research that collects the spiritual experiences of people walking the labyrinth. You will also anonymously benefit from knowing that others who read your story may be moved, encouraged, or inspired to find similar benefits from walking the labyrinth.

If you wish to stop your participation in this research study for any reason, you should contact the Principal Investigator. In addition, if you have questions about your rights as a research participant, please contact The University of Texas at Austin Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects, 512/232-4383.

If the results of this research are published or presented at scientific meetings, your identity will not be disclosed. Please take note of the following points about your interview.

1. The interview will be audiotaped.
2. The audiocassettes will be coded so that no personally identifying information is visible in them.
3. The cassettes will be kept in a secure place in a locked file cabinet in the investigator's office.
4. The cassettes will be heard only for research purposes by the investigator.
5. The cassettes will be erased after they are transcribed or coded.

The Principal Investigator will not benefit beyond presenting the results in a dissertation format. Perhaps, the researcher will adapt the dissertation for publication.

You are free not to answer any question or probe provided by the interviewer. Your name will remain anonymous in all public reports of the data. You will be given the copy of the interview to review for your approval.

Signatures:

As a representative of this study, I have explained the purpose, the procedures, the benefits, and the risks that are involved in this research study:

Signature and printed name of person obtaining consent	Date
---	-------------

You have been informed about this study's purpose, procedures, possible benefits and risks, and you have received a copy of this Form. You have been given the opportunity to ask questions before you sign, and you have been told that you can ask other questions at any time. You voluntarily agree to participate in this study. By signing this form, you are not waiving any of your legal rights.

Printed Name of Subject	Date
--------------------------------	-------------

Signature of Subject	Date
-----------------------------	-------------

Signature of Principal Investigator	Date
--	-------------

APPENDIX D

Data Sheet of Subject

Directions: Please fill in the following information or check the appropriate line. Thank you.

1. What is the pseudonym you would like to choose?

2. Male_____ Female_____

3. 20-29_____ 30-39_____ 40-49_____

50-59_____ 60-69_____ 70-80_____

4. High School_____ Associate's Degree_____

Bachelor's Degree_____ Master's Degree_____ Doctoral
Degree_____

5. African-American_____ Asian_____ Caucasian_____

Hispanic_____ Native American_____

If other please explain_____

6. What is your religious persuasion?

7. Occupation _____

APPENDIX E

Model Flyer of Labyrinth Performance

“THE LABYRINTH”

AN INTERACTIVE PERFORMANCE & WALK ON THE SACRED PATH

Created by Nancy Bandiera

PLACE: The field behind Hyde Park Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) 610 EAST 45 Th St

DATE & TIME: Tuesday, May 8 at 7:30 p.m.

Invitation: To walk the labyrinth after the performance

BRING: Something to sit on

Cost: Free

“The labyrinth is a metaphor for our spiritual lives, with its singular path, many turns, and it’s clear center. Walking the eleven-circuit medieval labyrinth, replicated from Chartres Cathedral in France, quiets the mind and opens our deep intuitive nature. It’s from this place that we can pray, meditate, solve problems, and discern insights that further our shared journey to God.” Dr. Lauren Artress, Creator of Veriditas: The World-Wide Labyrinth Project and author of *Walking the Sacred Path Rediscovering the Labyrinth as a Spiritual Tool*

APPENDIX F

Model Flyer of Labyrinth Performance

"Night Journey Under the New Moon"

A Thanksgiving Labyrinth Walk by Candlelight

Invite your friends and family. Walk a model of the 13th century medieval labyrinth at your leisure. Stay on the grounds for as long as you like. The circular labyrinth path takes about 20 minutes, one-third of a mile.

Date: Sunday, November 23

Time: 7:00 – 9:30 p.m. (Stay as long as you like)

Place: In the field behind Hyde Park Christian Church

610 East 45th Street (Central Austin)

Cost: Free

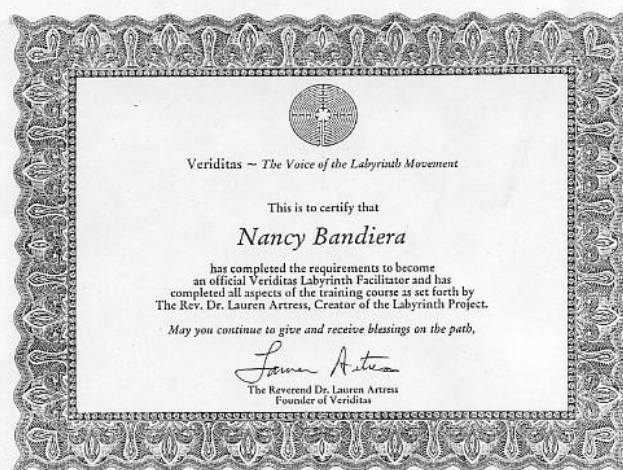
Bring: Something warm to wear and

Something to sit on

Appendix G

Guidelines to Labyrinth Walking

1. This labyrinth has only one path so there are no tricks to it and no dead ends. The path winds throughout and becomes a mirror for where we are in our lives; it touches our sorrows and releases our joys. So walk it with an open mind and open heart.
2. There are three stages of the walk: *Purgation* is a releasing, a letting go of the details of your life. This is an act of shedding thoughts and emotions. It quiets and empties the mind.
3. *Illumination* is when you reach the center. Stay there as long as you like. It is a place of meditation and prayer. Receive what is there for you.
4. *Union* is joining God, your Higher Power or the healing forces at work in the world. Each time you walk the labyrinth you become more empowered to find and do the work you feel your soul reaching for.
5. Clear your mind and become aware of your breathing pattern.
6. Allow yourself to find the pace your body wants to go.
7. You may “pass” people or let others step around you whichever is easiest at the turns.
The path is two ways. Those going in will meet those coming out. Do what feels natural.



Bibliography

- Alexander, Thomas M (1998) "The Art of Life: Dewey's Aesthetics" in *Reading Dewey*, Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press.
- Alvarez, Thomas (1990) *The Prayers of Teresa of Avila*, Hyde Park: New City Press.
- Attali, Jacques (1999) *The Labyrinth in Culture and Society Pathways to Wisdom*, Berkeley: North Atlantic Books.
- Archer, M.S. (1995) *Realist Social Theory: The Morphogenetic Approach*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Artaud, Antonin (1974) "No More Masterpieces" in Bernard F. Dukore (ed) *Dramatic Theory and Criticism Greeks to Grotowski*, New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.
- Artess, Lauren (1995) *Walking a Sacred Path, Rediscovering the Labyrinth as a Spiritual Tool*, New York: The Berkeley Publishing Group.
- Artress, Lauren (Fall 1998) "Imagine" in *Source*, San Francisco: A Veriditas Publication.
- Barton, Robert (1993) *Acting Onstage and Off*, Orlando: Harcourt Brace.
- Bauman, Richard (1974) "Verbal Art as Performance," in *American Anthropologist* 77: 290-311
- Beeman, William O (2002) "Performance theory in an Anthropology Program," in Nathan Stucky and Cynthia Wimmer (eds) *Performance theory in an Anthropology Program*, Carbondale: Southern Illinois Press.
- Bell, Catherine (1992) *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice*, New York: Oxford

University Press.

Bell, Catherine (1997) *Ritual: Perspectives and Dimensions*, New York: Oxford University Press.

Berleant, Arnold (1970) *The Aesthetic Field*, Springfield, Illinois: Charles C Thomas Publisher.

Berleant, Arnold (1991) *Art and Engagement*, Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Bielecki, Tessa (1994) *Holy Daring*. Rockport, MA: Element Inc.

Krathwohl, David R., Benjamin S. Bloom and Bertram B. Masia (1964) *Taxonomy of Educational Objectives the Classification of Educational Goals Handbook II: Affective Domain*. London: Longmans, Green and Company.

Branner, Robert (1969) *Chartres Cathedral*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company.

Briganti, Frank G (2003) *Regarding Wholeness*, Baltimore: PublishAmerica Book Publishers.

Brockett, Oscar (1993) Lecture notes, "Dramatic Theory II."

Brockett, Oscar G. with Robert Ball, (2000) *The Essential Theatre*, Orlando: Harcourt Brace & Company.

Brook, Peter (1968) *The Empty Space*, New York: Atheneum.

Burke, Kenneth (1945) *The Grammar of Motives*. New York: Prentice-Hall.

Cage, John (1965) "An Interview with John Cage" *TDR, The Drama Review* 10 (2): 50-72.

Carlson, Marvin (1984) *Theories of the Theatre A Historical and Critical Survey, From the Greeks to the Present*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Carlson, Marvin (1989) "Theatre Audiences and the Reading of Performance" in Thomas Postlewait and Bruce A. McConachie (eds) *Interpreting the Theatrical Past*, Iowa City: University

of Iowa Press.

Carlson, Marvin (1996) *Performance*, London: Routledge.

Charmaz, Kathy (2003) "Grounded Theory: Objectivist and Constructivist Methods," in Norman K. Denzin & Yvonna S. Lincoln (eds) *Strategies of Qualitative Inquiry*, Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

Chekhov, Michael (1991) *On the Technique of Acting*, New York: Harper Collins.

Cirlot, J.E (1962) *A Dictionary of Symbols*, New York: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

Cole, David (1992) *Acting as Reading: the Place of the Reading Process in the Actor's Work*, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

Compton, Vanessa Jane (Master of Arts 2001) *Experience and Meaning in the Cathedral Labyrinth Pilgrimage*, University of Toronto, Ontario.

Cornish, Kim Ann (Doctor of Philosophy 2001) *Phenomenology of Spiritual Experience*, The University of Tennessee, Knoxville.

Creswell, J.W (1998) *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design*, London: Sage.

Csikszentmihalyi, Mihaly (1990) *Flow*, New York: Harper & Row.

Curry, Helen (2000) *The Way of the Labyrinth*, New York: Penguin Compass.

d'Aquili, Eugene G., Laughlin, Charles D. Jr., and McManus, John (1979) *The Spectrum of Ritual*, New York: Columbia University Press.

Denzin, Norman K (2001) *Interactive Interactionism Second Edition*, Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

(2003) "The Practices and Politics of Interpretation," in Norman K. Denzin & Yvonna S. Lincoln (eds) *Collecting and Interpreting Qualitative Materials*, Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

Dewey, John (1934) *Art as Experience*, New York: Minton, Balch & Company.

(1984) "Art as Experience" in Stephen David Ross (ed) *Art and Its*

Significance An Anthology Of Aesthetic Theory, Albany: State University of New York at Albany.

Dey, Ian (1999) *Grounding Grounded Theory Guidelines for Qualitative Inquiry*, London: Academic Press.

Doob, Penelope (1990) *The Idea of the Labyrinth*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Dunne, Tad (1985) *Loneragan and Spirituality: Towards a Spiritual Integration*, Chicago: Loyola University Press.

Eliade, Mircea (1959) *The Sacred & the Profane*, Orlando: Harcourt Brace & Company.

Emigh, John (2002) "Performance Studies, Neuroscience, and the Limits of Culture," in Nathan Stucky and Cynthia Wimmer (eds) *Performance theory in an Anthropology Program*, Carbondale: Southern Illinois Press.

Ferre, Robert (1996) *The Labyrinth Revival*, St Louis: One Way Press.

(2001) *Origin, Symbolism, and Design of the Chartres Labyrinth*, St. Louis: One Way Press.

(2002) *Constructing Classical Labyrinths An Instructional Manual*, St. Louis: One Way Press.

(2002) *The Labyrinth Revival An Introduction to Labyrinths*, St. Louis: One Way Press.

Fish, Stanley (1980) "Literature in the Reader: Affective Stylistics" in Jane P. Tompkins (ed) *Reader-Response Criticism*, Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press.

(2001) "Yet Once More" in James L. Machor and Philip Goldstein (eds) *Reception Study*, New York: Routledge.

Fox, Matthew (1983) *Original Blessing*, Santa Fe: Bear & Company.

(1988) *The Coming of the Cosmic Christ*, New York: Harper Collins Publishers.

- French, Lindsey (1994) "The Political Economy of Injury and Compassion" in Thomas J. Csordas (ed) *Embodiment and Experience, the Existential Ground of Culture and Self*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Gadamer, Hans-Georg (1975) *Truth and Method*, New York: The Seabury Press.
- Gardner, Howard (1991) *The Unschooled Mind*, New York: Basic Books.
- Geiger, Don (1952) "Dramatic Approach to Interpretive Analysis" in *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 38: 189-191.
- Geoffrion, Jill Kimberly Hartwell (2000) *Living the Labyrinth*, Cleveland: The Pilgrim Press.
- Geoffrion, Jill Kimberly Hartwell (1999) *Praying the Labyrinth*, Cleveland: The Pilgrim Press.
- Glaser, Barney G (1978) *Theoretical Sensitivity*, Mill Valley; The Sociology Press.
- (1992) *Basics of Grounded Theory Analysis*, Mill Valley: The Sociology Press.
- Glaser Barney G. and Anselm L. Strauss (1967) *the discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for Qualitative Research*, New York: Aldine de Gruyter.
- Glynn, Joseph (1987) *The Eternal Mystic*, New York: Vantage Press.
- Grimes, Ronald (1995) *Beginnings in Ritual Studies*. Columbia: University of South Carolina Press.
- Goffman, Erving (1959) *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*. Garden City: Doubleday Anchor Books.
- Goffman, Erving (1974) *Frame Analysis*, New York: Harper & Row.
- Gonzalez, Maria Christina (2003) "Ethnography as Spiritual Practice: A Change in the Taken-for-Granted (or an Epistemological Break with Science)," in P. Glenn, C.D LeBaron., and J. Mandelbaum, *Studies in Language and Social Interaction*, Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Earlbaum & Associates.

- Guillory, John (2001) "The Discourse of Value" in James L. Machor and Philip Goldstein (eds.) *Reception Study*, New York: Routledge.
- Hallowell, A.I (1955) *Culture and Experience*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Heuvel, Michael Vanden (1991) *Performing Drama/Dramatizing Text*, Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press.
- Hodges, H.A (1952) *The Philosophy of Wilhelm Dilthey*, London: Routledge & Kegan.
- Hodges, H.A (1979) *God Beyond Knowledge*. London: The Macmillan Press.
- Hymes, Dell (1974) *Foundations of Sociolinguistics: An Ethnographic Approach* Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Iser, Wolfgang (1974) *The Implied Reader*, Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press.
- (1978) *The Act of Reading: A Theory of Aesthetic Response*, Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press.
- (1980) "The Reading Process: A Phenomenological Approach," in Jane P. Tompkins (ed) *Reader Response Criticism* Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press.
- Itkin, Bella with Richard C. Aven (1994) *Acting: Preparation, Practice, Performance*, New York: HarperCollins College Publishers.
- James, Williams (1977) *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, New York: Simon & Schuster.
- Jaskolski, Helmut (1994) *The Labyrinth: Symbol of Fear, Rebirth, and Liberation*. Boston: Shambhala Publications.
- Jauss, Hans Robert (2001) "The Identity of the Poetic Text in the Changing Horizon Of Understanding," in James L. Machor and Philip Goldstein (eds) *Reception Study*, New York: Routledge.
- Kavanaugh, Kieran, O, C.D., and Otilio Rodriguez, O.C.D. (trans) (1979)

- Teresa of Avila The Interior Castle*, New York: Paulist Press.
- Kirby, Michael (1965) *Happenings*, New York: E.P. Dutton.
- Kisliuk, Michelle (2002) "The Poetics and Politics of Practice," in Nathan Stucky and Cynthia Wimmer (eds) *Performance theory in an Anthropology Program*, Carbondale: Southern Illinois Press.
- Laderman, Carol, (1994) "The Embodiment of Symbols and the Acculturation of the Anthropologist" in Thomas J. Csordas (ed) *Embodiment and Experience, the Existential Ground of Culture and Self*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Langelier, Kristin M (1999) "Personal Narrative, Performance, Performativity: Two or Three Things I Know For Sure" in *Text and Performance Quarterly* 19: 125-144.
- Lex, Barbara W. (1979) "The neurobiology of ritual trance," in Eugene D'Aquili *et al.*, *The Spectrum of Ritual*, New York: Columbia University Press.
- Levi-Strauss, Claude (1963) *Structural Anthropology*, New York: Basic Books.
- Lonergan, Bernard J.F (1957) *Insight: A Study of Human Understanding*, San Francisco: Harper & Row.
- Low, Setha M (1994) "Embodied Metaphors: Nerves as Lived Experience" in Thomas J. Csordas (ed) *Embodiment and Experience, the Existential Ground of Culture and Self*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Madison, Gary Brent (1981) The Phenomenology of Merleau-Ponty. Athens: Ohio University Press.
- Matthews, W.H (1970) *Mazes & Labyrinths Their History & Development*, New York: Dover Publications.
- McConachie, Bruce A (1989) "Using the Concept of Cultural Hegemony to Write Theatre History" in Thomas Postlewait and Bruce A. McConachie (eds) *Interpreting the Theatrical Past*, Iowa City: University of Iowa Press.
- Middleton, Deborah K (2001) "At Play in the Cosmos The Theatre and Ritual of

- Nicolas Nunez” in *TDR, The Journal of Performance Studies*, Winter: 42-63.
- Mitter, Shomit (1992) *Systems of Rehearsal: Stanislavski, Brecht, Grotowski, and Brook*, London: Routledge.
- Moore, Sonia (1960) *The Stanislavski System*, New York: Penguin Books.
- Muller, Margaret H (Master of Arts 2000) *The Classical Seven-Circuit Labyrinth as Transcultural Phenomenon*, The University of North Carolina, Asheville.
- Myerhoff, Barbara (1990) “The Transformation of Consciousness in Ritual Performances: Some Thoughts and Questions,” in Richard Schechner and Willa Appel (eds) *By Means of Performance*, New York: Cambridge University Press.
- O’Connor, Colleen (Fall 1999) “Theatre of Enlightenment” in *Source*, San Francisco: A Veriditas Publication.
- Osinski, Zbigniew (1979) *Grotowski and his Laboratory*. Warsaw.
- Palmer, Richard (1977) “Toward a Postmodern Hermeneutics of Performance” in Michel Benamou and Charles Caramello (eds) *Performance in Postmodern Culture* Madison: The Center for Twentieth Century Studies.
- Pare, Timothy Joseph (Doctor of Philosophy 1997) *A Phenomenological Study of Spiritual Experience*, University of Alberta, Edmonton.
- Pettis, Chuck (1999) *Secrets of Sacred Space*. St. Paul: Llewellyn Publication.
- Phelan, Peggy (1993) *Unmarked the politics of performance*, New York: Routledge.
- Richards, Jean, ‘An Interview with Peter brook at the Fifth Annual Festival of Arts, Persepolis, Iran’, *Drama and Theatre*, vol. 10, no. 1 (Fall 1971).
- Roach, Joseph (2002) “Theatre Studies/Cultural Studies/Performance Studies” in Nathan Stucky and Cynthia Wimmer (eds) *Performance theory in an Anthropology Program*, Carbondale: Southern Illinois Press.

- Rubin, Herbert J. and Irene S. Rubin (2005) *Qualitative Interviewing*, Thousand Oaks; Sage Publications.
- Sands, Helen Raphael (2000) *Labyrinth Pathway to Meditation and Healing*, London: Gaia Books.
- Savron, David (1986) *Breaking the Rules: The Wooster Group*.
- Saward, Jeff (2002) *Magical Paths*, London: Octopus Publishing Group.
- Schechner, Richard (1973) *Environmental Theatre*, New York: Hawthorne Books.
- (1974) "From Ritual to Theatre and Back: the Structure/Process of the Efficacy-Entertainment Dyad," *Educational Theatre Journal* 26 (4): 455-81.
- (1985) *Between Theatre and Anthropology*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- (1988) *Performance Theory*. New York: Routledge.
- (1990) "Magnitudes of Performance" in Richard Schechner and Willa Appel (eds) *By Means of Performance*, New York: Cambridge University Press.
- (1993) *The Future of Ritual*, London: Routledge.
- (2002) *Performance Studies An Introduction*, London: Routledge.
- Sholem, Jane (Doctor of Philosophy 1999) *Listening to the Labyrinth: An Organic and Intuitive Inquiry*, Institute of Transpersonal Psychology, Palo Alto, California.
- Simpson, Liz (2002) *The Magic of Labyrinths*. London: Harper Collins Publishers.
- States, Bert O (1996) "Performance as Metaphor" in *Theatre Journal* 48 (1) Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press.
- Stanislavski, Constantin (1936) *An Actor Prepares*, New York: Routledge.

- Strauss, Anselm and Juliet Corbin (1990) *Basics of Qualitative Research: Grounded Theory Procedures and Techniques*, London: Sage Publications.
- (1998) *Basics of Qualitative Research*, London: Sage Publications.
- Stucky, Nathan (2002) "Deep Embodiment," in Nathan Stucky and Cynthia Wimmer (eds) *Performance Theory in an Anthropology Program*, Carbondale: Southern Illinois Press.
- Tansley, David V (1984) *Subtle Body*. New York: Thames & Hudson.
- Tedlock, Barbara (2003) "Ethnography and Ethnographic Representation," in Norman K. Denzin & Yvonna S. Lincoln (eds) *Strategies of Qualitative Inquiry*, Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.
- Tekippe, Terry J (1996) *What is Lonergan Up to in Insight*, Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press.
- Telesco, Patricia (2001) *Labyrinth Walking Patterns of Power*, New York: Citadel Press Kensington Publishing.
- Turnbull, Colin (1990) "Liminality: A Synthesis of Subjective and Objective Experience" in Richard Schechner and Willa Appel (eds) *By Means of Performance*, New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Turner, Victor (1969) *The Ritual Process*, Chicago: Aldine Publishing.
- (1974) *Dramas, Fields, and Metaphors: Symbolic Action in Human Society*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- (1977) "Frame, Flow and Reflection: Ritual and Drama as Public Liminality" in Michel Benamou and Charles Caramello, (eds) *Performance in Postmodern Culture*, Madison: The Center for Twentieth Century Studies.
- (1982) *From Ritual to Theatre*. New York: PAJ Publications.
- (1986) *The Anthropology of Performance*, New York: PAJ Publications.
- (1990) "Are There Universals in Myth, Ritual, and Drama" in Richard

- Schechner and Willa Appel (eds.) *By Means of Performance*, New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Turner, Victor and Edith Turner (1978) *Image and Pilgrimage in Christian Culture*, New York: Columbia University Press.
- Turner, Victor and Edith Turner (1986) "Performing Ethnography" in Victor Turner *The Anthropology of Performance*, New York: PAJ Publications.
- Vanden Heuvel, Michael (1991) *Performing Drama/Dramatizing Performance*, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
- West, Melissa Gayle (2000) *Exploring the Labyrinth*, New York: Random House.
- Wiles, Timothy (1980) "Artaud and Grotowski," in *The Theatre Event: Modern Theories of Performance*. Chicago: University of Chicago.
- Zarrilli, Phillip B (2002) "Action, Structure, Task, and Emotion," in Nathan Stucky and Cynthia Wimmer (eds) *Performance theory in an Anthropology Program*, Carbondale: Southern Illinois Press.

VITA

Nancy Ann Bandiera was born on August 11, 1951, in Albany, New York, the daughter of Mary Bandiera and Emilio Bandiera. She received the degree of Bachelor of Arts from State University of New York at Albany in December 1971. During the following years she was employed as an English and drama teacher in Latham, New York. She later worked as a free-lance actor in regional theatre. In September 1983 she entered the Graduate School of The University of Texas at Arlington. She received the degree of Master of Arts in Interdisciplinary Studies in the fields of applied linguistics and education in December 1986. For several years she was employed at the Summer Institute of Linguistics in Dallas. She later was employed as a cross-cultural teacher at Catholic Charities Migration and Refugee Services in Dallas and an English as a Second Language teacher at Dallas County Community College District. She received her degree of Master of Fine Arts in Acting from the University of Texas at Austin in May 1993. From 1989 to 2002, she was employed at the University of Texas at Austin, Austin Community College, and Huston-Tillotson University as an acting, voice & speech, and performance teacher. She currently works as a teacher in communication at the Texas Culinary Academy and St. Edward's University and in anthropology at LeTourneau University. She also teaches cross-cultural communication and English to international corporate engineers and executives.

Permanent Address: 12319 Limerick Avenue, Austin, Texas 78758

This dissertation was typed by the author.