

THESIS P TROTTA

Title: The potential contribution of psychosynthesis to education: an interview-based exploration of educators' experiences of working with members of the 'New Generations' who are developing towards self-actualisation and self-transcendence.

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ABSTRACT

The intention behind this research was to reveal through two interpretive, inter-related studies the perceived needs of differently-labelled youth, collectively addressed in this thesis as ‘the New Generations’, exploring potentially viable ways of working with them in education. The first study focused on youth labelled Indigos, and the second study focused on exploring a possible way of working with the New Generations according to experienced teachers. Both studies drew on lived experience and opinions of educators who have acquired extensive experience respectively with the Indigo phenomenon and with the psychosynthetic educational model. The first study’s results revealed not only Indigos’ self-actualising and self-transcending characteristics and needs, but also indicated that holistic approaches to education appeared to have been successful with them. A further analysis of characteristics observed by special education experts indicated that differently-labelled youth also appear to be motivated by self-actualising and self-transcending tendencies, which highlighted the relevance of investigating holistic models for potential integration in mainstream education. Psychosynthesis was chosen for investigation in the second study, in that besides addressing self-actualising/transcending needs, it also integrates them within the psyche. The study explored how recent psychosynthesis-based educational projects might inform, and contribute to, holistic and mainstream education.

Some innovative potential contributions to both holistic and mainstream education were found. Recent research on current tendencies, educational futures and global trends affecting a changing world would appear to emphasise the relevance of the contributions offered by the psychosynthesis model, hence to suggest the potential appropriateness of their fuller integration in mainstream education. However, an examination of study results and of the relevant literature on practices seems to indicate a tendency to transmit knowledge from past to future generations, irrespective of possibly changed needs, in both mainstream and holistic education. It is suggested that this potentially biased way of educating youth might need to be addressed on both fronts.

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CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter I will introduce this study by clarifying some of the key terms and concepts underpinning it and by explaining my rationale for engaging with the main topics under investigation, namely the Indigo phenomenon and psychosynthesis as a possibly helpful holistic educational model that may inform mainstream education for the benefit of the New Generations, as detailed below.

1.1 Key definitions and concepts and rationale for the study

The present study is interpretive and draws on lived experience and opinions of experienced educators; its purpose was to reveal the perceived characteristics and educational needs of differently-labelled youth and to explore viable ways of working with them in education. This investigation, which consists of two inter-related studies, revolves around children and adolescents whose characteristics and ways of learning appear to be different from what is considered the norm (for which they often seem to be misdiagnosed and misunderstood), but do not seem to be widely acknowledged in the general theory and practice of mainstream education in Italy, the UK or the US. The present research reflects my deeply-felt wish to investigate perspectives on practically useful ways of meeting the educational needs of such children, who are often labelled 'Indigo'.

The label Indigo is often assigned to individuals who appear to be non conformist, rebellious, often confrontational, creative, intuitive, highly independent and driven by an inner locus of control, who are said to be here to challenge the current system in order to introduce an emerging consciousness and a new collective way of being. I was initially sceptical of a new label used to categorise human beings, especially because I had been repeatedly told that I appeared to be an Indigo myself. However, having met many unusual (different from the norm) children and adolescents in my teaching and counselling work, I eventually chose to accept the challenge of investigating the phenomenon and of researching perspectives on potentially useful educational models which could both assist the development of Indigo children and inform mainstream education.

The Indigo phenomenon is a controversial, insufficiently researched movement that started in America, but whose popularity seems to be on the rise and attracting increasing attention, as British sociologist Kingsley Dennis's recent observations and writings testify (Dennis, 2012), as well as those of many psychotherapists, doctors, teachers and parents (reported in Altaras & Tappe, 2011 and Carroll & Tober, 1999, 2009, among others). However, because the phenomenon and those who write about it are often summarily and derogatorily labelled 'New Age', further research tends to be avoided. Chapter 2, therefore, begins with an analysis of the meaning, potential contribution, relevance, criticism and implications of the so-called New Age movement, which aims to clarify and situate the whole study (section 2.2).

In this thesis I will argue that, despite the controversial nature of the Indigo phenomenon, dismissing it altogether without further exploration might represent a missed opportunity to advance understanding of human potential and what might be emerging on a collective level.

Since the Indigo phenomenon does not seem to be confined to one country, participants in this study have been chosen from three different nationalities, which adds an international dimension to the research. My first study focused on the 'lived experience' of three experienced educators working with children they later identified as Indigos (within and outside mainstream education), on how they understand and perceive them and what approaches they have found successful in educating them.

The first, Indigo study served two purposes – it was an attempt to fill a gap found in research and to offer potentially useful information based on applied, expert educators' work; its function has also been to help define the focus of the second study (which was initially unclear), hence leading to the development of coherence (and shape) in my investigation. In fact, the study provided information not only in terms of characteristics that interviewed educators had observed in the children and youth they worked with for a number of years, but also in terms of the *educational interventions* they had found successful, which seemed to have strong holistic components.

As discussed in Chapter 2, it is my contention and concern that, perhaps because of the assumptions mainstream education is based on or because of incomplete information made available to educators and policy makers, mainstream education may not be serving Indigos (and similar) children and adolescents well. In fact, psychotherapist

Remi Thivierge, whose work focuses on Indigos and sensitive children, reports that in the United States and in Canada the incidence of Indigos dropping out of school and of families opting for home schooling or Waldorf/Steiner schools has been growing at (what he perceives as) a rather alarming rate (Thivierge, 2011).

The first study research, as well as results from a previous doctoral quantitative study on Indigos (see Chapter 2), which indicated self-actualising and self-transcending tendencies and motivational needs in Indigos (explained and defined below), inspired a further investigation into characteristics that special education experts and socio-historical researchers had observed in differently-labelled youth (Millennials, Gifted, ADHD in particular). This analysis, when compared to Indigos' traits, revealed that self-actualising and self-transcending tendencies did not seem to be confined to Indigos, but seemed to be applicable to other multi-labelled members of the young population, collectively addressed in this thesis as 'the New Generations' (see Chapter 2). The general label New Generations refers to, and clusters, differently-labelled individuals (such as 'Gifted', those potentially misdiagnosed 'ADD/ADHD' who are, in fact, Indigos or Gifted 'Millennials', 'Visual-Spatial learners', 'Highly Sensitive', 'Right Brainers' or 'Intuitives', to name a few) who appear to manifest Indigo-like traits and motivational needs (such as strong personalities, overexcitabilities, independence, inner locus of control, strong intuitive abilities, concern for the environment or for social justice, intolerance towards ambiguities or what they perceive as hypocritical behaviours) and who, like Indigos, have mainly (but not exclusively) been born since the early 1980s (Trotta, 2012).

In other words, the New Generations seem to be driven by a need to manifest and express creatively their full potential, but not in a self-serving way – rather, with a seemingly expanded consciousness and a sense of self that is embedded in the totality, which implies a wish to find ways to improve the quality of life for all life forms on planet Earth (including the environment). The educators interviewed in the first study revealed some educational interventions that seemed to be successful with Indigos and, collectively, these appeared to have strong holistic components. Given the similarities noted between Indigos and other members of the New Generations, it might be reasonable to deduce, perhaps somewhat speculatively, that the same or similar educational models adopted successfully with Indigos might be helpful for them, too. Inspired by the first study's results and the indications obtained by the further

investigation into the New Generations just outlined, my next step in this study was to explore a holistic educational model that addressed self-actualising and self-transcending needs. Having found that psychosynthesis-based educational projects address those needs, I became interested in finding out whether and to what extent the latest developments within the field may inform mainstream and holistic education.

The main reason for choosing psychosynthesis as a holistic model to explore was that, unlike other humanistically and transpersonally informed holistic models, psychosynthesis focuses not only on self-actualisation and self-transcendence, but on integrating both processes safely within the psyche; another reason for choosing to explore psychosynthesis was that it has also been used by a gifted education expert working with what he termed spiritually gifted youth (spiritual giftedness being another trait sometimes associated with Indigos in the literature but which, as argued below, might in fact be indicative of self-transcending tendencies and/or existential intelligence). The difference between psychosynthesis and other holistic educational/developmental practices is that the psychosynthetic model seems to have stood the test of time, in that it seems to have been successfully applied to several mainstream and non mainstream educational projects internationally for decades with children and young adults (see Chapter 2).

To summarise, after investigating Indigos' characteristics and educational needs as transpired from the lived experience of educators who had been working with them, a further analysis into characteristics found in other differently-labelled youth revealed that a potentially larger population than those labelled Indigos seemed to be driven by self-actualising and self-transcending motivational needs, as I argued in *The Indigo Phenomenon and the New Generations: Are They Symbolic Of An Emerging Consciousness and Paradigm?* which I wrote for the International Journal of Arts and Sciences, after presenting my initial research at a conference in Rome in 2011 (Trotta, 2012). Subsequently, on the basis of the observations of the experts involved in the first study and the applied educational interventions they had found successful, the relevance of holistic models of education was highlighted, especially of those models which addressed self-actualising and self-transcending motivational needs. It also became clear that finding out how and to what extent such models might inform mainstream education (so that the needs of the potentially misunderstood New Generations could be met without necessarily resorting to home/ alternative schooling) was worthy of

investigation and became important at that later stage of my research. The second phase of my study, therefore, was based on exploring further the results of the first study's findings on the educational needs of Indigos, later extended to the New Generations, by investigating the potential relevance and contribution of a transpersonally-based, holistic educational model, such as psychosynthesis, to mainstream education.

Psychosynthesis-based educational projects, potentially more suitable for Indigos and sensitive children, currently are only marginally recognised and sometimes adopted in mainstream education (*Gea Psicointesi* in Italy offers short educational programmes to elementary schools, for example), but only as relatively short-lived extracurricular activities. Furthermore, they seem to be adopted more often in higher education and undergraduate courses (where transpersonal education is already part of the school curriculum) than in primary or secondary schools. This appears to indicate that psychosynthesis-based education is recognised but not exactly widespread or widely known in mainstream education.

What this implies is that Indigos or other sensitive children can currently be exposed to potentially helpful forms of holistic education mainly when their parents, teachers or heads of school have an interest in the humanistic/holistic or transpersonal fields and can find funds to integrate their mainstream schools curricula with special, psychosynthesis or transpersonally-based educational projects. For this reason, and for the potential usefulness of psychosynthesis to a large number of students in mainstream education (i.e. representatives of the New Generations), the present study aims to investigate the relevance and potential contribution of psychosynthesis to holistic and mainstream education.

In practical terms, my aim in the second phase of this investigation was to explore how three, internationally active and pioneering expert educators working in different areas of the psychosynthetic educational field viewed their work and how/whether and to what extent recent trends/developments in the psychosynthetic educational model in general might contribute to both holistic and mainstream education (given its focus on self-actualising and self-transcending needs), to help establish the relevance of a fuller integration between the two. I am not aware of any previous study that has investigated this possibility.

To introduce Chapter 2, that explores and reviews literature relevant to the present study, a list of definitions of terms and concepts consistently used throughout this thesis follows (see also the Glossary):

Indigo – label assigned to individuals who appear to be non conformist, rebellious, often confrontational, creative, intuitive, highly independent and driven by an inner locus of control, who are said to be here to challenge the current system in order to introduce an emerging consciousness and a new collective way of being.

Self-actualising – associated with Maslow’s hierarchy of needs, this term indicates tendencies to explore, actively manifest, and creatively use one’s full potential.

Self-transcendence – associated with Maslow’s later findings (explained in chapter 2) and with tendencies or experiences studied by transpersonal psychology. It represents an expanded consciousness and a more inclusive sense of self embedded in the totality. A ‘transcender’, for example, would wish to work for the good of all, hence being motivated to go beyond satisfying only more self-centred needs. In Maslow’s hierarchy of (motivational) needs, it represents a sixth, later addition that goes beyond self-actualisation.

New Generations – Non conformist (‘out-of-the-box’) and differently-labelled individuals (such as ‘Gifted’, those potentially misdiagnosed ‘ADD/ADHD’ who are, in fact, Indigos or Gifted ‘Millennials’, ‘Visual-Spatial learners’, ‘Highly Sensitive’, ‘Right Brainers’ or ‘Intuitives’, to name a few), mostly, but not exclusively, children, adolescents and young adults, often born from the early 1980s to the beginning of the new millennium and beyond, who appear to manifest Indigo-like traits (such as strong personalities, overexcitabilities, independence, inner locus of control, strong intuitive abilities, concern for the environment or for social justice, intolerance towards ambiguities or what they perceive as hypocritical behaviours), and who often seem to manifest self-actualising and self-transcending tendencies.

Chapter 2 fully explains the above terms and contextualises the research questions which the first and second studies tried to answer, while Chapter 3 explains and justifies the research questions and the strategies adopted and applied to the present study. Chapter 4 spells out the methodology used for both studies, while Chapter 5 outlines and discusses the first study. Chapters 6, 7, and 8 describe and reveal the second study’s

findings, discussion, implications and conclusions. After an introduction, Chapter 2 presents some background information (section 2.2) that will help situate my literature review and my research.

CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Introduction

This chapter is a review of theories and previous work in the two fields under investigation, namely:

- 1) seemingly unusual children/adolescents whose characteristics and needs may not be understood or supported fully by mainstream education (the Indigo phenomenon) and
- 2) a potentially useful holistic education model which may inform mainstream education (general transpersonal educational model based on psychosynthesis).

My interest in both fields lies in perspectives on practical applications and lived experience, hence in how expert educators with experience in the fields being investigated perceive and contribute to them (as further explored in chapter 3). Given my interest in nonconformist children and adolescents whose needs might be potentially misunderstood, I set out to study a controversial phenomenon that seems to be on the rise but does not seem to have been studied academically in great depth, namely the so-called Indigo phenomenon, upon which my first study focuses (outlined in Chapter 5).

After (and as a result of) an initial exploration of the Indigo phenomenon, I became interested in situating Indigos in a wider context; this led me to analyse existing research in other relevant fields that might shed light on potential similarities among presumed Indigos and other multi-labelled representatives of what I have come to term the 'New Generations' (a collective and possibly more neutral term) for the purposes of this thesis. What eventually emerged was that, given the characteristics found in common among the multi-labelled New Generations, which could be described as self-actualising and self-transcending (Trotta, 2012) and their holistic educational needs the first study revealed, I became interested in exploring the latest trends applied in a transpersonally-informed, general education model because it seems to address those self-actualising/transcending tendencies, which might, at least potentially, meet the New Generations' educational needs better, as well as inform holistic and mainstream education.

Among transpersonally-based educational models to explore, psychosynthesis emerged as the focus of my second study for three reasons:

- 1) because it seems to be particularly congruent with the characteristics of New Generation youngsters described in the first part of my investigation;
- 2) because it has been successfully applied in other educational areas (see sections 2.5 and 2.7 below), and specifically with one category among those represented by the multi-labelled New Generations (i.e. spiritually gifted students) that appears to have close affinities with Indigos
- 3) because the contribution that psychosynthesis might make to a holistic approach to education is not currently evident in mainstream schools

Thus, the Indigo study's results led to the second study and gave coherence and shape to my research. As said, the focus of my second study is on exploring the psychosynthetic model of education, which is used not only with gifted children, but also in innovative international educational projects and in other fields. The second study, a multiple case study research, also partially fills a gap in the scant research within transpersonal education, which other authors have also highlighted (Buckler, 2012, Collins, 2010).

Section 2.2 below helps situate the whole study and provides some background information regarding the potentially controversial topics explored. This chapter is then organised in five further sections, each of which addresses in turn the key issues raised in the introduction above and in section 2.2, as follows:

- a) section 2.3 introduces the psychologies that inform this investigation. Relevant aspects of the work of Maslow, Assagioli and Jung, who all contributed to the development of transpersonal psychology, will be briefly discussed. Transpersonal psychology will also be introduced and defined.
- b) section 2.4 reviews the literature and existing research on Indigos which highlights the relevance of 'levels of consciousness', also conceptualised in this section;
- c) section 2.5 reveals my framing of the 'New Generations' and includes a review of socio-historical and special education issues potentially related to the Indigo phenomenon;

- d) section 2.6 offers an overview of how conventional, mainstream education generally seems to address the characteristics found in the New Generations and potential reasons why it may not serve their needs adequately; this section also briefly outlines dialogic education as representative of innovative tendencies in mainstream schooling. In this section holistic education and its agenda are also discussed;
- e) section 2.7 outlines the psychosynthetic model, which I will investigate as a general, potentially helpful holistic model applied in different educational contexts in my second study and describes its previous applications in education. Criticism and potential problems with the model are discussed in this section, especially as they may deter or affect applicability to mainstream educational practices;

The research questions for both studies are presented in the relevant sections of this chapter, but they will also be contextualised and explained in chapters 3 and 4 that follow. Findings from both studies will be outlined and discussed in chapters 5-8. In section 2.2 that follows, I will delineate some background information that situates the study and introduces the literature review in the rest of this chapter.

2.2 Background information (the nature, relevance and implications of the ‘New Age’)

I am aware that the present study may take the reader on a journey through slightly less familiar academic grounds than the norm. In this chapter I discuss a number of phenomena/topics that have previously been regarded as ‘New Age’ (such as the Indigo phenomenon and transpersonally-informed holistic education), an expression that has often been used dismissively to refer to what have been perceived as ‘fringe’ topics (that stray from mainstream orthodoxy). However, the so-called New Age movement has historically included disciplines once defined ‘parascience’ that have gradually gained more respect and integration in mainstream orthodoxy, such as psychoanalysis, humanistic psychology, deep ecology or complementary medicine/holistic health (Zamojski, 2008). Because of the potential relevance of the implications of this movement to my study, I have chosen to try to elucidate what the New Age consists of,

what it might imply and its relevance to my study before getting to the heart of my research in the chapters that follow.

Since the New Age movement has no recognised leader, dogma, sacred texts or unifying associations, it is very hard to find a definitive description. The New Age can perhaps tentatively be defined as a multidimensional and multi-disciplinary cultural phenomenon, a counter-culture movement of people who share an interest in a holistic approach to life in general, to spirituality (not necessarily religious-based), metaphysics and self-improvement/self-realisation, leading towards a new cosmology where external control and manipulation are bypassed and where peace, co-operation, sustainability and consciousness expansion appear to be the main goals (definition inspired by the most recent writings and research of sociologist and futurist Kingsley Dennis, 2011, 2012).

In the New Age classic *The Aquarian Conspiracy*, published in 1980 and still in print, author Marilyn Ferguson, while describing mainstream perceptions of reality in terms of social structure, politics, economics and environmental concerns at the time, also delineated areas where change or a paradigm shift was needed and appeared to be emerging through the New Age movement, which she saw as leading towards a healthier and more fulfilling planetary future (Ferguson, 2009). She was fiercely criticised for trying to destabilize Christian views and for supporting what was viewed as excessively optimistic claims regarding human potential, which encouraged escapism, self-absorption, or even self-obsession – an observation prevalent in the 1970s, for which Maslow's work was also critiqued (Daniels, 2005). Ferguson singled out palaeontologist and philosopher Pierre Teilhard de Chardin as the author who exerted the greatest influence on New Age ideas (op. cit.). Christian theologian Vishal Mangalwadi observes that Teilhard de Chardin's work led him to conclude that consciousness did not suddenly emerge in human beings, but has been present and guiding the evolutionary process since the beginning of humanity's time on Earth as an inherent part of all that lives (Mangalwadi, 1992).

Among thinkers who influenced the New Age movement, Ferguson also indicated philosopher Jiddu Krishnamurti, humanist and writer Aldous Huxley and psychologists Carl Jung, Roberto Assagioli and Abraham Maslow who, Ferguson wrote, 'focused their mature powers on trying to understand transcendent needs and the irrepressible

hunger for meaning' (op. cit., p.403). Despite having become more popular and mainstream, the three psychologists' empirical work is still opposed and criticised for not being 'scientific', in that it was based on their own observations and direct experience rather than on experimental studies (Daniels, 2005; Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000).

Maslow's work in particular was also criticised for encouraging self-centredness, hedonism and self-obsession through his self-actualisation theories (that encouraged the fulfilment of one's individual, innate potential), which he later was very keen on addressing and clarifying, having become aware that the intentions underlying the theory had been misunderstood (Krippner, 1972). It is important to point out that Maslow did not invent the concept of self-actualisation – founder of humanistic approaches to psychology Carl Rogers had previously written about it (Rogers, 1961) and psychiatrist Kurt Goldstein (1939) had first introduced it, but it was Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory that gave it prominence (Maslow, 1970, 1971).

It is also worth emphasising that Jung's depth psychology, Maslow's humanistic and transpersonal work and Assagioli's psychosynthetic model, still referred to as 'New Age' by some, in different ways were inspired by ancient knowledge and constitute a revisiting of the spiritual dimension of the human psyche and an exploration of one's potential and consciousness (discussed in section 2.4). This exploration, Mangalwadi (1992) explains, started in the 1960s and 1970s with Indian gurus gathering in America in large numbers and influencing a whole generation. The clash between the different Eastern and Western values and ways of life, Mangalwadi argues, eventually gave rise to the creation of highly individualised forms and models of spirituality and metaphysics that worked for the West which, to Mangalwadi, became the next and *ongoing New Age quest*. This quest, he clarifies, also inspired 'fringe', cutting-edge scientific research aimed at exploring the possible truth behind ancient, long-forgotten knowledge transmitted via myths and stories, often dismissed by orthodoxy as mere superstition or legend, to unearth and revisit ancient sources of information about the history of humankind. What Mangalwadi seems to be saying is that, as happened in the Italian Renaissance, the New Age seems to be perhaps more about revisiting ancient knowledge than about introducing new information (op. cit.). In other words, the East-West tension the author describes might have indirectly led to *a new way of*

approaching spirituality and of viewing human potential (and history) that merges Eastern and Western wisdom, while bypassing their respective shortcomings. In fact, one could argue that Jung's and Assagioli's work, as well as Maslow's self-actualisation and self-transcendence principles (described in section 2.3 below) might be a step in that direction.

Self-actualisation and New Age spirituality (which are not necessarily interchangeable terms) are considered from a different angle in *Shadows of the Sacred*, by transpersonal psychotherapist Frances Vaughan (Vaughan, 2005). Vaughan emphasises that psychology and academia have generally failed to consider or take seriously what lies behind self-actualisation and self-transcendence principles and motivational needs, and draws attention to how increasingly widespread substance abuse and extreme behaviours may be connected to – and may be mirroring – an unquenched spiritual thirst which, she argues, is a neglected and very human need, especially in recent times of increasing secularisation, when religions seem to fail to provide spiritual nourishment to an increasing number of people. She explains that both the outer world of the ego and the inner world of the Soul are legitimate and need attention equally. Suffering can come about not only as a result of being out of touch with one's inner world, but also by having unsuccessfully tried to come to terms with the needs of the ego, or, even worse, by having mistakenly tried to *suppress* the ego, as preached by some ancient Eastern schools of thought, whose teachings are not necessarily relevant to modern Western civilisations, Vaughan points out (op. cit.). Inner and outer needs, including spirit and body, Vaughan maintains, should be acknowledged and brought into balance, which is not always encouraged by so-called spiritual teachers. Besides warning readers about some of the pitfalls of the spiritual journey (i.e. developing a 'spiritual ego' and dissociating from difficult emotions, for example, which needs to be counterbalanced by psychological clarity for a mature spiritual life, as discussed also in Masters R., 2010), Vaughan 'grounds' spirituality in everyday busy lives. Vaughan makes spirituality practical, dispelling the myth that its cultivation is something that can only be experienced by a select few who have the time and means to pursue Eastern practices by divorcing themselves from everyday life which, Vaughan argues, is hardly the point of spirituality and self-realisation (op. cit.).

More critically, Jennifer Rindfleish, an Australian lecturer and researcher specialising in marketing and consumer behaviour, sees New Age spirituality as a market of transcendence and a social product of consumer society in the West, resulting from increasing secularisation and from the dominance of consumerism and its ever changing needs, which offer fertile ground for more and varied New Age spiritual theories, endless workshops and spiritual materialism. She writes that ‘consumer society requires New Age “technologies of the self” to be continually redefined, restructured and repackaged in new and different forms’, making certain popular writers’ fortune (Rindfleish, 2005, p.343). Professor of Marketing Stephen Gould, on the other hand, feels that ‘Westerners have been constantly reconstructing and situating the East; indeed much of what passes as New Age constitutes such reconstruction’ (Gould, 2006, p.72). He argues, however, that spirituality is too often conflated with spiritual materialism and suggests that the two are different, even if not necessarily mutually exclusive. Spirituality embodied in the New Age, to Gould, is a complex phenomenon, which he situates ‘in the *larger context of a global paradigmatic shift in consciousness*’ (ibid., p.63, my italics). Echoing Gould’s view, Polish historian Adam Zamojski, who has attempted a critical and multidimensional analysis of the New Age cultural phenomenon, concludes that:

Despite its ambiguity, the New Age seems to indicate one thing. We are witnessing a complex process of changes in almost all aspects of human activity – philosophy, religion, science, art – a process which embraces the entire culture (Zamojski, 2008, p.106).

Physicist, historian and philosopher of science Thomas Kuhn proposed a paradigm shift theory that indicates how revolutions in thought processes do not appear to take place through a gradual process, but rather when mainstream thought meets with anomalies that simply cannot be explained by the current paradigm. When a sufficient number of anomalies emerge that put accepted ideas in a state of crisis, Kuhn argues, such anomalies then become a new body of accepted knowledge, which brings about a new paradigm of thought in order to re-establish stability in human thinking and consensus worldview. In other words, Kuhn seems to suggest that yesterday’s anomalies and unacceptable theories eventually tend to become today’s and tomorrow’s fields of enquiry (Kuhn, 1970).

The point is that the New Age movement and the many areas of research it has inspired over the past few decades might be viewed as *part of a larger cycle of natural human evolution in consciousness*, eventually inspiring a paradigm shift possibly due to a collective change of consciousness and new archetypes and needs emerging from the collective unconscious. Archetypes could be defined as universal models or patterns of behaviour, often found in stories and myths, theorised to be psychically inherited through the collective unconscious – the container of archetypes (Jung, 1961; Tarnas, 2012).

The present study takes a predominantly psychological view (using social, sociological and anthropological framing) of the topics and phenomena being investigated – it is interesting to note how, by studying cyclical trends in history, sociologists Strauss & Howe (1991, 1998, 2000), cultural historian and proponent of archetypal cosmology Richard Tarnas (2007, 2010, 2012) and sociologist and futurist Kingsley Dennis (2011, 2012), among others, advocate a cyclic view of time through which to view the New Generations' intuitive, existential intelligence as leading to, or symbolising, a possible, emerging, paradigm shift. In the section below I will be briefly exploring another, perhaps less emphasised, aspect of the New Age movement relevant to my research, namely its esoteric roots and their cyclic relevance and historical impact as analysed by scholars in the field of Western esotericism.

2.2.1. The New Age and the archetype of renewal

In *New Age Religion and Western Culture* (based on his doctoral dissertation), Professor of the History of Hermetic Philosophy Wouter Hanegraaf (1998) analyses New Age beliefs and integrates the New Age movement within the historiography of Western esotericism. He reveals that the New Age neopaganism, holism and the quest for a unified worldview, rather than being about something totally new, seems to be a continuation of much older philosophies and teachings, adapted to suit the current secular field of thought. Hanegraaff clarifies that the *philosophia perennis* (perennial philosophy) is often the foundation of the 'Renaissance project, generally recognised as central to the history of Renaissance hermeticism and Western esotericism' (Hanegraaff, 2012, pp.5-6); interestingly, as discussed in section 2.6, perennial philosophy also seems to be influencing holistic education models. Perennial

philosophy can be seen as a thread of spiritual thought describing universal and ethical teachings common to all the great religions (spanning the last 25 centuries) particularly their metaphysical traditions, which make up Western esoteric teachings (such as Gnosticism, Hermeticism, Theosophy, Neoplatonism and Alchemy, among others) (Godwin, 2007).

The revival of ancient esoteric (meaning *hidden*) knowledge underlies the Italian Renaissance, which, many argue, has not only awakened a European continent that had been kept in obscurity and repression by the Catholic Church since the collapse of the Roman Empire (the ‘Holy Inquisition’ being perhaps the clearest example), but also influenced enlightened poets, artists, thinkers and even inspired the development of modern science (Wallace-Murphy, 2010). In *Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition*, Frances Yates, a Warburg scholar, traces all the occult sciences to the *Hermetica*, showing how important its role was in acting as a bridge, an inspiration and a connecting link between magic, alchemy and astrology and the sciences of physics, chemistry and astronomy respectively (Yates, 1991).

The revival of ancient knowledge which characterised the Renaissance started with a translation of the Egyptian Hermetic texts by linguist Marsilio Ficino, ordered by wealthy Florentine philanthropist Cosimo de’ Medici. This was followed by a recovery and translations of ancient philosophical texts (i.e. works written by Plato – an initiate of ancient Egyptian mystery schools and student of many other metaphysical teachings from Babylon, India and Persia – and texts written by Zoroaster and Plotinus, among others). These translations made possible and encouraged a more liberated quest for knowledge that brought to light and spread to Europe profound teachings which Pico della Mirandola and Giordano Bruno, among others, believed existed in the distant past of a Golden Age (Yates, 1991, Bruno & Ciliberto, 2001).

It is certainly interesting to note how Plotinus’s teachings, a blend of rationality and mysticism, and his applied or endorsed *theurgy* (practices/rituals aimed at uniting with the divine), for example, seem to echo closely the message behind humanistic and transpersonal psychology in terms of self-transformation (personal alchemy), self-transcendence and self-actualisation, which are central to the present study. Plotinus, founder of Neoplatonism, developed a complex spiritual cosmology and a theory of sense perception and knowledge, a central tenet of which was that the mind, rather than

receiving passively data from the senses, plays, instead, a very active role in shaping and organising the objects of its perception; Plotinus, like Assagioli in his psychosynthetic model, also saw the soul as being composed of a higher and a lower part, the latter being the seat of the personality (Hines, 2004).

Western esotericism has emerged as an academic discipline that is gradually rising in popularity (Goodrick-Clarke, 2008), with Masters' degrees and doctoral courses offered (so far) in Holland, France and at the University of Exeter, UK. Subjects studied include ancient Gnosticism and Hermeticism, Rosicrucianism, Christian Theosophy, Jewish Kabbalah, Occultism, Spiritualism, Modern Esotericism and the contemporary New Age spiritualities. A lengthy presentation and discussion of Western esotericism is beyond the scope of this thesis. However, a brief historical view seems to reveal information that helps situate not only the New Age movement, but also the present study. The late Nicholas Goodrick-Clarke, Professor of Esotericism at the University of Exeter until August 2012, explains in his historical introduction to the Western esoteric traditions that, while connecting humanity to the cosmos, Western esotericism combines spirituality with empirical observation of the natural world, revealing also a harmonious celestial order (op. cit.). He clarifies that the core, common characteristics found in different schools of esoteric spirituality incorporate a belief in interconnectedness and in the ability to transform and elevate one's nature, while achieving a personal form of connection with the Divine. Such core common concepts are referred to as:

- a) *correspondences* – in accordance with the Hermetic axiom 'as above, so below', all realms of nature are connected and organised symbolically, reflecting in the microcosm (human being) the order found in the macrocosm (the heavens);
- b) *living nature* – the view that nature is alive and that the Cosmos is a complex, ensouled entity which is animated by energy and intelligence;
- c) *imagination and mediations* – which highlights the differences between a mystic and an esotericist, in that whereas a mystic uses his mind and imagination to seek direct union or experience of God without intermediaries, an esotericist tends to choose to focus on intermediaries (spirit guides, angels, nature devas, etc.) as a favourite form of contemplation;

- d) *the experience of transmutation* – referring to personal alchemy and transformation of one's nature, personality and psyche as a result of using imagination or mediation to reach personal gnosis (illuminated knowledge) (op. cit., adapted from pp.8-9).

It is interesting to note, at this point, how the psychologies of Jung and Assagioli, among the founders of transpersonal psychology, as discussed in section 2.3 below, seem to contain all the elements just listed. Religious studies expert Kocku Von Stuckrad points out that the image of the human being who can choose to emancipate him/herself through seeking the Divine in him/herself without a mediator (highlighting personal sovereignty) is what characterises both modern esotericism and transpersonal psychology's anthropological assumptions. He writes that:

By relating the human soul to cosmic dimensions and seeing the highest task of man – his individuation – as his absorption in transcendent universal spheres, *transpersonal psychology perpetuates ideas from the Renaissance* and early modern period. These involve a holism of the human soul and a sacred world soul, which are not characterised by an act of divine grace, but through man's own absorption in his own divinity (Von Stuckrad, 2005, p.136, my italics).

A case in point is Carl Jung, who, with a Gnostic spirit, studied the history of religions, as well as alchemy and astrology (Hoeller, 1989, 1996); he developed a modern esoteric concept of the Soul and developed a theory of universal symbols pertaining to the Soul in terms of universal archetypes for *individuation* – transformation and integration of one's unconscious with the personality and psyche – with the archetype of Soul/Self having a key, central role (Singer, 1994). Popularised by Jung, the principle behind the archetype hypothesis was already discussed in Plato's times as collective mental 'Forms', of which the soul was aware before birth (being, in that sense, innate). Jung saw archetypes as psychological organs. The Self, one of the main archetypes in Jung's view, for example, was seen as the regulator of individuation (Daniels, 2005). Jung perhaps contributed to the New Age movement by sacralising 'the psyche and simultaneously psychologised the sacred', mirroring Neoplatonic teachings (Von Stuckrad, 2005, p.137). In a similar way, Assagioli's psychosynthesis clearly reflects and contains esoteric, theosophical teachings, promoting the Self as the connection between the Soul and one's personality; Assagioli also studied astrology and many other esoteric disciplines, although, to preserve 'respectability' perhaps, he was less

overt about his interests than Jung, choosing to expose his theosophical ideas under the pseudonym 'Considerator' (Assagioli & Esposito, 2008).

In conclusion, the main point Goodrick-Clarke makes that is particularly relevant to this study is that behind the perennial characteristics of an esoteric worldview and the cyclic resurgence of esoteric disciplines in history might hide a persistent vitality and an archetypal quality of Renaissance/Renewal that *seems to re-emerge when the hold of orthodoxy starts waning*. He maintains that scholars in the field are concerned with documenting the history of Western esotericism, that has 'characterised and illumined Western thought in various schools and movements from late antiquity to the present' because:

Through such a historical approach, it is possible to examine the cultural and social circumstances that favour the emergence of esotericism as a worldview and to document its significant influence on philosophical, scientific and religious change (Goodrick-Clarke, 2008, p.4).

He claims that Western esotericism is highly relevant to religious and scientific debates in the West and that, far from considering esoteric disciplines superstitious and irrational and a rejected form of knowledge as a 'casualty of positivist and materialist perspectives during the nineteenth century' (Goodrick-Clarke, 2008, p.14), esotericism should be restored to a position of historical importance because:

the historical evidence suggests that esotericism (also) involves a return to sources, to some archetypal forms of thought and energy which generate a fresh round of cultural and spiritual development. In this regard, esotericism is an essential element of renewal in the historical process (ibid.).

The point is that, behind the broad intellectual movement of the New Age, with the sacralisation of the inner centre of individuals, seems to lie a transcendent, timeless and archetypal, mythic view of reality espoused by Jung and endorsed by philosopher and historian of religion Mircea Eliade and by Joseph Campbell, expert in comparative mythology and religion. Cultural historian Richard Tarnas also sees archetypes as being cyclic and central to humanity's consciousness evolution and, like Ferrer (2002), sees a *participatory worldview* (and the resurgence and fusion with feminine principles) as the way forward for humanity (Tarnas, 2010). A participatory conception holds that the extended mind ultimately is the instrument through which Divine Intelligence, the Universe, and its archetypal forces and cycles, reveal themselves throughout the various historical stages of human knowledge. East-West psychology expert Jose Ferrer argues

in favour of a pluralistic and participatory understanding of spiritual knowledge, realities and practices, which, he writes:

Refer(s) to a multidimensional access to reality that includes not only the intellectual knowing of the mind, but also the emotional and empathic knowing of the heart, the sensual and somatic knowing of the body, the visionary and intuitive knowing of the soul, as well as any other way of knowing available to human beings (Ferrer, 2002, p.121).

In *The Passion of the Western Mind* Tarnas writes that each era tends to embrace different values and paradigms, reflecting in different stages the current archetypal state of the evolving collective psyche (Tarnas, 2010). The relevant values of each era, he claims, appear more attractive in that moment in history simply because they have become archetypally appropriate to that culture at that stage of evolution, until the time comes when those same initially attractive values start feeling limiting and constricting, which invariably sees the emergence of some kind of intellectual revolution that introduces a new paradigm. The shift and evolution of paradigms, Tarnas claims, is an archetypal process (rather than a purely sociological or empirical one), which seems to take place historically on a collective level, from within many individual minds simultaneously, usually coinciding with synchronistic arrivals of new scientific data, new social contexts, new tools and/or new psychological and mental structures (Tarnas, 2012).

I am aware that the above might only reflect what Plato referred to as a ‘noble lie’, whose concept political scientist and social psychologist Walter Truett Anderson uses to describe the postmodern logic behind (the social construction of) reality-creation; this, he argues, is being practiced like never before, but is as old as Western civilization (Truett Anderson, 1990). Truett Anderson argues that in the postmodern era many people seem to conclude that ‘the best way to advance a personal opinion is to create a whole new reality about it, complete with new absolute truths’ (op. cit., p.7), creating a subculture which depends on many people believing the ‘new’ proposed version of reality and acting in the desired manner; the author argues that this is a somewhat dubious way to get things done, in that it seems to disrespect the intelligence of those to whom the story is sold. Yet, Truett Anderson points out, history is replete with ‘noble lies’ (a form of brainwashing), many created using myth (and ‘shakily assembled stories about the past with glib promises about the future’), often with the best sociopolitical

intentions, argues Truett Anderson, the postmodern era simply ‘being the fountainhead of new ones’ (op. cit., pp.10-11).

Despite the risk of incurring, or even indirectly or unconsciously promoting a ‘noble lie’ myself, I would argue that the mental structures and predominant motivational needs found in Indigos and in the New Generations (discussed below) seem to be embedded in an emerging archetype of renewal (and concomitant re-emergence of esotericism/ancient knowledge), represented by the New Age phenomenon. There is a possibility that, to use Tarnas’s concepts, the Universe, through its archetypal forces and cycles, might have been revealing the unfolding meaning behind an evolutionary process taking place in our age not only through the New Age movement, but also through changes which the New Generations seem to manifest in their consciousness that seem to puzzle so many parents and educators (Trotta, 2012).

In the overview above, I have tried to present different facets of the New Age movement as thoroughly as this limited space allows. The main criticism against the New Age and its supporters, which, as discussed below, seems to be very similar to criticism of psychosynthesis and transpersonal psychology in general, addresses a noted tendency towards:

- a) escapism (arising perhaps because of a tendency to ignore what Jung called one’s *shadow side* – unacknowledged fears, traumas or aspects of oneself which tend to be out of reach of one’s conscious awareness and are often projected outside oneself, potentially giving rise to a typical ‘us vs. them’ dualistic and elitist mentality),
- b) delusions of grandeur and
- c) ‘spiritual egos’ (being part of a chosen elite).

The pitfalls just described are emphasized also by psychotherapist Robert Masters who, however, argues that no individual exploring mysticism and spirituality can objectively claim to have been exempt from such pitfalls. Masters also highlights the importance of ‘grounding’, of simplifying and of embracing one’s emotions fully (Masters R., 2010). Because the purpose of this exploratory study is to *understand*, despite the shortcomings and the provisos presented above, it seems necessary to consider multiple social, historical and anthropological aspects, preferably with the help of scholarly studies and

an open mind. What has been outlined above is a summarised presentation of relevant background information, which hopefully situates and explains better what lies behind the topics being explored in the present study (see also section 2.4.3.).

To conclude and summarise, what I am proposing is that it is possible that the Indigo phenomenon and the changes observed in the New Generations – their self-actualising and self-transcending tendencies – might be part of a much larger movement, indicating and symbolising an archetypal, cosmic cycle of change and renewal previously introduced by the New Age phenomenon and by the re-emergence of Western esotericism. In fact, the whole scenario (the New Age movement, the re-emergence of Western esotericism and the Indigo phenomenon), when viewed together, might offer clues about an emerging new consciousness (further discussed in section 2.4 and in Chapter 8), a new paradigm, where increased spiritual awareness, interconnectedness and ecological care of the planet seem to be values needed for humanity's next cycle of growth and development. It is for this reason that I maintain that dismissing the Indigo phenomenon, holistic education or transpersonal psychology as 'New Age unscientific thought' might be simplistic, in that shunning or avoiding the study of such phenomena and values is likely to imply a loss of precious information about social and anthropological currents and emerging trends.

In the spirit of the noblest intention behind scientific investigation, which was originally born to add a rational, (ideally) unprejudiced investigation of facts and theories, independently of beliefs based on faith alone (which the Church had imposed for many centuries), my two qualitative, exploratory studies investigate possible answers or 'constructed truths' based on 'lived experience'. Ways to explore both studies' findings further, including quantitative measurements in a mixed-study research, will be suggested in Chapter 8. It is with the overview and possibilities presented above in mind that the exploration of the review of the literature pertaining to the psychologies that inform my studies can begin.

2.3 The vision and psychologies behind holistic approaches to education

Developmental trends in psychology, provided they gradually became mainstream, seem to have regularly affected the evolution of education in the past. For example, behavioural psychology has taught educators about the importance of reinforcement in

development and learning, while with humanistic psychology the role of emotions and interpersonal relationships has been highlighted, and student-centred learning, more or less marginally, has increasingly found its place in education (Roberts, 1974, 1975; Rogers & Freiberg, 1994).

This section introduces the psychologies that inform the present study and underlie holistic, humanistic and transpersonally-informed ways of educating. After a brief discussion of relevant aspects of the work of three well-known humanistic and transpersonal psychologists, transpersonal psychology will be introduced; criticism and problems found that might discourage its application or influence on mainstream education will also be highlighted in this section.

2.3.1. Positive psychology and the ‘actualisation principle’

Positive psychology, as it is understood today, has been in existence for just over a decade and can be defined in the words of its founder, Martin Seligman, as the ‘scientific study of optimal human functioning [that] aims to discover and promote the factors that allow individuals and communities to thrive’ (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000, p.7). This recent movement, its founder claims, was born not only to rectify mainstream psychology’s emphasis on individuals’ shortcomings rather than on their potentials, but also to correct an observed tendency in humanistic psychology to rely excessively on empirical studies based on observations rather than on experimental, ‘scientific’ ones in investigating what contributes to people’s well-being (op. cit.). However interesting the new branch of psychological research seems to be, it will not be the focus of the present study. What I will be discussing here is the original conception of positive psychology, a term in fact coined by psychologist Abraham Maslow (Froh, 2004). Initially, positive psychology was conceived as the sum total of observations and theoretical framework based on psychoanalytic, humanistic, existential and transpersonal theories, whose main original representatives proposed a holistic, developmental model that studied human potential and was based on wellness, on psychologically healthy functioning, ideally without encouraging narcissism – its scope was to develop the ego and personality in a healthy way, eventually transcending the ego’s more selfish drives by aligning it with the Self, a transcendent, spiritual centre within each individual (McLafferty & Kirylo, 2001).

The model, inspired also by Jung's and Assagioli's work, consisted of two main stages:

- 1) *Individuation* (the process of 'discovering, exploring and integrating different parts of the personality and psyche, while achieving freedom from unconscious compulsions and independence from social conformity' [Kesson, 2003, p.26])
- 2) *Alignment of the personality with a transcendent centre*, (initially named Higher Self and later Self or Transpersonal Self), which was supposed to bring about transpersonal values such as: freedom, optimism, peace, well-being, courage, hope, joy, resilience, right use of will and intention, wisdom, creativity, service, and feelings of interconnectedness with all life and one's wise inner source, which would lead to spontaneous ethical behaviour (Assagioli, 1965).

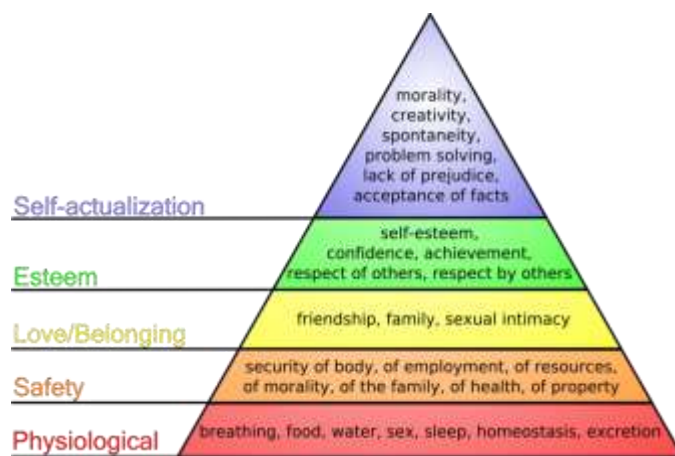
It is interesting to note how the above-mentioned traits emerging from the personality's alignment with a transcendent centre, the Transpersonal Self, appear to be shared by the main world religions, from Christianity to Buddhism (Daniels, 2005). As illustrated above, the principle of self-actualisation generally guided positive psychology's model. Self-actualisers were observed to be psychologically healthy and well-adjusted, self-determined, self-directed and self-organised individuals who appeared to possess, and be guided by, an inner locus of control (McLafferty & Kirylo, 2001). Furthermore, self-actualising individuals often reported what Maslow termed 'peak experiences' – momentary incidents of elation, feelings of awe and self-transcendence and 'unitive' experiences of interconnection with all life.

Peak experiences gave a taste of what was possible in terms of potentials to develop and motivational needs beyond the first five Maslow originally discovered and included in his hierarchy of needs, illustrated below (Maslow, 1970, 1971). The hierarchy of needs model shows that individuals tend to be motivated to develop and seek fulfilment following a priority of needs – the bottom two being top priority. The theory has it that self-actualisation needs, for example, tend to be explored once all the previous needs in one's life have been met (op. cit.).

Maslow's widely popular motivational model is shown below as it is usually represented. However, this model is actually incomplete, in that in his later years Maslow noticed a new motivational need that went beyond self-actualisation and appeared to be more about *self-transcendence*. In other words, people had started to

manifest a need that seemed to be based more on service to others than on self-interest – a need to experience a communion beyond the boundaries of the self, to embrace and further a cause beyond the self. He called this additional step self-transcendence, which is also sometimes referred to as ‘transcendent actualisation’ (Krippner, 1972). Shortly before his death, Maslow also started connecting this newly observed need with what he called a ‘plateau state’ (to distinguish it from peak experiences and self-actualisation), which educator and researcher Scott Buckler and scientist Koltko-Rivera have further investigated (Buckler, 2011; Koltko-Rivera, 2006).

Maslow’s incomplete hierarchy of needs



(Royalty free clip art: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Maslow%27s_hierarchy_of_needs.png)

Among self-actualisers of all ages and from all walks of life, Maslow had encountered and previously distinguished ‘nontranscenders’ (high-achievers) from ‘transcenders’, those who naturally appeared to display more spiritual tendencies, which alerted him to an emerging tendency that needed attention. Interestingly, positive psychologist Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi also sees self-actualisation as a prerequisite for self-transcendence and describes transcenders as people who:

move beyond the boundaries of their personal limitations by integrating individual goals with larger ones, such as the welfare of the family, the community, humanity, the planet, or the cosmos (Csikszentmihalyi, 1993, p.219).

In his later years Maslow also discovered that there was a more stable state beyond temporary and spontaneous peak experiences encountered by self-actualisers. He termed this state of self-transcendence ‘plateau’ and became greatly interested in studying it

towards the end of his life (Maslow, 1971). He found that it was a state that could be taught, cultivated and accessed at will, that it was less emotional and more permanent and that it was characterised by a new appreciation and expanded awareness of self and the world and also by the ability to acquire a holistic perception of life, including one's relationship to other people, nature and other non material aspects (Krippner, 1972).

Among the defining traits of the plateau experience were the acquisition of a *Transpersonal Consciousness*, which aligns the personality with the Self and perceives reality beyond appearances or socially constructed notions 'independently of fears, desires, beliefs', which grants 'a perception of realities that ordinary consciousness cannot perceive but that are common in contemplation' and manifests the ability to recognise in everyday life and in ordinary states of consciousness a transcendent nature at work behind experiences, events, activities etc. (Hamel et al., 2003, p.12). Satisfying the motivational needs that Maslow had previously identified, research has shown, seems to lead to personal growth; however, his sixth stage of spiritual or transcendent motivations that may generate transpersonal growth or 'transcendent actualization' (Hamel et al., 2003, p.4) appears to have been less researched and to be less known, warn researchers Hamel et al., who add:

all the same, clinical experience does confirm that people benefit from the psychospiritual actualization approach. It helps them to come to terms with the haphazard turns their lives may take. And this has prompted mental health researchers to better learn what it is and how it works (ibid.).

The tendency just described seems to be confirmed also by Cloninger's extensive research (Cloninger, 2004, 2006, 2011a, 2011b). Robert Cloninger, a distinguished and controversial scholar, psychiatrist and geneticist writes that psychiatry has failed to improve well-being, despite drugs used, because it has focused excessively on mental disorders, neglecting methods to enhance 'positive emotions, character development, life satisfaction, and spirituality' (Cloninger, 2006, p.71). Cloninger has been very active in research on well-being and has gradually developed the Temperament and Character Inventory (TCI), extensively tested in several countries and now widely used internationally (Cloninger et al., 2011a; Cloninger & Zohar, 2011b) . It started as a model of temperament based on genetic, neurobiological data (rather than on self-reports) to which Cloninger consequently added a second domain of personality variables, using character traits to measure a person's humanistic and transpersonal

dimensions to determine the component of people's mental self-government (Cloninger, 2004). Simply put, research and clinical application have shown that:

the personality traits of self-directedness, cooperativeness, and self-transcendence are each essential for well-being and can be reliably measured (Cloninger, 2006, p.71).

According to Cloninger's TCI model, those who score high in self-transcendence seem to manifest an intuitive understanding of elevated aspects of humanity (ethics, compassion, inspiration, art, wisdom, etc.), reporting also an awareness of a divine presence, feeling inseparability and union with all that is, confirming Maslow's late findings (Cloninger, 2004).

Maslow's observations and empirical research made him a central figure in humanistic, early positive psychology and transpersonal psychology. His work on peak experiences helped to see the core of one's inner being as a source of health and creativity, rather than merely a source of psychotic tendencies and darkness. Through his work with 'self-actualized' individuals, Maslow showed that following inspiration and guidance from the Transpersonal Self, one could embrace and realise his/her potential more fully (Maslow, 1971). Shortly before he died, because he noted that humanistic psychology and his own studies could not account for mystical, transcendent experiences people were increasingly reporting, he decided to give birth to the Journal of Transpersonal Psychology and to inspire the creation of a 'Fourth force' in psychology, beyond Freudianism, behaviourism and humanism, namely transpersonal psychology (defined below), whose job it was to study and research transcendent, mystical experiences reported and experienced by increasing numbers of people (Daniels, 2005, Koltko-Rivera, 2006).

2.3.2 Transpersonal psychology: the work of Jung and Assagioli

Definitions of transpersonal psychology vary – I will cite here two that seem to emerge consistently when exploring the literature:

transpersonal psychology studies human transcendence, wholeness, and transformation (Hartelius, et al., 2007, p.145). Transpersonal psychology is concerned with the study of humanity's highest potential, and with the recognition, understanding, and realization of unitive, spiritual, and transcendent states of consciousness (Lajoie & Shapiro, 1992, p.91).

Transpersonal psychology was born to study scientifically those areas that mainstream psychology does not traditionally explore or has neglected and left to the domain of religion, mysticism or the occult, and to investigate the transcendent, the mystical and spiritual as lived and experienced by human beings. It brings together and studies Eastern and Western forms of spirituality spanning millennia (Fontana & Slack, 2005). East-West psychology expert Jose Ferrer proposes that the discipline today might be in need of revisioning some of its theories by evolving beyond its inherited Enlightenment impulse to privilege the truth of a pre-given 'objective reality', while trying to legitimate the ontological status of spirituality and of the discipline of transpersonal psychology itself in the eyes of the dominant empirical science in the Western paradigm (Ferrer, 2002).

What Ferrer refers to is the noted tendency in some transpersonal circles to use empirical testing as a way of measuring and validating personal and private spiritual realities against some hierarchical rankings of mystical experiences established to measure their more or less evolved status. Because spiritual and mystical experiences cannot be divorced from subjective and cultural interpretations, Ferrer argues, they can hardly be ranked into hierarchies; in fact, to be understood as lived experiences, they need, instead, appropriate (often qualitative) methodologies that do not necessarily contemplate testing and measuring to be respectable. Furthermore, testing against pre-given truths or creating measures of universal objective spiritual realities against which to test one's experiences, Ferrer emphasises, is not only misleading, but also goes against the spirit with which transpersonal psychology was founded, namely the wish and need to *free* spirituality from its previous religious or dogmatic associations, and also from its negation on the part of modern science (op. cit.).

In essence, transpersonal psychology is concerned with the study, recognition and acknowledgement of creative human experiences and transformative capacities associated with a range of consciousness states, in which:

personality action extends beyond the usual boundaries of ego-directed awareness and personal identity and even transcends conventional limitations of space and time; hence the term "transpersonal" (Cunningham, 2011, p.16).

Some of the areas transpersonal psychology studies are: ordinary and altered states of consciousness (drug-induced or as achieved in different forms of meditation, for example), subjective experience of inner states, evolving consciousness, human potential and psycho-spiritual development, the effects of the emergence of mystical states or spiritual crises, newly discovered forms of energy, Eastern and feminist psychologies, voluntary control of internal states (via biofeedback) and parapsychology (Vaughan & Walsh, 1993).

It is important to point out that initially (and for a couple of decades), research on altered states of consciousness focused on controlled experiments involving psychoactive substances such as LSD, DMT or psilocybin mushrooms (Grof, 2009; Strassman, 2000) until LSD was made illegal. Psychologist and parapsychologist Charles Tart, one of the founders of transpersonal psychology, comments on that phase of research:

many psychologists, myself included, had high hopes that the INTELLIGENT use of psychedelics would be a major boost in the intellectual, emotional, social, and spiritual evolution of humanity. [Earlier editions of] This book introduced many educated people to these possibilities: some of them tried psychedelics, with great personal gains. I am pleased with that outcome. On the other hand, we had no real conception of the degree to which people could and would take these potential gifts and turn them into paths of personal and social destruction (Tart, 1990, p.389 original caps).

From the 1970s psychotherapist Stanislav Grof was involved in such studies for 17 years, through which he claimed to have found other dimensions of the psyche (perinatal – before or around birth - and transpersonal) that had been ignored until that time, in that individuals seemed to have (drug-induced) access to all kinds of information unavailable to normal consciousness. Later, Grof developed drug-free holotropic breathwork (similar to hyperventilation) through which to explore dimensions of the psyche in altered states of consciousness (Grof & Bennett, 1993).

Whether one accepts or rejects Grof's theories, or findings by other researchers who explored drug-induced states of consciousness, such studies, despite being controlled, may appear as ethically dubious, hence their experimental findings might be hard to relate to for the same reason. Therefore, one might argue, the early years of transpersonal research in particular (influenced by the spirit of the 1970s perhaps) may have done little to endear the discipline to mainstream psychology. In fact, Professor of

Psychology and researcher Paul Cunningham recognises transpersonal psychology's shortcomings (such as presenting a less than unified discipline, being excessively open to infinite developments in all kinds of fields of research, but lacking a comprehensive textbook), but also notes that despite being established as a discipline for four decades, transpersonal psychology remains on the margins of mainstream scientific psychology. Cunningham maintains that the latter seems to hold on to a prejudiced view of humanity's psycho-spiritual nature or even its potential (Cunningham, 2011).

Interestingly, in *How Institutions Think*, social anthropologist Mary Douglas set out to explore why science or any institution seems to shape social cognition so profoundly and how such institutions develop in the first place (Douglas, 1986). Douglas argues that to deny the social origins of individual thought is a mistake, in that human beings appear to have a strong need to belong, hence they tend to seek social solidarity and guiding metaphors to establish *shared* classifications, categories and conventions. Douglas explains that underlying this tendency is the need to minimise entropy or chaos in the process of decision making, which is why human beings tend to create institutions they legitimise, which make major decisions for them involving not only ethical principles and values, but, above all, shared *beliefs* (op. cit.).

Institutions are both constituted by beliefs and *define* the beliefs of their members, clarifies Douglas. She also observes that, as institutions are created and established, social classifications and conventions are gradually stabilised and legitimised, ideas take a common shape, and the institution acquires legitimacy by the sheer number of people who join it. Institutions, however, cannot really afford too much doubt, observes Douglas, lest they collapse and disappear, so they tend to order categorical knowledge and filter information in a process of remembering and forgetting, thus directing and controlling memory, validation or lack thereof (op. cit.).

In other words, Douglas challenges the deeply-felt conviction that human intellectual agency is truly autonomous or that collective action necessarily has rational foundations, demonstrating that the individual's most elementary cognitive process seems to be shaped by, and even depend on, social classifications and institutions; the *a priori* rightness of some ideas and the nonsensicality of others, Douglas argues, seem to be handed out as part of the social environment. Some scientific ideas, for example, are accepted or rejected not necessarily for their inherent worth, but because specific social

conditions (thoughts and assumptions) enable or disallow their admittance into mainstream collective thought. New ideas that challenge, or differ from, what collective thought has established as comfortable will tend to be ignored – and not necessarily consciously – by the individual scientist or by the whole profession as an institution. In fact, to what extent an individual is committed to a social group can sometimes be witnessed by illogical reactions of outrage when entrenched judgements are challenged.

Different kinds of institutions allow individuals to think different kinds of thoughts and to respond to different emotions, but research shows that they do tend to give the illusion to put uncertainty under control (op. cit.). Douglas writes:

Institutional structures [can be seen as] forms of informational complexity. Past experience is encapsulated in an institution's rules, so that it acts as a guide to what to expect from the future. The more fully the institutions encode expectations, the more they put uncertainty under control, with the further effect that behavior tends to conform to the institutional matrix (Douglas, 1986, p.48)

Douglas's study and the influence of institutions on collective thought helps put into perspective why transpersonal psychology and esoteric and spiritual matters often seem to be (perhaps unconsciously) avoided by the institutions of psychology and education in general.

Before reviewing the literature pertaining to the Indigo phenomenon in section 2.4, I will end this section by briefly illustrating Jung's and Assagioli's work. As said, among those who informed, and contributed to, both early positive psychology and transpersonal psychology were psychiatrists Carl Jung and Roberto Assagioli, founders of analytic psychology and psychosynthesis respectively. Their contributions relevant to the present study are briefly outlined below.

In Jung's cosmology, the concept of one world (*unus mundus*) is connected to synchronous events and points to a unified reality from which everything stems and to which everything returns; it is the foundation of Jung's theory of *archetypes* (timeless primordial forces in the collective unconscious and reflected in the psyche, often as images, myths and symbols). Archetypes, symbols, myths and synchronicity appear to contain important ways and means of learning about oneself and how one interacts with life and the Cosmos – they might indirectly teach aware individuals how to live more meaningfully. In fact, the interconnectedness and unified reality Jung's *unus mundus* represents may also indicate a non-local quality/characteristic of our unconscious

mental states in space and time, which may be the basis of how intuitive knowing functions (Tarnas 2010).

Jung observed in his analytical work how an individual is helped in his suffering by coming across ‘revelations of a wisdom greater than his own’ (Jung, 1933, p.240). He expanded Freud’s notion of the unconscious (as repository of repressed material, traumas, etc.), adding a collective unconscious populated by universal archetypes, which seemed to structure the human psyche and collective and personal experience. Jung theorised that matter and psyche appeared to be more linked than previously suspected and observed that openness to the transpersonal dimension of oneself was often characterised by an increase in noted synchronicities (meaningful coincidences) in one’s life (Jung, 1960).

After careful observation of his own and his clients’ incidences of synchronous events, Jung discovered that synchronicities seemed to be immediately accessible parts of the ‘revelations of a wisdom greater than one’s own’ and found their relevance to the self-actualisation and self-transcendence principles described above. Jung even observed that the powerful impact synchronicities sometimes had on a person’s life could abruptly change a person’s paradigm, in that once an individual started perceiving reality and life as meaningful, as reflecting the contents of one’s psyche, they also perceived an *anima mundi* (world’s soul) – an ancient concept pointing to living in a meaningful, ensouled world with which they could interact (Tarnas, 2010). Psychiatrist Jean Shinoda Bolen reports that, over the years, increased awareness of synchronicities has been clinically observed to provide a very immediate way of experiencing not only interconnectedness, but also how one’s inner, psychic life seems to interact with some form of cosmic intelligence and with the Self, reflected and observable in everyday life occurrences often called coincidences – synchronous events (Shinoda Bolen, 1979).

In his appreciation of Jung’s work, which partially influenced his own, Assagioli observes that:

To Jung must be given the credit of having recognized and demonstrated the existence in the human being of the natural tendency towards the high, of a genuine need, which he called instinctive, for spiritual satisfaction. He gave prominence to the fact that the neglect or repression of this need can create serious neuro-psychic and psychosomatic disturbances (Assagioli, 1974, p.5).

However, despite the centrality of the Self embraced by Jung and Assagioli, their way of interpreting its role differed. To Assagioli, the Self was an ontological reality and a source that radiated energies which could be felt and even reflected on the human level by a self-conscious 'I'. Assagioli's 'Higher Self' was accessible and could be known and consciously realised (in states of *cosmic consciousness* described, for example, in Bucke, 1901-2009). Jung, on the other hand, saw mystical/spiritual states as vitally important but purely subjective. To him the Self was never fully comprehensible or realisable and was 'a psychological concept, a construction aimed at expressing an essence,' 'a scientifically unprovable subjective archetype', and an 'intermediate point in which the conscious and the unconscious meet' (Assagioli, 1974, p.12).

Analytic psychology and psychosynthesis appear to be similar also in their therapeutic aims. Both, in slightly different ways, were trying to promote the liberation of the individual from the influences of his/her personal and collective unconscious by:

- encouraging awareness of the causes of one's illness or unease,
- assimilating the contents of one's unconscious,
- discovering the Self and transforming the personality by integrating (synthesising) either one's shadow (Jung's *animus/anima*, etc.) or one's subpersonalities and lower self (Assagioli, 1974).

As said, Jung's controversial concept of collective unconscious was particularly appreciated by Assagioli, who consequently changed his initial 'egg diagram' (describing the psyche) to include it (Assagioli & Esposito, 2008), separating all levels of the unconscious with dotted lines (as shown in section 2.7) 'to signify the continuous exchanges going on between the collective and the personal unconscious' and the continuing exchanges between all levels of the psyche (Assagioli, 1974, p.5).

Assagioli's developmental model and critique of his psychosynthesis are described in more detail in section 2.7. They are particularly relevant to the present study because psychosynthesis-based educational projects and their potential contributions to education are the focus of my second study. The general psychosynthetic educational model and its different applications in various projects appear particularly interesting because they seem to address self-actualisation and self-transcendence – tendencies noted in Indigos and in members of the New Generations, as discussed in section 2.4

below and in Chapter 5 – they might potentially inform mainstream educational models in practically useful ways, as this study tries to ascertain.

Having introduced above the psychologies that inform my two studies, the next section explores the relevant literature and a previous quantitative study on the Indigo phenomenon. This phenomenon is the focus of the first part of my investigation through which I intended to ascertain how educators who had acquired years of experience working with Indigos viewed their characteristics and their educational needs (as explained in chapters 3 and 4). The present investigation, therefore, started with the following research question: *How do experienced educators describe and interpret the nature of Indigos and their educational needs?*

2.4. The Indigo phenomenon

2.4.1. What the literature says about Indigos

As discussed in section 2.2, some believe that the basis of the Indigo phenomenon is rooted mainly on New Age metaphysical assertions born, in part, as a reaction to excessive drugs (such as Ritalin) prescribed to hyperactive children (Whedon, 2004). However, this observation might reflect only a partial truth, in that general sociological information made available by authors writing about Indigos seems to be based on observations by: psychologists and psychotherapists (Goode and Paterson, 2009; Thivierge, 2011); educators specialising in gifted education (Chapman and Flynn, 2007); metaphysically inclined former educators (Day & Gale, 2004); a transpersonal researcher (Atwater, 2005); prominent New Age proponents who collected both educators' and Indigos' testimonies (Carroll & Tober 1999, 2001, 2009), and by a professional intuitive who coined the term 'Indigo' (Tappe, 2009), whose observations were recently updated and written in conjunction with a retired teacher and education consultant (Altaras & Tappe, 2011). Most recently, the Indigo phenomenon was addressed and situated in the current *Zeitgeist* (spirit of the time) also by British sociologist and futurist Kingsley Dennis (2012).

The term *Indigo* is attributed to the late Nancy Ann Tappe, a self-described parapsychologist, professional intuitive and synesthete. Together with a psychiatrist, Tappe claimed to have studied connections between personality and the few colours

she perceived, publishing results in *Understanding Your Life Through Color*, (Tappe, 2009). She also claimed to have been the first to identify a new 'life colour', namely Indigo, and to write about related characteristics as she perceived them in the 'Indigos' she met and studied. Tappe initially suggested that the Indigo life colour indicated gifted souls with intuitive abilities and a new consciousness, but, in her last book she specified that Indigos are not necessarily more spiritual or psychic than others, in that she claimed to have observed that Indigos are simply individuals who are here to usher in a new consciousness characterised by intuitive knowing and guidance, increased spiritual awareness, respect for nature, peace and unity. Tappe believed this state will eventually become the norm, noting that 'the indigo lesson is to build the bridge to the future and show us tomorrow' (Tappe, 2009, p.221), but also to enjoy today *without interference from others* (Altaras & Tappe, 2011).

After several decades spent observing Indigos, in her last book Tappe added that Indigos' main drive and desire is to feel interconnected and that their mission seems to be to use communication technology to globalise and connect the planet and to be united in transforming what they perceive as outmoded ways of thinking and perceiving the world. Interestingly, this observation is independently echoed in sociologist and futurist Kingsley Dennis's very recent book based on multidisciplinary research (Dennis, 2012). Dennis briefly refers to the Indigo phenomenon as part of a wider movement of consciousness (rather than considering Indigos 'special' individuals) and sees the latest generations' use of communication in terms of developing through technology an empathic consciousness for the purposes outlined in Tappe's consideration just reported (Altaras & Tappe, 2011). One observation of Tappe's, namely her claim that 95% of children under ten years of age are Indigos (op. cit., p.15), however, seems particularly dubious, in that it was based only on her own perceptions and not on any particular evidence of having travelled the world and observed Indigos in other cultures outside America.

In *Raising Intuitive Children*, Goode & Paterson, psychotherapist/educator and parenting coach respectively, provide information for educating and parenting intuitive children, including Indigos, who are referred to as gifted and intuitive (Goode & Paterson, 2009). Several other authors have written about the Indigo phenomenon, but Carroll & Tober, prominent New Age proponents, seem to have been instrumental in making the Indigo movement internationally known by writing three best-selling books.

Their books mainly consist of contributions on the Indigo phenomenon offered by experienced and well-qualified educators and experts in different fields (probably to lend credibility to the subject); they also present testimonies written by Indigo adolescents, self-identified or identified through educators' or parents' observations of their characteristics (Carroll & Tober 1999, 2001, 2009).

Among the testimonies and comments offered by Indigos, there are consistent claims of 'knowing things that other people don't know, which are tough to share because people don't understand' (Carroll & Tober, 2009, p.264). Many Indigos and their parents share stories of 'knowings' and wise perceptions beginning from early childhood, that appear to defy logic, acquired by what would usually be termed psychic or intuitive means. In Carroll & Tober's latest book there is also advice to adults, including the 'spiritual adults who are capable of understanding "far out" things' (op. cit., p.265). It transpires from this book that some Indigos feel frustrated because they are not listened to, claiming that there is much information available on how to care for Indigos but little information for the Indigos themselves. One of them asks:

'Where's the guidance'?...If they [adults] are preoccupied in projecting their own difficulties onto my situation, they won't be able to hear me, and consequently, they won't see me... I'm sure some people would like to know what Indigos are dreaming of these days, too. As a young human being of the 21st century, I do dream of great things, including many of the common ideals people have dreamed of forever and ever. Why? Because it's human to desire them! (op. cit., p.266).

Another teen ager offers advice for dealing with Indigos. He suggests that Indigos would feel much more comfortable if they had the full support of loved ones. He explains that they do honestly have problems with 'a good amount of the school systems' attributes nowadays' (op. cit., p.259). He asks adults to be as understanding and loving as they possibly can, being demonstrative also. Interestingly, he adds:

Creativity is also a large part of Indigos' lives. Some act; some write; some have an incredible connection to music. Whatever it may be, be sure to encourage them to follow their hearts. As for the gifts that they harness, they may be scared or confused. Answer any question they have. Just let it unfold naturally. Fate has its plans for everyone, including us Indigos (ibid.).

A list of Indigo characteristics derived from information found in Carroll & Tober's three books and enriched by her own observations has been compiled by gifted education expert Wendy Chapman, author of a general guidebook on Indigo children

(Chapman & Flynn, 2007) and director of Metagifted Education Resource Organization (MERO). The list can be found in her book, has been made available on her website (Chapman, 1998a, 1998b) and is reflected in the composite list of Indigos' traits in Table 1 below, which I compiled from information found in these and other sources mentioned above.

Interestingly, Altaras & Tappe (2011) question the value of questionnaires to identify an Indigo, claiming that the four subcategories that portray the different types of Indigos observed by Tappe's claimed extensive work with them (and by her visual synesthesia and ability to associate character with colour) make self-identification more reliable and easier for Indigos and their parents. Needless to say, the authors seem to be very confident in their system, hardly realising that the evidence they offer is mainly subjective and rather slim (which arguably applies to all observations by other Indigo authors, becoming perhaps more solid when found to match with several other independent sources); in fact, one is simply asked to accept their system on trust, which, one could argue, hardly justifies their criticism of other Indigo authors' questionnaires.

Former primary school teacher, now child counsellor, play therapist and education consultant, Jan Yordy specialises in treating and educating sensitive children, Indigos and their parents. Among the techniques she uses are Energy Freedom Technique (EFT – used in energy psychology) and 'Brain Gym' (a program of physical movements designed to bring the mental, physical and emotional aspects of the body and psyche into balance) to educate sensitive children and their parents about their emotional needs and how to take care of them. In line with information found in the Indigo literature mentioned above, she writes that:

New types of children called *Indigos* are being recognized all over the world. These children have enhanced awareness and sensitivities. Some characteristics of Indigos:

Bright, creative right-brained thinkers

Independent & want to do things their own way

Extremely emotionally & environmentally sensitive

Displays [sic] intuition or knowledge of things that are unexplained

(source: Yordy, 2001, original italics).

Yordy's observations and experience led her to summarise Indigos' characteristics in the form of a quiz designed to help parents identify whether their offspring might be potentially Indigo (op. cit.). Similar work to Chapman's and Yordy's is being carried out in Canada, but with a more therapeutic emphasis. Psychotherapist, social worker and energy healer Remi Thivierge focuses his work on the treatment of Indigos and sensitive youth, explains the difficulties which the young people with whom he works seem to encounter given their characteristics, and offers healing modalities and training to parents and other professionals. He also proposes a comprehensive (and, he emphasises, not definitive) list of Indigo characteristics which aim to describe their type of intelligence, their sensitivity, their personality, independence and social issues (Thivierge, 2011, pp.24-28). He also refers to Carroll & Tober's work in describing the Indigo phenomenon. Additionally, he writes that:

Indigos are highly intelligent, intuitive, sensitive, and strong-minded. Many writers have also commented on the variety of psychic and healing gifts that these children have. Many people believe that indigos have come to break down old structures, such as rigid school systems, and help transform the world. However, the reality is quite different than this ideal – so far... Because traditional schools don't meet the needs of many kids, there's a great deal more home schooling taking place and increasing numbers of children attending independent schools. From what I've seen, it's a common pattern for many indigos to leave the traditional school system because it doesn't work for them. Some leave willingly, others are medicated or suspended after acting out (op. cit., p.16).

Thivierge suggests that teachers trying to make positive changes seem to be limited by rigid systems, by the status quo and by busy parents' inability to get more involved in their children's educational needs. Excessive use of electronic devices and families breakdown, with consequent reliance on far from wise peer groups for guidance, are also seen by Thivierge as negative factors which, to him, contribute to sensitive children's suffering. He points out that many of them become dissatisfied with life and become angry or depressed – those that do not act out their dissatisfaction may end up with attention deficit disorders or even more serious problems, he adds. His conclusions are that:

We then label many of these sensitive and gifted children as being unhealthy because of their reactions to a negative environment and try to medicate them or use behavior management methods, instead of finding out what they need. All too often, we focus on their minds and their behavior and ignore their emotions and their spirit, as many of us ignore our own emotions and spirit. Educational systems generally do the same,

although there are exceptions, such as efforts to teach children about emotional intelligence (op. cit., p.19).

Thivierge also feels that ‘our children are paying for our plundering and polluting Mother Earth so extensively and for our living unhealthy lifestyles’ (op. cit., p.15).

A comparison of characteristics found in each of the cited Indigo sources reveals great similarities with the other authors’ noted observations, whether educators or therapists. The only existing academic study I am aware of, which is described below, also relies in part on sources of information found in popular literature (as none seems to be available from other academic studies), but compares this general information to responses obtained by self-identified Indigos (checked against a control group) using different research methods.

To summarise this section, a hermeneutic analysis of themes and characteristics consistently found in the relevant literature outlined above, as detailed in Table 1 that follows, seems to reveal that Indigos are seen as strong-willed and non-conformist, right-brained, creative, hypersensitive, intuitive, powerful, confrontational and existentially aware individuals, who are supposedly here to lead humanity towards a different tomorrow. Table 1 lists the Indigo characteristics consistently found throughout the literature.

Table 1 Indigos' characteristics (as consistently found in the literature)

Table 1 - INDIGO'S CHARACTERISTICS as found in the literature below (Sources: Altaras & Tappe, 2011; Atwater, 2005; Carroll & Tober, 1999, 2001, 2009; Chapman & Flynn, 2007; Day & Gale, 2004; Tappe, 2009, Thivierge, 2011)
Tendency to resist conformity and authority. Discipline accepted only when they (Indigos) are involved in the process and convinced about the final outcome.
Emotionally very sensitive and highly empathic, often knowing others' feelings.
Might instead display callousness at times, as if dissociated from feelings and pain.
Right-brain dominant, highly intuitive, often telepathic, having easy access to answers, information and solutions without knowing how. Ability to offer intuitively better ways of doing things, both at home and at school. Pronounced wisdom despite young age. Seemingly gifted with an inner locus of control (strong contact with Higher Self?).
Physically delicate, sensitive to sensory input and prone to allergies. Often excitable and highly energetic, with very quick minds.
Strong self-reliance, self-esteem and sense of purpose; behaviour often misunderstood and mistaken for arrogance/abrasiveness only

indicates an Indigo's displayed preference and need to listen to his/her intuition, inner voice and guidance rather than following somebody else's (*inner locus of control*).

Scarce patience and tolerance, particularly towards perceived hypocritical behaviour, slower, linear-minded or unethical people, institutions or attitudes. Unresponsiveness to guilt-inducing manipulations.

Desire to participate in causes/projects that benefit humanity and the environment. Love of nature.

Dislike towards excessive structure which, to an Indigo's mind, kills creativity or self-expression.

Tendency to form deep relationships with very few, like-minded people or to be a loner.

Enamoured with spontaneity and creative self-expression, an Indigo's attention span is short. Boredom accompanies assigned tasks, so focusing becomes difficult. At times labelled ADD/ADHD as a result (Attention deficit/and hyperactivity disorder).

Easy grasp of abstract concepts, as Indigos do not function linearly. They have a different way of knowing and sometimes display what are perceived as 'learning difficulties' by the current (Western) mainstream system.

In essence, the common message presented in the literature is that many Indigos appear to be empathic or even psychic at times, often rebels and bringers of a new consciousness which is less self-centred and more embedded in the totality of life (possibly indicating a tendency towards self-transcendence, as outlined above). Despite the proliferation of books and courses aimed at educating Indigos and their parents about the so-called Indigo phenomenon, scant academic research is available in this controversial area. One of the problems related to the Indigo movement seems to be what could be perceived as a tendency to sensationalism in terms of potentially inflated claims and/or inadequate theories that often seem to permeate the literature. Needless to say, data presented sensationally, and perhaps often uncritically, might be encouraging for parents of potentially difficult children, but appear to be of little use to researchers trying to understand the Indigo phenomenon.

Indigo sceptic R. Carroll points out that any parent of difficult, rebellious offspring would rather reject an ADHD diagnosis, understandably preferring to think their children are 'special' and 'gifted' Indigos, who represent the next step in human evolution (Carroll R., 2009). Witts (2009) and Anderson (2003), also Indigo sceptics, agree with Carroll's observation and highlight to what extent the Indigo phenomenon has become an expanding money-making market, where what they see as questionable training courses for parents and educators proliferate. Nevertheless, no research has been mentioned in Witts's and Anderson's articles that would help readers establish how 'questionable' or otherwise such courses truly are. Giftedness expert Nick Colangelo defines the Indigo phenomenon a 'dangerous movement' and suspects that Indigo proponents intend to gain respectability and credibility 'using his colleagues' credentials', whom he strongly advises not to get involved (Colangelo, 2003, p.1). Applications from parents of Indigo children to enrol their offspring on gifted programmes on the grounds of their presumed giftedness are also considered problematic in Colangelo's opinion (op. cit.).

An opposite tendency, however, seems to exist, too. Some educators and consultants increasingly appear to be reporting new characteristics noted in children and their parents (Lovecky, 1998, 2004). Giftedness expert and consultant Annemarie Roeper, for example, observed 'the arrival of a new kind of child...so bright, so knowledgeable, so naturally spiritual and intuitive' (Roeper, 2007, p.75). Roeper especially found that parents' attitudes towards their children had changed as well. Instead of seeking ways of

making their children conform, they seemed to be seeking schooling that would meet their children's needs. Finally, Roeper reported that these changes had been noted by other educators and consultants; for example, some Waldorf educators have referred to this 'new breed' of children as 'star children', probably to emphasise their self-transcending tendencies and seemingly expanded, unitive consciousness (ibid.).

Interestingly, some educators and transpersonal researchers have been addressing the question of spirituality in children, supporting the thesis that children can indeed have valid transpersonal and transcendent experiences even in their pre-rational stage of development, contesting noted author and philosopher Ken Wilber's popularized concept of 'pre/trans fallacy'. This core belief has it that pre-rational childhood spiritual experiences are qualitatively different from the 'more valid' trans-rational levels of mysticism achievable in adulthood. Wilber (1993) considers them more valid because he claims that the emerging structure of consciousness for humanity (i.e. Integral – see section 2.4.3.) involves the ability to express, integrate and *consciously* transcend all previous modes of consciousness that humanity has acquired throughout history – he feels that the ability to do this integrating and transcending consciously is impeded in children.

Wilber's conception of the psychology of spirituality advocates that the pre-rational should not be elevated to spiritual status, on the grounds that, rather than being spiritual, many non-rational states are highly egocentric and even narcissistic (Wilber, 1980). In essence, Wilber argues that non-rational states of consciousness can be easily confused with each other, and that the pre-rational is to be seen as a separate category in sharp contrast and distinction to the transpersonal realm of mysticism. The natural development from 'pre' to 'trans', Wilber argues, involves a process that *transcends* and *includes*, as an individual grows towards greater wisdom and compassion without leaving behind one's mind, sense of individuality and capacity for responsibility (op. cit.).

In contrast, other educators and researchers claim the legitimacy of childhood spiritual experiences and write about the need to acknowledge them, in order to avoid suppression of some sensitive children's natural gifts. Psychologist and special education expert Thomas Armstrong (1984), for example, argues that, in making sense of childhood experience, theorists of developmental models with a transpersonal

orientation have tended to rely excessively on Western, non-transpersonal child development models (i.e. ego psychology, cognitive psychology); he points out that, despite valuing ‘certain aspects of the child’s encounter with the infinite’ (op. cit., p.207), even Jung considered the process of ego-Self-reunion (individuation) to be a concern limited specifically to the second half of life.

In other words, there seems to have been a tendency to see transpersonal issues as being truly relevant and a concern to address only when the personality has fully matured. Hence, the importance of spiritual dimensions within the child has been consistently minimised, laments Armstrong, who also clarifies that transpersonal experiences can, and indeed do, happen in pre-personal and personal stages of development and can be thoroughly and consistently documented (op. cit.), as Hart (2004, 2006), Piechowski (2003, 2006, 2009) and Taylor (2009), among others, also do in their work, calling into question traditional Western conceptions of child development.

Empirical evidence for transpersonal experience in childhood tends to come from three different sources, writes Armstrong:

Biographical and autobiographical material of extraordinary individuals; research studies examining contemporary adult memories of religious experience in childhood; and finally, reports of children concerning their inner spiritual lives (Armstrong, 1984, p.209).

In essence, given the evidence collected and studied, Armstrong and the other authors mentioned above argue that transpersonal experiences seem to transcend both developmental models/levels and age differences – what seems to be emphasised by all authors is that *childhood transpersonal experiences cannot and should not be ignored or underestimated*.

Armstrong’s further conceptualisations, in particular, merit a brief exposition here. As with adults, Armstrong illustrates that also children’s transpersonal experiences can be analysed using a psychological, metaphysical and even mythological level of interpretation as follows:

- a) on a *psychological* level there can be archetypal dreams as ‘manifestation of Self within the limited individuality of the child’ (op. cit., p.213), which, Armstrong points out, has been supported and confirmed by clinical observations of analytic psychologists;

- b) *metaphysical* views can also be used to interpret children's transpersonal experiences with the help of esoteric and energy psychologies, which describe 'subtle bodies' and 'fields of energy' (op. cit., p.215), found, for example, in theosophy and in Steiner's anthroposophy. Such models differ from traditional Western models in that they recognise the potential of accessing information from all fields and subtle bodies at any age, even in children;
- c) the worldwide *mythological infant exile motif* can be used to illustrate and analyse transpersonal experiences, in children as well as adults. This myth contemplates children who descend from nobility, are abandoned and adopted by humble people, by wise animals or even by an enlightened orb of light, they are raised to maturity and then freed to fulfil a heroic destiny. The infant exile myth, Armstrong suggests, might possibly underlie a transpersonal conception of *human origins*, in that one's insights, transpersonal and 'light' experiences might symbolise memories of one's spiritual nature, the 'noble origins' of one's soul and its expanded awareness (the Selfhood), while the exile might symbolise one's current earthly incarnation in which the soul, by taking on a body, temporarily forgets one's divine origins.

In other words, the potential for remembrance of one's divinity being present in all humans, Armstrong argues, might simply have awakened and actualised at an early developmental stage in some children, who occasionally or regularly experience their transpersonal dimensions. Although Armstrong does not elaborate further on the infant exile myth described above, one could also speculate that the third phase (being freed to accomplish one's heroic mission in life once grown up) might be equated with actualising one's full potential (self-actualisation/transcendence), embracing consciously all levels and dimensions of oneself. It is tempting to equate this phase with the consciousness, potential and tendencies found in Indigos and the New Generations examined below. The relevant concept of 'consciousness', often cited in this thesis, and theorised development and levels/structures thereof will be further discussed in section 2.4.3.

To conclude this section, although the Indigo criticism illustrated above is not to be taken lightly, I would argue that trying to *understand* a phenomenon that will not go away (as the growing literature would appear to testify) might be more fruitful than

dismissing it entirely. Arguably, researchers interested in furthering their understanding of this controversial area of study might find that empirical observation, phenomenological and case studies might be more suitable methodologies than experimental studies, at least until potential neurological changes of a testable kind can be established. Synchronistically, however, as my first Indigo study was in progress, one previous doctoral quantitative attempt at studying the Indigo phenomenon was published on the Internet, whose results are summarised and reported below (Masters, 2008).

2.4.2. Previous quantitative study on Indigos

Dahlia Masters, a self-identified Indigo, focused her doctoral research on testing whether reports and claims by writers on the Indigo phenomenon could be supported or not (particularly the reported spiritual consciousness aspects of Indigos).

Masters's initial review of material published by Indigo authors resulted in 129 Indigo characteristics, which she organised into seven different categories, namely:

- 1) Self-image/self-esteem;
- 2) Rebellion, resisting against ritual, structure or authority;
- 3) Higher consciousness and wisdom beyond years;
- 4) Relationships and interaction with others, including sexuality;
- 5) Creativity;
- 6) Intuitive or psychic or telepathic;
- 7) ADHD/ADD or health issues (Masters, 2008, pp.241-251).

Subsequently, Masters tested a group of 25 self-identified Indigos aged between 18 and 29 and a control group matched by number, age and gender. No attempt was made in the selection process to exclude potential Indigos from the control group. Both groups were drawn from the same student pool at the University of Central Missouri. Three different methods were used to test four hypotheses. The methods used were:

- 1) Personal Orientation Inventory (POI) to measure levels of self-actualisation as defined by Maslow's theories and research.

- 2) Rhine (Zener) card test on 100 cards to measure psychic abilities (test chosen for simplicity and portability reasons, but ultimately found limited by the researcher).
- 3) A 34-item-questionnaire with demographic, biographic and consciousness questions, based on transpersonal researcher Jenny Wade's *Holonomic Theory of the Evolution of Consciousness* to measure potential attributes and existence of spiritual consciousness. Wade's model was created by collecting research from neurology, psychology, new-paradigm studies and mysticism (Wade, 1996).

Masters's research question was:

Do the characteristics attributed to Indigos by the authors of books examined in this study delineate them as a unique group?

Masters worked with the following hypotheses:

- 1) The self-identified Indigo group will demonstrate a higher level of self-actualization than the control group as measured by the POI;
- 2) The self-identified Indigo group will demonstrate a higher level of psychic ability than the control group as measured by a test using the Rhine Cards;
- 3) The consciousness questions (questions 25-34) in the Demographic and Biographic questionnaire will show that the self-identified Indigo group is in the Authentic level of consciousness as described in Jenny Wade's model of the *Holonomic Theory of the Evolution of Consciousness*;
- 4) The self-identified Indigo group's background is not unique to a single sociocultural group (Masters, 2008, p.114).

Her findings were that:

While the overall results of the POI and consciousness Questions 25-34 were statistically significant, the results of the psychic test using the Rhine cards were not. With the exceptions of the Rhine card test and the ADHD question results, none of the data collected in this investigation disagreed with the anecdotal reports of the authors reviewed... Three of the four research hypotheses were supported by this study. (ibid., p.192)

Masters's study seems to indicate that Indigos can be found in all walks of life, they are not necessarily ADHD-diagnosed and tend to gravitate naturally towards self-actualisation and Authentic levels of consciousness (explained in the next section), as the cited Indigo literature appears to suggest consistently. The findings imply also that Indigos seem to have been born with a very active inner locus of control, a form of intuitive inner guidance that they seem to follow with a passion, which the relevant literature also appears to emphasise.

Masters's investigation, as the researcher herself suggests, is only to be viewed as an initial attempt to study the Indigo phenomenon quantitatively. Replications on a bigger scale are likely to be needed to make results more conclusive and generalisable. In spite of some limitations, one particularly relevant aspect of Masters's study is deemed to be the answers she obtained using Wade's Holonomic model and transpersonal theory of the evolution of consciousness. The fact that the Indigo study group displayed a larger percentage of answers which would fall in the Authentic level of consciousness, having moved further beyond the Conformist level than the control group, appears particularly interesting, especially given that, as stated above, no attempt had been made in the selection process to exclude potential Indigos from the control group. The POI results also confirm that the consciousness of the Indigo study group seems to be closer to what Wade's model classified as an Authentic stage (see section 2.4.3.).

It seems important to point out that, as described by Indigos themselves (quoted above), even if Indigos' consciousness were indeed more integrated as suggested, Indigos, particularly the younger ones, would arguably still need guidance from understanding and evolved adults, from positive role models able to teach them how to ground and direct energies which many of these youngsters seem to experience often, but may not fully understand. As Indigo author and psychotherapist Remi Thivierge points out, failure to rely on adult role models might encourage disillusioned and sensitive youth to rely on peer groups for guidance, whose wisdom derived from experience is highly questionable and might lead to destructive or self-destructive acts in the long run (Thivierge, 2011).

The information presented so far including previous research results, however tentative at this stage, does seem to indicate that Indigos' Authentic level of consciousness (or self-actualising/transcending tendencies) manifests as a willingness to help and to be

involved in creating a fairer and better world for all and to find more meaning in life, but also that Indigos appear to lack guidance and direction and to be in pain, possibly reflecting adults' shortcomings in educating them, both as parents and as teachers. Perhaps, as envisaged by Thivierge (2011), more encouragement and guidance from adult role models might result in youth's less avoidance of life, hence in less depression, crime or suicide, not to mention drugs consumption. However, acting as role models would imply that adults, parents, teachers and professionals might first need to take steps towards attaining more awareness or a more extended consciousness, hence more inner peace and healthier functioning, in order to act as convincing or helpful role models to Indigo children, or so Thivierge points out (op. cit.).

2.4.3. The question of consciousness

Before elaborating on Wade's model of consciousness (used in Masters's research), and particularly on the Authentic stage, it seems appropriate to try and define what consciousness is and how its development is mapped, as indicated by the vast, multidisciplinary field of consciousness research. For reasons of space, the following narrative can only be relatively brief and limited to issues relevant to the present investigation.

Philosopher David Chalmers (2010), noted researcher in the field, highlights to what extent the phenomenon of consciousness is multi-faceted and must be approached from different angles – it includes the mind-body problem, language, content, epistemology, philosophy, psychology, history, archaeology, science, physics and even metaphysics. Chalmers clarifies that the study of consciousness makes a distinction between the 'easy' and the 'hard' problems of consciousness – the former addresses cognitive and behavioural functions, while the latter focuses on trying to explain conscious experience. Chalmers argues that standard reductive methods of science so far seem to have failed to explain the hard problem convincingly, in that 'explaining conscious experience requires more than explaining structure and function' (op. cit., p.xiv). He argues that consciousness is irreducible and nonphysical and cannot successfully be approached by materialistic approaches – an epistemic gap between the physical and the phenomenal needs to be established to address also an ontological gap, he adds. In other words, Chalmers maintains that in the science of consciousness still prevails an absence

of a solution to the hard problem, which poses special challenges that require positive nonreductive attempts and arguments; such attempts are collected in his book, despite being considered not very convincing or successful at facing and resolving the hard problem (op. cit.).

Chalmers considers conscious experience a challenge, particularly to neuroscience, and one of the most profound mysteries of existence. In his article, *The Puzzle of Conscious Experience*, he defines consciousness ‘the hidden mind’ and ‘the subjective experience of an inner self’ (Chalmers, 2002, p.90). He points out that ‘a theory of consciousness may have startling consequences for our view of the universe and of ourselves’ (op. cit., p.92).

Interestingly, Arthur Deikman (1996), transpersonal researcher and pioneer in the study of consciousness, distinguishes the ‘I’ from the self, and argues that individuals’ mental concepts form their selves, not their ‘I’. Most discussions of consciousness, he points out, confuse the self with the I, as if consciousness necessarily described ‘being conscious of’. Awareness is independent of any specific mental contents, claims Deikman, and is the ground of all experience, in that when individuals try to describe it, they inevitably describe what they are aware of. Using introspection, Deikman highlights, one realises not only that the objects of one’s awareness (such as emotions, memories, thoughts, sensations, etc.) keep changing, but also that awareness is ongoing, independently of any ever-changing mental content. Human experience, in other words, is essentially dualistic, claims Deikman, and it is split between the ‘I’ as observer, and that which is observed, but it is the ‘I’ and not the self that is doing the observing. In that sense, argues Deikman, awareness and pure consciousness (independent of contents) could be interchangeable concepts, in that we know awareness, the internal observer, by *being it*, not by observing it; if one *is* awareness, they hardly need to observe or imagine it – *knowing by being* ontologically differs from perceptual knowledge. In other words, Deikman suggests, it could be postulated that the ‘I’ equals the ground of one’s being, that which does the observing, hence arguably the ‘I’, the core of subjectivity, equally represents one’s awareness *and* consciousness. Deikman argues that introspective techniques reveal that not being able to ‘see’ awareness does not imply that it does not exist – they reveal, in fact, the missing centre, the ‘I’. He maintains that whatever ontology of awareness one embraces should also be applied to

the concept of 'I'; in other words, if awareness is considered nonlocal or transcends material reality, the same is applicable to the 'I', he claims. He laments that 'in contemporary psychology and philosophy, the 'I' usually is not differentiated from the physical person and its [sic] mental contents. The self is seen as a construct and the crucial duality is overlooked' (op. cit., p.350).

Philosopher and cultural critic Mark Rowlands goes even further. He writes on the nature of phenomenal consciousness, and considers attempts to explain consciousness in terms of 'what is not conscious' as too reductive, arguing that phenomenal aspects of conscious experience revolve around directing experience towards nonphenomenal objects. He describes the dual nature of consciousness as being its most significant feature and defines it as *that which directs awareness and that upon which awareness is directed* (Rowlands, 2001).

Professor of Psychology Stanley Krippner and researcher Adam Rock (Rock & Krippner, 2007) bring attention to conceptual confusions regarding the multiplicity of meanings attributed to the term 'consciousness'. They particularly highlight the 'consciousness/content fallacy', namely the notion that consciousness is too often confused with its changeable contents, found especially in qualifiers such as 'altered states of consciousness', or 'states of consciousness' in general. Elucidating the implications of the 'consciousness/content fallacy', especially for research purposes, Rock & Krippner warn that clear terminology should be used and that a distinction between consciousness/awareness from its content should be kept clear, in order to avoid (what they refer to as) a widespread confusion between *phenomenal* (ordinary or altered) *properties of consciousness* and consciousness itself (op. cit.).

When it comes to *levels and structures of consciousness*, instead, several models of the evolution of human consciousness describing its development have been proposed in the past few decades, most of which include humanity's biological/genetic, neuropsychological and historical/evolutionary progress over centuries and millennia, hierarchically organised, and describing accumulated life experience on a global scale, stored in the collective unconscious (Grandpierre, 1997). The gradual development of higher human capacity and potential, in theory, should reflect the evolution of human consciousness; transpersonal researchers Combs & Krippner (1999) have analysed

various models, theories and proponents to ascertain to what extent so-called evolution also mirrors spiritual advancement in human beings (discussed below).

As stated, advancements of consciousness are no longer within the confines of biology and philosophy, but also of psychology, transpersonal psychology in particular; the latter touches and investigates many fields, bypassing the rational/empiricist and objectivist paradigm view still prevalent today. In fact, despite shortcomings outlined in this thesis, transpersonal psychology takes spirituality seriously and attempts to merge it with mainstream psychology, daring to approach transcendence in an entirely new way that seems appropriate for a postmodern era. Integral theorist Ken Wilber (1980, 2000, 2001) is a prominent transpersonalist – his model of the structures of consciousness clearly reflects an evolutionary approach to consciousness (historical evolution), whose upward movement in various stages theoretically follows a predetermined path that contemplates progressive identification with subtle levels of being (spiritual ascension); it contemplates both historical developments (phylogeny) as well as individual, personal growth (ontogeny) towards various levels of development exemplified by his model (Combs & Krippner, 1999).

Wilber (1993) posits that consciousness is the field in which all else manifests in different forms (from furthest to closest to pure consciousness), from matter to mind, to soul to spirit – the Great Chain of Being. Emanating from the Great Chain of Being, human selfhood, in Wilber's model, develops from a pre-personal subconscious (awareness of nature and body), to self-consciousness (awareness of mind and psychic realities) and eventually to transpersonal consciousness (awareness of causal, subtle, and ultimate realities). In the higher stages of his spectrum of consciousness, Wilber notes that 'individuals consistently report an awareness of being one with the all, or identical with spirit, or whole in spirit, and so on' (Wilber, 2001, p. 124) – thus human beings are seen as developing in a special relationship to God, and their gradual transformation is theorised to be taking place at the causal and subtle levels of consciousness, merging the finite and infinite realms.

Wilber's controversial model and views have been criticised by anthropologists and feminists, among others, for being 'Victorian' in portraying primary cultures, for being 'simple'/male-oriented, hence excessively linear and hierarchical, and also for depicting solitary achievement and individual progress as more desirable than collective

development achieved through co-operation (Rothberg & Kelly, 1998). Furthermore, Wilber's stages, up to the mental-egoic, are similar to philosopher Jean Gebser's historical structures of consciousness; following Hindu philosophy, Wilber adds further evolutionary stages which depict progressive identifications with the inner planes of being (Gidley, 2007a). Combs & Krippner are critical of Wilber's choice of mixing Gebser's structure of consciousness (which they describe as general noetic orders/modes of experience) with Vedantic subtle, metaphysical levels of reality 'to which one may aspire experientially through meditation, yoga and the like' (op. cit., p.14). They point out that even if such levels of reality were considered experiential and not metaphysical, they could still not be considered 'structures of consciousness', hence they attribute a 'category error' to Wilber's model (ibid.). The authors point out that some of the stages envisioned by Wilber are totally omitted in some other wisdom traditions (such as Buddhism, for example), which, to them, calls into question the whole model (op. cit.). Combs & Krippner also clarify that:

While states of consciousness [which they previously qualified as dream sleep, meditative states, shamanic trances, etc.] contextualize states of mind [described as moods, emotions], structures of consciousness [i.e. Gebser's archaic, mythical, magical, mental, integral] in their turn contextualize states of consciousness. They provide the noetic frame in which one's lifeworld is interpreted and understood. Gebser believed that human history bears witness to a sequence of these, beginning with the *archaic*, *magical*, and *mythical* structures, and proceeding to the *mental* structure dominant in the world today... Each is an entire way of knowing and experiencing the world (op. cit. p. 16).

What Gebser's work seen through the eyes of Combs and Krippner seems to bring to light is the insight that world views (i.e. cosmologies, structures of consciousness and paradigms) do not appear to reveal how the world actually is. They rather indicate how it is that human beings in diverse cultures, historical epochs and levels of collective consciousness believe and perceive 'reality' and 'the world' to be. This insight clearly challenges the Enlightenment's conviction that it is possible to arrive at 'objective truth' through logical/empirical methods (Cartesian/Newtonian paradigm). It has to be said, however, that the impact of major climatic events and geological changes seems to have received scant attention in consciousness evolution discourse and models, which, according to some, may limit their validity or applicability; an exception might be represented by Steiner's evolutionary, integrative and self-proclaimed 'scientific'

macro-history, which seems to integrate astronomical (including precession of the equinoxes) and geoclimatic changes within his map of cultural, philosophical and mythological evolution of consciousness (Scharmer, 1998).

In Gebser's model describing the structures of the gradually evolving human collective consciousness, which bears great similarities with Wilber's and Steiner's models, five stages are identified: Archaic, Magic, Mythical, Mental, Integral. Briefly described, Archaic consciousness was characterised by spiritual evolution/original wisdom and embeddedness in nature and the cosmos, theorised to be lacking in individuality and to be strongly influenced by female archetypes. In Gebser's model, the Magic structure of consciousness is still egoless and characterised by unitive interconnectedness (psychic connectionism), with spaceless, timeless, shamanistic and telepathic merging with nature (which Wilber sees as superstitious), but also by the flourishing of art, music and paintings (Gebser, 1949; Gidley, 2007a). It is worth emphasising that Magic consciousness is still debated, and it should be noted that depth psychology, transpersonal psychology, parapsychology and Western esotericism academic studies and research are still contributing to a more comprehensive understanding of Magic consciousness in human beings and its relevance to the modern and developing human (Grof, 2000).

The Mythical cognition is a mixture of magic and logic and this phase (mode of experience/consciousness) seems to have a more mental orientation; it includes increasing socialisation, exchange of objects and ideas, measurements and the development of pictographic language system. During this phase, organised religions and related architecture (i.e. temples and pyramids) started to emerge, together with an awareness of soul as mediator between body and spirit (in inward directed contemplation). Steiner maintained that the awakening human soul was linked to the world soul (*anima mundi*) through imagination (Gidley, 2007b). With reference to Mythic consciousness and ancient wisdom, Gidley interestingly observes that:

The suppression of healthy imagination that has come in the wake of centuries of dominance by increasingly narrow forms of rationality has created an imbalance—particularly observable in the images of the future of young people... Young people also feel that there is a spiritual vacuum in our society...When imaginative mythic consciousness is not given scope for healthy expression, it is likely to break through in unhealthy ways, as Gebser has demonstrated (Gidley, 2007b, p.87).

Interestingly, because manifestations of archetypal material as mythic elements from the collective unconscious are accessed in a process of experiential self-exploration and introspection, in our modern era they are considered normal and essential constituents of the human psyche which have objective existence (hence are ontologically real). However, to distinguish such experiences from imaginary products of individual fantasy or psychopathology, Jungians refer to this domain as *imaginal* (Gidley, 2007a).

Imagination is very powerful – imaginary things (invented or experienced as a result of some optical or auditory illusion, for example) can be very confusing, in that the brain cannot distinguish between what is illusory and what is real, therefore illusory things can act as emotionally evocative stimuli and even drive an individual to schizophrenia. Imaginal things or imaginal devices (such as metaphors, for example) can, on the other hand, be very useful in connecting or comparing something real to something unrelated. Skillfully or meaningfully chosen metaphors (or even poetry and stories) can help individuals to organise their perceptions, to be more creative and even to change their behaviour. For example, it is possible to rely on imagery and innate imaginal capacities to access emotions, which can be changed, intensified, alleviated, etc., giving rise to different behaviours or reactions (Singer, 1994). Human imaginal abilities do seem to be given increasing importance, so much so that a new branch of soul-focused, postmodern psychological studies (Imaginal Psychology) dedicated to imaginal abilities has recently developed in California (in Meridian University, formerly known as Institute of Imaginal Studies), based on the idea that the soul finds expression in images, to which great attention should be paid (Meridian University, 2011). Furthermore, it should also be emphasised that, as Wilber points out, *experiential knowledge of the imaginal world* has inspired both science and religion – the apparent conflict between them, he argues, only reflecting a fundamental misunderstanding of both (Wilber, 1983).

The stage of collective consciousness that has prevailed in the more recent past has been called Mental (abstract thinking), and reflects a paradigm characterised by individualism and independent ego, rational functioning, more abstract language and alphabet, mathematical measuring and analysing as a way to understand the world – a

form of excessive rationality which was deficient in Gebser's opinion. He expressed his strong views by describing this imbalance as:

The suicide of Western civilization... the consequence of the destruction of man's inner being by the self-destruction of the divine in man, and by his rational denial of all the irrational and pre-rational aspects by which he dispossessed himself of his own foundation (Gebser, 1949, p.357).

On the other hand, as Hegel suggested, 'a civilization cannot become conscious of itself, cannot recognize its own significance until it is so mature that it is approaching its own death' (Tarnas, 2010, p.44), so the current collective crisis seems to hide a positive side and potential, too. In fact, as regularly seems to happen in the history of the development of humanity's consciousness, this challenging Mental phase/structure seems to be undergoing changes, evolving towards a fusion between 'head knowledge' and 'heart knowledge', towards what Gebser called an 'Integral aperspectival' (spiritual) structure of consciousness and way to perceive the world. This emerging structure of consciousness and mode of experience theoretically encompasses the emergence of reintegration (Gidley, 2007b), possibly of ancient ways of knowing which, one could argue, have the potential to reintegrate multi-sensory awareness and humanity's innate imaginal abilities. In Wilber's words: 'as vision-logic begins to emerge, postconventional awareness deepens into fully universal, existential concerns: life and death, authenticity, full bodymind integration, selfactualization, global awareness, holistic embrace' (Wilber, 2000, p.105).

In her lengthy research paper, Gidley cites multidisciplinary research and authors that help identify new, emergent and Integral structures of consciousness, but she cites also research, disciplines and authors whose work not only identifies, but helps to *enact* new modes of consciousness, such as Chilton Pearce (1994), Ferrer (2000), Hart (2009), Laszlo (2009), Miller (2010), Palmer (1993), and Wilber (2000), also cited in this thesis, as well as many others (Gidley, 2007b, pp.104-105). Interestingly, Combs and Krippner, together with Gebser and Wilber, also refer to this emerging paradigm and collective way of knowing and experiencing the world as *Integral consciousness*, and argue that this stage is characterised by the fluid perception of time and *the free expression of all the structures that preceded it* (described above), including magical and imaginal experience and the Mythic structure of consciousness, without being confined to any of them (op. cit.).

It is also noteworthy that the ‘Integral’ structure of consciousness/paradigm developing from the Mental stage has been given different names according to which system/model one follows. It is important to point out that Wilber’s spectrum of consciousness, although perhaps the most discussed and the most ambitious, is only one among the models proposed by transpersonalists (such as Grof, Washburn, Steiner, Wade, etc.) – in-depth analysis and discussions of all models of consciousness development are beyond the scope of this thesis, hence only a selection of them will be briefly introduced and discussed here.

Cultural historian and transpersonalist Richard Tarnas (2010) has identified two guiding stories underlying paradigmatic differences in current conceptions of human history – one story describes heroic, progressive advance towards a bright future of enlightenment and freedom (‘gain’ scenario). Another version contemplates a fall from an original state of unity, of interconnectedness with all levels of creation, spiritual dimension included, where the Western mind is guilty of having created a schism, losing an original sacralisation of the world (‘loss’ scenario), which it aspires to reintegrate. Tarnas sees both metanarratives – the gain and the loss scenarios – as leading to a possible synthesis which, he suggests, needs to be addressed by any developmental model of consciousness (op. cit.).

Wilber’s progressive view, his vertical, stage by stage awakening of consciousness through increasingly higher and more complex stages and levels does not contemplate any loss of harmony and unity with nature and the *anima mundi* that may need to be recaptured – primordial unity and separation, he claims, lie outside time/space; he does acknowledge, however, that the ability to integrate and to use reason got distorted at some point in human development/history, and that is what needs to be corrected before humanity’s consciousness can evolve (Wilber, 1993).

Washburn’s model (based on depth psychology and object relations theory, on individual rather than grand historical, collective development), instead, contemplates a ‘regression in service of transcendence’ (encounter with the ‘ground unconscious’ as the first levels of the transpersonal domain) in which unconsciousness and consciousness need to interpenetrate and work together for the sake of integration and regeneration. The dynamic relationship between pre-personal, personal and trans-personal dimensions

is conceived differently by Washburn – to him, evolution moves from an original unconscious fusion through a distinct, dualistic egoic self, alienated from an unknowable world. The individual and the collective, Washburn argues, can, at least potentially, gradually reunite with the original all-that-is in full consciousness/awareness, having resolved previous conflicts and experienced dualities (Washburn, 1995). Interestingly, both Wilber and Washburn recognise nondual levels of consciousness, but, as discussed above (section 2.4.1.), Wilber sees a difference between the nondual consciousness expressed in pre-personal and trans-personal levels of consciousness; this perceived and theorised difference is at the heart of the ‘pre-trans fallacy’. Not making a distinction between pre-personal and trans-personal levels of consciousness, claims Wilber, is a mistake made by Western psychology reductionists or mystical romantics (Wilber, 1980). Psychotherapist Stanislav Grof has been researching consciousness for over four decades; interestingly, his clinical findings have led him to claim that the psyche has a holographic, multidimensional nature that cannot be accurately perceived using linear models (Grof, 1993). In other words, Grof’s findings do not seem to endorse Wilber’s linearity and his sharp distinctions between pre- and trans- phenomena. In fact, Grof argues that research results consistently show that the transformational encounter with one’s unconscious does not appear to be restricted to one’s biography/age (Grof, 1985, 2000).

Whether Wilber’s views can be critiqued for being overly rigid and disparaging of ‘primitive’ forms of knowing, his form of reductionist ‘fallacy’ seems to reveal a regressive view (the ‘fall’ scenario) and the belief in a form of transcendent purity that existed in the past and in childhood, which has been repressed by social conditioning. In other words, Wilber’s postmodern, Integral model envisions a transpersonal state and a pre-existing wisdom/unitive consciousness that remains potentially attainable by all. Philosophically, this evolution of consciousness can be understood in Neoplatonic terms perhaps, an evolution that proceeds from an archetypal unity – the Universe is seen as sleeping Spirit gradually awakening to itself through creation, human consciousness/awareness included, on a journey back to fully awakened Spirit. In psychological terms (Washburn’s, for example), instead, one moves from pre-egoic consciousness to increasing individuation and existential alienation between oneself and the world, until one usually experiences some form of crisis/ego death, potentially followed by a psychological rebirth (Tarnas, 2010).

It is interesting to note that the concept of evolution of consciousness was seeded towards the end of the 18th century and popularised by German integral philosophers such as Goethe, Hegel and Schelling – their views were inspired by both unitive, earlier worldviews (pre-modern, Mythic consciousness) and potential future ones (beyond modern rationality, pointing to a more conscious awakening) towards a ‘post-formal’ (beyond Piaget’s formal), Integral (inclusive) consciousness (Gidley, 2007b). Trained as a scientist and greatly influenced by Goethe, Rudolf Steiner left a vast heritage in terms of writings and teachings designed to reframe Western culture and consciousness, both practically and spiritually. He evolved theosophy (esoteric Christianity) into his own anthroposophy (‘spiritual science’), leaving clear instructions for anybody to access information from subtle sources (Akashic field/records) through training one’s mind/consciousness (Steiner, 1923). In essence, Steiner’s teachings highlighted the mysterious connection between humankind and cosmos as the fundamental basis of evolution, and emphasised humanity’s *freedom* and *responsibility* to shape the ultimate destiny of the universe (Steiner, 1904). Arguably a macro-historian, Steiner’s description of the evolution of culture and consciousness, and of the multi-dimensional human being, spanned thousands of years, comprising the past and the possible future; the stages of evolution Steiner described show great similarities to cultural historian Jean Gebser’s structures of consciousness, while his descriptions of a multi-dimensional, evolving human being with a developing consciousness reflect Indian sage Sri Aurobindo Ghose’s work (Gidley, 2007b). As stated, Wilber’s contemporary and futuristic views of human consciousness (and his model of integral psychology) draw considerably on the work of Gebser (and Aurobindo), but, like Steiner’s model, Wilber’s map develops beyond, to cultural futures of an expanded human consciousness which encompasses subtle layers of being.

In fact, both Wilber and Steiner hold a postmodern view of human consciousness, which, they maintain, has been evolving beyond an abstract and intellectual level, towards a post-formal, Integral level characterised by more imaginative, spiritual, complex and self-reflective ways of being – towards a different consciousness and mode of functioning. Wilber calls this Integral mode/consciousness ‘post rational vision-logic’, representing to him the highest reaches of the mental realms, beyond which lie transrational developments; Steiner called it ‘consciousness soul/spiritual

consciousness’, which he saw as the highest manifestation of the personal soul (the ‘I’), beyond which development proceeds into more purely spiritual realms (Gidley, 2007a).

In their own words:

this is the dawning of the age of vision-logic...Evolution in all forms has started to become conscious of itself. Evolution, as Spirit-in-action, is starting to awaken on a more collective scale. (Wilber, 2000, p.193).

In the human self-consciousness...thought contemplates itself. The essence of the world arrives at its own awareness...at the highest stage, as thought living within itself, which is the highest manifestation of spirit (Steiner, 1914, pp.171–172).

Interestingly, Wilber defines the pre-requisite level of consciousness that leads to transcendent realms the *Centaur* level – one intimately connected to self-actualisation, representing ‘the integrated and total self, above and prior to body, mind, persona and shadow, but embracing, as it were, all of them as experiences’ (Wilber, 1980, p.54). The Centaur level of consciousness connects with Maslow’s vision of a new, emerging psychology and of a developing higher consciousness in humanity, which he outlined in the last two levels of his model (self-actualisation and self-transcendence, with peak experiences transforming into a more steady and permanent plateau state, discussed in section 2.3.1.). What mainly differs is how the two authors termed the gradually emerging consciousness – what Wilber calls transcendent, *Integral* consciousness (Centaur), Maslow (1969) initially defined ‘Transhumanistic’ and then called *Transpersonal* consciousness (Anderson & Braud, 2011). Both terms describe an *empowering*, motivational state that expresses a need for self-transcendence, a state that goes beyond personal benefit to include a greater cause, a union with a higher power, service to others, etc., all expressing identification beyond one’s ego. Maslow described some noted peculiarities of transcendents and their emerging, Transpersonal consciousness thus:

I would expect another paradox to be found in transcendents: namely, that they are more apt to regard themselves as *carriers* of talent, *instruments* of the transpersonal, temporary custodians so to speak of a greater intelligence or skill or leadership or efficiency. This means a certain peculiar kind of objectivity or detachment toward themselves that to non-transcendents might sound like arrogance, grandiosity or even paranoia... Transcendence brings with it the "transpersonal" loss of ego (op. cit., pp.42-43, original italics).

The last, but not least, transpersonal model that I will describe here is Wade's holonomic theory of consciousness used in Masters's research outlined above. Wade's theory of the evolution of consciousness combines conventional, esoteric and transpersonal psychologies; within this model, the Authentic level of consciousness is equated to Maslow's concept of self-actualisation, which is seen as a journey and a progression toward self-transcendence and enlightenment, rather than as a fixed state of consciousness (Wade, 1996). This emergent stage is called 'Authentic', Wade explains, because it describes the first stage in which 'selfhood is undistorted by ego [and it is] characterised by major changes in psychological integration' (op. cit., p.161); she adds that Maslow 'labels lower levels of functioning neurotic, not so much emotionally sick as cognitively wrong' (ibid.).

Wade reports that most individuals in so-called civilised cultures tend to function at the Conformist level all their lives, and that this conclusion finds agreement among all schools of psychology; the mainstream Conformist level of consciousness (the current Mental mode), Wade clarifies, seems to have the advantage of providing security in rituals and rules to follow, a stable equilibrium which encourages rationalisation of (or resistance towards) anything that threatens one's self-image or acquired belief system. She adds that 'leaving this level behind, therefore, is understandably rather difficult until or unless enough cognitive dissonance (or major crisis) is experienced' (op. cit., p.130).

Wade also emphasises that although conventional psychology sees the current Conformist stage as a consciousness level that enables individuals to achieve an accurate perception of reality, the transpersonal view is different. Assagioli, founder of the psychosynthetic model of self-awareness and integration of the psyche towards spiritual growth, for example, considers the Conformist stage an ego-inflated consciousness built on illusions and false securities, which need to be transcended to achieve one's true potential and alignment with the Superconscious and the (transpersonal) Self (Assagioli, 1993). In other words, according to Assagioli's model (outlined in section 2.7 below), accurate perceptions of reality can be achieved at higher levels than the mainstream Conformist stage.

It is interesting to note that Wilber interprets Wade's identified Authentic level of consciousness as the next, developing stage of human development, and describes it as a

revolutionary and *empowering shift in consciousness* that moves from fragmentation to wholeness, from an external to an internal locus of control (Wilber, 2000). Wade, in turn, writes:

Wilber calls his version of Authentic consciousness the Centaur stage, to symbolize a higher order reunification of mind and body after the splitting off of the mental ego at Egocentric consciousness...Sensual experiences of all kinds are enhanced and fully enjoyed (Wade, 1996, p.163).

In essence, individuals who tend to manifest what Wade called Authentic consciousness are characterised by (adapted from Wade, 1996, pp.159-174):

- 1) An acceptance of self, others and the world;
- 2) An ability to choose from multiple behavioural modes, to the point of androgyny;
- 3) The natural ability to use whole-brain thinking;
- 4) A tendency to pursue their desires, but not at the expense of others;
- 5) An ability to offer help without a need to 'fix' others;
- 6) A tendency to think 'outside the box', without dependence on social approval;
- 7) A willingness to take full responsibility for their choices;
- 8) A need to pursue personal growth for its own sake.

Like Wilber and Steiner, Wade identifies further, subtle spiritual stages of consciousness beyond the gradually emerging Authentic stage, which she names: Transcendent consciousness, Unity consciousness and After-Death consciousness (op. cit.). Wilber identified four broad stages of postformal consciousness development (with different brain states associated with them), which he called Psychic, Subtle, Causal, Nondual (Wilber, 1997b). He emphasises that:

The precise definitions of those four postformal stages need not concern us...The point is simply that there now exists a substantial amount of rather compelling evidence that interior consciousness can continue the evolutionary process of 'transcend and include', so that even rationality itself is transcended (but included!) in postformal stages of awareness, stages that increasingly take on characteristics that might best be described as spiritual or mystical (op. cit., p.80)

To synthesise, the information outlined above, derived from various models of consciousness development, appears to indicate that a new consciousness or a new cycle of collective growth is *expected to be emerging* (see Hart's educational model for Integral consciousness, section 2.6.1.), whichever name is adopted to describe it. This

implies that, contrary to what part of the Indigo literature claims, Indigos did not necessarily initiate a new, emerging consciousness in human development; they seem rather more likely to *accelerate* its widespread induction, as revealed by some of the literature and by my first study's results.

I find it interesting that there appear to be similarities between the Indigo phenomenon and the Cultural Creatives movement identified by sociologist Paul Ray and psychologist Sherry Ruth Anderson about a decade ago (Ray & Anderson, 2001). The two researchers claim to have found over 50 million adult Americans and an estimated 80-90 million Europeans (at the time of their research) who appeared to be environmentally sensitive, altruistic, idealistic, and spiritual, and who had been creating new social inventions and institutions, worldviews, and lifestyles. The Cultural Creatives seem to have moved beyond conservatism and traditionalism, being characterised by a strong inner locus of control, independence, self-actualising tendencies and a drive towards initiating social change. Ray and Anderson found that the Cultural Creatives's core values appeared to be:

- a) authenticity (consistency between speech and action),
- b) self-actualisation (wholeness of self and cultivation of one's potential),
- c) appreciation of the emergence of feminine values,
- d) deep-ecology awareness and activism to protect and nurture the planet and
- e) the need to find and express one's talents and passions to contribute to the well-being of others, as well as to attain personal self-fulfilment.

As can be seen, the reported characteristics found and outlined above seem to strongly echo Wade's descriptions of an Authentic consciousness, as well as Indigos' observed traits (listed in Table 1); their self-actualising, possibly self-transcending tendencies, seem to describe and confirm that a new consciousness and new needs have indeed been growing and emerging on a collective, archetypal level. It is therefore tempting to presume that Indigo children might have been influenced by parents belonging to the Cultural Creatives group. However, as Thivierge and other authors point out, Indigo-like children can be found in many typical, 'normal', conformist families who seem to have scant interest in the values stated; in fact, the rising presence of Indigos in typical families (manifesting Conformist consciousness), who do not know how to cope with them, appears to be challenging and to make life more difficult for all concerned

(educators included). Admittedly, this would seem to confirm Indigos' presumed role of 'system busters', of shakers of the status quo through exemplifying a new (Transpersonal, Authentic or Integral) consciousness (Carroll & Tober, 1999).

Masters's study seems to confirm that 'authenticity' (insistence on coherence between speech and action while also being faithful to one's unconventional thinking) and 'inner locus of control' (following and acting on one's own intuitive guidance) are traits commonly found in Indigos, which might represent a challenge to the status quo even without further disruptive or rebellious actions on their part. Arguably, however, if Indigos are indeed here to accelerate the emergence of a new consciousness as the literature appears to indicate, it would seem doubtful that their characteristics should be isolated and confined only to a relatively small group. Situating Indigos in a wider context to find out whether the phenomenon of a new emerging and collective consciousness (based on evolving self-actualising and self-transcending tendencies) might be more widespread among recent generations than currently acknowledged or recognised was the next logical step in my research (see section 2.5). An analysis of socio-historical and anthropological research seemed to indicate that so-called Indigo characteristics appear to be shared by other differently-labelled members of the New Generations, possibly representing a self-actualising/transcending trend, and an Integral, Centaur, Authentic consciousness, gradually emerging on a collective level (Trotta, 2012). The Table I have created to summarise and compare findings from existing research (Table 2) suggests that a new consciousness movement or phenomenon does indeed seem to exist among the New Generations, which, I would argue, deserves attention and further study beyond the present investigation.

2.5. Casting of the 'New Generations': Placing Indigos in a broader context via relevant existing research

Although presented in a linear fashion, this section of the literature review was developed after concluding my first study. The Indigo study's research results, in other words, inspired a different focus for the second study than Indigos alone, and encouraged me to try to place the Indigo phenomenon in a broader context not only to shed light on whether Indigos are truly special or simply different or even deficient in

some ways, but also to find out whether it was indeed an isolated phenomenon, as the literature would seem to indicate. I reasoned that situating the Indigo phenomenon in a wider context and in comparison with other research-based sociological trends was likely to provide more information on potential movements in the collective unconscious that the Indigo phenomenon might symbolise, which, in addition to my first study, would help me to define the focus of my whole investigation.

My first step in attempting to situate the Indigo phenomenon within a wider arena was reviewing some generational studies which link and compare Indigos' traits with Generation Y/Millennials' characteristics, given that Indigos are said to have been growing in numbers since the early 1980s, which places them mostly in the Millennial generation. My second step was to collect and analyse some relevant research-based information on giftedness, learning difficulties and neurodiversity that, the literature informs, seem to affect Indigos. My comparison among all characteristics collected by researchers in the fields stated is displayed in Table 2, which will show how multi-labelled representatives of recent generations (Indigos, ADHD, Gifted, Millennials) appear to share striking similarities, especially in terms of self-actualising and self-transcending tendencies, and justifies how I reached my decision to group multi-labelled youth by referring to them as 'the New Generations' for the purposes of this thesis.

2.5.1. Socio-historical generational research: the 'Millennials'

Admittedly, sociological studies of generational trends can easily be criticised for allowing for generalisations which are not always correct, and for being less than precise, in that all cycles and events in history are inevitably part of much larger cycles on an even larger, longer and archetypal scale likely to escape human understanding. They can, however, provide some interesting points to reflect on, so I will explore briefly some theories obtained by research and historical analysis of trends and events. Socio-historical researchers Strauss & Howe have been studying the characteristics of generations spanning the last five centuries of recorded history and, on the basis of their findings, they theorise that there are four basic and recurring generational types or archetypes (Strauss & Howe, 1991, 1997, 2000). Each of these types is thought to shape and be shaped by history, it appears to have a particular lifecycle 'and a special

relationship to spiritual awakenings and secular crises’ (Strauss & Howe, 1991, p.452). Each generation type is naturally also characterised by different instincts and talents they have to offer, which the authors call *endowments* or *endowment agendas* (op. cit., pp.370-371).

Here is an adapted list of generational types (in the order in which they recur cyclically, with details about the most recent ones), their endowment areas and the archetypes they represent according to Strauss & Howe (1991):

GENERATIONAL TYPE	ENDOWMENTS	ARCHETYPE
IDEALIST (Boomers, the rebels, 1943/60)	Principle, Religion, Education	PROPHET ARCHETYPE
REACTIVE (Gen. X, the survivors, 1961/81)	Liberty, Pragmatism, Survival	NOMAD ARCHETYPE
CIVIC (Millennials, the fixers, 1982/2001)	Community, Technology, Affluence	HERO ARCHETYPE
ADAPTIVE (Gen.2020, the adapters, 2002/24)	Pluralism, Expertise, Social Justice	ARTIST ARCHETYPE

It can be argued that using cycles and the cyclical nature of things seems to be a popular way of trying to make sense of the world. Author and linguist Peter Lemesurier, for example, when questioning the concept of how a new age generally tends to be perceived, writes that in this way ‘the whole of human history comes to be seen as a cycle of fall and redemption, a ritual round-dance from bliss to despair and back to bliss again’ (Lemesurier, 1990, p.9). He claims that this view is particularly true with regard to assumptions that there is necessarily anything to transform/reform or anybody to transform it. Lemesurier might have a point, in that, as discussed below, Strauss & Howe (1997) do seem to be looking to Millennials as the bearers of the ‘hero archetype’, expected to introduce new solutions and a new age of bliss to reform and transform a world in crisis, based on possibly questionable assumptions.

Millennials and the Crisis Era

According to the models suggested above and further research and historical observations provided in Strauss & Howe’s *The Fourth Turning*, time, like nature’s seasons, appears to be cyclical and each season reflects the different phases of human development and history (Strauss & Howe, 1997). The current cycle we find ourselves

in, according to the authors, is winter, or crisis time, which usually starts with a catalysing event and eventually leads to regeneration and a new order. On the basis of their research, the authors claim that previous crisis eras in history (such as the American Revolution or the Great Depression and WWII) seem to be characterised by generational archetypes entering specific phases of life as follows:

Prophets (Boomers) would be in their elderhood

Nomads (Generation X) would be in their mid-life

Heroes (Millennials/Generation Y) would be in their early adulthood

Artists (most recent generation sometimes referred to as Gen. 2020) would be in their childhood.

In *The Fourth Turning*, a calamitous event was predicted by the authors likely to take place soon after or before 2005, which would initiate a new turning, a new phase we are currently in and lasting about 20 years. The predicted event in question might be speculated to be 9/11 in America and/or the recession phase worldwide. In crisis eras, the authors note, societies get a chance to exercise their survival instincts, as well as harness archetypal strengths in the most productive ways, to find solutions to problems that threaten to destroy them. The responsibility of participating well and with a positive outcome or otherwise rests on all individuals alive during a crisis cycle, the authors warn. The future outcome, in other words, is not written in stone, nor is it guaranteed.

Strauss & Howe offer some suggestions as to how to face the current crisis. Among them, they recommend that the Millennial generation, bearers of the Hero archetype, should be seen as an exceedingly important *investment priority*, given their pivotal role in crisis eras in the past, likely to repeat itself during this crisis time as well. According to most Indigo authors, Indigos have increased in numbers starting from the early 1980s, which would identify them as belonging to the Millennials (as shown above). Another way of looking at this phenomenon might be what philosopher of science Ian Hacking (1986) would argue, namely that perhaps more people have chosen to accept the label, and to identify with a partially or seemingly appealing category that somebody invented (Indigos). Whichever the truth may be, it seems plausible, as an intellectual exercise, to link and compare Indigos with the Millennials (Generation Y) and briefly consider what has been written about them.

Interestingly, Millennials are indicated as being the largest generation in America, therefore predicted to have an important role and impact in the future (Rainer & Rainer, 2011). Some authors and researchers, such as the Rainers (2011) and Strauss & Howe (2000), are more hopeful and positive than others (Elmore, 2010) regarding this generation's potential, development and future. As said, Strauss & Howe appear perhaps to be overly optimistic – they emphasize the Millennials' greatness and potential influential role in creating a much better future for all. Tim Elmore, expert of youth leadership development, trainer and founder of Growing Leaders, appears to be far more critical of the same generation; he also highly recommends serious changes in education and parenting styles to prepare the future leaders among the Millennials (Elmore, 2010). His observed characteristics regarding the Millennials have been adapted and used in compiling Table 2.

2.5.2. Characteristics of the Gifted

As researchers', parents' and teachers' attitudes towards children change, evolve and appear to become increasingly more supportive, different forms of giftedness also continue to be identified (Roeper, 2007). On the other hand, however, given that the number of categories of illness/disabilities listed by the American Psychiatric Association has tripled in the last fifty years, more tolerance towards 'neurodiversities' and different ways of knowing also seems to be increasingly encouraged (Armstrong, 2010). As a result, it is becoming increasingly difficult to define with great certainty what is supposed to be 'normal' or even optimal, as average may not necessarily equate with optimal (Daniels & Piechowski, 2010).

Deirdre Lovecky, a clinical psychologist specialising in giftedness, reports that traits commonly noted in relevant research include a developed sense of humour, vivid imagination, inventiveness, drive towards perfectionism (which, when out of control, can cause depression), quick, creative and inquisitive minds, fast speech, perseverance, exceptional power to learn and ability to retain and apply knowledge, independence, nonconformity and acute perceptiveness (Lovecky, 2004, p.25). Michael Piechowski, psychologist and gifted education expert specialising in the emotional and spiritual worlds of the gifted, lists a series of giftedness characteristics that researchers have

found most common, such as higher energy levels and physical, emotional and mental energy, which is translated into (Piechowski, 2009, pp.177-186):

...interest, passion, sustained effort, perseverance, creative flow, ecstasy, caring, compassion or spiritual experience [and] a greater than average intensity (p.177) ...Empathy as a way of knowing (p.180), emotional hypersensitivity and intuitive connections with others (p.182)...They can also feel predestined for their mission in life, an inner imperative called entelechy...In such cases the qualities of the will and self-determination become prominent and will clash with compulsory demands and authoritarian commands (p.183)...Gifted students, and the creative ones especially, react very strongly and viscerally when they are denied choice and respect (p.185)...To be emotionally gifted is to dare to act on one's awareness (p.186).

Interestingly, Piechowski also notes that Myers-Briggs personality type measurements have revealed that the higher levels of giftedness tend to correlate with increased frequency of both the Intuitive and the Perceiving type, which is the opposite tendency found in the general high school population, where:

The intuitive type is about five times less frequent than the sensation type... This is one significant source for the gifted feeling different, consequently not fitting in school – their predominant type is opposite of that of mainstream students and teachers (op. cit., p.189).

Piechowski also found that the spiritually gifted can easily induce heightened consciousness by using simple techniques, they tend to ask questions about the purpose of life from a very early age, appear to have wisdom beyond their years and a connection to some kind of Divine energy, feeling one with their inner Self and with the cosmos (Piechowski, 2003). Lovecky's observations tend to confirm the above and add to the list of spiritual giftedness characteristics of heightened empathy and connection to all that lives, plus 'a sense of transcendence with the Infinite, whatever they [the spiritually gifted] define that to be' (Lovecky, 1998, p.182). It has to be said, however, that the concept of spiritual giftedness, to which the authors refer, implies the acceptance of a form of spiritual intelligence that is still hotly debated, as described below.

2.5.3 The question of spiritual intelligence in education

Giftedness traits, especially those referred to as spiritual giftedness, appear to be very similar, and in most cases identical, to those listed for Indigos in the section above. It

has to be said, however, that the concept of spiritual giftedness presumes the existence of spiritual intelligence – a category of intelligence not yet recognised among those proposed by Gardner (2000). In his theory of multiple intelligences, psychologist and educational theorist Howard Gardner has developed a list of eight criteria that must be met in order for a potential ‘intelligence candidate’ to be considered an intelligence; he considers skills and abilities which are universal within the human species and a distinction is also made between domain and intelligence (Gardner, 1983, 1993). Gardner defines a domain as ‘any organized activity in society in which individuals can be ranked in terms of expertise’ (Gardner, 1993, p.65).

To decide if there was a ‘spiritual intelligence’, Gardner examined two senses of knowing – ‘knowing how and knowing that’; the skills manifested in spiritual intelligence that Gardner recognised were: being in touch with spiritual, psychic or noetic phenomena, meditating, envisioning the transcendental or achieving trance states (Sisk, 2008, p.24). Sisk & Torrance’s vision and research (reported below) coincided with Gardner’s, but also added the skills of intuition and visioning (Sisk & Torrance, 2001). Although Gardner has not included spiritual intelligence among his list of multiple intelligences, he has, however, considered *existential intelligence* as a worthy ‘new intelligence candidate’, characterised by a tendency to contemplate fundamental questions in life (Gardner, 1999). Existential intelligence also seems to meet his established criteria except one (brain localisation), which is the reason why this intelligence remains only of a proposed kind, until the remaining criterion is met (op. cit).

Spiritual intelligence seems to be hard to pinpoint, considering that even a clear definition of the adjective ‘spiritual’ and the concept of ‘spirituality’ are possibly still vague and not yet universally agreed on (Buckler, 2011). Transpersonal psychotherapist Frances Vaughan, for example, defines spirituality as ‘ultimate belonging or connection to the transcendental ground of being’, arguably a rather vague statement that may not find universal agreement, particularly in defining ‘transcendental ground of being’ (Vaughan, 2002, p.16). There are many definitions of spiritual intelligence, which researcher David King (who also devised a spiritual intelligence self-report inventory) reviews (King, 2008). He also provides his own definition, claiming that spiritual intelligence consists of:

a set of adaptive mental capacities which are based on nonmaterial and transcendent aspects of reality, specifically those which are related to the nature of one's existence, personal meaning, transcendence, and expanded states of consciousness. When applied, these processes are adaptive in their ability to facilitate unique means of problem-solving, abstract-reasoning, and coping (King, 2011, p.1)

King claims that, when applied, such mental capacities also tend to facilitate critical existential thinking and personal meaning production, which can assist an individual in creating and mastering a life purpose (op. cit.). Interestingly, Professor of Gifted Education Dorothy Sisk claims that 'education is fearful of things spiritual' (Sisk, 2008, p.25) and points out that this fear seems to permeate not just education, but basically all fields. Sisk claims that 'fear of things spiritual' limits the system of education, which, she writes:

fails to address the real issues of life—dispensing facts at the expense of meaning, and learning information at the expense of wisdom—and that such schooling alienates and dulls students. Palmer defined spiritual as a quest for connectedness with self, with others, with the worlds of history and nature, and with the mystery of being alive (ibid.).

Together with psychologist and pioneer in creativity Paul Torrance, Sisk wrote *Spiritual Intelligence – Developing Higher Consciousness* (Sisk & Torrance, 2001), a research-based book which has attempted to chart out a landscape of the elusive terrain of spiritual intelligence, using a variety of fields and sources and illustrating how complex and vague an intelligence connected with spirituality can be, in that it intersects with psychology, science, religion, and mysticism. Sisk & Torrance's aim in researching material for their book was also to find out in what fields of knowledge clues about the nature of this intelligence can be found. I have chosen to review their book and not others because, more than general spiritual intelligence literature, their work is particularly relevant to the present investigation, in that it explores not only the nature, but the applicability of spiritual intelligence in education.

The authors analysed the work of psychologists, scientists, knowledge from ancient wisdom and mythic traditions *to find a theory of spiritual intelligence that affects pedagogy*, too. The research in the book seems to suggest that spiritual intelligence encompasses all other kinds of intelligences. Reviewing general concepts of intelligence that may be connected to spirituality, spanning traditional and more transpersonal texts,

including those by humanistic and transpersonal psychologists, Sisk & Torrance found that a spiritual realm of human consciousness and activity is illustrated by, and can be found in the following:

- a) the Jungian concept of *synchronicity*,
- b) psychiatrist and physician Kazimierz Dabrowski's theory of *overexcitabilities* (which describes heightened ability to respond to psychomotor, sensual, imaginal, intellectual, and emotional stimuli and is used in gifted education) and
- c) humanistic and transpersonal ideals of *self-actualisation* and transpersonal behaviours dictated by a *tendency towards seeking justice, wholeness and truth*.

Sisk and Torrance examined and reviewed also the work of cutting-edge physicists, brain researchers and neuroscientists and found to what extent their findings tended to question certain longstanding assumptions that, in the authors' opinion, tend to marginalize study or research on people's spiritual or intuitive experiences (for example the assumption that the evolution of humanity and the universe has come only from physical causes or that the objective world is separate from the subjective one). Reviewing more science-based research, the authors discovered that pioneers in less orthodox science seem to gradually find bridges between science and mysticism; also, in reviewing ancient wisdom and Eastern mystical traditions, Sisk & Torrance found that their fundamental characteristics seem to correlate with physics' evolving view of the world as a conscious universe. As a consequence, therefore, they identified a need to question any Western paradigm that places material science and spiritual experiences at polar opposites, in that, they reason, a dualistic view might hide an existing and more unified whole which can easily go undetected by the senses (op. cit.).

As a result of their research, Sisk & Torrance formulated their own definition of spiritual intelligence, which, in summary, they saw as the ability to use a *multisensory approach to problem solving*, which includes learning to listen to one's inner voice (a characteristic that seems to be innate and already prominent in many Indigos, as discussed above). The authors observed that this form of intelligence is exemplified in traits such as compassion, empathy and caring for all living beings, creative reasoning, an ability to think and explore 'outside the box' (an expression often used throughout the authors' book and the Indigo literature) and to see connections between phenomena

that are seemingly disparate. It is noteworthy how the authors' observations and reports appear to describe the transcendent actualisation tendencies/process discussed above, and may add to the relevance of addressing such tendencies in education, as outlined below.

Because Sisk & Torrance's interest in researching the topic of spiritual intelligence was also motivated by its implications for pedagogy, in the last few chapters of their book the authors also describe a range of methods to nurture spiritual intelligence in schools (such as role playing to explore creative solutions to problems and theatrical techniques that explore a sense of wonderment, heightened states of consciousness, expanded awareness, intuition and visualisation as a powerful means of using inner knowing), with the last chapter discussing the need for spiritual study in schools without promoting or adopting any religion or dogma. Sisk in particular points out that one area of giftedness that is often avoided by educators seems to be the spiritual dimension which, she argues, is indeed relevant, in that gifted children in particular have often been observed to struggle with the injustice of wars and to be concerned about the environment, the importance of human rights and other philosophical questions.

To conclude, the authors emphasise that gifted and all sensitive students who seem to think 'outside the box' by seeing connections that elude other people or demonstrating interest in both physics and metaphysics, deserve a kind of education that can respond to their legitimate needs to find a sense of purpose, joy, creative expression and a sense of connectedness with the world and all forms of life (op. cit.).

Such definitions and observations appear to describe characteristics of Maslow's self-transcenders and related plateau experiences, discussed above and also in educational psychologist Scott Buckler's latest research book, which includes a psychometric plateau experience measure (PLEX) to aid further investigation of Maslow's top hierarchical need – self-transcendence (Buckler, 2011). Transcendent actualisation tendencies among Indigos and the New Generations have been observed in the present study, too. Are these children/adolescents all gifted or simply embodying latent tendencies in humankind's evolving consciousness, as I would be more inclined to postulate? Whichever the case might be, I would argue that such concepts, at this stage and in this exploratory study, can only be considered speculative. Furthermore, to my knowledge, no data are available of any attempt to measure self-actualisation or self-

transcending tendencies among a large number of young individuals, especially Indigos or other multi-labelled members of the New Generations, which could, in fact, represent a further step in research beyond the present study (see Chapter 8).

Moving on to an analysis of another major and relevant topic, all children and adolescents that appear to manifest overexcitabilities, which include Indigos and, as discussed below, also gifted students – in fact, probably most members of the New Generations – run a very real risk of being diagnosed ADHD, an alarming tendency that will be briefly discussed in the following section.

2.5.4. The problem of ADHD misdiagnoses

One worrying factor that has been attracting attention is the number of potential misdiagnoses of giftedness as ADHD, studied and reported in the *Roepert Review* (Hartnett, Nelson and Rinn, 2004, 2006). As the Indigo literature seems to emphasise, many Indigos appear to meet the same fate. The American Psychiatric Association's DSM (Diagnostic and Statistical Manual) currently recognises three forms of attention deficit disorders, with three main groups of symptoms – hyperactivity, impulsivity and distractibility. Furthermore, sometimes ADHD is diagnosed as coexisting with other forms of learning deficits or disorders (Armstrong, 2010). It is interesting to note that ADD/ADHD individuals are diagnosed as having a deficit of attention. However, what actually transpires when observing them (especially in a classroom), argues special education expert Thomas Armstrong, is that the very opposite is true (op. cit.). They *can* actually pay enormous attention for extended periods of time (hyperfocus), but only to what stimulates and interests *them*, which is very often not what they are supposed to pay attention to. This is a trait that, Armstrong observes, they seem to have in common with creative people and with gifted learners (op. cit.).

It seems that children are being labelled ADHD because, by following their excitabilities and passions, they are not following adults' directives, as, more often than not, they are seeking more stimulation and trying to avoid boredom, especially at school, where attention is often directed to routine and *externally imposed tasks* and where physical activity in the open air is very limited. This last factor seems likely to contribute to the problem to a noticeable extent (Piechowski, 2009). Furthermore, like

Indigos, ADHD-diagnosed individuals prefer to follow their own inner guidance, their inner locus of control, and this trait is clearly perceived by ‘neurotypicals’, who structure the way society is organised, as being particularly offensive and threatening to the status quo. How institutions tend to shape collective thinking and actions has been discussed above in reviewing social anthropologist Mary Douglas’s work on the subject, which reflects sociologist Emile Durkheim’s theory of the sociology of deviance – in essence, Durkheim argued that conventional outlooks for the study of deviant behaviours usually provide a framework that tends to be far too narrow to accommodate them easily (Erikson, 1960).

In other words, what ADD/ADHD individuals might represent is a type of deviant behaviour that the collective seems to be biased against, notes Armstrong (op. cit.). As proof of this point, which is worth emphasising, Armstrong has observed that when comparing signs of ADHD with traits of a creative person, great similarities can be found, except that in ADHD the connotations assigned to the same or very similar traits found in Creatives tend to be interpreted in a negative light. For example, the ADHD trait of *impulsivity* is the Creative’s *spontaneity*; ADHD individuals are *distractible*, whereas Creative persons have a *divergent mind* – they follow their own instincts wherever they lead and tend to think ‘outside the box’ (Cramond, 1994), but so do Indigos and ADHD-labelled individuals, one might argue (in fact, as previously noted, the expression ‘outside the box’ seems to recur and to be used extensively in Indigo and Giftedness literature). Furthermore, Cramond argues that the *hyperactivity* noted in ADHD-labelled individuals is hailed in the Creatives as *vitality*, on the grounds that the latter are constantly in search for creative expression or for a creative solution to a problem (Armstrong, 2010). The similarities just listed are striking. Yet, ADHD-diagnosed children in American and European schools are still prescribed Ritalin and similar drugs in massive doses, as Armstrong points out (op. cit.).

This section has outlined findings from previous research on Millennials, Gifted and ADHD-diagnosed, multi-labelled youth; in the next section, their observed characteristics will be compared to those observed in Indigos to explore whether similarities exist.

2.5.5. A comparison resulting in characteristics of the New Generations

Table 2 below compares characteristics reported in existing research presented above on:

- a) Indigos (composite list from the relevant literature in Table 1 and Masters' s research),
- b) Millennials (Elmore, 2010, p.35),
- c) ADD/ADHD - diagnosed individuals (Armstrong, 2010) and the Gifted (Lovecky, 2004, p.25 and p. 38; Piechowski, 2009, pp.177-186).

I have chosen to compare the categories in Table 2 because, as noted, Indigos are said to have appeared in greater numbers since the early 1980s (Millennials generation) and they seem to be often labelled ADD/ADHD or Gifted. The rationale behind creating this table was that existing research results in all cited fields, when compared, would show whether similarities among differently-labelled youth could indeed be found and whether the Indigo movement and Indigo-like characteristics (especially self-actualisation and self-transcendence tendencies/Authentic levels of consciousness) were an isolated phenomenon or, as suspected, was more widespread than commonly recognised and possibly symbolic of a collective emerging trend. It is important to emphasize that my choice to group ADHD and giftedness traits in one heading does *not* imply that all gifted individuals are ADHD-diagnosed or that all ADHD-diagnosed children are gifted. Only those characteristics which would appear to overlap have been reported in the table for reasons of conciseness.

Thus Table 2 not only shows similarities among multi-labelled representatives of the New Generations, but it also points out that the self-actualising and self-transcending tendencies found in Indigos might indeed be manifested by a larger population than Indigos alone, possibly symbolising an emerging new consciousness or new values on a collective level (Trotta, 2012). Interestingly, Table 2 seems to indicate that Indigos, Millennials, ADHD and Gifted youth would appear to have in common: ecological/sustainability concerns, a sense of purpose/pre-destination, a certain degree

of personal sensitivity, restlessness, resistance to conformity and very individualised personalities, with an inner locus of control – in essence, an Authentic level of consciousness that seems to have moved beyond the Conformist stage, which seems to point to self-actualising/transcending tendencies, as described in Wade's model (see section 2.4).

Table 2 Characteristics the New Generations appear to have in common

<i>Table 2 - Characteristics the New Generations appear to have in common</i>		
INDIGOS (from composite list created consulting the relevant literature/ research reported in Table 1)	MILLENNIALS/Generation Y (adapted from Elmore, 2010)	ADHD AND GIFTED INDIVIDUALS (adapted from Armstrong, 2010, Lovecky, 2004, Piechowski, 2009)
<i>Spontaneous and creative</i>	<i>Feel special and needed</i>	<i>Impulsive and spontaneous</i>
<i>Might come over as arrogant but strongly self-reliant</i>	<i>Can act spoilt and conceited</i>	<i>Demand choice and respect</i>
<i>Impatient and intolerant towards slow-minded people or hypocritical behaviours</i>	<i>Unable to complete a task unless they see its relevance</i>	<i>Attention span short on routine tasks imposed by external sources</i>
<i>Quick minds and easy grasp of abstract concepts</i>	<i>Catch on to new ideas quickly</i>	<i>Insist on marching to own drummer</i>
<i>Right-brain dominant and creative. Adept at multitasking</i>	<i>Adept at multitasking</i>	<i>Right-brain dominant Adept at multitasking</i>
<i>Highly energetic and excitable</i>	<i>Impatient/ Get bored easily</i>	<i>Need plenty of activity and independence</i>

<i>Focusing difficult unless own passion directs learning. Dislike of excessive structure</i>	<i>Find focusing difficult unless driven by passion</i>	<i>Focusing difficult unless driven by passion</i>
<i>Tendency to resist conformity and authority. Inner locus of control. Unresponsive to guilt-inducing manipulations</i>	<i>Biased in favour of action. Struggle with long-term commitments</i>	<i>Energetic, creative, vital. Tend to act on their own awareness-inner locus of control</i>
<i>Tendency to form few but close relationships</i>	<i>Despite being social, they need alone-time</i>	<i>Feel one with inner Self and Cosmos</i>
<i>Think outside the box</i>	<i>Think outside the box</i>	<i>Think outside the box</i>
<i>Sense of purpose</i>	<i>Have a sense of purpose</i>	<i>Feel predestined for their mission in life</i>
<i>Desire to participate in causes and projects that serve humanity/environment</i>	<i>Hunger to change the world</i>	<i>Drive to change the world and rectify injustice</i>
<i>Intuitive/ Nonlinear ways of knowing. Technologically-minded. Wisdom beyond their years</i>	<i>Technology is a prominent part of their lives</i>	<i>Intuitive connections with others and with all that lives. Wisdom beyond their years</i>
<i>Emotionally sensitive and empathic. Prone to allergies, physically delicate</i>	<i>Prone to depression (due to being hyper-sensitive?)</i>	<i>Caring, compassion, empathy. Intense emotions and perceptions</i>

Given the remarkable commonalities found among the new, multi-labelled generations shown in Table 2, one might speculatively conclude that there seems to be an archetype in the collective unconscious pushing to find expression in human life, which differently-labelled youth appear to already embody and represent (see section 2.2). This phenomenon, which Table 2 seems to indicate might not be exclusively confined to Indigos, seems deserving of further investigation (a first step being perhaps the present study, with further suggestions for developments outlined in Chapter 8).

Perhaps the New Generations, as Promethean figures, are only mirroring to their adult counterparts that all human beings are needing to actualise their full potential through authentic and empathic ways of being in, and belonging to, the world, embodying an archetype/consciousness that represents the next cosmic, collective stage of evolution (as discussed in section 2.2 and further explored in section 2.4.3). Finally, maybe the children and adolescents described above are restless because they might be naturally experiencing ‘self-transcendence’ – an expanded field of consciousness through which they perceive a different relationship between self, others and life as a whole (Trotta, 2012). I should perhaps reiterate here that whereas self-actualisation describes a desire for fulfilment of personal potential, self-transcendence seeks to further a cause beyond the self (which could involve service to others, devotion to an ideal or a cause, such as social justice, environmentalism, etc.), and to experience a communion *beyond* the boundaries of the self (definitions already contextualised and discussed in section 2.3).

The commonalities found among the New Generations would appear to indicate that more in-depth investigations aimed at understanding youth’s educational needs are appropriate and called for at this stage. Possibly, as Sisk (2001) has argued, different and more expansive ways of knowing may need to be integrated in both mainstream and holistic education if the New Generations are to be helped or served rather than drugged or singled out as needing special education with various labels that emphasise their ‘neurodiversity’. My second study represents a step in that direction.

To summarise and conclude this section, once all the investigations outlined above (my first study) were examined carefully, they seemed to reveal that Indigos’ characteristics were possibly not confined to Indigos, but might apply to a wider section of the population (the New Generations). Such investigations also seemed to indicate that holistic ways of educating Indigos had been found successful, which led to an evolution

of the research question. The focus in the first study was on Indigos' characteristics and educational needs; given the results, the second study focused instead on an exploration of the general psychosynthetic educational model. This choice was based on the congruence of psychosynthesis with the characteristics of New Generation youngsters described in the first part of my investigation, in that Assagioli's psychosynthesis seems to address all the main points raised in the first study relevant to Indigos and the New Generations (i.e. multidimensional awareness, inner guidance, right use of transpersonal energies, heart/intuitive intelligence, self-responsibility/actualisation/transcendence, etc.). Furthermore, psychosynthesis has also been applied in educational areas for several decades (described in section 2.7). However, since the contribution that psychosynthesis might make to a holistic approach to education is not currently evident in mainstream schools, three psychosynthesis-based educational projects have been explored and compared in my second study.

The focus of the new question was on finding out whether, and to what extent, the latest trends in applied psychosynthetic educational programmes might inform and contribute to both holistic and mainstream education, and possibly even show indirectly how relevant it might be to integrate transpersonal, holistic models into mainstream education for the benefit of self-actualising students. In fact, the second phase of my research places its focus on the multi-labelled children and adolescents described above, whom I have since started collectively referring to as *the New Generations* (ideally a more neutral term which includes Indigos) – the potentially self-actualising/transcending youth, whom, I suspect, both mainstream and holistic education could serve better. In essence, the two studies may represent a first step towards understanding not only the New Generations, but also how to best educate them while meeting their needs. The research question in the second study was:

How are the latest trends in the general psychosynthesis-based educational model contributing to holistic education according to experienced educators and how might contributions inform mainstream education?

Chapter 3 explores and justifies the different methodologies chosen and the research strategies adopted for the present study, further detailed in Chapter 4. As my research tries to investigate potential solutions and ways in which mainstream education might be better informed by more holistic, transpersonally-influenced educational methods, I shall

briefly examine in the next section the agenda behind conventional and alternative approaches to education and how they seem to address the characteristics and needs of the New Generations as outlined above.

2.6 Mainstream education and the New Generations

This section briefly illustrates areas that some experts seem to find wanting in mainstream education and the suggestions they make for its future developments. The section also highlights to what extent schools curricula are generally built on assumptions based on general Western attitudes towards the acquisition of knowledge in institutionalised education and also on widely accepted, mainstream scientific and psychological research on mind power and potential. Such assumptions seem to be about how the mind works, what constitutes effective teaching and learning and what skills the current generations are likely to need to meet future needs. I will argue below that the general suppositions and assumptions in creating schools curricula and in considering the function of education might be based on values that have been passed down from previous generations, which might be either relatively biased or no longer/not entirely adequate to meet the needs of the New Generations.

The mainstream education and schools curricula I am referring to in this section exclude Waldorf/Steiner and Montessori schools and educational models, whose founders were inspired respectively by anthroposophic (Ullrich, 1994) and theosophic theories (Wylie, 2008). Based on the wisdom traditions, on ancient esoteric ideals, at least in principle, these tend to address the more spiritual or self-transcending drives within children's psyches; in fact, such models are classified as holistic education, which is discussed in section 2.6.3. Dialogic education, which appears to bridge mainstream and holistic models of education, is introduced and explored in section 2.6.2.

The information in this section should be read with the following specifications in mind. Considering that:

- a) the subject of mainstream education can be approached and critiqued from widely different angles and deserves a whole doctoral study itself,
- b) my doctoral investigation is international, having interviewed British, Italian and American educators,

c) institutionalised education is structured slightly differently in each country, the literature reviewed specifically for this section will be necessarily limited to issues that concern the present study, and the overview outlined should be seen as confined to issues that can be relatively generalised and seen as generally applicable to institutionalised education in the Western countries mentioned above.

2.6.1. A critique of conventional approaches in mainstream education

British futurist Adrian Done defines education thus:

Education is the process by which society deliberately transmits its accumulated knowledge, skills and values from one generation to another. (Done, 2012, p.114).

It could be argued, however, that values from one generation to another do seem to change, as Strauss & Howe's research outlined above also points out, and what served well in the past might not serve present young generations for the future world they will inhabit and shape. A brief overview of what some experts currently find wanting in mainstream education follows.

American educator Stephanie Marshall laments that the current patterns of schooling, based on deficiency and fragmentation, seem to reward reactivity and compliance, rather than initiative and creativity; in other words, to her mind, education does not seem to stimulate imagination, joy, deep learning or critical thinking. She envisages more dynamic teaching and learning approaches to assist children in exploring their questions about life with passion, original thinking and creativity (Marshall, 2006). The exploration of enhancing creativity in education has been attracting increasing attention in educational research. Anna Craft, Professor of Education specialising in creativity in education, explains how including and nurturing creativity in all levels of education has a fundamental role that goes beyond the arts, in that creativity is inherent in all that an individual engages in, from studying science to making choices that affect the present and the future, hence moving so-called reality beyond the status quo (Craft, 2011). In other words, creativity, to Craft, involves what she calls 'possibility thinking' – the ability to imagine the possible from what currently is. As Craft explains, 'whilst creativity does occur at the 'edge' of understandings, habits, traditions, shifting,

developing and transforming these, it is also at the heart of what it means to be human – to imagine the possible from what is’ (op. cit., p.25).

Wisdom, as a subject for educators to integrate and nurture in their teaching, seems to be increasingly highlighted as a necessity for the present and the future of education, although no robust research or consensus seem to exist on the definition of wisdom. Despite acknowledging the difficulty of researching a subject that seems to be so culturally-dependent, the Max Planck Institute in Germany has been investigating ways of defining wisdom as a psychological and cognitive construct – they consider wisdom the peak of human excellence, whose ‘foundation lies in the orchestration of mind and virtue towards the personal and public good’ (Baltes and Kunzmann, 2003, p.133).

Tobin Hart, Professor of Psychology specialising in transpersonal psychology and education, actively *promotes educating for a developing Integral consciousness*, especially via the integration of wisdom in education; in fact, he advocates a form of education that is as much about inner knowing and personal transformation as it is about information acquisition. He maintains that wisdom is about ‘waking up’ to one’s own and others’ presence. In his words:

Wisdom is distinguished from bare intellect especially by its integration of the heart... We might even think of wisdom as the power of the mind to honor the insights of the heart (Hart, 2001b, p.5)...Education for wisdom is not about simply being taught but about *waking up*. Waking up requires a certain kind of energy, certain capacities for taking the world into our consciousness (op. cit., p.10).

It is interesting to note that Rudolf Steiner had also highlighted the concept of ‘waking up’, referring particularly to teachers, who, in his opinion, must be awakened in order to awaken ‘the children and young people... what matters, is a question of awakening, for evolution has made human beings fall into a sleep that is filled with intellectualistic dreams’ (Steiner, 1967, pp.23-28).

In his model, Hart highlights that being intellectually brilliant does not necessarily equate with being wise (Hart, 2009). He calls wisdom ‘an activity of knowing’, of acting wisely, which, he argues, integrates the heart and helps individuals see beyond self-interest (Hart, 2001b, p.1). He clarifies that:

Acquisition of information, mastery of skills, and the power of the intellect give us tools to navigate, change, even destroy the world, but the capacity of wisdom is required if we are to grow the soul of world and our own soul along with it (ibid.).

Hart emphasises the need to nurture wisdom in schools because of the way that wisdom encourages authenticity (being honest with oneself) and how it stands at the intersection between the microcosm and the macrocosm and does not limit one's knowing to prepackaged knowledge, but includes listening to oneself, to one's inner authority, when making choices; he maintains that wisdom cannot be taught directly, but it can be acquired and nurtured more subtly by practices in the classroom. Hart further elucidates how wisdom allows space for ambiguity, vulnerability and mystery, which the current educational system, with its tendency to measure, control and prefer certainty and predictability, tends instead to stifle (op. cit.). With an exception for deductive and logical answers to, for example, a mathematical problem, Hart maintains that letting go of certainties by engaging in open dialogue in the classroom, without the need to find immediate 'tidy' answers, engages wisdom, 'insight born of awe' and inner dialogue (op. cit., p.9), which, in Socratic style, is about asking questions about questions that, Hart seems convinced, serve as a mirror or looking glass when observing one's reactions. Wisdom, Hart explains, is about 'problem finding', rather than problem solving; he suggests that wisdom seeks and creates further questions and deep inner probing and inner knowing, which moves the process 'beyond conceptual limits', accepting nothing at face value (op. cit., p.6). In his transpersonal educational model, Hart clearly supports insight and intuitive learning. He writes:

When the inner life is attended to on a daily basis, it does not breed narcissistic preoccupation or indulgence but instead the opportunity for a deep meeting at the intersection of inside and outside. All the mystics and sages affirm the Delphic oracle's admonition, "Know thyself," and live true to your authentic nature. Inward awareness is not only important to provide a kind centerpoint but also because it reveals the intersection of our individual depth with a more universal depth. The universe lies not only about us but also within us; the outside can reveal the inside and vice versa. (op. cit., p.10).

In essence, throughout his book, Hart (2009) highlights the potential benefits of stimulating a dialogue between an individual's mind and spirit, but also between teachers and students – a dialogue that encourages an interplay of mind and heart. He feels that education should aspire to serve the totality of a human being, having therefore also a role in spiritual development and personal transformation, thus

promoting education for an Integral consciousness and an integral way of knowing (beyond the cognitive only).

Psychology of education expert Guy Claxton has written about creativity and the need to include intuitive knowing in education as a way of learning (Claxton, 1997, 2002). Claxton's concerns, however, are also about schools curricula which, he observes, are not only shaped according to assumptions about the future and about what constitutes personal fulfilment, but also by assumptions regarding what the human mind is really capable of (Lucas & Claxton, 2010). Claxton, among others, reports that students appear to be increasingly unhappy about an education that seems to fail to equip them with the ability to learn for life and not just for exams and who appear to be dissatisfied with a world they see as 'unfair, unsustainable, uncaring and corrupt' (Claxton, 2008, p.94). He reports that research evidence seems to show that by secondary school most students are hungry for the three Rs – responsibility, respect and 'real' – and the three Cs – choice, challenge and collaboration (op. cit.).

Claxton suggests that more modern and practical approaches and solutions are needed in education, which take into consideration what the mind is, what intelligence is and how its various elements and characteristics (including intuition) can be nurtured and helped to develop in the most productive way (Claxton, 2008; Lucas & Claxton, 2010). As a result of collected theoretical and empirical research, futurist and educator Sohail Inayatullah and his colleague and researcher, Jennifer Gidley, echo Claxton's findings above and add that:

there is a cultural seachange (paradigm shift) occurring, namely popular disenchantment with the dominant materialist worldview that grounds Western culture. Youth are part of this desire to see ethical and spiritual values become central to policy and action in all spheres of life...youth desire futures based on truths. Can we create a world that incorporates integrity and authenticity? If not, of what use are the futures we are creating? (Gidley & Inayatullah, 2002, p.243).

What has been discussed so far would appear to indicate that mainstream education might still be holding on to inadequate or obsolete conceptions of what education entails, what youth need and what mind power and the nature of learning might consist of; at the very least, such assumptions might need to be revised, as Claxton's work would appear to indicate. Interestingly, sociologist Frank Furedi, whose views seem to be more conservative and less in favour of students' agency than Claxton's, laments that

having to share authority with a growing number of experts diminishes teachers' authority, their responsibility as educators and their freedom to make professional judgements, to the detriment of educating the young effectively. He also argues in favour of decentralising institutional models of education, giving local communities and schools more power and freedom to decide through what subjects (and how) a general common curriculum is taught and to discover the most effective way of schooling their children (Furedi, 2011). Whether one agrees with Furedi's objections or not, this last observation draws attention to the fact that 'normal' (average) versus 'optimal' performance can more easily be confused when a less personalised way of imparting knowledge prevails, as seems to happen with institutionalised education.

In essence, mainstream education, as stated, generally seems to reflect a widespread Conformist level of consciousness (as defined by Wade), in that it tends to favour conformity and obedience to rules – attitudes which, as discussed above, Indigos and the New Generations (being closer to an Authentic consciousness) find very hard to accept. Indigos and sensitive children increasingly dropping out of mainstream education, as Thivierge (2011) observed, seems to be the result. One controversial area in mainstream education which potentially affects Indigos and the New Generations appears to be the long-standing, inherited views of what constitutes learning and optimal functioning. What is currently hotly debated seems to be the tendency to label 'special needs' students all those children and adolescents who display learning skills that deviate from what is considered 'normal' (such as visual-spatial learners, for example).

Education consultant Anne Adams, specialising in cultural transformation and change, points out that the increasing tendency to stigmatise and medicate mentally and physically restless children, whose learning needs appear to depend not so much on sitting down for hours but on being creatively interested and actively involved in whatever is being learned, possibly entails 'educating them out of their creativity' (Adams, 2011, p.78). Adams points out that this tendency seems particularly alarming to a growing number of education professionals, given the escalation of Ritalin prescribed to children in the past decade.

Educator and author Tony Monchinski echoes Adams. He seems to have strong views about ADD/ADHD diagnoses and points out that no reliable and objective means of

physical examinations, such as brain scans or blood tests, have been found to exist to diagnose ADD or ADHD, yet research shows that in 2006, 1.6 million American children were prescribed psychiatric medications in various combinations, whose potentially harmful side-effects were never tested (Harris, 2006, 2007 cited in Monchinski, 2008). Recent research published in the Archives of General Psychiatry claims that a comparison of prescriptions of antipsychotic drugs per 100 children (0-13 years) between the years 1993-1998 and 2005-2009 has revealed a rise in prescriptions from 0.24 to 1.83. Considering that most prescriptions are for older children in that age range, as the article notes, the increase in prescriptions would be considerably higher among preteens and 13-year-olds. For adolescents (14-20 years old) the increase was found to be nearly fivefold (Olfson et al., 2012).

Monchinski highlights emphatically the potentially ambiguous connections between the pharmaceutical industry, psychiatrists and doctors of various denominations (Monchinski, 2008). He writes at length about ‘the architecture of power’ in mental health, education and ADHD diagnoses and warns that:

we should be wary of the way the feelings and opinion of the mental health professional constitute diagnosis...Today’s brain chemistry is invoked more and more to explain who we are and what is wrong with us...If brain chemistry is the cause, biochemical explanations and drug treatments are the proffered solutions...Unsurprisingly, it turns out that the more psychiatrists earn from drug makers, the more likely they are to prescribe medications including antipsychotics to children. (op. cit., p.98).

A national campaign of ‘pediatric pharmavigilance’ in Italy has also been actively fighting the phenomenon about which Monchinski writes, which is certainly not confined to the United States. The campaign informs the public about ‘psychiatric abuses, rampant prescriptions to children and adolescents and potential ADHD misdiagnoses’ (Poma, 2004, p.1) via an organisation called ‘Giù le Mani dai Bambini!’ (Hands Off Children!), increasingly supported by educators, parents and therapists in Italy, as the phenomenon seems to have become part of what mainstream schools and education regularly seem to have to contend with.

ADHD is a serious and complex phenomenon that I cannot hope to discuss at any great length in this context, nor do I wish to underestimate it. Massive antipsychotic prescriptions (not infrequently misdiagnosed, as discussed in the section above) to keep active children under control hardly seems to be the answer education is expected to

provide. While educators and parents might need to see a more positive side to what lies behind so-called attention deficit disorders (Lovecky, 2004), they arguably also need to find alternative ways to help, particularly ‘neurodiverse’ children, to learn to function in the world and compromise, as well as find ways to carve a niche for themselves and their hyperactive brains (Armstrong, 2010).

Focusing on another aspect of neurodiversity, in line with some of Claxton’s observations, I would also draw attention to the fact that mainstream education and policy makers seem to be informed only by mainstream research on mind power; scant attention seems to be dedicated to less mainstream and perhaps more holistic branches of scientific research that study human potential. In fact, Anne Adams (2011) laments that human potential does not seem to occupy centre stage in educating youth; she points out that conventional schools curricula seem to be more focused on educating the ‘doing’ aspect rather than the ‘being’ aspect of students – they seem to be focused on *instructing* (rather than educating) future human workers/doers. Adams argues that different skills from those regularly taught in schools might be needed for future grown-ups to prosper, so much so that more holistic models of educating for integral intelligence and for wisdom are increasingly being created (i.e. Adams, 2011; Lombardo, 2011a, 2011b; Miller, 2006, 2007, 2010; Sternberg, 2002).

Given the issues discussed so far and the characteristics and tendencies shown by the New Generations, there appear to be indications that the current ‘materialistic’ paradigm and values on which so much of Western reality seems to be based, including education, may prove to be inadequate in meeting the New Generations’ present and future needs (as Sisk & Torrance [2001] also found). Gidley’s and Inayatullah’s research did indeed yield results that showed that youth wished to live in a reality where ethical and spiritual values could become more central in all spheres of life (Gidley & Inayatullah, 2002). One could reasonably expect that such issues would be felt even more strongly by youth manifesting self-actualising and self-transcending tendencies, hence the New Generations’ natural wish to create balance and well-being for all, including the environment.

The point of all the information provided in this section is that the validity or adequacy of the current prevailing paradigm and values in education might be in question. What has been considered normal or desirable behaviours, customs, beliefs, long-held

assumptions and values which may have served humanity well in the past, seem to fail to do so now, especially because humanity's collective consciousness seems to be gradually shifting from a Conformist to an Authentic stage (see section 2.4.3.) For this reason, one could argue that certain important and long-standing assumptions might have to be revised (Sisk & Torrance, 2001), particularly in view of the fact that they seem to be causing serious damage to children and adolescents.

In her *Evolution of Consciousness as a Planetary Imperative* Gidley lists several contemporary scientists, educators, ecologists and philosophers who see the current epistemological and planetary crisis as a *crisis of consciousness* due to the Western historical separation of spirit from humanity (Gidley, 2007a). She situates her research among other transformative intellectuals' efforts to 'consciously shift the global epistemic paradigm from one of fear and fragmentation to one of hope and integration' (op. cit., p.7). When outlining the current environmental, economic, and psycho-social crisis, in view of the disturbing trends gradually evidenced, Gidley questions 'the true value of a society if it is making its children and young people sick', as seems to be currently happening (op. cit., p.19). Having said that, however, Gidley, an educational psychologist as well as futures researcher, does seem hopeful that educational transformation, in a way that promotes the evolution of Integral consciousness (described above), could be a pragmatic ground of action for change (Gidley & Hampson, 2008).

Part of the crisis that mainstream education appears to be facing seems to stem from a mainstream Mental structure of collective consciousness (which Wade calls Conformist), which reflects a tendency to measure, standardise and label children against a presumed standard of 'normality' and conformity. At best, the standard used confines bright but different learners to special education classes, as stated. Any efforts to understand where individuals' perceived 'neurodiversity' stems from seem to be scant, therefore any special talents to be nurtured and developed tend to be overlooked. One could even argue that more efforts to investigate which innate talents might be potentially hidden behind children's neurodiversity might reveal precious information about human potential. Insisting on linear, rational, logical ways of knowing, which may instead be perceived as confining by the New Generations, seems to be mainstream education's conventional ways of educating and 'serving' students, preserving the old

ways of conceiving what learning consists of, how the brain is supposed to work, what potential should be nurtured and encouraged independently of students' natural propensities, etc. What is in question, in other words, is whether the New Generations find beneficial, helpful or stimulating this way of being educated (and the assumptions on which mainstream education, and a Mental/Conformist consciousness/mode of experience, seem to be based).

A point of view worth considering is argued rather convincingly by special education expert Thomas Armstrong, who emphasises that institutional perceptions and diagnoses of giftedness or deficiency in children who manifest neurodiversity (deviation from what is considered the norm in neurological functioning) depend more on when and where one was born and on the values of one's culture than on any factor intrinsic to the individual. Certain abilities might serve well a specific culture in a particular historical time, but they might be seen as undesirable by other people with different living habits and mindsets – a gift for some and a curse for others (Armstrong, 2010). Along the same line, one could argue that neurodiversity today, rather than being indicative of some sort of learning deficiency when measured against the norm, might instead highlight an emerging new type of human being with a new consciousness/mode of experience, with new needs or nonlinear, wholebrain learning. For this reason, addressing such needs in an empowering way through education, I suspect, might require a fusion or cross-pollination between mainstream and holistic educational models, which my study attempts to explore. Before illustrating the agenda behind holistic education in section 2.6.3, it is worth considering a relatively recent development within mainstream education which might act as a bridge between the two, namely dialogic education.

2.6.2. Dialogic education

Dialogic education moves away from monologic discourse as an approach to communication geared towards achieving the teacher's goals; in contrast, dialogic discourse promotes communication through more authentic exchanges, with an interest in sharing and building meaning collaboratively (Bakhtin, 1981). Philosopher and critical pedagogue Paulo Freire defines dialogue as:

A means to transform social relations in the classroom, and to raise awareness about relationships in society at large. Dialogue is a way to recreate knowledge as well as the way we learn...In a problem-posing participatory format, [in dialogic education] the teacher and students transform learning into a collaborative process to eliminate and act on reality (Freire & Shor, 1987, p.11).

Partly inspired by the authors mentioned above and by philosopher Martin Heidegger's theories, dialogic education essentially means teaching for dialogue, *through* dialogue, which is theorised to enhance the ability to think together better in classrooms, hence to improve the quality of classroom *interactive* talk (Mercer, 2008); it is about creating a different environment in which the student is encouraged to think for him/herself – questions asked, for example, rather than being focused on requiring a right or wrong answer to be recalled, are instead exploratory; they encourage students to think through their responses and eventually to initiate questions and discussions, using and viewing the teacher more as a facilitator than as a keeper of knowledge (Wegerif, 2010).

Professor of Education at the University of Exeter and one of the foremost proponents of dialogic education, Rupert Wegerif presents research results which, he claims, provide evidence that dialogic education leads to improved thinking and adds that 'across many examples, improvements in the quality of shared thinking are accompanied by children being able to listen to others, change their minds, and argue against their own initial positions' (op. cit., p.19). Wegerif also highlights the importance of developing dialogic educational models that stimulate verbal creativity which, he suggests, should be encouraged and used to balance 'Exploratory Talk', the 'dialogic model of reason that has proved to be a useful pedagogic tool' (Wegerif, 2005, p.223). In *Towards a Dialogic Theory of How Children Learn to Think*, Wegerif (2011) argues that learning to think implies a shift in self-identification and suggests that the observation of classroom interaction offers insights that can inform pedagogy, potentially enriching future educational models. He theorises that such interactions in an open and democratic dialogue based on equality (with teachers as partners in the co-creative learning experience), requires openness and a willingness to change on the part of teachers, as well as students. Similarly to humanistic and transpersonal models of education (see sections 2.7 and 8.2), Wegerif conceives of education as the drawing forth of knowledge in partnership with learners (op. cit.).

Dialogic education, despite being a step in the right direction towards encouraging more holistic ways of facilitating the learning process, seems to have its critics in mainstream academia – they highlight that being able to engage in dialogue seems to imply and take for granted a child's ability to express him/herself in talking (and writing) and also seems to idealistically ignore the pressures placed on teachers to meet educational targets at the expense of students' individual needs. Professor of Education Debra Myhill (2005), for example, expresses concern about the nature of interactivity in whole-class learning and laments that:

Despite national initiatives to develop greater use of whole-class teaching with higher levels of interactivity, teachers still use questioning to maintain control and to support their teaching, rather than supporting pupils' learning experiences (op. cit., p.415).

More specifically, in *Talking, Listening, Learning*, Myhill et al. (2006) share research results derived from a national research project (TALK – Teaching and Learning to Activate Knowledge) carried out by the University of Exeter, focused on the quality of children's learning during whole-class interactive sessions. Findings showed that children need to have more time to form and process ideas during such sessions and that *listening to children's responses* to assess prior knowledge and address potential misconceptions is necessary on the part of teachers supporting dialogic education. Results also showed that low achieving students were not deriving the same learning outcomes from the same teaching input. The authors critically point out that developing *effective talking techniques* seems to be necessary before students are able to engage in dialogic education. Attention was also drawn to potential reasons why many teachers may feel disinclined to adopt dialogic pedagogy for fear of losing class control, hence the ability to meet curricula requirements; in fact, the concerned authors emphasise the pressure on teachers' accountability to achieve predetermined learning objectives, which realistically makes them unable to respond to more individual learning needs. They therefore exhort educators who want children to talk to learn, as well as learn to talk, to focus on *listening to what the children say* more actively, rather than focusing on what dialogic teachers say to encourage dialogue (op. cit.).

In *Talk, Talk, Talk: Teaching and Learning in Whole Class Discourse*, Myhill (2006) also reports on a research study based on the implementation of pedagogic strategies to improve literacy and numeracy abilities through interactive teaching, which involved

the whole class for up to 15 minutes; the study analysed how teachers use talk during that interactive time to build on pupils' learning, potentially capitalising on their prior knowledge to encourage them to grow into independent learners. This research study again revealed that too much attention is focused on what teachers say during interactive teaching, at the expense of children's cognitive and conceptual connections in their learning, still too often ignored (op. cit.). Such studies seem to reveal that an excessively idealistic element might underlie dialogic pedagogy.

Some doubts could also be raised about so-called democratic tendencies in dialogic education and children's/learners' presumed needs (especially Indigos) – do children need more dialogue or learning by direct experience? Do they need more 'democracy' or more 'role models' and educators/guides whom they can respect and who can teach wisdom by example, by being more authentic themselves? Are children given space to teach adults how to relate to them? Are they effectively encouraged to explore and express their potential and rise above fear-based conformity that gives rise to mediocrity (as the British expert in my first study pointed out)? Are educators on a path of increased self-awareness and exploration of their own unique potential or are they simply embracing the noble concept of 'democratic education' without acting authentically as inspiring role models for their students? In other words, are their behaviour and the principles they encourage consistent (as the two Italian teachers in my first study highlight – Table 8 in Ch. 5 gives details of what Indigos seem to need in education)? My own limited experience as a mature student with dialogic teachers, I admit, has failed to convince me of the authenticity behind dialogic pedagogy – this may therefore limit my objectivity.

Despite the criticism above, dialogic education revisits and rethinks an older, teacher-centred model of education that contemplates the student as a passive, empty vessel to be filled by an all-knowing teacher as an unequal partner in the teaching and learning experience. It also interestingly reflects part of Hart's transpersonal educational model (i.e. dialogue for transformation and problem posing – see section 2.6.1.). The encouragement of dialogue as a formative way of educating is where the similarities with more holistic models of education seem to end, however. In fact, unlike more holistic educational models, dialogic education does not seem to emphasise multisensory, experiential learning (learning by direct experiencing through different

modalities), nor does it highlight the need for teachers to undergo personal/psycho-spiritual development in order to act as role models and guides, whose integrity students may find inspiring (see section 2.7.3.).

Arguably, teaching by example and acting authentically and wisely to provide encouragement (and inspire the kind of respect that Indigos and the New Generations discussed in this thesis seem to need) might help more actively all individuals who are developing towards Integral/Transpersonal/Authentic consciousness, and might resonate more with what they would appear to grow towards. In actual fact, however, the kind of dialogue encouraged in dialogic, interactive learning does not seem to be focused on teaching wisdom or enhancing creativity through encouraging imaginal thinking or a Mythic mode of consciousness – no intuitive learning or education of the heart seem to be particularly highlighted in the literature. Students' spiritual needs and sensitivity to subtle energies and other people's emotions (empathy) do not seem to be addressed in dialogic literature and discourse, either. In fairness, this would depend on the individual teacher's inclinations, as, one could argue, the structure of dialogic education could certainly allow an integration of all the above – the main obstacle, perhaps, as pointed out by Myhill, might be limitations, pressures and accountability imposed on mainstream teachers. Another potential limitation might be the tendency in dialogic education to reflect the Western, predominant collective consciousness, what Gebser called a Mental mode of experience and structure of consciousness still dominant also in mainstream education.

In conclusion, while dialogic education seems to place less emphasis on 'conformity', to give more space to individuality and to provide an encouraging first step towards meeting the more holistic needs of the New Generations, for the reasons just listed, I would argue that it still seems to fail to offer a convincing model that educates for an Integral consciousness (discussed in section 2.4.3.) and for the new needs that would appear to be emerging on a collective level, especially for the New Generations. I would also, however, point out that dialogic education could, at least potentially, act as a *bridge* between mainstream and holistic educational models, despite the limits just outlined.

What follows describes the vision and agenda behind holistic ways of educating, which, at least theoretically, would appear to be more likely to take the needs and

characteristics of the New Generations (and of an emerging Integral consciousness) into consideration, while potentially serving them better. This, however, remains a speculation until more extensive research is carried out. I would be inclined to expect that biases are likely to be found in holistic education, too. With this in mind, before exploring the psychosynthesis model in section 2.7, I will be briefly describing the vision and agenda behind holistic education in general, which appears to be heavily influenced by the humanistic and transpersonal branches of psychology that inform the present study.

2.6.3. Holistic education and its agenda

The adjective holistic comes from the concept of ‘whole’, implying that in holistic education all aspects of a developing young learner are taken into consideration, educators attending to their physical, emotional, social, intellectual, aesthetic and spiritual dimensions; holistic education claims to value diverse learning styles and needs of future adults and to oppose standardised testing, in that developing human beings’ intelligence and abilities are seen as too complex to be confined, measured and made to fit certain preconceived standards (Miller, R. 1997). Ron Miller, one of the main authorities in holistic education and founder of the journal *Holistic Education Review* (now called *Encounter: Education for Meaning and Social Justice*), emphasises that holistic education attempts to help students find identity, self-awareness and purpose in life by teaching also humanitarian values, integrating the educating of emotion, compassion and healthy relating and of social responsibility to nature and the community, while preparing students for academic success. Among key contributors to the holistic movement in education, Miller indicates Francis Parker and John Dewey (progressive educators), Johann Pestalozzi (Swiss humanitarian), and theosophically-inspired Jiddu Krishnamurti, Maria Montessori and Rudolf Steiner. Such thinkers pioneered more ‘integral’ educational approaches to counterbalance a more ‘factory model’ education system that had developed as a result of industrialism, materialism and secularism, which appeared to privilege a cognitive way of knowing over equally significant others (affective, intuitive, imaginative, contemplative, musical, participatory, etc). All the authors Miller mentions, among others, subscribed in their own way to an evolutionary notion of consciousness, which included culture and cosmos, emphasising creativity, spirituality, imagination, aesthetics and holistic

thinking and valid ways of knowing, together with practical engagement with what was learned (Gidley, 2011).

Miller also mentions the cultural history, science and philosophical theories emerging in the 1970s and 1980s, which also influenced the holistic movement – among key figures he cites (op. cit.) are Theodore Roszak (ecopsychology), Fritjof Capra (new physics), Charlene Spretnak (socio-philosophy, specialising in eco-social and inter-relational orientation to all aspects of life) and Ken Wilber (transpersonal psychology and proponent of integral theory, which draws on the world's greatest knowledge traditions, as outlined above).

Also relevant to the development of holistic education were psychosynthesis-based educational projects. Being transpersonally inspired, such projects hold the Higher Self as central in the process of learning and, interestingly, they had a pioneering part to play in the emergence of holistic education in the 1970s. Assagioli seemed to be very interested in giftedness, having observed that 'supergifted children show at a very early age an interest in philosophical, moral and spiritual subjects. They often possess real intuition and spiritual illumination' (Assagioli, 1960, p.8). These characteristics, however, may not have been exclusive to gifted children, argued Jack Canfield and Paula Klimek – educators, teacher trainers and co-directors of the 'Institute for Wholistic Education' in Massachusetts at the time. To prove their point, they developed a project called 'The Radiant Student' in 1978, which was made up of several workshops (Canfield & Klimek, 1978).

Using a series of psychosynthesis exercises to guide individuals to find their life purpose through sources of inner knowing, the two educators worked with a 'normal', non-gifted group of children (11/12-year-olds), purportedly obtaining great success, which they reported in *The New Age Journal*, sharing also material, techniques and their insights; they combined New Age and transpersonal education principles and explained the relevance of such combination thus:

Within the past five years we have also witnessed the birth of "transpersonal education," the acknowledgment of one's inner and spiritual dimensions, through working with such forms as dreams, meditation, guided imagery, biofeedback, centering, mandalas, and so forth. Now is the time to combine both of these focuses, for the New Age means integrating the soul and personality... Holistic education... views the student as being engaged in an integral process of unfoldment under the direction of his/her higher self. This process is perceived as taking place in a universe that is also constantly evolving:

each of us is seen as an important part of the larger planetary and universal evolution of consciousness (Canfield & Klimek, 1978, p.28).

The point Canfield and Klimek were trying to make in their article was that children do not need to be confined to ever-changing and stultifying developmental models – what they truly need, according to the authors, is a supportive space and environment that allow their wisdom to shine through (op. cit). Interestingly, about a decade later, the AERO movement was born (Alternative Education Resource Organization), which echoes dissatisfaction with mainstream education. Founding members have been offering educational consulting in different projects in several countries in the world, attempting to revolutionise education and to provide learner-centred educational alternatives (AERO, 2012). A major source of inspiration for them has been New York award-winning former teacher and writer John Taylor Gatto's influential writings. In summary, Gatto forcefully accuses compulsory governmental schooling to confuse children with fragmented, incoherent and soon-to-be-forgotten information hardly relevant to their lives, and to make children emotionally and intellectually dependent on constant confirmation by experts (giving them provisional self-esteem), whose job is to supervise them and limit their freedom (Gatto, 2005). Alongside the AERO movement, consciousness-based education, designed to integrate the contemplative mind in the classroom, started to develop and eventually became known as the holistic and spiritual education movement, a representative of which is John Miller, Professor in the Department of Curriculum, Teaching and Learning at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE).

John Miller has been researching and working in the field of holistic education for almost four decades, organising training courses and conferences in the field. He is a recognised pioneer in holistic and spiritual psychology and a prolific writer – his books on education of the whole child have been translated into seven languages. Miller notes that although the field of spirituality in education has been a secondary addition, it has now become an integral part of holistic education and is inspired by perennial philosophy (Miller, J., 1999; 2007). In the updated, spiritually-inclusive version of holistic education, whole-brain learning is promoted and multiple pedagogies tend to be adopted to accommodate different learning styles and to encourage the dynamic interplay of multiple forms of intelligence. Intuitive and creative intelligence are given relevance, and critical thinking and questioning is stimulated and preferred; in other

words, holistic educators do not view learning as linear or confined to memorising or to abstract and logical problem solving. Miller writes that uniqueness rather than conformity is supported by holistic educators and care is exercised in welcoming and accommodating differences in children, whose labelling as ‘hyperactive’ or ‘learning disabled’ tends to be avoided. An inclusion of spirituality in the curriculum, Miller argues, entails creating a stronger connection with the cosmos and stimulating a seemingly lost sense of wonder and awe in students (Miller, 2010); connectedness, inclusion and balance represent the three basic principles in holistic education, Miller clarifies (1999). Holistic educators, claims Miller, counterbalance an existing fragmentary approach to the curriculum by offering connections among different subjects and by linking different levels of learning (i.e. from body and mind, using analytic and intuitive thinking, etc.) via multiple learning approaches (Miller, 2005).

In essence, the main underlying philosophy and message of holistic education and criticism towards mainstream education has been that educating children and youth should involve more than training them as future workers and employees. Although a school or programme can be more or less holistic, Miller maintains, the attitude of the educator or the teaching styles adopted are really what makes the greatest impact and difference (Miller, 1999). In fact, the holistic teacher is ideally seen as a facilitator of learning, who creates an environment where students can have the freedom to explore their potential and find their source of inner authority (and personal power) for self-empowerment and for the development of self-responsibility; co-operation with others, rather than competition, is encouraged, maintains Miller, in order to enhance a sense of connection (op. cit.).

Montessori’s cosmic education, for example, aims to help children feel part of the wholeness of the universe, where learning becomes enchanted and interesting to the child through various methods and styles, as appropriate for the young learner (Montessori, 1917). A Montessori educator encourages direct engagement with the environment, thought to naturally inspire a sense of wonder and interconnection with all life, which may not be equally nurtured in mainstream education (Miller, 1999).

Criticism of holistic education addresses the difficulty of implementing its agenda and holistic values in mainstream schools, which, some argue, are not necessarily needed in today’s competitive world. Critics also call into question the academic rigour found in

holistic institutions, in that ethical values, personal or spiritual development cannot be measured or tested, hence increasing the risk of this form of education being marginalised for lack of credibility, but also leaving it open to criticism for creating collaborators, rather than future leaders. It is also argued that students graduating from holistic institutions may find it hard to adjust to mainstream university education or may have difficulty finding employment (Crawford & Grossiter, 1993). Considering also that specially trained teachers, plenty of open space and extra-curricular activities seem to be included in a holistic curriculum, there are also concerns about how costly holistic education can be, attracting a more wealthy elite as a consequence (op. cit.). Such criticism should not be taken lightly, I would argue, as, until holistic education is more cohesive as a movement and its principles are more integrated in mainstream psychology and education or collectively accepted, students and educators might meet with more marginalisation than they might be prepared to face. Parents who would like their children to grow up more holistically but cannot afford private schools will also meet with great difficulties, being unable to meet their more sensitive and idealistic children's needs.

To counterbalance some of this criticism and educate the public about the relevance of cooperation rather than competition, cultural historian Riane Eisler (2001) and social philosopher Charlene Spretnak (2011), among others, have respectively written extensively about multidisciplinary research that demonstrates the value of partnership education and of the awareness of interconnectivity of all life (Eisler, 2001; Spretnak, 2011). They work in co-operation with the Club of Budapest, an international association and 'think-tank', whose members are international researchers intent on providing multidisciplinary evidence of the value of holistic thinking; the association is dedicated to developing new ethics and a new paradigm that might 'help resolve the social, political, economic and ecological challenges of the 21st century'... initiating 'a dialogue between different belief systems and world views in order to co-create and develop effective strategies for responsible and sustainable action with a global focus' (Worldshift Network, n.d., p.1).

To conclude, Miller campaigns actively about the values of holistic education and writes that, despite the fact that educators in alternative schools (such as Montessori or Waldorf/Steiner) might have more freedom to incorporate holistic principles in their teaching than those involved in public institutions, a holistic attitude towards teaching

and learning in general seems to be increasingly accepted and slowly integrated in mainstream education, if only by sympathetic teachers or heads of schools (Miller, J., 2010). Among all branches of holistic education, the general model of psychosynthesis-based education, however, is likely to qualify as the branch of holistic education that is most accepted by mainstream orthodoxy, having been introduced and used at all levels (from elementary to graduate courses) for several decades, their successful application also having earned public funds (see section 2.7). For this reason, this study focuses on exploring how/whether/to what extent *the latest trends* in the psychosynthesis model (in other words, findings from three psychosynthesis-based educational projects currently being applied successfully) might inform both holistic and mainstream education. Section 2.7 below illustrates and critiques the general psychosynthetic model of psycho-spiritual development that Assagioli created in 1911 and refined over several decades, and then describes its application in education.

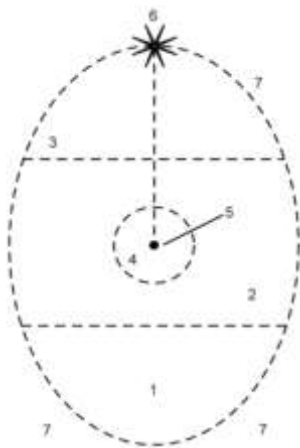
2.7 The psychosynthetic model

Psychosynthesis is informed by Eastern and Western philosophical and spiritual traditions and it was conceived as an open system and developmental model, whose aim was to resolve opposing tendencies and to achieve integration within an individual's psyche. Assagioli considered it a *praxis*, a mixture between theory and experiential practice, conceived to enable anybody, from any cultural, social and religious background, to benefit from it without restrictions or dogma attached to it. The ambition of the psychosynthetic model, as gleaned from Assagioli's articles and books, was that its application could easily extend to psychology, relationships, education, parenting, organisations and individuals' relationship with the environment (Assagioli, 1965, 1973a).

Practitioners and therapists within the field explain that Assagioli's model highlights that human beings are essentially spiritual beings containing vast reservoirs of wisdom, love and power. They point out that what psychosynthesis and its various techniques try to do is not only to integrate one's personality and the various dimensions of the fragmented unconscious, but to explore and experience many facets and dimensions of identity (and potential), encouraging growth into higher or more expanded consciousness via the Transpersonal Self (henceforth referred to simply as Self),

potentially achieving also a transcendence of individuality (self-transcendence), feeling one with all creation (Firman & Gila, 2002). The literature also informs that while exploring fully one's inner layers of personality to find one's true essence, through psychosynthesis an individual is helped on a deconditioning journey, encouraged to gradually identify with more of what they can be, while disidentifying with the kind of more limited person they have been (concepts explained below, after the 'star diagram') (Guidi, 2005). As new versions of oneself and one's potential are embraced, one's *centre* (the I or the Self or both) occupies a fundamental, integrating role, a point of consciousness, will and identity (Parfitt, 2006). The diagram below, known as 'egg diagram', shows how Assagioli viewed the different layers of the unconscious (Assagioli, 1965).

Assagioli's model of the psyche – the 'egg' diagram



(Source: Psychosynthesis - free clip art, n.d.).

Assagioli points out that divisions of the unconscious would probably not be necessary if human beings did not have an inherited and learned tendency to repress aspects of their experience. As said, the practice of psychosynthesis ideally aims at integrating all dimensions, making unconscious and superconscious material readily accessible to one's conscious mind as needed; in other words, one of the main goals of psychosynthesis seems to integrate the psyche and *to make the unconscious conscious* (Assagioli, 2008). Assagioli maintains that awareness, in psychosynthesis, needs to be coupled and balanced with *Will* for the personality to become effectively integrated;

motivation (the ‘Will’) to take responsibility for one’s life and act to bring about desired changes by applying insights received from one’s Self was, to Assagioli, an essential part of grounding such insights in everyday life (Assagioli, 1973a).

The meanings of the layers of the unconscious shown in Assagioli’s ‘egg diagram’ is described throughout Assagioli’s *Psychosynthesis, a Manual of Principles and Techniques* (Assagioli, 1965); I have summarised them as follows:

1. The **lower unconscious** usually contains ancestral memories, rather primitive energies in terms of impulses, old traumas and unacceptable feelings that have been repressed. The lower unconscious seems to have connections with one’s past.
2. The **middle unconscious** is where individuals tend to elaborate their daily experiences; it contains retrievable memories, albeit filtered, as the less acceptable ones tend to be instantly relegated to the lower, unconscious level. This is where experiences are assimilated and where imagination and mental activities are gestated before becoming fully conscious.
3. The higher unconscious or **Superconscious** is theorised to be the source of latent positive and creative energies capable of directing one’s growth and optimum development, the potential realm of genius waiting to emerge, usually beyond ‘normal’ levels of conscious awareness. The Superconscious in Assagioli’s model is deemed to be responsible for creative inspirations and intuitions of a scientific, artistic, philosophical and humanitarian nature.
4. The **field of consciousness/awareness** contains easily accessible parts of the personality, which include thoughts, desires, impulses, feelings and sensations that one can easily analyse, observe and rectify.
5. The conscious self or **I** is the inner observer, pure self-awareness and will, the integrating centre of one’s personality which is permanently connected to the Self, but not always aware of it; certain transpersonal experiences or states of consciousness facilitate a more conscious link between the I and the Self, expanding one’s personal, subjective experience of reality.

6. The **Self**, to Assagioli, is a centre of consciousness and Will (intention/motivation), unaffected by the mind and fluctuating emotions. It is said to encompass all levels of the unconscious but to transcend the ego-limited personal self. Awareness of this higher, transpersonal centre can be achieved in different ways – meditation and guided imagery being among the most popular exercises in psychosynthesis (Assagioli, 1965; Ferrucci, 1982).
7. The **collective unconscious** (and the universal archetypes and symbols contained therein) is seen in psychosynthesis as a dimension shared by all human beings, who, although feeling isolated at times, are seen as psychologically and spiritually connected.

Physicist Arvan Harvat examined the psychosynthetic model critically and compared it with the main ancient Eastern and Western spiritual disciplines; interestingly, he found that all of them contain the concepts of ‘I’ and Self, albeit described in different terms and languages. His criticism is directed to all of them for showing limiting cultural conditioning and outmoded paradigms (Harvat, 1999). However, he concedes that Assagioli’s model is successful in combining Eastern and Western paradigms and that, besides offering the advantage of a Western-friendly language, it also shows flexibility and elasticity, in that to Harvat’s mind the exercises and techniques in Assagioli’s writings are less laden with culture-bound symbols and are given in their essential forms, hence enabling interested people to change and personalise them (op. cit.). Harvat notes also the absence in the model of the ego’s function, whose autonomy, unlike Jung, Assagioli did not seem careful of maintaining. If the ego and its functions and needs are not clearly addressed, Harvat observes, complications can derive, especially in psycho-spiritual development (op. cit.). In fact, spiritual ambitions might lead an individual to underestimate the limits of their personality, giving rise to what has become known as the ‘Icarus effect’ – flying too high for one’s own good, as psychosynthesis author and psychotherapist Piero Ferrucci maintains (Ferrucci, 1982).

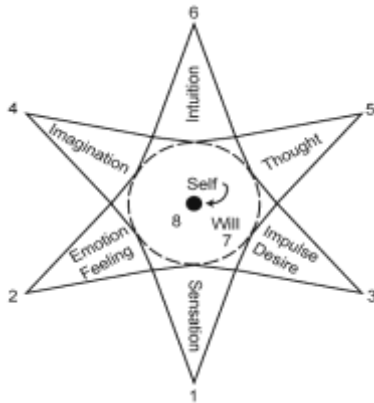
Inflating one’s spiritual ego and becoming elated by heights to avoid difficult emotions and pain appears to be more common and tempting in spiritual/transpersonal circles than might initially appear, according to psychotherapist Robert A. Masters, leading to all kinds of complications, self-delusions and inauthentic behaviours (R. Masters,

2010). Psychosynthesis as a psycho-spiritual model, I would argue, does not seem to contain safeguards that leave the practitioner protected from the pitfalls Masters cites. In fact, Harvat observes that the shadow side that every human being contains, so clearly highlighted in the Jungian model, appears to be unduly overlooked in psychosynthesis (Harvat, 1999), as Jungian and psychosynthesis psychotherapist Chris Robertson also emphasises (Robertson, 1998).

The problem with psychosynthesis might be that for decades it remained fragmented and taught mainly through papers and seminars. It became a proper discipline with clearer guidelines for training established only in the 1970s. A degree of fragmentation, also due to Assagioli's insistence that the model remain as flexible and open as possible, still exists even in the training of psychosynthesists and the biases each training centre perpetuates, notes Robertson (op. cit.); Assagioli himself pointed out that the weakness of psychosynthesis is its lack of boundaries, in that it accepts too much (Keen, 1974). Prominent psychosynthesis researcher and writer Martha Crampton seemed to echo Assagioli's attitude of openness, in that she emphasised that the 'maps' used in psychosynthesis, and briefly analysed in this section, are neither fixed, nor prescriptive. They are only potentially useful guides to understanding the characteristics and functions of the psyche, and need to be kept flexible to accommodate individual differences (Crampton, 1977).

All the criticism above notwithstanding, there are two integral parts of Assagioli's model that need to be explained, which are his 'star diagram' (another 'map'), which describes psychological functions and the central role of the 'will' and intuition in psychosynthesis, and the three main constructs of the model (personal psychosynthesis; subpersonalities and disidentification). Being central to the model, these concepts will be encountered again in Chapters 6-8, which outline and discuss my second study (on the potential contribution to holistic and mainstream education of the latest trends of the psychosynthesis-based general educational model applied in three different educational projects). For this reason, a brief explanation of the star diagram and of the three main constructs of psychosynthesis follows.

The 'star diagram' - psychological functions and the role of intuition in psychosynthesis



(Source: Psychosynthesis - free clip art, n.d.).

Assagioli's star diagram is relatively self-explanatory: it shows the central position of the Self and its relationship to the Will (written with a capital letter when its energies stem directly from the Self), as the Will in psychosynthesis serves to direct energy to the psychological functions exemplified in the diagram itself (Assagioli, 1973a). According to Assagioli, the diagram helps to understand that the Self, in a way, *is* the Will, as it acts as a guiding force, often discovered in action; it seems to be experienced in tandem with impulses, instincts and hopes and to give individuals courage and freedom to choose, and behave in the way they consciously *choose to*, which generally reflects one's attitudes to life. In other words, Assagioli sees the Will as a dynamic expression of the Self, a dynamic function of the psyche that not only directs, but regulates all the other functions and human activities, from daily life, to business and even education (op. cit.). Furthermore, psychosynthesis 'lays much emphasis upon the importance and value of the intuition and upon the necessity of developing it', in that it gives voice to the Self and its guidance, claims Assagioli (op. cit., pp.1–2). As can be seen above, in Assagioli's model intuition is at the top of the star diagram, possibly indicating not only its perceived importance, but also *the next step in human evolution* and development, all other functions having been already fully explored in ages past on a collective level (Viglianghi, n.d.). It is interesting to note that educational theorists and futurists have been increasingly highlighting that the function of intuition on all levels needs to take a more central role, to be better understood, employed, correctly developed and integrated in the future, particularly in education (i.e. Anthony, 2010; Dennis, 2012, among many others).

Clarifying the basic constructs of psychosynthesis

To make this brief introduction to psychosynthesis as complete and clear as possible, the three basic constructs which typify its discourse are synthesised below, namely:

- a) the process of personal psychosynthesis,
- b) subpersonalities and
- c) dis-identification.

Personal psychosynthesis focuses on the 'I' that acts as the integrating centre of the personality, which leads to self-actualisation. What characterises personal psychosynthesis is an integration of one's subpersonalities and a more harmonious functioning of the personality in everyday life (i.e. in work, relationships, etc.). As such harmonisation increases, the 'I' comes increasingly under the influence of the Self in one's psychosynthesis process so that the personality can express expanded, higher consciousness daily and on all levels, towards one's greater fulfilment and towards achieving self-transcendence, as well as an inner locus of control (Russell, 1981, 1982).

Subpersonalities can be defined as one's conflicting inner needs, almost heard as inner voices which clamour for attention. Therapists have noted that subpersonalities appear to be primitive, defensive measures and attitudes organised around a specific need often adopted in childhood to compensate for some real or imaginary lack in upbringing. In other words, they seem to be parts of a fragmented 'I', with their own drives, isolated values, beliefs and habits – small parts that speak for themselves, rather than for the whole of who one is (Rowan, 1990). They often seem to exist in polarities, with one part often sabotaging the other (i.e. perfectionist, 'hard to please' subpersonality coupled with a lazy, procrastinating side, which acts as saboteur). Until they learn to communicate and harmonise, one part will unconsciously try to get rid of the opposite, offensive part, creating constant conflicts within the psyche; once this crystallised energy is released from a subpersonality's structure, it creates freedom and can be directed to serve the whole personality (Crampton, 1977).

Dis-identification (and its polar opposite, identification) is considered to be a vitally important contribution of psychosynthesis to psychological thought, a way of bringing the conscious and unconscious minds in direct communication. Dis-identification helps

the process of integrating one's subpersonalities, as transmuting them requires the ability to stand back and observe one's conscious and unconscious dynamics. In doing so, one usually discovers that certain limiting or non authentic behaviours, often learned as a coping mechanism while growing up, are no longer functional and need to be discarded so that, instead of being aware of only parts of oneself, it is possible to gradually see a fuller picture (Crampton, 1977). Assagioli maintained that whatever an individual identifies with (i.e. their car, jobs, social roles, looks, unproductive emotions, etc.) holds power and control over him/her – freedom can be attained when the I, the inner observer, manages to recognise that *whatever one identifies with does not represent their true essence*, which is made up of awareness of all one's subpersonalities in constructive relationship with each other, under the guidance of the Self and the Will. Dis-identification from any particular social role, emotion, etc., together with increased self-awareness, Assagioli maintained, can potentially improve one's communication and emotional expressions, harmonising not only one's personality, but also one's relationships in general (Assagioli, 1965).

Dis-identification, in other words, does not (and, Crampton emphasises, *should not*) serve to disassociate and disconnect from oneself or one's feelings – in fact, Crampton clarifies, by allowing the inner objective observer to recognise one's unconscious dynamics, one can choose alternative ways of functioning, rather than simply reacting to the inner pressure of a subpersonality and its unmet needs (Crampton, 1977). Crampton also claimed that the whole process is about being aware of having *agency*, more power and a wider choice in life as to who to be in one's chosen social roles, which, once self-awareness has increased, can be played in a 'centred', aware, balanced way. Awareness thus avoids the trap of expressing one's unrecognised subpersonalities unconsciously through the roles one plays in life. Before dis-identification is possible, however, 'identification' needs to take place in psychosynthesis – that is 'owning' (accepting), recognising one's tendencies and behaviours, Crampton argued, while the inner, objective observer plays a crucial role in this important process (op. cit.).

Interestingly, Harvat criticised the construct of dis-identification, arguing that no dis-identification can happen in the psyche's mental contents when the *mind* itself is used, hence the process, he maintained, is rather illusory if devoid of a felt emotional content (Harvat, 1999). In fact, psychosynthesist Penelope Young Andrade has been writing for

two decades that the theories and techniques in the psychosynthesis model revolve around an excessive focus on the power of the mind, to the detriment of, and potential dissociation from, body sensations and emotions (Young Andrade, 1992), subsequently proposing her own method to counterbalance the lack of embodiment/grounding and to encourage the need to feel and embrace all emotions, however difficult (Young Andrade, 2011). Crampton herself updated the psychosynthetic model, integrating it with the new psychoenergetics techniques borrowed from energy psychology, which, she claimed, seem to make up for the lack of felt emotional content in psychosynthesis, encouraging instead the release of felt emotions held in the body (Crampton, 2006).

Whether one agrees with all the criticism outlined in this section, it seems fair to point out that Assagioli developed his model as early as 1911 in his doctoral thesis – a century ago – and it has not been updated since his death in 1974. In line with all transpersonally-based disciplines, Assagioli's challenge (which also reflects the main criticism towards his model) was to try 'to empirically validate experiential experience' (Palmer & Hubbard, 2009, p.31), which he tried to do by quoting the numerous testimonies of personal transcendent experiences reported in psychotherapist Richard Bucke's *Cosmic Consciousness* (first published in 1901 and reprinted in 2009, and still considered a classic in the modern study of mystical experience), and also by claiming that:

It is clear that the Higher Self exists because it is proven by direct experience; it is one of those primary experiences which are evidences of themselves... and therefore have full scientific value, in the broader sense (in Keen, 1974, p.4; concept also discussed in Assagioli, 1965).

Since Assagioli never insisted that either techniques, guidelines or even the model itself should ever be considered fixed and unchangeable, but always adaptable to each individual and to the changing times, one could argue that it is up to modern psychosynthesis practitioners to update both the 'quaint' language used in original teachings and the techniques used today. In 1994, however, psychosynthesist and psychotherapist Chris Meriam expressed concern that, in the space of two decades, with very few exceptions, there had been little development in psychosynthesis theories, especially clinical theories regarding the application of the subpersonality construct and approach outlined above. He lamented that, when applied clinically on its own, the construct provided short-term relief, but was ultimately found to be inadequate in

affecting real personality change, in that the deeper structures of the psyche appeared to remain unchanged and a continuing source of life difficulties (Meriam, 1994).

Meriam's concern appears to be founded, in that four decades have now elapsed since psychosynthesis became more structured and more widely known as a discipline, and even a cursory analysis of the literature seems to reflect to what extent many practitioners still seem to depend on Assagioli's original writings without many major contributions of their own (with a few notable exceptions, such as Crampton and Young Brown, for example). Given this state of things, one could argue that Assagioli was a true visionary, proposing a model and teachings that are as useful in recent times as they were futuristic in his time. However, one could also reasonably question the excessive attachment to Assagioli's teachings, which could raise some doubts about the possible 'cult status' of the discipline and its subscribers. Such doubts were raised by social psychologist Walter Truett-Anderson (2004), who describes in his book the development of the human potential movement over the past few decades (reflected in the teachings taking place at the Esalen Institute in California), which included psychosynthesis and the attitude of its followers. Although it is beyond the scope of this thesis to establish the truth behind the possible cult status of psychosynthesis, research results of a study that clarifies the psychology of cultism are illustrated and outlined in Chapter 8.

In summary and to conclude this section, the essence of the whole psychosynthetic model seems to be about becoming whole by harmonising different parts of oneself, establishing a link between one's conscious and unconscious minds and with the Self. It is about conscious self-transformation and self-awareness (personal alchemy), which ideally lead to actualisation of one's potential and also to self-transcendence, hence to an *expanded and more inclusive sense of self embedded in the totality*. Psychosynthesis as a discipline is part of what transpersonal psychology studies. Besides the reasons stated above, it is being reviewed in this context because it represents the transpersonal model that has most been applied to education. It has been used with pre-school children (Murdock, 1987), with elementary school children (Fugitt, 2001), with undergraduate gifted students (Piechowski 2006) and even in spiritual psychology and counselling psychology Masters' degree courses at the University of Santa Monica (Hulnick & Hulnick, 2011). Outside mainstream education, it is used not only in

psycho-spiritual development courses, but also by the WYSE international project that offers inner leadership educational training courses for future leaders, teaching adolescents, young adults and even ‘elders’. This is investigated in my study and outlined and discussed in Chapters 6-8.

Interestingly, Martha Crampton, after Assagioli, was probably the most prolific writer and pioneering practitioner in the field of psychosynthesis. One of her major early contributions is in the field of psychosynthesis applied to education, which, being an integral part of this investigation, will be discussed, together with Whitmore’s and other psychosynthesists’ and educators’ contributions in sections 2.7.2. and 2.7.3. First, section 2.7.1. briefly outlines how psychosynthesis in education as a model is generally conceived of.

2.7.1. Psychosynthesis in education

I will organise this section by outlining how the general psychosynthetic model has been applied to education in the past. Assagioli was particularly interested in educating the gifted, but also left some general indications regarding the application of psychosynthesis in education. Two prominent figures in psychosynthesis who, as educators, have also left written guidance in this area are Martha Crampton and Diana Whitmore, whose work is summarised below. The few books published more recently (i.e. Murdock, 1987, Fugitt, 2001, Waters, 2004) appear to replicate the essence of the original exercises and model (mainly guided visualisations and deep questioning to explore answers from within) found in Assagioli’s and Ferrucci’s books (Assagioli, 1965; Ferrucci, 1982). Published research in more recent applications of the model to education seems to be very scant, which the present study attempts to remedy. Before reviewing the work of a few psychosynthesists working in education, I will present succinctly Assagioli’s own vision and recommendations for applying psychosynthesis to education.

Education, Assagioli felt, should ‘favour a process of growth’, drawing out (from the Latin *educere*) ‘the great human potentialities that exist, unrecognized and unused, in the unexplored higher levels of every human being... It also means to draw out of conditions that limit’ (Assagioli, 1963, pp.1-2); to his mind, students’ development

should be well-balanced and all their psychological functions (sensation, feeling, thought, imagination, intuition, will, desire) should be trained and harmonised for wise use (op. cit.). Assagioli was critical of Western cultures' assumptions (which he saw as unfounded) that an education based on the rational mind was more valuable than direct perception and education of emotions and the senses (Assagioli, undated); imagination, the feeling nature, needs to be educated as well as the rational mind, he felt, because it 'precedes all creative expression' (Assagioli, 1968, p.2). Employment of dynamic methods and techniques to 'learn by doing' and also to express personality and abilities creatively through the use of various expressive techniques (such as dance, drama, drawing, painting, modelling and sculpture, writing and the composition and performance of music) was highly recommended; he also strongly believed in employing famous personalities' lives as inspirational examples (such as heroes, artists, scientists, etc.) to cultivate in youth a sense of beauty, wonder and appreciation of the possibilities of human potential (Assagioli, undated).

It is interesting to note similarities among Assagioli's, Steiner's and Dewey's models (all progressive educators in their own way), in that all valued the conceptual and rational development of the child in a practical, real life context of education, where students should be encouraged to take part in their own learning; they maintained that education should not be limited to content knowledge, but should also offer an environment *where students could learn how to live*, and where imagination and the use of language should be cultivated through artistic processes, story-telling, drama and poetry (Steiner, 1965; Dewey, 1972).

Above all, Assagioli encouraged the creation of a cheerful atmosphere in class while exploring deep questions, in order to encourage learning at a subconscious level, pointing out that anything presented in a boring way tends to be automatically rejected (Assagioli, 1968). He seemed convinced that education of the intellect should include techniques to develop and control mental faculties through well graduated exercises of concentration, reflection and meditation, and advocated the use of visualisation exercises and creative forms of meditation to 'counter-balance the current exaggerated tendencies toward extraversion and outer activity' (Assagioli, 1968, p.15). Given the dangers caused by the misuse of the will, its training and the development of self-

discipline was encouraged at all levels and in all dimensions of the psychosynthetic model, too (op. cit.).

Assagioli considered a form of spiritual education in schools necessary to help students to appreciate the meaning of life and of human potential, as well as their own potential achievements; he also felt that broadening the outlook of young people would help them develop beyond an egocentric personality to include cooperation and union with all that lives (Assagioli, undated). He also recommended physical education to complement spirituality, non-competitive outdoor activities in the countryside and the development of empathy and sensitivity to counterbalance or avoid repression of emotions, so that ‘pupils [can be] taught how to transmute and sublimate their exuberant emotions and drives’ (Assagioli, 1960, p.3). Last but not least, Assagioli also emphasised the creative roles of energy and thought, to be used responsibly, explaining that:

Energy follows thought, and thought directed by the will, and animated by feeling, is *creative*... we must remember that all visible, material events have *inner* causes stemming from the imagination, from *thought*, and from the will. Hold this firmly in your awareness and live accordingly (Assagioli, 1968, p.1, original italics).

Energy and thought/intention seem to be the basis of the next step in psychology that Assagioli predicted would one day become the Fifth force in psychology, namely psychoenergetics (see Chapters 6-8), which, he felt, might have an important part to play in the future (Assagioli, 1973b). In the rest of this chapter, I will illustrate a few examples of how psychosynthesis has been applied to education in the past and in what contexts.

2.7.2. Crampton’s pioneering, psychosynthesis-based educational project

In ‘*Some Applications of Psychosynthesis in the Educational Field*’, Crampton discussed her successful, pioneering work for the Quebec ministry of education related to a project to ‘deal with the increasing problems of alienations among students and the obvious need to humanize the schools’ (Crampton, 1975b, p.453). Crampton explains that ‘Integrative education’ was central to the project; it was multidimensional, in the sense that:

bridges [were built] between the various aspects of their [students'] being: between emotions... and intellect; between the higher abstract mind – the archetypal realm – and the realm of the concrete mind; between knowledge and action; between intuition and reason (op. cit., p.455).

Various dimensions of the human being (physical, emotional, mental and spiritual) and the natural, social and cosmic ecologies were included and integrated. The function of the Self, Crampton illustrates, was kept prominent and the humanistic dimensions related to affective, emotional education were also addressed (op. cit). Crampton introduced dis-identification, self-identification and subpersonality work using cartoons and creative exercises to encourage youngsters to examine their roles, emotions, constantly changing thoughts and related physical states experienced. This was done to also encourage an expansion of consciousness and identity to include others and other dimensions of being, writes Crampton. Training the will in terms of self-discipline was also part of the holistic, psychosynthesis-based educational project; creative expressions in group settings were introduced and encouraged in different ways. Crampton illustrates that to avoid impositions, the will needed to be perceived as a 'deeply experienced sense of meaning and purpose' (op. cit., p.456) emerging from each student's inner guidance sought from transpersonal levels of the Self, which, she reports, the educators helped translate in practical terms, relating the experience to students' daily lives.

To link cognitive and affective realms, a collection of quotations by wise individuals and great geniuses in history who have inspired humanity were employed and used in colourful posters, aimed at encouraging dialogue and meditation on those desirable qualities that any individual student had identified and might like to emulate and develop in the future. Such highly interactive classes, where joy and an element of humour could easily be introduced to sustain interest and attention, Crampton points out, appeared to facilitate the emergence of insights likely to go more deeply than any taught lesson which excludes students' active participation (op. cit). Myths, legends, fables, films, cartoons and all kinds of cultural materials were used creatively to stimulate intuitive awareness, deep thinking and dialogue and to prompt material from the higher unconscious, consequently expressed in movement, drawn or written down. Audio stimulations via specific sounds (white noise, ocean, or sounds which induced alpha and theta brainwaves) were also used to enhance mental imagery and to induce

meditative states. The project, claims Crampton, was successful in meeting the goal of the Ministry of Education in Quebec, which was to humanise schools (op. cit.). Interestingly, all the techniques, exercises and attitudes illustrated and used by Crampton and described above had been suggested and written about in Assagioli's few articles on applying psychosynthesis to education (Assagioli, undated, 1960, 1963, 1968), the essence of which has been presented in section 2.7.1. above.

With very few more recent exceptions (i.e. Buckler, 2012; Cunningham, 2007, 2011; and Hart, 2009), research, papers or books dedicated to transpersonal education, including psychosynthesis, mainly date back to the 1970s. The relatively few more recent books dedicated to psychosynthesis in education (Murdock, 1987, Fugitt, 2001, Waters, 2004) appear to be based on applying and replicating Crampton's and Whitmore's experiences and on Assagioli's and Ferrucci's early writings. There seems to be great reliance on the possibly 'evergreen' educational ideas of the father of psychosynthesis, Roberto Assagioli, given that they are still reported to be successfully applied (and receiving grants and public funds). This, however, implies that very little seems to have been contributed to the field in terms of new knowledge, theories or techniques by psychosynthesist educators since Assagioli's death; in fact, as outlined below, one out of the four relatively recent books available on applied psychosynthesis in education places much more attention on the therapeutic aspect of psychosynthesis (Waters, 2004) than Assagioli possibly ever intended or found desirable (as can be gleaned by Assagioli's cited writings). Besides Crampton, another major contributor to psychosynthesis in education is Diana Whitmore who, as illustrated in the following section, still applies psychosynthesis in educational settings so successfully that she has attracted public funding in recent years (for an educational programme that has been independently assessed).

2.7.3. Other applications of psychosynthesis in education

In *The Joy of Learning: A Guide to Psychosynthesis in Education*, Diana Whitmore, patron of WYSE international and chair of the Psychosynthesis Trust, provides a series of imaginative exercises which 'point to the power of inner-directed conscious will' (Whitmore, 1990, p.8). In line with the psychosynthetic model, the book offers exercises that 'stimulate coherent thought, imagination, feelings, will, creativity and the intuition', providing means to cultivate an expanded awareness of oneself and life. A

psychosynthetic education, in Whitmore's experience, teaches children to be self-directed and to take initiative, asserting themselves with courage when needed, and it has implications for lifelong learning; concentration and self-discipline, for example, can be taught and used not only to increase performance in school, but also in life (op. cit., p.22). Whitmore shared with Assagioli a profound belief that applying psychosynthetic techniques from early education would help create harmonious and well-balanced individuals, in that all spheres, all aspects of the human being ('physical, emotional, imaginative, intellectual, ethical, social and intuitive') would be given attention and be appropriately developed, integrated and centred into 'Self-consciousness, into a higher unifying centre' (ibid.).

Interestingly, techniques suggested by Whitmore throughout the book are graded and adapted according to students' ages, but in essence they are the same as those outlined in Crampton's article (guided imagery, play, word/concept evocation, movement etc.), informed by Assagioli's vision and by the philosophy underlying psychosynthesis, which greatly reflects also humanistic concepts/psychology; in fact, humanistic psychology, together with transpersonal psychology, seems to have greatly informed and inspired all holistic educational models. In her book, Whitmore offers an analysis of the nature of the child's unconscious, of the adult's unconscious, of psychological defence mechanisms and self-fulfilling expectations; she greatly emphasises the importance and responsibility implicit in the role of educators and concludes with a reminder:

It is not what we *do* with our young; it is who we are...The answer does not lie in better classrooms, more equipment, team teaching, new tools and methods, although these things may help. It lies in you (Whitmore, 1990, p.216, original italics).

Whitmore encourages educators to cultivate not only *self-knowledge*, but also *mastery* by finding one's inner centre of power, wisdom and creativity and using one's will to get to know and transform one's limiting unconscious behaviour and old conditioning. In other words, Whitmore encourages educators to embrace a higher vision of what they can be and to act towards manifesting that ideal, using psychosynthesis on themselves to help them reach self-actualisation and acting as role models for children. The influence of Maslow's humanistic psychology on transpersonal psychology, hence on psychosynthesis, is clearly acknowledged (i.e. Cunningham, 2011) but, interestingly,

this cross-pollination seems to become particularly clear in Whitmore's book and in psychosynthesis generally applied to education.

As said, Whitmore has been very active in promoting psychosynthesis-based educational interventions. More recently, her human potential oriented approach has been introduced in her gradually expanding and publicly funded Teens and Toddlers UK project, which takes care of vulnerable, socially excluded young people. In a relatively recent interview, she explains that the programme has been independently assessed and that the Department for Children, Schools and Families endorses it as a youth development programme that raises self-esteem, aspiration and educational attainment in young people (Whitmore, 2008).

Psychosynthesis-based educational interventions have also been promoted by educator Trisha Waters who, for many years, worked in special and mainstream schools as an educational therapist; psychosynthesis-trained, Waters eventually founded the Centre for Therapeutic Storywriting based on her educational project that has now been used in over 500 schools in the UK (Waters, 2004). Her project particularly aims to develop emotional literacy (in abused children especially) in primary schools (op. cit.), and it focuses on subpersonality work, (criticism of this construct has been outlined above).

Before concluding this section, two more books on the educational application of psychosynthesis will be briefly reviewed. Psychosynthesist and Jungian psychotherapist Maureen Murdock's *Spinning Inward: Using Guided Imagery With Children For Learning, Creativity and Relaxation* (Murdock, 1987) presents simple and original guided imagery (for children, but also adolescents and adults) as a method that promotes multisensory learning and wellness through awareness, facilitating access to one's innate creativity and wisdom within (from the Self); her method uses guided meditation exercises to hone wholebrain learning and inner peace. Meditations and exercises are graded and children's feedback regarding the effects of the exercises on them is also reported. The activities contained in Murdock's book, furthermore, aim to encourage small children to establish their own identity (rather than copying their peers), helping them appreciate that their feelings and ideas are important. Other exercises help children explore deep questioning in a creative and entertaining way (op. cit.).

Former elementary school teacher, counsellor and psychosynthesis trainer (conducting also training courses for parents and teachers), Eva Fugitt has written one of the very few (not therapy based), relatively recent books detailing psychosynthesis exercises applied in education. The techniques she extensively used for many years and outlined in the book are graded to suit different ages. The first edition of the book was published in 1985 and a second, revised edition was printed in 2001, which makes it the most recent work of its genre; the first edition was translated into several languages and is currently being used by over 24,000 teachers, counsellors, and parents (Fugitt, 2001) . It is slightly different from the ones reviewed above, in that it is about developing children's will-power in a positive way, using it in a way that raises children's self-discipline and self-esteem; in other words, techniques outlined aim to help children develop their potential, in order to make wise choices for themselves, recognising and self-correcting their behaviour when they themselves judge it to be unproductive (op. cit.).

The book guides teachers and parents to understand what motivates children, but also shares information as to what children themselves can do to direct their will power for improved behaviour and enhanced academic and social performance. The book's title, in fact, points to its purpose: *He Hit Me Back First! Development of the Will in Children for Making Choices*. Unsurprisingly perhaps, techniques used are asking deep questions that encourage children's self-reflective abilities, creative visualisation and imagery work to learn to contact and trust one's inner wise part/teacher and to consciously choose a behavioural response that will enhance self-fulfilment, honing children's ability to apply their will to control and direct wisely their thoughts and behaviours (which reflects clearly Assagioli's [1973a] own teachings on the importance and application of the will).

To summarise and conclude, it would appear that psychosynthesis in education has been applied quite productively in different (but not numerous) international projects for several decades now, enjoying enough credibility to earn grants and public funding. The imagery and visualisation techniques proposed by Assagioli still seem to be adopted in all the educational projects reviewed here; in fact, the most diverse and creative methods seem to have been applied in Martha Crampton's pioneering project in the 1970s (Crampton, 1975). Crampton also applied psychoenergetics in a pioneering way, (see Chapter 8).

2.7.4. Chapter summary

This chapter has introduced, discussed and situated some controversial aspects of the present study, it has explored the psychologies that inform the holistic nature of the topics under investigation, outlined a previous Indigo study and my own further explorations into the phenomenon. These would appear to indicate that other multi-labelled youth seem to share self-actualising/transcending tendencies (and an emerging Authentic consciousness) found in Indigos. In other words, my initial speculations that the phenomenon might be more widespread than suspected, possibly indicating an emerging new consciousness especially in differently-labelled youth (the New Generations), were found relevant to the field under investigation. Such indications would also appear to confirm that, in order to serve the New Generations better, further research into what forms of education might be beneficial to integrate with mainstream curricula seems to be necessary (my second study being a first step in that direction).

As revealed by the first study and the literature, educational interventions successfully applied with Indigos seem to have a holistic nature; an existing holistic and transpersonally-informed educational model was found that seemed to address all the main points raised in the first study relevant to Indigos and the New Generations, namely Assagioli's psychosynthesis. Psychosynthesis has been applied in educational areas for several decades, but the contribution that it might make to a holistic approach to education not being currently evident in mainstream schools, it has become the focus of my second study. An overview of the agenda behind conventional and holistic education and an evaluation of how they both seem to address current generations' needs have also been outlined in this chapter, which has concluded by briefly presenting Assagioli's psychosynthesis, its general principles and applications in education so far. This chapter has presented all the relevant literature and explained how my initial research question has gradually evolved into a new, related study. The research question in the first Indigo study was:

How do experienced educators describe and interpret the nature of Indigos and their educational needs?

Once the relevance of a new focus in the second part of my research was clearly derived from my previous investigations, three successfully applied psychosynthesis-based educational projects were found to explore and compare in my second study. The purpose of my second study was to find out which new trends might emerge, if any, that may inform both holistic and mainstream education for the benefit of the New Generations. The question that I explored through my second study was:

How are the latest trends in the general psychosynthesis-based educational model contributing to holistic education according to experienced educators and how might contributions inform mainstream education?

Chapter 3 that follows explores in more detail how my initial question and focus on the Indigo phenomenon evolved to become an investigation into the possible contribution of a holistic, transpersonally-informed educational model to mainstream education in my second study; the chapter especially clarifies, justifies and outlines the research strategies adopted in the two inter-related studies.

CHAPTER 3 RESEARCH FOCUS

I have chosen to dedicate this relatively brief chapter to the research questions and to a clarification of my research strategies for readers' easy retrieval and repeated consultation if need be, as keeping this information among considerable amounts of data might be confusing. The narrative that follows also explains how and why I shifted focus from the first study and research question to the second study, which explored another question.

3.1 Research questions

This research, as stated in Chapter 1, consists of two linked studies which focus on children and adolescents whose characteristics appear to be different from what is considered the norm, for which they often seem to be misunderstood and even misdiagnosed and medicated – Indigo children, according to the literature, appear to be typical representatives of such youth. In the first study I attempted to find out more about the Indigo phenomenon and how educators with experience working with them viewed not only their characteristics, but also their educational needs and what educational interventions were found successful with them. My research question in the first study was the following:

How do experienced educators describe and interpret the nature of Indigos and their educational needs?

The study revealed that characteristics observed in Indigos tended to confirm results of a previous doctoral study on Indigos and information found in the literature; such characteristics seemed to indicate that Indigos' motivational needs verged towards self-actualisation and self-transcendence, as detailed in Chapter 5. An analysis of existing research on the characteristics found in other multi-labelled children and adolescents appeared to indicate that the same motivational needs (self-actualisation and self-transcendence) were shared by a much larger young population than simply Indigos, who have been clustered in this thesis under the more neutral and collective label of New Generations, as outlined in Chapter 2. The first study revealed also that educational interventions found to be successful with Indigos appeared to have strong holistic components.

The information provided in the first study helped define the focus of my second study, lending coherence to the whole investigation. In fact, out of the information acquired emerged the relevance of investigating a holistic educational model which addressed and educated self-actualising and self-transcending tendencies, integrating them within the psyche. Psychosynthesis seemed to meet these criteria and to be congruent with the characteristics of the New Generations found in the first study. Despite having been comparatively recognised and used, especially in higher education, for a few decades, however, the contribution that psychosynthesis might make to a holistic approach to education did not seem to be evident in mainstream schools. My second study attempted to fill this gap in research and to find some answers. This was done by investigating how, whether and to what extent the latest common trends found in three different psychosynthesis-based educational projects (representative of the general model) might inform both holistic and mainstream education for the benefit of the New Generations (and to educate a new, emerging Integral/Authentic/Transpersonal Consciousness theorised to be emerging on a collective level, as discussed in section 2.4.3.).

This study also partially fills a gap in research on transpersonal education, under which psychosynthesis is categorised. Through results of my second study and some additional investigation, I was hoping to find out how relevant it might be for mainstream education to integrate some of the agenda behind holistic, transpersonally-based education to serve the New Generations better. My research question for the second study, then, became the following:

How are the latest trends in the general psychosynthesis-based educational model contributing to holistic education according to experienced educators and how might contributions inform mainstream education?

My two inter-related studies focused on aspects of education (especially outside mainstream channels) and on the needs of the younger generations. Both studies, using different methodologies, also focused on ‘lived experience’, on personal perceptions and constructed meanings derived respectively from teaching Indigos and teaching psychosynthesis applied in education in different contexts. In other words, the topics under investigation were seen through the eyes of those directly involved in them, hence the choice of experienced educators as participants. The following section further clarifies and justifies the research strategies I adopted and applied to the present study.

3.2 Research strategies

Since the topics and bodies of literature being investigated in this study are not often reviewed together, *my empirical work began, and was shaped by, seeking out practitioners who were familiar with some of the theories and practices identified in the literature* and I eventually found educators who had acquired years of experience working in the investigated fields, from whom, as stated, I gathered information about their ‘lived experience’ of working educationally with Indigos and subsequently of applying and using psychosynthesis-based educational models and techniques in different projects. In other words, on the basis of the information that educators had acquired over a number of years working educationally with Indigos, which they shared with me in the first phase of the present study (first study), psychosynthesis was subsequently identified as a potentially compatible and useful educational model for the New Generations. They, like Indigos, also seemed to manifest self-actualising and self-transcending tendencies, which the psychosynthetic model addresses, educates and integrates within the psyche. Consequently, in the second phase of this study, ‘lived experience’ of working with and applying psychosynthesis-based techniques in educational programmes was gathered from experts and pioneers in the field. This was done in order to ascertain:

- a) interviewed experts’ views on the agenda behind the general psychosynthesis model in education;
- b) which elements the three investigated educational projects had in common (once compared and contrasted), if any – hence highlighting the latest trends in psychosynthesis-based education;
- c) whether and how such trends found in common might inform holistic and mainstream education.

All the experienced educators I interviewed in both studies (and experts in their field) had had experience working in mainstream education, even if only two (in the first study) were currently active, full-time teachers working exclusively in mainstream education. The other participants in both studies were pioneers in their respective fields and taught mainly outside mainstream channels, having also worked as teachers, teacher

trainers or having offered specialist courses in schools for limited and varying amounts of time in their lives (thus potentially *contributing insider knowledge*, too).

My choice of interviews as the main data collection method was dictated by several factors. Given the controversial and relatively little known topics being explored, my first study research relied strongly on educators' observations and meaning making, especially in finding out about educational practices they had found successful with their students – the study, as said above, relied on *lived experience*. The methodology chosen for the first study, as explained in Chapter 4, was interpretive phenomenological analysis (IPA). Possibilities among data collection techniques recommended in IPA are focus groups and self-reporting tasks, but, in the opinion of the researchers who developed this methodology, interviews are the most faithful to IPA's underlying philosophy, in that interviewees are considered the experts on what is being analysed. Non-directive interviewing styles tend to be used in IPA to encourage participants to tell their story their way (Smith et al., 2009), which I adopted in the first study by using non structured interviews. I was also particularly keen on giving educators a voice, considering that their expertise, creativity and initiative in teaching seem to be so often chastised by changing governments, policy makers' decisions and general rules regarding education (Seidman, 2006). I felt that my job as a researcher in this case was to create conditions which would encourage interviewees to share information in a safe, relaxed and supportive environment.

Professor of Qualitative Research Irving Seidman writes that the language and words people use in telling their stories is a microcosm of their consciousness which 'gives access to the most complicated social and educational issues, because social and educational issues are abstractions based on the concrete experience of people' (Seidman, 2006, p.7). Seidman maintains that interviewing as an approach to research in education is not widely accepted because in the past, to give the discipline credibility, researchers were 'urged to adapt research models patterned after those in the natural and physical sciences' (ibid.). However, although emphasising that the adequacy of a research method depends on the questions being asked and on the research purpose, he argues that:

At the very heart of what it means to be human is the ability of people to symbolize their experience through language. To understand human behavior means to understand

the use of language (Heron, 1981)...Recounting narratives of experience has been the major way throughout recorded history that humans have made sense of their experience... To observe a teacher, student, principal, or counselor provides access to their behavior. Interviewing allows us to put behavior in context and provides access to understanding their action (Seidman, 2006, pp. 8-9).

Seidman's comment summarises the reason why I have chosen interviews as a research method, further explored below. As explained in Chapter 5, the two Italian primary school teachers in particular (whom I interviewed for the first, Indigo study) had no previous knowledge of the Indigo phenomenon before encountering it through an 'indomitable' class they jointly taught for five years. By revolutionising their work, teaching attitudes and styles, they gradually learned about Indigo characteristics and educational needs and developed new ways of teaching to meet the needs of their 'indomitable' pupils they eventually identified as Indigo. Their input in particular, I felt, required sensitive handling and non-directive interviewing. The other expert interviewed in the first study was a self-identified Indigo who pioneered an educational system and training courses especially addressed to Indigos of all ages, which revolve around developing an 'expanded consciousness' (increased awareness of oneself and one's potential). After over a decade, her ideas and experience acquired while being an Indigo and educating Indigos (which included children in mainstream education via specialist courses) were very clearly defined and she was keen on voicing and sharing them. A non structured interview in this case appeared to be particularly suited as well. What I was trying to find out were the characteristics of Indigos as the three educators perceived them and also what Indigos' educational needs seemed to be, according to the experience my interviewees had gained after years of working with them. Hence my research question was:

How do experienced educators describe and interpret the nature of Indigos and their educational needs?

As outlined in Chapter 2, the first study results and further socio-historical and educational research revealed that the self-actualising and self-transcending tendencies found in Indigos did not seem to be an isolated phenomenon, but seemed to involve other representatives of differently-labelled members of the New Generations, potentially making the essence and characteristics of the Indigo phenomenon more widespread than previously recognised. Characteristics found in common also

highlighted that an Integral Consciousness towards which humanity is theorised to be evolving on a collective level (as argued in the previous chapter), seems more than likely to be increasingly embodied by the New Generations. Educating for an evolving Integral consciousness, therefore, seems to be increasing in importance and relevance to serve the New Generations; this implies that researching less mainstream areas to find potentially valuable contributions which might be integrated in mainstream channels, arguably assumes increasing relevance. In fact, it is argued in this thesis that transpersonal psychology and its areas of research (including human potential) have not been totally accepted by mainstream psychology. The latter has always informed education and policy makers, but, it is argued, information might not be complete, restricting, therefore, the range of educational choices available to parents and students. There may be needs of the New Generations, who seem to increasingly embody an Integral consciousness, that mainstream educational channels do not seem to be providing for to a sufficient degree. Transpersonal educational models, it was thought, were worth exploring for their potential contributions to integrate in mainstream channels, and the choice fell on psychosynthesis as a focus for the second study.

Psychosynthesis has focused on educating and developing individuals' self-actualising and self-transcending needs for decades, not only in psycho-spiritual development courses, but also in education at various levels. Despite that, the contribution that psychosynthesis might make to a holistic approach to education is not currently evident in mainstream schools. Therefore, being congruent with the characteristics and needs found in the New Generations, three psychosynthesis-based educational projects have been explored in my second study to investigate whether/how recent developments in psychosynthesis applied in educational projects might contribute to, and inform, both holistic and mainstream educational knowledge.

As stated, psychosynthesis was chosen as a research focus not only because it is a general, transpersonally informed educational model which addresses and safely integrates self-actualising and self-transcending needs within the psyche, but also because, unlike other holistic models, it has already been applied in education internationally for several decades in different forms (as detailed in Chapter 2). For all the reasons stated, my research question for the second study became:

How are the latest trends in the general psychosynthesis-based educational model contributing to holistic education according to experienced educators and how might contributions inform mainstream education?

For the second, exploratory, qualitative study, as discussed in chapter 4, *a multiple case study methodology* was chosen for two reasons:

- a) Three cases of psychosynthesis being applied in the education of the young, of the less young, of parents and teachers (representative of the latest trends of the general model of psychosynthesis in education) could be compared, analysed and cross-analysed in the second study
- b) Provided consent is freely given by interviewees in terms of anonymity issues, with this methodology multiple sources of information and data for analysis (i.e. information available from other previously published material such as books, videos, websites etc.) are normally made available to the researcher in addition to direct interviews or observation, which, besides offering an important supportive function, aid triangulation of data and add a story behind research results (Yin, 2009). Furthermore, it can help to confirm (or otherwise) claims made during interviews, to fill in gaps and to circumvent misunderstanding or misinterpretation on the part of the researcher (Creswell, 2007).

Analysis and comparison of all data aimed to answer the research question, hence focused on finding out how and to what extent recent trends in a differently applied, general psychosynthesis-based educational model could inform and contribute to holistic and mainstream knowledge. Three internationally known expert educators in psychosynthesis, working in three different educational contexts, were eventually found and I was interested in what vision drove their work, not just the techniques used. I wanted to know their agenda, how they felt their educational projects informed education and why they thought it was necessary for parents and educators to be made aware of any contributions their projects could offer, given their extensive experience both within and outside mainstream education.

Even admitting my great fascination with how language is used and with the power of words to reveal or hide information, which my previous training as a

translator/interpreter and in psychology probably biases me towards, again I felt that interviews backed up by additional material (in terms of previously published books, articles, videos, websites, interviews and so forth which my interviewees had authored – see Chapter 4 and Table 5) could provide the most effective way of gaining the information needed to answer my second study research question. Interestingly, interviews as relatively frequent choices of data collection techniques in case study research, when supported by further available data, are contemplated and endorsed also by Creswell, 2007, Stake, 1995 and Yin, 2009. I was satisfied that the additional and previously published material I had available could potentially:

- a) confirm interviewees' claims/beliefs or otherwise,
- b) enhance or clarify what they had shared in the interview,
- c) fill in gaps I might have left in my questioning,
- d) curtail, at least in part, the danger of circularity implicit in self-reports.

Given the above, I did not feel that any participant observation as a means of data collection for the purposes of my own investigation would have provided richer data. Later in my investigation, as the focus and purpose of the whole study became increasingly clear, I also became aware that what I was investigating did not revolve only around course contents or behaviours I could observe, but also, and especially, the intentions and *agendas* behind each interviewed expert's choices of methodologies used in their specific psychosynthesis-based educational projects. This point is debatable, but it seemed to me that intentions and agendas could be revealed more easily using interviews and extra available material. Once again, as in the first study research, the voice of the 'expert' seemed to take precedence.

Other objective difficulties, perhaps unconsciously, led me to the decision to rely on interviews as a data collection method. For example, two out of three experts interviewed in my second study were based in America, which would have made observations particularly difficult and costly. Another potential difficulty in choosing participant observation instead of interviews for collecting data would have been obtaining ethical clearance in observing very personal transformational effects deriving from psycho-spiritual work which, I know from long experience, is inevitably connected with transpersonally-based educational courses. In fact, very early enquiries

(before deciding what the final focus of my second study would be) into the possibility of acting as a participant/observer in one of the international (psychosynthesis-based) WYSE project courses based in Italy or in the UK did not yield a positive answer for two reasons: one was that access to WYSE courses (other than the Elders course) is open only to younger people who have attended all previous levels. The second reason given by the director and course leader was that I would be welcome to attend an 'Elders course' even if 'under age', so to speak, but only as a participant and not as a researcher acting as a participant/observer due to concerns about other participants' privacy and especially about the personal, inner nature of the psycho-spiritual transformational work that characterised the Elders courses, which, the director felt, did not lend itself to observations or externalisations and sharing.

It seems appropriate at this stage to emphasise that in any naturalistic enquiry the choice of which data collection methods to use depends on the kind of study and research question a researcher is working with – I am aware that interviews can be seen as the lazy researcher's chosen method, but I would argue that observation is not always the most adequate or most efficient data collection method to use in a naturalistic enquiry, especially when reflection on motives is so important to answering the research question, as in this case. Furthermore, it has to be said that, as Seidman points out, interviewing can be more complex than it appears, as well as time consuming (Seidman, 2006). Throughout the whole research process, I was always aware of the potential problem of 'interviewing for exploitation', so to speak, and I was keen on finding with participants a mutually agreeable way to create a fair exchange (with solutions that made everybody happy). In one case, for example, I helped out at a fund-raising event in which one of the interviewees was involved; in another case, I agreed to give a talk to parents in their school on a subject they wanted more information about which I happened to be knowledgeable in; in other cases, I was asked (and agreed) to share results of further investigations into the field being studied.

Interestingly, Seidman writes of interviewing that besides being sensitive to many issues, including sensitively approaching potential interviewees among strangers, the researcher needs to be aware that:

Interviewing research takes a great deal of time and, sometimes, money. The researcher has to conceptualize the project, establish access and make contact with participants,

interview them, transcribe the data, and then work with the material and share what he or she has learned... Any method of inquiry worth anything takes time, thoughtfulness, energy, and money. But interviewing is especially labor intensive. If the researcher does not have the money or the support to hire secretarial help to transcribe tapes, it is his or her labor that is at stake (Seidman, 2006, p.12).

In fact, finding participants that could offer ‘lived experience’ as educators who had acquired experience in the fields being investigated was a very lengthy process – the first study, from beginning to end, lasted 10 months, from January 2010 to October 2010. Once experienced and willing participants were found, ethical papers signed and interviews carried out, translated and transcribed, the processes of analysis, coding, obtaining feedback, and reaching conclusions took about four months (from July to October 2010).

The second study, from planning to conclusion, was a process that lasted 19 months – finding and interviewing the case study experts who met the criteria (I was looking for expert educators who had also acquired experience working in mainstream education for added ‘insider knowledge’) and were willing to take part in the study took eight months, from October 2010 to May 2011. Once experienced and willing participants were found, ethical papers signed and interviews carried out, translated, transcribed and double-checked, the processes of selecting and coding data for all three case studies, writing reports, obtaining feedback and working on the cross-case analysis discussion and results lasted from June 2011 to May 2012, including revisions.

Despite the difficulties outlined, I echo Seidman’s views; he believes that interviewing remains:

a powerful way to gain insight into educational and other important social issues through understanding the experience of the individuals whose lives reflect those issues. As a method of inquiry, interviewing is most consistent with people’s ability to make meaning through language. It affirms the importance of the individual without denigrating the possibility of community and collaboration. Finally, it is deeply satisfying to researchers who are interested in others’ stories (Seidman, 2006, p.14).

As said, given the exploratory nature of my investigations, I was particularly interested in *self-reflection* on the part of the psychosynthesis experts I interviewed and I really wanted to find out *why* all the educators I interviewed were doing what they were doing and what they were trying to achieve beyond the obvious. In other words I was more

interested in experts' reported observations, meaning-making, vision, experience and understanding and in finding a potentially common (conscious or unconscious) thread underlying their work and vision. I truly wanted to honour and do justice to their work, their intentions and their voices in empowering, fruitful and *non invasive* ways. I am aware that my choice may be seen as relatively controversial, but I felt that observation of my interviewed experts' work via my filters and carried out only for a limited amount of time could never rival their reported experience spanning years of work. In the next chapter all methodological issues concerning both studies are presented in more detail.

CHAPTER 4 METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I will be outlining ontological, epistemological, ethical and validity issues, design and research methods used, data collection and analysis for both my first and second studies. The first study will be outlined and discussed in chapter 5. The second study's presentation, discussion and conclusions are outlined in chapters 6-8.

To make the narrative clear and to avoid repetition, I have divided this chapter into three main parts:

Part I will outline all *general* issues both studies have in common, such as paradigm and epistemological issues, ethical issues and criteria for establishing rigour and trustworthiness.

Part II will cover the first study methodology.

Part III will be focused on the second study's methodological issues.

Part I – General issues applicable to the whole study

As stated, this section will outline all general issues applicable to the whole study (first and second study) – my partiality, paradigm and epistemological issues, ethical issues and criteria for establishing rigour and trustworthiness of a naturalistic study. Where applicable, the details particular to each study will be outlined in the study's relevant sections below.

4.2 My partiality and biases

For authenticity and credibility purposes, as a result of *progressive subjectivity tests* (addressed in section 4.5 below), I will be outlining in this section where my biases lie.

I do not subscribe to a 'separate-matter universe'; in other words, due to studies and personal experience, I do not conceive of this universe as a strictly material one made up of separate objects affecting each other through direct contact, and I do not see human beings as merely a composite of organs, chemicals and genes, with consciousness residing in the brain. The holistic and transpersonal vision I embrace is

based on an ontological assumption of interconnectedness of all that exists and on the epistemological assumption that reality can be constructed not only via our physical senses, but also through the more subjective and non linear lens offered by our instinctive and intuitive faculties, which facilitate instantaneous exchange of information between potential fields of consciousness/energy. An example of this concept may be British biologist Rupert Sheldrake's 'morphic fields', which might be defined as a medium through which objects/habits/behaviours seem to have an effect on each other without being in physical contact (Sheldrake, 1981). A similar concept was offered by psychoanalyst Carl Jung and his theories on synchronicities, archetypes and the collective unconscious (Singer, 1994).

I believe fields of consciousness/energy linking all life constitute reality at its most basic level. This belief seems to be supported by modern multi-disciplinary research (i.e. Cloninger, 2004, 2011a, 2011b; James, 2007; Laszlo, 2007, 2008; Radin, 2006, 2009; Sheldrake, 1981, 2005) and, for me personally, by a lifetime of personal experience acquiring information intuitively, partly via subtle exchange between energy fields – whatever they are conceived to be. I am not alone in using this kind of information exchange/acquisition, and I choose not to deny my own and other individuals' personal experience.

Finally, I am comfortable with the viewpoint of interpretivism (discussed below), which holds that the social world is constantly recreated in processes that contain subjective meaning – this is likely to have influenced my approach to this research and my wish to remain true to participants' original interpretations.

4.3 Paradigm, epistemology and ontology

The qualitative studies in this thesis were conducted from the point of view of an interpretive researcher. In other words, my research paradigm is *Interpretivist/Constructivist*. Each paradigm is known to be guided by ontological assumptions (theories about the nature of reality), epistemological ideas (about the nature of knowledge) and methodologies used to obtain knowledge (Crotty, 1998).

Researchers operating within the interpretive paradigm see the social world as a world of interpretation and meaning – no single truth is privileged because the interpretivist perspective recognizes that social reality can be viewed in different ways by different

individuals. Educational research within this paradigm, therefore, strives to understand subjective meanings and interpretations. Because subjective realities can be socially and experientially based and can be portrayed via mental/psychological constructions, a relativist ontological assumption tends to underlie an interpretivist paradigm (Guba & Lincoln, 1994).

Inevitably, ontological and epistemological assumptions also influence the methodology chosen for any research study. A constructivist/interpretivist epistemology holds that knowledge results from the interpretation of interactions between people and their known environments, and envisions no 'right' or 'wrong' interpretations of such, since different people make sense of different objects/situations in different and legitimate ways. This clearly relativist ontology acknowledges that 'the way things are' is simply 'the sense we make of them' (Crotty, 1998, p. 64). Methodologies being the designs (ways of doing research) that inform the researcher's choice of method, the methods eventually chosen represent the procedures/techniques used to gather data. Both investigations in this thesis use qualitative methods – data expressed in words and concepts rather than in numbers.

Creswell offers a very clear description of qualitative research:

Qualitative research begins with assumptions, a worldview, the possible use of a theoretical lens, and the study of research problems inquiring into the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem. To study the problem, qualitative researchers use an *emerging* qualitative approach to inquiry, the collection of data in a natural setting sensitive to the people and places under study and data analysis that is inductive and establishes patterns or themes. The final written report or presentation includes the voices of participants, the reflexivity of the researcher, and a complex description and interpretation of the problem... (Creswell, 2007, p.37, my italics).

Because all phases are emergent and evolving, Creswell points out, even the research question may change in the different phases of the investigation (op. cit.). It is this emergent quality that I have found especially attractive, as the first study in particular (outlined in chapter 5) was entered into with a view of letting emergent themes guide my next steps.

Another reason why a qualitative study was considered the best option for both investigations is that, given the nature of my areas of interest, as yet insufficiently explored, relevant or useful information seemed more likely to be derived through

empirical observation (direct or reported) than via experimental studies at this stage. In fact, unless changes in DNA or neurology can be detected and measured with our current technology, measuring the issues being investigated through scientific testing would be impossible. At this stage, it would appear more reasonable and, to my mind, more interesting to collect and analyse data that might help ascertain individuals' direct experience, understanding and meaning ascribed to the Indigo phenomenon (first study) and to potentially useful, transpersonally-based educational interventions (second study).

4.4 General ethical issues

Ethical guidelines for educational research outlined by British Educational Research Association (BERA) were strictly adhered to. The principles underlying BERA's ethical guidelines (updated in 2011) are founded on an ethic of respect towards:

The person

Knowledge

Democratic values

The quality of educational research [and]

Academic freedom (BERA, 2011, p.4).

Respect towards any individuals involved in the research (including the educational researchers themselves) implies fair and sensitive treatment at all stages of the research, which should be free of prejudice of any kind. Voluntary informed consent is seen as an essential process through which any willing participant, before the research begins, receives a thorough explanation of what the research involves, how it is going to be used and how their privacy, anonymity and confidentiality are going to be guaranteed. Participants' right to withdraw data at any time or stage of the research (and for any or no reason, without any duress on the part of the researcher) needs to be made clear to them before any interview is conducted or fieldwork begins. Every attempt has been made on my part to meet all BERA's guidelines.

The guidelines given clarify that any educational researcher needs to apply sensitivity to any discomfort or distress caused by the research process (including a feeling of intrusion), minimise them and be prepared to interrupt any action that may cause

emotional or physical harm. Special steps need to be taken when children, young people or vulnerable adults take part in any research. This last point, to my knowledge, was not applicable to the present investigations.

Debriefing participants once the research is concluded is also considered good practice, as is sharing with them any publications that report the research they had been involved in, made possible thanks to their participation. As stated above, the ethical guidance just outlined has been adhered to. Before beginning my first and second studies, I completed an ethical approval form and sent my application to the Graduate School of Education at the University of Exeter (the Education Department at Exeter is currently part of the College of Social Sciences and International Studies). I obtained the school's certificate of ethical research approval in January 2010. The following points, adapted from the original document (enclosed at the end of the thesis), should help to clarify how I adhered to ethical guidelines:

Informed Consent: Records of when, how and from whom consent was obtained, have been kept. I used the University of Exeter Consent Form for ethical clearance (Appendix C), which each participant signed (keeping a copy) before being interviewed and after being informed of the purposes and uses of the study to which they were contributing. The document informs participants about how their privacy and anonymity will be respected/treated and it clearly outlines that they have the right to withdraw their data and participation from the research for any and no reason at any time, and that data related to them or their interview will be destroyed once the whole PhD study is completed. Special written ethical clearance was obtained by my second study's participants regarding anonymity issues, as outlined below.

Respect: The views of every participant have been paramount in this study. I have ensured that these were listened to, respected and represented. Every effort has been made to also respect individual, cultural and role differences, including those involving age, disability, education, ethnicity, gender, language, national origin, race, religion, sexual orientation, marital or family status and socio-economic status.

Anonymity and Confidentiality: Real names have been used with permission only in the second study (as explained in Part III of this chapter). The names of the first study participants have been changed and anonymity guaranteed at all times; their personal

information has also been coded to ensure anonymity and remains anonymous in the write up of the research. Records of the data collected (including transcripts and any audio recordings) are kept stored in a secure and safe place. Electronic and paper information could only be accessed by this researcher with personal username and password and is stored on a secure system with virus protection, locked in a secure building. Collected written information and any audio recording will be securely destroyed by respectively shredding/digitally disposing of it when no longer required (after the end of the whole PhD study, as agreed with participants).

Methods for data collection and analysis and how I intended to ensure no harm, detriment or unreasonable stress was caused: This project involves studying human experiences and understanding. The methods of data collection have respectively involved meeting interviewees in person for a recorded, subsequently transcribed interview, double-checked and eventually coded for the first study, and written/telephone and skype interviews, also subsequently transcribed, double-checked and coded for the second study. In both studies, quotations from participants' own words have been used with their permission to represent the concepts they shared. The multiple case studies (second study) also included quotations and concepts from available material that interviewees had previously published in books and online, as outlined in Part III below.

General debriefing has been offered at the end of each interview, as well as warmth and engagement during and after the process. Participation has been entirely voluntary and each participant has been made aware that they would be sharing personal stories, anecdotes and personal experience only to the extent and depth that would feel comfortable to them.

Reason for choosing educators' views and interviews in both studies: this research strategy is discussed in Chapter 3.

4.5 Trustworthiness and rigour criteria

Although several authors have suggested standards to ensure the trustworthiness of naturalistic studies, for the purpose of this investigation, the criteria offered by Lincoln and Guba (1985) and Guba and Lincoln (1989) have been used. The four types of

criteria they suggest are known as *credibility*, *transferability*, *dependability* and *confirmability*, explained below. Ideally, a naturalistic study should adhere to all these criteria or at least address as many as possible.

The **credibility** standard requires the contents of the study to be approved by those who provided the information on which the investigation is based (participants/interviewees). When met, this standard also tries to ensure that the study is believable to critical readers. Among the suggested techniques that may be used to augment the credibility of any study are *member checks* (where data reports and interpretations are reviewed by participants to ensure their viewpoints have been adequately represented), *triangulation* (verification of findings through multiple sources of information) and *progressive subjectivity tests* (noting and revealing one's preferences, biases and expectations as a researcher, which might influence results obtained). All three suggested techniques have been applied to both studies.

The **transferability** principle addresses the applicability of findings to other contexts (i.e. generalisability). A thorough description of the phenomenon being studied and of the context in which the investigation took place should help readers/audiences establish to what extent a particular study's results might be transferable. The methodology, discussion and results sections of both studies provide details of the issues, phenomena and context being investigated. Transferability is to be judged primarily by readers of this thesis. The information that follows and further research outlined in the literature review chapter above should help clarify to what extent my studies' results might be considered transferable.

The criterion of a study's **dependability** refers to establishing how consistent the processes used to carry out an investigation have been. In other words, the conceptualisation of the study, the choice of participants and methods for data collection, the interpretation of findings, and results reports need to be coherent and logical and the logic used needs to be clearly presented. Consistency in the research process adds dependability to the results. Such issues have been discussed with supervisors in different phases throughout the research process.

In order to meet the **confirmability** standard, which addresses the *quality* of results, information and interpretation by other sources (participants, findings by other authors

or literature, for example) should substantiate the researcher's interpretations. This point, at least in part, has been met by participants' partial involvement (via feedback) with the interpretation phases of the studies. Only one other academic study has been found on the Indigo phenomenon, with a different focus than the present study, results of which have been outlined and discussed in the literature review chapter. Relatively more information is instead available in terms of transpersonally-based educational interventions, as discussed in Chapter 2. In addition, raw data (brief quotes from original interviews) have been included in the findings section of both studies, and, for replicability purposes, examples of how data from interviews were thematically reduced into categories and analysed have been outlined in Appendices A and D, in sections 4.11.1. and 4.17.1. below and in Chapter 7, thus partially meeting dependability and confirmability criteria.

Part II – First study methodology

Given the question and the rationale for the first study outlined below and in the introduction, a qualitative research was chosen for my initial investigation to allow participants to provide information about the way they understood and made sense of the so-called Indigo phenomenon. The philosophy that informs this study holds that personal experience is not to be seen as anecdotal, but as a valid part of one's reality and one's construction of knowledge, yielding significant research data. For this reason, methods employed in this research are naturalistic and attempt to portray and reveal insider knowledge, perceptions, values and constructed meanings.

4.6 Research question

How do experienced educators describe and interpret the nature of Indigos and their educational needs?

4.7 Rationale for research design and methodology – interpretive phenomenological analysis

The method I eventually chose to collect and interpret data was interpretive phenomenological analysis (IPA), an experiential qualitative approach to research in

psychology and the social sciences, guided by phenomenology and hermeneutics. IPA has an idiographic focus, whose aim is to offer insights into how an individual in a specific context makes sense of a particular phenomenon. Access to a participant's world depends on a researcher's ability to interpret thoughts and comments and personal experiences articulated by participants, which presents the very real risk/complication that such interpretations can be filtered through the researcher's biases and own views of the world. In-depth analysis of data and seeking feedback from participants themselves are useful ways of counterbalancing the risk of presenting biased results (van Manen, 1990, Smith et al., 2009).

Interviews, focus groups and self-reporting tasks are among data collection techniques used in IPA, interviews being the most faithful to IPA's underlying philosophy, in that interviewees are seen as the 'primary experts' on the material being analysed. Non-directive interviewing styles tend to be used in IPA to encourage participants to tell their story their way, which is one of the core premises of IPA. By dividing the transcribed text into 'meaning units' and identifying commonalities and differences across a number of participants describing the same phenomenon, common themes are eventually found and interpreted, making meanings explicit (Smith et al., 2009).

I was interested in the *lived experiences and meanings* (relative to the Indigo phenomenon and the educational interventions found successful with Indigos) which several experienced educators could offer and in what they had in common, so that a composite description of the essence of their experience and understanding could emerge. Interpretive phenomenological analysis was chosen because it sheds light on the complexity of lived experiences. Furthermore, it 'provides insights into the lives of people whose voices might not otherwise have been heard, or whose experiences were ignored, or else constructed quite differently by mainstream theoretical models' (Smith et al., 2009, p.206).

Given the controversial topics under review, IPA, with its *interrogative* characteristic (aimed to contribute to the existing body of literature) seemed particularly suited to the present study – any new or unexpected data uncovered can be added to existing theories or even used as the basis for new, emerging theories; in order for this to happen, the researcher is required to remain particularly open-minded and to exercise not only patience in coding and analysing data, but also integrity in avoiding biasing results. The

material provided in interviews represents each interviewee's worldview and any results need to be consistent with that (Smith & Osborn, 2003).

Participants' unstructured interviews were analysed using IPA and coded using thematic content analysis (Creswell, 2007; Smith et al., 2009). Unstructured interviews were chosen for their potential to let significant issues (to the research focus) arise spontaneously and guide further research steps, hence no need to standardise how interviewees' thoughts and contributions flowed was deemed necessary. Unstructured interviews seemed especially helpful in the early stages of my research, when I was not certain yet about which areas or topics were going to be particularly important and deserving of further attention and investigation – this process, in other words, allowed my research focus to become progressively clearer.

Interpretation in IPA is meant to amplify meanings, which result from engaging intensively with the data obtained ordered into categories found using thematic content analysis, as stated above and detailed in Appendix A. To develop the required illumination of meanings, elements of creativity, insight and intuitive, critical awareness must also be present. This can be a rewarding, but challenging task, to which I have dedicated effort, patience and intention for several months (timeframe detailed below).

4.8 Sample and interviews

This study focuses on how two Italian educators who had unexpectedly been exposed to the Indigo phenomenon eventually made sense of it and worked with it; it also focuses on how a British 'Indigo expert' who has been doing pioneering work with Indigos of all ages for 12 years viewed Indigos, their characteristics and needs. The study was based on participants' reported *experiences*, on their *understanding* and, particularly in the Italian educators' case, on reactions to changes in students' abilities and behaviours never before encountered. The three participants offered two interviews, all unstructured as stated above, to enable interviewees to express their thoughts naturally and spontaneously on the topic of Indigos and their experience with them. The joint interview with the two Italian primary school teachers (in their early fifties) was long and detailed, as it was about an apparently difficult/unusual class they jointly taught for five years and how they handled it.

It is customary in Italy for one or two main teachers to teach the same class for the whole 5-year-elementary cycle. Primary school children usually have one or two main teachers for what are considered the main subjects and are also taught by what are known as ‘experts’ in other subjects (i.e. foreign language, information technology, etc.), who are more likely to change over the 5-year-cycle, due to different schools in other districts being assigned to them each year. Teaching the same class for five years, as my interviewees did, implies knowing the children very well indeed.

About 10 years ago, the two Italian educators encountered the Indigo phenomenon in their search for explanations, for a frame of reference and for alternative ways of working with an ‘indomitable’ class they would be teaching for five years; they unexpectedly found themselves faced with a challenging situation that they tackled as a creative process, thanks to which, they report, their awareness as educators and their teaching methods were eventually totally reviewed and changed.

The second interview was with a 40-year-old British professional intuitive, a self-identified Indigo and a psycho-spiritual teacher working with Indigos (all generations), mainly outside mainstream education. She is also the mother of two Indigo children (she claims) and over the years she has collaborated with primary and secondary schools in various brief projects, teaching dynamic forms of meditation and ways to hone and use one’s own intuitive guidance.

Participants’ details, location, focus of their work, reason for choice, time frame, type and place of interview are summarised in Table 3 below.

Table 3 Information on first study participants, the Indigo experts

<i>Table 3 – Information on first study participants, the Indigo experts</i>				
Participant	Location	Focus of their work	Reason for choice	When/where interviewed and type of interview
1 – Caroline (pseudonym)	Based in Italy	Primary school teacher with over 25 years’ experience.	Met her briefly at a seminar on education several years previously. She reported her experience with a difficult class she jointly taught for 5 years with a colleague. They later found there was a label that described the behaviour of that ‘indomitable class’, namely Indigo. Through an acquaintance, I was able to contact her again, informed her about my doctoral investigation and met her to find out whether she was willing to take part in the study. Having many years’ teaching experience and also direct experience of so-called Indigos in her class for a whole 5-year-cycle, she felt she had a lot to contribute to the study and was happy to share not only her knowledge of Indigos, but also measures taken to review her own teaching style and what she learned from the children about their own needs. She also wished to offer educational suggestions that might be	One joint interview session (with colleague Barbara below) at the primary school where they teach (their chosen location). April 2010. Unstructured interview transcribed, translated by me (a trained translator) and double-checked by a professional translator.

			useful to other teachers. She met me for the interview with her colleague she co-taught the Indigo class with, whom she informed about this study. I did not know it would be a joint interview until the arranged meeting with Caroline.	
2 – Barbara (pseudonym)	Based in Italy	Primary school teacher with over 25 years’ experience	Barbara co-teaches with Caroline, participant 1 described above. She wished to take part in my investigation, which her colleague Caroline informed her about, and to offer her own thoughts and contributions to the interview. Like Caroline, Barbara has extensive experience as a teacher and wished to help other educators, as well as parents. Both interviewees had tried to relate their experiences to their colleagues, to no avail. They felt they were not being listened to, which made them particularly keen interviewees. They had been looking for somebody to share their experiences with. Barbara said she was particularly keen on raising awareness regarding the dangers of ADD and other forms of misdiagnosis and consequent misuse of drugs such as Ritalin, in her opinion too often given to so-called ‘difficult children’. She felt a creative approach to teaching and learning could help establish a different rapport with such children. Interestingly, only one Indigo book in Italian was available to both Caroline and Barbara,	One joint interview session (with colleague Caroline above) at the primary school where they teach (their chosen location). April 2010. Unstructured interview transcribed, translated by me (a trained translator) and double-checked by a professional translator.

			which they soon discarded because they felt the information was too general. They preferred to let their children/pupils teach them about themselves and their own needs.	
3 – Tara (pseudonym)	Based in England	Professional intuitive and self-identified Indigo. Psycho-spiritual teacher working with Indigos (all ages), mainly outside mainstream education.	I had met Tara a year before and worked with her once in a professional capacity (as her client). I later learned that her expertise focused particularly on Indigos in a kind of work she pioneered over a decade before and carried out from different centres and institutions in London, England. She herself claims to be an Indigo and the mother of two Indigo children. Her expertise had also been used in brief energy awareness and meditation courses by several primary and secondary schools in the UK. She appeared to have extensive experience with Indigos and apparently her theories and techniques were derived from her own intuitive sources, as well as accumulated direct experience with many clients. Tara seemed to have very definite ideas about Indigo characteristics and needs, which she was happy to share with me, in the hope that other educators and adults might be better educated about Indigos and the New Generations – a topic she feels strongly about. No Indigo literature was ever mentioned by Tara.	June 2010 in her office (location chosen by participant). Unstructured interview in English, later transcribed by me and double-checked for accuracy by Tara herself.

4.9 First study – ethical issues expected to arise and other considerations

Although I had contacted only one of the Italian teachers for my Indigo-focused interview, on the day of the interview I found myself with two interviewees instead of one. Preferring to err on the safe side, when interviewing in person I always bring with me extra ethical forms (just in case of mistakes being made). This habit of mine proved useful in this case. I explained the study's purposes, data treatment and ethical issues to both participants before interviewing began and both could sign and keep a copy of the ethical clearance form, which had previously been translated into Italian for their benefit.

The joint interview was their own initiative – they felt that the interview should be seen as a particularly detailed one, as their views were the same but, because the interview was taking place in one session, each of them could provide information the other might be overlooking or not focusing on, they explained. They were clearly driven by a passion to let other people, parents and educators in particular, know of their experience and become aware of certain children's needs; they seemed also eager to communicate some of their successfully applied and, in their opinion, necessary changes in education for the future. They had been looking to be heard, they explained, and had been trying to communicate via other channels, but all educators, colleagues, headmasters and parents with whom they had tried to talk were reportedly not listening, and many seemed to be afraid/suspicious of a strange phenomenon with which they did not wish to be associated (i.e. Indigo). I had no idea before meeting them how keen they both were to be heard, so I accepted their suggested joint interview, seeing no ethical problem that would affect the interview, their well-being or my own in any particular way.

The interview lasted longer than initially agreed on (one and a half hours instead of the previously agreed one hour) and, probably due to their need to be heard, coupled with cultural reasons, it proved to be relatively intense at times, but provided very rich data. Given that all adults involved, interviewees and interviewer, shared the same cultural background (Latin/Italian), such relative intensity, especially once reasonable time boundaries had been established and agreed upon by all parties, did not prove problematic. I am aware, however, that an interviewer from a different culture, where

overt emotional expressions may be less encouraged or accepted, might have found the process slightly more challenging.

The only other ethical issue that could potentially have been problematic in the first study was the fact that I had previously had a personal consultation with the British Indigo expert/pioneer some time before I contacted her for a potential interview. The factor that, to my mind, counterbalanced and neutralised a potential ethical problem was the fact that she works from different centres and interacts with many people and does not appear to memorise either the people or the information she provides during private sessions. I cannot know for certain whether she remembered having worked with me – she did not appear to and no reference was made to a previous encounter on her part. Our respective roles had changed for the interview, making the exchange balanced, as I was clear in my mind that I was simply interviewing an expert in the field I was researching. Personally, I see no ethical issue connected to this participant or the interview obtained, but acknowledge that opinions on this point may differ.

I interviewed her because she had devised pioneering techniques especially for Indigos of all ages, which she had been using for over a decade. When I approached her for a potential interview she explained that the Indigo phenomenon was close to her heart and that she was happy to be interviewed particularly on that topic. In other words, it soon became clear that I found myself with another experienced educator who was eager to clarify what Indigos were all about and what interventions, in her experience, had proved beneficial to them. Her previous work with me was not in any way part of the study's interview, also because, as stated, she did not appear to have any recollection of it or of its contents.

Other than the two issues outlined above, I did not anticipate any further exceptional factors which might raise ethical issues for this particular kind of research and no ethical issues that I am aware of arose during or after research for my initial study. Other general ethical issues applicable to my doctoral investigation as a whole have been discussed in section 4.4 above.

Because all three first study's participants had expressed a wish to be kept informed of any developments, I maintained sporadic contact with them after the study had been completed and shared with them the study's results which, in part, as stated in Chapters

2 and 3, inspired me to a further investigation and comparison of existing research which might situate the phenomenon in a broader context, eventually leading to my casting of the New Generations and influencing the focus of the second study.

My first study on Indigos and the ‘New Generations’ phenomenon, with potential implications for teaching and learning, became the subjects I presented and discussed at two conferences and in an article I have written for the *International Journal of Arts and Sciences* (Trotta, 2012). Interviewees’ anonymity, as agreed, has always been preserved when presenting at conferences or writing about this first study research.

It is interesting to note that the continued interest in the topic and potential developments thereof on the part of participants might meet other criteria mentioned by Guba and Lincoln (1989), besides those outlined above, that arguably help measure a study’s authenticity, namely:

Fairness, which holds that a variety of understandings should be presented.

Ontological authenticity, according to which an expansion or improvement of the participants’ understanding of the topic ideally takes place.

Catalytic authenticity, which inspires or stimulates action as a result of the research investigation. I am aware that one of my three participants has indeed taken further action in the ‘Indigo field’ about a year and a half after my study. More details might compromise her anonymity, hence they cannot be elaborated on in this context.

The criteria just stated, and possibly those outlined in section 4.5, might be seen as value-laden or culturally bound. For this reason perhaps, I suggest that a definitive answer as to what makes a qualitative study truly trustworthy to everybody’s satisfaction may never be reached.

4.10 Reflexivity

Reflexivity on the self as a researcher, or on my multiple and changing selves (rather than a fixed self), as Crotty points out (1998) has been an ongoing process throughout my PhD journey. This included being aware of what may be influencing my relationship with my chosen topics or with my research participants. A personal, self-

reflexive journal has been kept throughout both investigations to aid me in a creative purpose of discovery and learning.

While claims of having remained an independent and totally objective observer during the research process cannot be made, I was clearly aware from the beginning that developing this kind of investigation which entailed interpreting individuals' thoughts, meanings and observations, presented the risk of the researcher being overtly biased and of the study becoming circular, easily manipulated to fit pre-existing ideas and worldviews. My conscious effort to present rigorous work will hopefully have circumvented the risks just outlined to a great extent and presentation and analysis of findings, informed by participants' feedback, is given as an accurate reflection of participants' understanding, observations and meaning of the Indigo phenomenon. This study was undertaken with a focus on its potential *usefulness in practice*, which could only be achieved if the study itself remained faithful to, and reflective of, participants' experiences. I have applied my conscious effort and intention for it to be so. The limitations of the first study and suggestions for future research are outlined in Chapter 5.

4.11 The interview process, data collection and analysis

As outlined above, unstructured interviews guided the first study research on the Indigo phenomenon – the only limit was placed on previous agreement with participants of the two main topics to discuss, namely perceived Indigos' characteristics and educational needs. How to proceed and what to say was totally up to participants. All interviews were conducted in person in environments chosen by participants (which ensured their comfort), were digitally recorded and later transcribed, translated where applicable and double-checked, as stated.

Interviewed experts were encouraged to feel at ease and use any kind of language they felt comfortable with and to provide any information they wished on the topic of their experience with Indigos, following their own inspiration or any chosen order of narrative, with no pressure or specific questions from me. Any question I might ask would be based on concepts they freely shared to obtain more clarity or to make sure I had understood correctly what was being said. We had agreed beforehand that the topics under investigation and to be generally discussed would be Indigos, their characteristics and needs as each interviewee perceived them, and any educational interventions the

educator being interviewed had successfully applied with Indigo individuals. Interviewees were free to add or withdraw any relevant information as they deemed appropriate.

The joint interview with the two Italian teachers took place in Italian and was later translated and transcribed by me (my original training was in translating and interpreting) and double-checked for accuracy by a professional translator. To avoid influencing data as much as possible, I actively sought and generously obtained feedback on my interpretation of data. This addresses validity issues (member checks and triangulation, discussed in section 4.5), while enabling data analysis to be as rich and accurate as possible.

4.11.1 Data analysis process - summary of analytical steps

What follows is a step-by-step summary of the *analytic process* I carried out for the first study using data obtained via interviews (further details are provided in Appendix A):

- 1) I re-read each interview several times, listened to original recordings, made copies of original interviews and highlighted main themes manually.
- 2) Using Microsoft Word, I placed line numbers on documents so I could create 'quote references' that I could easily retrieve from the transcribed interview text. Interview quotes have been referenced using interview number, page and line number that locate them in the original transcribed text.
- 3) For my thematic coding, I started extracting comments, initially lengthy quotes, ordering them by main initial themes, following a logical order of concepts presented in the interview, which guided me to identify the title of each initial thematic category. This process was used for each interview separately.
- 4) Original interviews were always kept on screen, side by side with separate documents where main thematic categories were being organised and relevant thematic quotes moved to.

- 5) Re-arranging the whole interviews according to compatible quotes/contents led to large initial numbers of categories/themes - 16 for interview 1 and 12 for interview 2.
- 6) I interacted with the material intensively, and, at regular intervals, I chose to pause, to let material sink into my unconscious/superconscious, in the hope to gain insight and add to clarity. By finding more similarities among quotes and themes meanings and writing key words that illustrated mental summaries, I succeeded in regrouping the quotes under thematic units that organised similar material, gradually reducing thematic categories. Noting repetitions, emphases and similarities and discarding non relevant information also guided the process, as shown in Appendix A.
- 7) At this stage, I started looking at both thematically coded interviews. The similarities found between themes from the two interviews were then grouped together, with relevant original quotes and extracts from both interviews placed under the different, temporary common thematic categories with which I started out. Throughout this process I was mindful of the focus of the research question.
- 8) After spending more intensive time with the data, I began seeing how certain comments/quotes reflecting interviewees' thoughts, reflections and contributions could be grouped differently. The number of common categories was eventually further reduced from six to three which were found to answer the research question (see Appendix A). It was both a highly logical and a profoundly intuitive, heuristic process.

Planning the study, finding participants and carrying out the first study investigation occupied a total of 10 months, from January 2010 to October 2010. Once experienced and willing participants were found, ethical papers signed and interviews carried out, translated and transcribed, the processes of analysis, coding, obtaining feedback, and reaching conclusions took about four months (from July to October 2010). Findings, discussion and conclusions from the first study are outlined in Chapter 5.

Part III – Second study methodology

4.12 Introduction

As explained in Chapter 2, the first study's results, plus further socio-historical and educational research, revealed that the self-actualising and self-transcending tendencies found in Indigos did not seem to be an isolated phenomenon. Because other representatives of differently-labelled members of the New Generations seemed to manifest the same or similar self-actualising and self-transcending tendencies, my interest in a phenomenon that seemed to be more widespread than previously recognised grew, as did my wish to find ways of meeting the educational needs of the New Generations. Hence, the focus of the whole investigation shifted from Indigos to the New Generations and moved on to exploring how/whether holistic educational models might address their self-actualising tendencies and inform mainstream education.

Psychosynthesis, as a transpersonally-informed educational model, was found to be congruent with the New Generations' characteristics, in that it addresses and safely integrates self-actualising and self-transcending needs within the psyche. It was also found to have been applied in education at various levels and in various contexts for several decades (see Chapter 2). The potential contribution that psychosynthesis might make to mainstream education was also relatively unexplored, therefore its transpersonally-based, general educational model became the focus of my second study – a qualitative, multiple case study research. The second study investigates whether and to what extent characteristics and elements of psychosynthesis-based educational work, as obtained from three experts' descriptions and perceptions (derived from their interviews and previously published material available) might potentially:

- a) contribute to holistic education
- b) inform future developments in mainstream education so that the New Generations might be potentially served better.

This study focuses on discovery, interpretation and insight. The *unit of analysis*, which is the fundamental issue to be studied that defines the cases under investigation (Yin,

2009), therefore, was the experienced educators' views of the applicability, nature and potential contributions of psychosynthesis-based educational interventions.

4.13 Research question

As the participants were found and the study began, focusing on what I really wanted to find out, I reached the following two research questions formulated as one:

How are the latest trends in the general psychosynthesis-based educational model contributing to holistic education according to experienced educators and how might contributions inform mainstream education?

4.14 Rationale for research design and methodology – multiple case studies

For this exploratory qualitative study, *a multiple case study methodology* has been chosen because it enables the researcher to compare results from different cases and does not limit the investigation to data offered only via interviews or observation, enabling triangulation of data, as discussed below.

When using multiple case studies, provided consent has been given by interviewees regarding anonymity issues, multiple sources of information and data for analysis are available to the researcher, such as participants' published material in books, journal articles, videos and previous interviews found on the Internet, as detailed in Table 4 below. This previously published material authored by participants has offered an important supportive function which, besides facilitating triangulation of data, has enabled me, the researcher, to understand more fully how the participants' worldviews and backgrounds formed the various psychosynthesis-based educational interventions they offered, each with a different focus.

Another advantage of multiple case study methodology is that it offers a multiple perspective on the unit of analysis. In other words, the researcher considers not only the interviewees' voices, but also those of other groups of people with whom they interacted, and who influenced them (revealed in this study by using and briefly quoting from relevant books, documents and concepts interviewees learned from other people they mentioned, who influenced them and their work).

In multiple case study research, each individual case study is first treated as a ‘whole’ study, in which information and facts are gathered from various documentary sources, and conclusions drawn are based on those sources, quotations from which can be found in each case study report. Multiple case studies sometimes follow a logic of replication, but not necessarily (Yin, 2009). They can, like in the present study, simply offer more information and different ways of looking at the same topic, adding subtleties that are likely to enhance analysis (Stake, 1995, 2010). I reasoned that adopting a multiple case study research strategy for this investigation would allow me to focus on understanding the dynamics present within single settings, eventually cross analysing all case studies to find potential *cross-case patterns*. Any replication in patterns eventually found would reinforce **confirmability** of research results/potential emergent theories.

Multiple sources of data and cross-case analysis in case study research lend the potential of ‘grounding’ a potentially emergent theory by *triangulation* of evidence and are likely to add credibility to the investigation, as does *member checks* – a process by which data reports and interpretations are reviewed by participants to ensure their viewpoints have been adequately represented. Member checks have been carried out throughout this study, and amendments have been applied where requested and applicable.

Because no previous research has been found in the field under investigation to compare and contrast it with, the present study contains exploratory, explanatory and descriptive elements (Yin, 2009). The *exploratory* quality of this study offers initial analysis of a phenomenon to be potentially explored in further investigations; its *descriptive* element provides a full portrayal of each case, while its *explanatory* dimension will attempt to elucidate particular aspects or themes potentially found underlying all the data collected.

4.15 Potential limitations of case study research

The risks and likely limitations connected to case study research of which I, as an investigator, have needed to be mindful have been:

- 1) its potential excessive length to be kept in check,
- 2) the need to be systematic in data collection and analysis,
- 3) the importance to take steps to ensure trustworthiness and rigour in the study,

4) sufficient triangulation of data.

For a critique of my own case study research see Chapter 8, section 8.3.

4.16 Sample

The sample for the first study focused on participants whose acquired experience was often obtained by a long process of trial and error (and also via intuitive guidance, as in the case of the British ‘Indigo expert’), without the benefit of any previous training in the specific field under investigation – the Indigo phenomenon. In other words, their own acquired experience without guidance available in the field made them experts.

The sample for the second study, instead, was composed of highly trained individuals, whose experience of the topic under investigation (psychosynthesis/psychoenergetics) had entailed not only psycho-spiritual needs they had initially experienced and met via a psychosynthetic process of self-discovery and integration, but also several years of training under supervision before being able to train and work with others. In their own ways, all three participants are pioneers in their chosen psychosynthesis-based area of work, they are all published authors and very active in training others and in offering them different forms of psychosynthesis-based courses and therapies (from self-awareness courses, to counselling and even psychosynthesis psychotherapy, as in the case of Ilene – case study 3). As reported in Table 4, all have worked in mainstream education and all work with children, adolescents and young adults in different capacities and have done so for decades.

After collecting five different interviews from a sample described above, I decided to narrow my focus on three case studies. The main screening criterion used to select the final three case studies to be analysed was interviewees’ long experience as psychosynthesis educators who also had ‘insider knowledge’, that is experience teaching in mainstream education or working with/training children, young adults, parents and/or mainstream educators. All three experts at different stages of their lives have also taught in mainstream education. Each case study participant, besides being a published author, also pioneers or specialises in a different area within psychosynthesis-based learning. Each is an active trainer who works with people of all ages, including elders, children, adolescents, parents and educators.

Once emergent themes and unique case features were initially noted when collecting data relative to one case, I, the researcher, opportunistically decided to direct the choice of the next case study to analyse by approaching the best-known international representatives in the field and experts in emergent areas under scrutiny. In other words, I approached prospective participants who could either potentially provide the richest data or add information on topics that had already partially emerged from the previous interview/case, thus potentially enriching final results. A clear example of this process is my final choice of expert number 3, Ilene, whose expertise revolves around training parents and educators – a topic that participant number 2, Molly, had discussed at length in her interview and about which she appeared to feel strongly, but in which she could not necessarily offer extensive experience.

The process of making my final choice of which case studies to include in my research (which was influenced by finding willing participants whose work met the criteria just stated) and of interviewing them after obtaining ethical clearance lasted eight months (from October 2010 to May 2011). Participants' details, location, focus of their work, reason for choice, time frame and type of interview are summarised in Table 4 below. Table 5 shows the type of data collected and documentary evidence for the three case studies.

Table 4 – Information on multiple case studies’ participants

<i>Table 4 – Information on multiple case studies’ participants</i>				
Participant	Location	Focus of their work	Reason for choice	When interviewed
<p>1 – Mariella Lancia</p> <p>This is her real name, used with permission after she was informed that the methodology chosen for the study entailed using extra material she had authored that was published on the Internet or in books/magazines, references to which might make her recognisable, potentially compromising her anonymity. She was also made aware that she would have the possibility of reading her own case study report and of requesting amendments to how her work had been represented. She was happy for her work to be known and for her real name to be used.</p>	<p>Based in Bologna, Italy</p>	<p>Director of WYSE-International’s Italian branch and of one of WYSE’s programmes (called “Elders”, aimed at participants aged 50+, with young volunteers from other programmes also regularly participating as helpers).</p> <p>WYSE (World Youth Service and Enterprise) is a psychosynthesis-based training programme affiliated with the Department of Public Information of the United Nations. It is an NGO (non-governmental organisation) founded in 1989 by the late Marilyn Feldberg, an internationally known, UK-based, pioneering soul educator and psychosynthesisist.</p> <p>Yoga and psychosynthesis trainer. Soul educator.</p> <p>Former teacher in mainstream education.</p>	<p>Wish to liaise directly with one of the directors of WYSE-International. UK-based directors were not available for interviews. Mariella, director of the Italian branch, was happy to share her insights and experience and she was open to further future contact, if needed (i.e. to read case study draft and offer feedback/require modifications).</p> <p>Interviewee and researcher were both based in Italy, which would potentially facilitate interviewing. Due to illness and Mariella’s preference, however, the interview did not take place in person.</p> <p>Having worked in mainstream education, she could offer ‘insider knowledge’ – a vision applicable to the field and based on direct experience.</p>	<p>November 2010 (due to her illness at the time, she initially chose to reply in writing via email). She integrated her written interview in December 2011, offering a further informal discussion of her work by telephone.</p> <p>The spoken interview was digitally recorded and subsequently transcribed. Both the digitally recorded and the written interviews were translated by me, the researcher. The translation was double-checked by Mariella herself (who publishes material in English and Italian and who was formerly a teacher specialising in English as a foreign language).</p>

<p>2 – Molly Young Brown</p> <p>This is her real name, used with permission after she was informed that the methodology chosen for the study entailed using extra material she had authored that was published on the Internet or in books, references to which might make her recognisable, potentially compromising her anonymity. She was also made aware that she would have the possibility of reading her own case study report and of requesting amendments to how her work had been represented. She was happy for her work to be known and for her real name to be used.</p>	<p>California, USA</p>	<p>Psychosynthesis and eco-psychosynthesis international trainer, pioneer, educator, activist, author, consultant and therapist.</p> <p>Former teacher in mainstream education. For a relatively short time she was also involved in teacher training.</p> <p>She also created two distance learning self-development courses: one on psychosynthesis and one on eco-psychosynthesis.</p>	<p>Key-speaker and author, internationally well-known in the field. Currently one of the most active in making psychosynthesis and eco-psychosynthesis known internationally.</p> <p>She is very keen on encouraging research involving psychosynthesis, which is one of the main reasons why she was happy to take part in the present study.</p> <p>Molly was also open to further future contact, if needed (i.e. to read case study draft and offer feedback/require modifications).</p> <p>Having worked in mainstream education, she could offer ‘insider knowledge’ – a vision applicable to the field and based on direct experience.</p>	<p>April 2011 (via skype). Interview digitally recorded and transcribed verbatim. A copy was sent to her for approval or amendments.</p>
<p>3 – Ilene Val-Essen</p> <p>This is her real name, used with permission after she was informed that the methodology chosen for the</p>	<p>California, USA</p>	<p>Psychosynthesis trainer; psychotherapist and educator at UCLA (University of California Los Angeles).</p> <p>Works with children, parents, teachers and professionals in providing a</p>	<p>Her work with parents and educators on being centred, on attitudes, intuition and the Transpersonal Self has gained popularity after her award-winning book was published.</p>	<p>May 2011 (via skype). Interview digitally recorded and transcribed verbatim. A copy was sent to her for approval or amendments.</p>

<p>study entailed using extra material she had authored that was published on the Internet or in books, references to which might make her recognisable, potentially compromising her anonymity. She was also made aware that she would have the possibility of reading her own case study report and of requesting amendments to how her work had been represented. She was happy for her work to be known and for her real name to be used.</p>		<p>practical, psychosynthetic model to be used with children by parents and educators.</p> <p>Former teacher in mainstream education.</p>	<p>She is currently working on a second project – an advanced level of her vision, which focuses one’s awareness on inner guidance from the Transpersonal Self (the inner wise teacher), which the centred self receives via the development of one’s intuitive faculties.</p> <p>Ilene is active in promoting a psychosynthetic vision; she was also open to future, further contact, if needed (i.e. to read case study draft and offer feedback/require modifications).</p> <p>Having worked in mainstream education, she could offer ‘insider knowledge’ – a vision applicable to the field and based on direct experience.</p>	
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The type of data collected and documentary evidence used for the three case studies is listed below.

Table 5 – Documentary evidence for the case studies

<i>Table 5 – Documentary evidence for the case studies</i>			
Case	Interview	Documentary evidence	Web based material
1 Mariella	E-mail interview Telephone interview	Chapter 6 in book on soul-based education, an international movement to which WYSE subscribes: Lancia, M. (2010). <i>Ethics as the language of the soul</i> , pp.69–81, in ‘The wheels of soul in education: An inspiring international dynamic’, Kates & Harvey (eds.), Rotterdam, NL: Sense Publishers.	Article: Lancia, M. (2011). Elders in Training, <i>Psicosintesi magazine</i> . WYSE’s websites: WYSE’s international website: Wyse Intl. (n.d.). Wyse’s approach. WYSE’s Italian website: WYSE Italia (n.d.). L’approccio di WYSE
2 Molly	Skype interview	Young Brown, M. (2009). <i>Growing whole: Self-realization for the great turning</i> . CA: Psychosynthesis Press Macy, J., Young Brown, M. (1998). <i>Coming back to life: Practices to reconnect our lives, our world</i> . Canada: New Society Publishers.	Molly’s website: Molly Young Brown (2011) – Ecopsychosynthesis and ecopsychology. (I used participant’s quotations from definitions and essays she published on her website) Articles: Young Brown, M. (1996a). <i>Ecosynthesis</i> . Young Brown, M. (1996b). <i>Psychosynthesis and deep ecology</i> .

			<p>Young Brown, M. (1999). <i>Ecopsychosynthesis: Meeting the crises of our time</i>.</p> <p>Young Brown, M. (2007). <i>Self-regulation and the egg diagram</i>.</p> <p>Young Brown, M. (2009a). <i>Psychosynthesis and the Great Turning</i>.</p> <p>Online interview: Destri, M. (2008, January 23).</p> <p>Video on psychoenergetics: Dummer, V. (n.d.). Guided by the Sun: Psychosynthesis Video Portraits. <i>Psychosynthesis resources</i>.</p>
3 Ilene	Skype interview	<p>Val Essen, I. (2010). <i>Bring out the best in your child and your Self: Creating a family based on mutual respect</i>. CA: Quality Parenting.</p> <p>Chapter 5 from participant's book in preparation, focusing on advanced teachings related to her first book above. Chapter title: <i>Discovering the intuitive: Finding the extraordinary in the ordinary</i>. Received by author.</p>	<p>Ilene's website: Val Essen, I. (2003). <i>Quality Parenting</i>.</p> <p>Article:</p> <p>Val Essen, I. (2002). <i>Parenting – The most challenging role of a lifetime</i>. AAP Newsletter, Spring 2002.</p>

4.17 The interview process, data collection and analysis

All participants were initially contacted via email and informed of the study I intended to undertake, what it involved and what I was trying to find out. Because most potential participants lived in the United States and interviews were not going to take place face-to-face, I provided details of my university student page to reassure them that I was a *bona fide* researcher before asking them whether they were willing to take part. Once potentially interested experts replied asking for more information, I let them know that their participation was going to entail a semi-structured interview via skype (software programme that enables audio and video conversations between computers all over the world), lasting about an hour (interview protocol in Appendix B). I informed them I would later transcribe their words and send them a copy for approval or amendments. Once a report had been written about their individual work, I would also send each expert their individual case study report, giving them the opportunity to judge whether their work had been correctly represented and to offer suggestions or require changes to it.

The methodology chosen for my investigation and what it involved was also explained, introducing discussion of ethical issues. Because case studies make use of different sources of information, potential participants were informed that to create a report representing their views and their work, I would use not only their interviews, but also information taken from their books, websites, articles and any material they had authored and published on the internet, which would make it difficult to preserve or guarantee their anonymity. E-mail communications, at this point, provided enclosed ethical clearance forms, to be signed and returned in case of participation acceptance. Interested participants were always invited to ask any clarifying questions before signing and giving consent, and were informed that their consent was not binding because they had the right to change their mind about participating at any stage and to withdraw their data for any or no reason they did not need to share with me, the researcher.

All three final case study participants offered me the opportunity to contact them again in case further information/help was needed at any later stage of the present study. The interviews with the two participants living in the USA took place via skype and lasted about 60 minutes. A semi-structured interview protocol was loosely followed to make

space for spontaneous contributions. The conversations were relaxed and yielded very rich data. Interviewees were encouraged to feel at ease and use any kind of language with which they felt comfortable, and to provide any information they wished on the topics being researched, following their own inspiration and sharing as much or as little as they felt comfortable with.

The interview with the Italian educator and director of WYSE's Italian branch was originally scheduled to take place in person. I travelled to Bologna, Italy, where she is based but, due to her ill health, the interview was cancelled twice while I was staying in the area. Several other alternatives were offered over the following two months, but the interviewee, still keen on participating, eventually chose her own preferred method (also due to her busy schedule) – she asked to be provided with a list of questions (see protocol in Appendix B), which she chose to answer in writing in the first instance. The information obtained was to be combined with a telephone interview which took place soon after, was digitally recorded and transcribed. The final document was sent to her for translation/contents approval or amendments (she used to teach English professionally). Despite the unusual procedure, the interview provided interesting and rich data. She informed me she was open to a meeting in person in the future, should an integration of data/information be necessary.

In terms of analysing data, themes found from the interviews and other available material for each case study allowed a 'within-case' analysis for each case study report. This process facilitated a preliminary theory generation. However, it was the cross-case analysis (cross-case pattern search found when comparing themes from the three case studies) that allowed me, the researcher, to refine initial impressions, to see evidence through various lenses and to let underlying concepts emerge, which formed a holistic picture eventually derived from an intuitive process of incubation of data (Anderson & Braud, 2011; Moustakas, 1990; Stake, 2010; Yin, 2009). A summary of the replicable analytical procedures that I employed follows.

4.17.1. Data analysis process - summary of analytical steps

Each case study was analysed separately, starting from case study 1 and following a logical order. Two tables were created for each case study – one showing how initial themes were grouped into final categories and another showing contributions from each participant organised by sections. Details and tables are provided in Appendix D.

What follows is an explanation of all the steps I followed in organising and analysing data for each case study (using thematic content analysis), leading to the cross-case analysis (the latter detailed in steps 14-18 below and further illustrated in Chapter 7 and App. D):

- 1) I line-numbered each interview transcript page.
- 2) I found initial themes following logically what the interviewed expert was saying and choosing appropriate headings, under which extracted lengthy quotes (raw data) were grouped and reference numbered (showing interview, page and line numbers) to allow easy retrieval and reorganisation of data, as needed.
- 3) I carried out a data triangulation process, looking for confirming/contradicting statements found in material previously published by the expert interviewed. Quotes extracted from extra material were added to the relevant illustrative quotes from interviews already grouped and organised in initial thematic categories.
- 4) I revisited all data and listened again to all interviews, noting the different emphases, repetitions or contradictions, if any. After all the relevant extra material and evidence had been collected, I highlighted sections that seemed particularly clear; key words or brief summaries were written manually beside each theme.
- 5) I made comments in pencil and took time off data analysis to gain some detachment and perspective.
- 6) I focused on research questions, highlighting areas of work each expert specialised in and how and why they were using psychosynthesis, as guided by their stated aims and visions.
- 7) I made a note of individual/s whom each participant had mentioned as having influenced their thoughts and work/vision.

- 8) I made lists of each participant's area of expertise, so that when reducing categories in answer to the research questions, information from all their areas of work was included.
- 9) I printed all grouped data and wrote in pencil beside each initial category a brief summary of what each theme covered and discussed – this would help me summarise and reorganise data.
- 10) I checked that each initial theme/category had been named appropriately and was clearly reflecting the contents of the material each heading represented.
- 11) When re-reading all data, I noted again any confirmations or contradictions and highlighted with a different colour any data not strictly relevant to the research question, to avoid getting lost in tangents, however interesting they might have been.
- 12) I created a table for each case study, which visually helped to see how initial themes could be grouped and absorbed to reduce the number of categories, providing short summaries which clarified the rationale I had used to group data. The focus this time was heavily on data that could provide answers to the research questions. (i.e. Table 10).
- 13) I chose illustrative quotes/extracts to report under each final category after my interpretation to ensure that the essential messages (and interviewees' voices) contained in the interviews and extra material had not been lost, while also ensuring that each case study report was kept interesting but not excessively lengthy.
- 14) Two parallel processes were followed for each case study to lead to finding answers to the research questions. One process focused on moving from initial to final thematic categories for each case study; a second process focused on gradually compiling a table for each interviewed expert that would clarify their vision, aims, techniques used, etc., and would lead to a presentation of participants' contributions organised by headings, thus adding more depth to the analysis of data available (i.e. Table 11). All six tables can be found in Appendix D.

- 15) While analysing single case data, being aware that further work on comparing and contrasting the information derived from the final categories of each case study would eventually contribute to an answer to the research question in the cross-case analysis stage, I gradually wrote summaries of each final theme for each participant, as work on analysing data for each case study progressed (presented in a synthesised version in sections 6.2.1, 6.3.1. and 6.4.1.). One aspect of the analysis of thematic contents is about creating summaries later summarised, keeping the essence of participants' contributions intact (Anderson, 2007; Anderson & Braud, 2011), while helping to extract each participant's contributions that help answer the research question.
- 16) As stated, I compiled Tables 10-15, which helped to provide 'within case' findings, with data already organised by headings so as to be more easily cross-analysed. Finding patterns across all cases, similarities and differences by making initial notes was my step at this stage.
- 17) Particularly the findings tables for each case study (Tables 11, 13 and 15 in App. D), which were the result of summaries of summaries of themes and data, as explained above, eventually revealed visions, aims and practices that all three experts interviewed appeared to have in common, despite the slightly different focus each expert placed on their work.
- 18) I eventually created Table 16 to show clearly and synthetically similarities and differences among all three case studies. The summaries written for each final category of each case study (synthesised in Chapter 6, as stated), once compared and contrasted, helped compile not only the findings table for each study, but also helped to find patterns, eventually resulting in two more tables. Table 16 summarises the cross-case analysis process and Table 17 outlines possible answers to the research question. All the tables mentioned contained, summarised and organised data and information that led to conclusions and implications, discussed and outlined in Chapter 8.

From planning to finishing the whole study was a process that lasted 19 months. Finding and interviewing the case study experts took eight months, from October 2010 to May 2011. Once experienced and willing participants were found, ethical papers signed and interviews carried out, translated, transcribed and double-checked, the

processes of selecting and coding data for all three case studies, writing reports, obtaining feedback and working on the cross-case analysis discussion and results lasted from June 2011 to May 2012, including revisions.

4.18 Ethical issues specific to this study

General ethical issues applicable to both studies were discussed in section 4.4.

Informed consent was obtained for each case study. Anonymity and confidentiality issues were clearly addressed and ethical clearance obtained before the study began. As stated above, such issues appear particularly important in case study research. Using and referencing interviewees' web-based or previously published material as data to be analysed, together with the interview, effectively limits the anonymity guarantees ideally offered in research. Special permission to use data that could make each participant recognisable obviously needed to be obtained before proceeding with the interview and case study. I was especially sensitive regarding any confidentiality issues and took extra time to make sure that each aspect of this study was clearly communicated in writing (via e-mail) and potential implications understood before obtaining consent from each participant. A number of clarifying emails were written in answer to any possible question or concern interviewees might have, and every step of the procedure involved in coding and analysing data and the potential use of the present study was fully explained.

4.19 Unexpected ethical issue

An unexpected ethical issue I have had to confront and resolve has alerted me to the potential misunderstanding of intentions and purposes underlying a research study – a danger that should not be underestimated. Framing the study and trust issues seem to depend not only on clear communication, but also possibly on personality, cultural differences or even one's unconscious projections or unresolved issues (both as a researcher and as a participant).

One participant, half-way through my investigation, suddenly expressed concern for the name of the methodology used – 'case study' reminded her of psychoanalysis and she did not want to be psychoanalysed or judged. A very lengthy email correspondence

followed, in which I offered a very detailed explanation of every step involved in each phase of the research, explaining clearly that judgement of her work was not part of the research purposes. She was invited to ask for as much extra clarification as necessary until she was satisfied and her concerns had been fully addressed and explained. She was also reminded that she was free to withdraw her data or participation any time and at any stage of the research for any or no reason she did not need to share with me. I reassured her that I was going to respect this right and there was absolutely no pressure on her to continue with this particular investigation should she still feel concerned. Her feedback was that the explanations provided were exhaustive and that she was happy to continue to participate.

Another unforeseen ethical issue and potential complication encountered was that, despite all information offered before the study began, the same participant referred to above still seemed to have misunderstood the purpose of the investigation. The other two participants, as later verified, appeared to be clear that the *unit of analysis*, the fundamental issue to be studied that defined the cases under investigation, was the *applicability, nature and contributions of psychosynthesis-based educational interventions*. They both welcomed the opportunity to provide information that might inform the psychosynthesis community and other related fields involving the practice and usefulness of psychosynthesis.

The unconscious expectations of the other interviewee, which I failed to realise in the early stages of my work with her, were apparently different. After being presented with a draft of her own case study report for amendments or approval, she revealed that she had assumed that my interest in her work had been for the purpose of eventually promoting it. I tried to exercise the utmost care and sensitivity in clarifying again why I was undertaking the research, and repeated in great detail not only the purpose of the study under investigation, but also every step involved. I also sent extracts from emails previously sent to her that she could easily retrace, explaining that this was done to reassure and prove to her that I had never tried to mislead or cheat her into participating and that I genuinely thought I had made every step and intention behind my research project very clear, but obviously had not. I also apologised for any misunderstandings I might have caused.

My concern was that she should not feel cheated at any stage, therefore, for the third time, I again reminded her that, as stated in the consent form and clarified before, she had every right to withdraw participation and data at any stage, for any or no reason, and she did not need to share her reasons with me. Again, I asked her to express in writing (via e-mail) her wish to continue participating or to withdraw participation and data, with no hard feelings or duress from me in any way or form.

Again, she confirmed she was happy to continue being a participant, but on condition that quotes from her interview (during which informal language had been used) could be used solely for the purpose of this study. She expressed the wish to have control on the wording of any data used from her interview that I might potentially use in future publications.

I guaranteed that, as part of my ethical commitments, I would have to ask for her permission before using any data for purposes different from this specific investigation in any case, reassuring her that informal language, commonly used in interviews, actually adds to the authenticity of participants' voices. I again shared that I did not want any participant to feel unhappy about any aspect of participating in the research. Keen on minimising any discomfort in any possible way, I offered her the option of opting out of the investigation now or at a later stage. Again, she refused to exercise this right and stated that she was happy to remain an active participant, with the proviso just outlined.

By now, concerned that my previous explanations to participants might not have been adequately clear, I shared with the other two interviewees extra clarifications regarding the name of the methodology, all procedures used and purposes and uses of the present study, asking them both whether they were happy to continue taking part in the research, reminding them that I was always available for any questions or concerns and that they were always free to withdraw data and participation. They seemed to welcome the extra explanation concerning the name of the methodology used ('case study') and stated that they appreciated being reminded of their right to withdraw from the study, but expressed no previous or existing concern about it, confirming consent to their participation.

I am not sure whether this issue with one particular participant was attributable to cultural or personal differences or simply to my defective explanations regarding the

purpose of the study or name of the methodology and procedures involved. This potential problem, however, has made me aware of how easily communication, perceived as clear by the sending party, can be 'coloured' and perceived differently by the listening/receiving party. Clarity seems to be more a matter of opinion than previously realised and possibly greatly influenced by personal values/expectations or social/cultural bias. Perhaps a researcher can never be clear enough regarding intentions or purposes behind a study – unconscious assumptions or expectations might certainly compromise one's presumed clarity in giving or interpreting verbal or written communication. Also, for many reasons, individuals differ in the amount of control they need to have/keep when relating with others and a researcher needs to be mindful of that. In other words, being misunderstood seems certainly a possibility and an ethical danger not to be underestimated in research.

This chapter has outlined ontological, epistemological, ethical and validity issues applicable to the two investigations, and has provided information on participants, details of design and research methods used, of data collection and analysis for both my first and second study. Encountered and potential ethical issues, specific to each study, were also acknowledged and discussed, as were my own biases, which I took care to spell out clearly. The chapter that follows outlines my first, Indigo study findings, discussion and conclusions, to be followed by three chapters (6-8) that present and discuss my second study findings, implications and conclusions.

CHAPTER 5 FIRST STUDY REPORT

This chapter outlines the contributions of educators who acquired expertise in working with children and older individuals whom they came to define Indigos and it also presents and discusses the first study findings in answer to the following research question:

How do experienced educators describe and interpret the nature of Indigos and their educational needs?

My first study is based on educators' lived experience (lasting 5 years in one case and 12 in the other case), on meaning-making and observations they acquired working within and outside mainstream education; the study as previously stated, has focused on a controversial social phenomenon that has been attracting attention in the media, but has received scant academic research – in fact, the literature available seems to be written mainly by therapists and educational consultants, who, as discussed in the literature review, are accused of profiting from a growing phenomenon that, at least for the moment, cannot be standardised, scientifically measured through neurobiological changes or universally defined.

Having said that, as outlined in Chapter 2, one could argue that the same reasoning might underlie psychological theories based on therapists' observations, which, in time, have acquired respectability in varying degrees (for example Jung's, Maslow's or Assagioli's work) and that absence of 'scientific evidence' may not necessarily equate with evidence of absence of the phenomenon under review. The aim of the first study is to further understanding of a phenomenon that does not appear to go away, behind which new emerging collective values or needs might be lying.

While this small-scale study attempts to partially fill a gap in research on Indigos by providing experienced educators' observations and perspectives on the nature and educational needs of Indigos, acquired after years of teaching and working with them, it has also served the purpose of providing a clearer focus for the second study, outlined and discussed in Chapters 6-8, as well as cohesiveness to my investigation as a whole, as argued in Chapters 2 and 3.

5.1 Presentation of findings

In this section, I will report on the Indigo phenomenon, characteristics, and applied/envisaged educational interventions, as offered by participants. As stated in chapter 4, the three main categories/themes eventually found and outlined below were discussed with participants, whose feedback regarding the emphasis they wished to give to their thoughts, reported meanings, perceptions and experiences guided my analytic work in co-constructing interpretation. This study's analytic process is summarised in chapter 4, (section 4.11.1.) and detailed in Appendix A. The three key areas discussed by participants, which helped to provide an answer to the research question, were Indigos' traits (which the interviewed British expert defined 'Indigo consciousness') and educational needs, empowerment issues and suggested and successfully applied educational interventions. These three main areas were eventually identified by analysing data and became the common, final thematic categories for the first study (see Table 6, App. A).

Having indicated the three thematic categories that eventually grouped participants' contributions, the findings from the first study in this chapter have been organised by presenting each thematic category in turn; narratives in each theme outlined below have been interweaved with raw data/original brief quotes from the two interviews (the numbers shown after each quote show interview, page and line numbers in the original transcripts for reference), which give participants a voice and provide evidence. In other words, this chapter focuses on the narrative and provides descriptive and conceptual summaries; contributions are also summarised and presented in Tables 7 and 8 below. The presentation of data in three thematic categories is organised in logical order, beginning with Theme 1 below.

Theme 1 - Indigo consciousness, characteristics and needs (as observed)

All three interviewees have had personal experience respectively with children or adults whom they define 'Indigo', so to them this phenomenon is a reality. The two Italian primary school teachers, who had five years to interact with an 'indomitable class' they subsequently identified as Indigo and the British Indigo expert, who has been working with Indigos of all ages for over 10 years, report characteristics they commonly found in

dealing with them – such characteristics are outlined in synthesised form in Table 7 and appear to be very similar to what was found in reviewing the Indigo literature, summarised in Table 1. Longer quotes from interviews are indented and reported in slightly smaller font.

In terms of Indigos' perceived needs, interestingly, all three interviewed experts feel that Indigos need to be approached differently, listened to and encouraged to find their purpose and be/express all that they can be. The British Indigo expert, for example, states that:

They [Indigos] need to be empowered and vibrant and learn integration of the different dimensions, which is what my work focuses on...and what development really is all about (2, 3, 1/2).

She has noticed that 'a mass of creative visionaries are being born, too. And a new way of functioning is being born with them' (2, 8, 17-18). She maintains that Indigos' kind of intelligence entails 'an ability to recognise what their gifts are, what their skills are, what their abilities are' (2, 3, 15-17). She emphasises that Indigos need to be listened to and understood, 'particularly where sensitivity and awareness is concerned', because 'awareness and intuition enable [them] to utilise much more of [their] minds, to unite conscious and unconscious levels' (2, 7, 25). To her mind, Indigos' kind of intelligence, if not honoured, creates chaos, unhappiness and brings about destructive and self-destructive tendencies. Her experience and work with them have convinced her that helping Indigos find and express their potential and their purpose is paramount – in other words, her observations seem to confirm Indigos' self-actualising tendencies revealed by Masters' quantitative study's results, discussed in Chapter 2.

Interestingly, the two Italian teachers note that 'any superficial observation would have defined these kids [Indigo class] as borderline.... as difficult children with special needs' (1, 2, 6/7); however, the teachers found that their Indigo students just seemed to be very bright and simply different, needing to be met half way. Authority appeared to mean very little to the young Indigos in their class, who seemed to be 'challenging and unforgiving, particularly when faced with lack of consistency'(1, 2, 10). The teachers note that:

[The Indigo class seemed to be] Faster, stimulating, motivated (1, 4, 34)...Extremely sensitive (1, 2, 8); They intuitively knew the answer. It was amazing. Almost all displayed what appeared to be telepathic abilities (1, 3, 36/37)...They just got there immediately. They simply had the answer and that was that...and could not explain how they got there (1, 4, 8/9).

Although these particular children were proud, independent and demanding, with a strong sense of identity and of self, the teachers noted that when they managed to create harmony and the children felt loved and accepted, 'they invariably showed great affection among each other and with us, too. Very loving' (1, 2, 4-5) and...[were] 'active in offering suggestions and happy to be involved' (1, 2, 8).

Before moving on to a narrative related to thematic category 2, I have compiled a table that uses quotes and excerpts from participants' words and that synthetically lists Indigos' characteristics and traits which interviewees had observed throughout their years of teaching and working with them.

Table 7 – Indigo characteristics (in participants' words)***Table 7 – Indigo characteristics noticed by the experienced educators interviewed***

Ability to recognise what their gifts, skills, abilities are;

Incredibly dedicated to their purpose;

Evolved consciousness [is] already in place;

Integrated imagination and creativity;

Very fast-minded... they think quickly and connect quickly;

Very fast kind of intelligence... Almost *multidimensional* intelligence;

They...operate in a non-linear way... much more dynamic... *interdimensional* (words in italics are explained below in theme 2);

Extremely fast, emotionally as well;

They have access to their imagination and unconscious;

They find it incredibly difficult to work in conformist ways [because]
conformity has an incredibly negative and depleting effect [on them];

They... work ... from the head and the heart as well; they are endowed with heart intelligence

Stimulating, motivated [to learn];

Extremely sensitive; almost all displayed... what appeared to be telepathic abilities;

They intuitively knew the answer... Could not explain how they [knew];

Independent. Resistance to any kind of rule, indomitable;

Always on the move, bored easily;

Difficult to handle... challenging;

Particularly bright, intelligent and demanding;

They do not tolerate lack of consistency;

Any superficial observation would have defined these kids [Indigo class] as borderline.... as difficult children with special needs;

Powerful ego; strong sense of identity and of self;

Extremely proud... Can't stand being belittled in any way;

Very active in offering suggestions... Happy to be involved;

Very creative;

Rather volatile;

Indigos are particularly interested in how consciousness is entirely developed;

[Indigos] represent the future of humanity's consciousness;

A mass of creative visionaries are being born, too. And a new way of functioning is being born with them.

Table 7 synthesises findings and answers to the first part of the research question. Contributions towards answering the second part of the research question – Indigos’ educational needs and the educational interventions envisaged and successfully applied by participants, resulting from Themes 2 and 3, are summarised in Table 8 below.

A narrative of interviewees’ comments on thematic category No. 2 follows. In the following theme, participants offer their views on how the current system does not seem to meet Indigos’ needs.

Theme 2 – Empowerment issues and problems with the status quo

Participants highlight here what seems to cause problems with the status quo and with how the current paradigm conceives learning and knowing. The British expert maintains that the old way of functioning simply does not work because, for Indigos, ‘linear thinking and old consciousness just isn’t right’ (2, 8, 13). What is being emphasised is how the difference noted in these Indigo children/adults in particular calls for new methods and approaches; it also discusses to what extent reforming an old system of functioning and educating seems to be important, for practical reasons, too.

The two Italian teachers, in facing a class with whom no previously used teaching method seemed to work, note that ‘old fashioned ideas relating to order and rigid rules just had to be abandoned. These kids need to see there is always more than one way of doing things’ (1, 4, 31-34). The teachers sought help from various sources, including hiring a psychologist to observe not pupils’ behaviour, but their own. At the same time, they coincidentally came across the only book on Indigos available in Italian at the time, discussing a concept they previously knew nothing about. The book helped them see new possibilities, but was soon discarded by them because not only did the teachers find it too general and culturally bound (authors being American), but they also found they preferred to let the children teach them how to relate to them in new ways. They report:

We wanted to hear children’s voices and let them be our guide and relate to them differently. We quickly realised we needed to be much more flexible than we were before and also a lot more affectionate and loving (1, 4, 29-31).

Failure to serve Indigos better in mainstream education, to them, is also due to the fact that the phenomenon is not widely recognised. They lament that they had tried to share their discovered new approaches that seemed to have eventually provided a successful way of dealing with these children, but got very little support from children's families and their own colleagues, who seemed to be scared by the phenomenon or by the idea of having to question or evolve their teaching/educating styles. The teachers report that their 'colleagues never understood there was a need to change teaching methods and relating methods... We were very much on our own' (1, 4, 11-14). What they seem to find particularly sad is that too often the literature available to teachers via specialist papers emphasises the negative traits of new pupils and New Generations and their unsupportive families, but the need to change educational styles and ways of relating to pupils hardly seems to attract enough attention or be discussed – 'for some reason, nobody seems to...talk about the need for new methods and approaches', they say (1, 5, 1-4). They add that the main responsibility for educating children is still expected to come from teachers and they feel that 'there's a real need to raise awareness' in the field (1, 6, 1/2).

The fact that emerging new needs are still largely ignored is emphasised in this interview, as is the scarce flexibility and awareness registered in the existing school system, which makes teaching and learning increasingly difficult, the teachers claim. The teachers blame it also on bureaucracy and constant reforms, which, they believe, makes teaching almost impossible. Their view is that this situation is going to get increasingly difficult and that 'schools will feel very inadequate in their role. Teachers are likely to feel increasingly frustrated or depressed or simply unable to teach and help kids in their development' (1, 5, 27-29).

Interestingly, the need to create space and awareness for individual differences and creative ways of teaching, learning and being, seems to link what all participants are reporting in different ways throughout both interviews. The main concepts seem to be repeated – new approaches are needed, according to participants' experience, simply because the old ways do not seem to work and are not perceived as empowering. In the British expert's words:

There's a whole issue around elements of awareness (2, 5, 11)...It is all about bringing all of us back into empowerment as well (2, 6, 14)...It is extremely important to bring

the power back to the individual...it's self-belief, confidence, responsibility (2, 8, 29/30).

She sees dynamic ways of being and teaching as necessary for Indigos of all generations. *Multidimensional* (involving all senses, emotional and even spiritual spheres) and *interdimensional* (encouraging access to information from all forms of intelligence, including those originating in subtle realms of existence) were adjectives used respectively by the Italian teachers and the Indigo expert to describe Indigos' form of intelligence, as well as (to them) necessary educational approaches for the future. In fact, an element that appears to be strongly emphasised in the British expert's work with Indigos has to do with increasing self-awareness and developing intuition for inner guidance, in line with their innate inner locus of control, which, for an Indigo, equals self-empowerment that indirectly encourages others to develop their own, she feels. In her words:

I think the intuitive element is beneficial...self-awareness allows us to operate out of intelligence in an awakened way, so it does facilitate much more effective functioning in everyday life...[With] more aware[ness], one is more able to empower oneself...it is also connected to [a form of] self-empowerment that equally empowers others (2, 7, 15-18).

As pointed out above, her experience has taught her that 'Indigos need to be involved in activities that really allow them to develop and express the gifts they were born with' (2, 6, 17/18). If encouraged in childhood education, the British expert explains, this empowering process can potentially avoid a lot of pain when they grow up. Her observations and experience have taught her that:

For a lot of adult Indigos to force down their awareness...is excruciatingly painful. They need to be encouraged to get that back in power and use it, [so that] that awareness can serve them without any pain (2, 6, 6-8)...The majority of adult Indigos I come across are highly sensitive and they just don't know how to function in this world and... a lot of the work that I am doing is realign them with their identity and real purpose (2, 9, 8-10), helping Indigos find their empowerment in their sensitivity and in using their intuition (2, 6, 10).

This particular expert also notes in her older daughter's school that young Indigo teachers seem to be more dynamic and more suited to the new requirements of Indigo pupils. Having said that, however, she also points out that a lot of educational aspects

need to be taken care of by parents, whose responsibility involves facilitating children's development outside the school as well. Delegating this to teachers and schools, to her, simply is not the right answer. What is wrong with the system needs to be shared among all educators, parents, teachers and the whole wide world, she maintains. She feels it is a question of raising one's own consciousness first and foremost.

Theme 3 addresses directly the second part of the research question – Indigos' educational needs. Detailed information on this topic, derived from the interviews, has been organised and presented in tabular format (Table 8 below).

Theme 3 – Educational interventions (envisaged and successfully applied)

The educational interventions applied by participants seem to show unconventional ways of working. Creativity in all forms appears to be a key element of success. For example, with the help of the psychologist they hired to improve their own teaching methods, the Italian teachers found that they needed to teach these indomitable children opposing principles. They report that this 'was done through play, putting white feathers in a bag and dark feathers in another bag, assigning different, opposite meanings' (1, 2, 16-20). They found that 'creativity is what enhances any teaching and relating with these kids. (1,4, 32/33)...The main successes we achieved were through creativity in many different forms (1, 2, 36)'. This included plays in the school theatre, devised, directed and acted by the children themselves, designed to show parents and children in other classes what they had learned and found most enjoyable. They were totally responsible for creating them.

They also appeared to enjoy planting and taking care of flowers and tending the school's garden. The two primary school teachers also found that linking what the children were learning conceptually to its relevance and applicability in their daily lives tended to keep the children more interested and less restless. Ethical behaviours seemed to be part of what the children were keen on learning, provided these were accompanied by creative methods and that consistency was shown in teachers' behaviour. To enhance a sense of *reciprocity*, responsibility and respect, for example, children 'were encouraged and allowed to create rules which they were expected to apply to themselves and honour them' (1, 2, 29/30). Ground rules were also agreed upon in relating to each other. The teachers provide an example: 'there was a need to learn to

listen – they had to respect that and let whoever was talking finish before intervening. Another rule was *refraining from judgement*, whether positive or negative’ (1, 2, 30-33).

In summary, mutual respect and new, creative ways of learning and relating seemed to make a difference with these Indigo children, who had come into the teachers’ lives, in a way, to shake up the status quo, or so it seemed to the teachers interviewed, who report that learning to work with Indigos was a process which enabled everybody to grow and learn. Creativity was also used and is highly recommended by the British expert, who has done a lot of work with children and families, teaching different kinds of dynamic meditations/exercises. In several projects, she reports, ‘children used drawing as a meditation tool and we got some interesting results. The programme was about meditation, imagination and energy work’ (defined as becoming sensitive to and able to use *and direct* energy to affect consciousness and raise awareness of the effects of thoughts, emotions and attitudes on one’s life, health and relationships) (2, 9, 27-29). She has found that ‘any kind of meditation, dynamic meditation, is going to allow them to access their higher, evolved consciousness at much more dynamic levels’ (2, 8, 32/33). She claims that:

Indigos need to bring in dynamic sources with energy work, meditation work and I think that is something that’s key actually for education (2, 4, 6/7);...integrating imagination, creativity, and that’s exactly the aspect of Indigos which needs to be celebrated (2, 4, 7/8).

She seems convinced that ‘energy work..., work done creatively and dynamically helps them with refocusing’ (2, 4, 1/2) and argues that intuition needs to be brought more actively into schools as well because ‘intelligence that is associated with intuition and awareness avoids fear-based action’ (2, 8, 28). Also, she sees this way of working as conducive to a fusion of ‘the conscious and the unconscious aspects of the mind...and that brings in a kind of integrated consciousness’ (2, 8, 7-9), which she previously stated was desperately necessary for Indigos. Her key areas recommended for inclusion in education, mainstream or otherwise, in other words, include creative development and use of imagination, intuition, and energy work (defined above and explained further in Chapters 7 and 8, when discussing psychoenergetics). She feels that this leads to self-

empowerment, to a kind of consciousness that is not fear-based, which, indirectly, leads to empowering others, as pointed out before.

Interestingly, despite her focus on psycho-spiritual work, she thinks that the Steiner educational format might be obsolete and that much can and needs to be done via mainstream education and state schools because, she emphasises, what she refers to as ‘consciousness work and techniques’ need to be applied in a very practical, useful way, in that she has found that ‘active work which exercises consciousness really helps’ (2, 8, 13). The time for mainstream education to embrace that, she feels, has come. She adds: ‘I find that raising a little bit of awareness makes a huge amount of difference...there seems to be an acceleration, boundaries are being pushed further anyway, so it is easier now’ (2, 9, 15-18).

The three themes outlined here have provided information that helps answer the research question. Theme 1 has clarified how Indigos were perceived by the interviewees, Theme 2 has addressed empowerment issues and discussed the current system’s perceived inadequacies as participants saw them. Theme 3 has contributed observations on Indigos’ educational needs, together with reflections on educational interventions successfully applied with Indigos, outlined below and presented in Table 8. The next section provides an answer to the research question obtained as a result of my interpretation of participants’ contributions (on which feedback was received to verify that interviewees’ perceptions had been faithfully represented, as previously stated).

5.2 Answer to the research question

The research question was:

How do experienced educators describe and interpret the nature of Indigos and their educational needs?

This study has provided some answers that seem to be in line with the general Indigo literature and some extra information regarding their educational needs.

The first part of the question addresses how the interviewed educators saw Indigos and what identifying traits they observed in the years they had worked with them. As a

comparison between Table 7 and Table 1 reveals, – respectively participants’ noted characteristics and those reported by analysing Indigo literature – the data gathered from the interviewed experts in this study seem to confirm, and be in alignment with, previous findings on Indigos’ traits observed by educators, parents or even therapists who have interacted with Indigos in a meaningful way, reported in the Indigo literature. Indigos are again described as highly intuitive, non-conformist, rebellious, not prone to tolerating hypocrisy or respecting imposed hierarchies, active and creative, non-linear, independent, demanding, very fast, etc. (see Table 7).

The second part of the research question addresses Indigos’ educational needs as observed by the interviewed educators who had worked with them continuously for a number of years, within and outside mainstream education. As detailed below, the recommended educational interventions successfully applied with these individuals appear to indicate that holistic educational models might address their needs better than conventional, mainstream educational systems. Briefly, in line with Indigos’ observed characteristics and educational needs, the experienced educators interviewed in this study recommend that educational projects should include the following:

- 1) Consciousness expansion.
- 2) Empowerment.
- 3) Creative expression.
- 4) Affection and respect for diversity.
- 5) Support of Indigos’ uniqueness by acceptance and cultivation of their sensitive, intuitive awareness and multidimensional ways of knowing.

Despite interviewed educators’ entirely different backgrounds, what seems to transpire from their experience and from both interviews is that respecting, accepting, encouraging and integrating Indigos’ differences and natural traits, rather than forcing conformity, seems to be crucial. They recommend that heart-centred and unique self-expression should be encouraged. Empowering ways of knowing and learning that respect Indigos’ individuality, in the interviewed educators’ opinion and experience, should also be introduced. This includes an acceptance of intuitive ways of functioning while learning.

The British expert in particular suggests that Indigos should be encouraged to reach mastery of their sensitivity and should be taught how to use intuition and hypersensitivity in empowering ways, inspiring uniqueness rather than conformity to expected standards and ‘acceptable ways of being’. Particularly when energy-aware Indigos are found in one’s classes, she also recommends that dynamic forms of sensing, using, directing and embodying certain forms of subtle energy should be part of Indigos’ education (she calls this *expansion of consciousness*). She has noticed that it is important for Indigos to become aware of the effects that their thoughts, attitudes and emotions have on their lives and relationships with others (I have termed her observations and recommendations in this area *dynamic psychoenergetics*). She also insists that education should provide help and guidance in finding purpose in life, by encouraging creative expression of Indigos’ unique talents.

In other words, results seem to show that ‘consciousness work’ and activities that stimulate self-awareness, empowerment, creative expression, affection and support of Indigos’ uniqueness by cultivation of their sensitive, intuitive awareness appear to be very important elements to be integrated in education and in handling presumed Indigo children (and adults). Participants recommend that Indigos need to be taught accountability, integrity and consistency mainly by example and by establishing some ground rules applicable to both teachers and students and by establishing boundaries. Integrity and authenticity, all participants emphasise, need to be sustained and coherently shown by educators, in order to obtain Indigos’ respect. This includes questioning and reviewing old ways of teaching and relating, the teachers suggest.

Furthermore, because of Indigos’ observed clumsiness and problems with physicality and embodiment, the interviewed experts recommend that grounding activities should be introduced and cultivated in many different ways, which include creativity through manual work, mind-body exercises and, for the more sensitive ones, simple and dynamic techniques of directing perceived subtle energies to and through the body. Table 8 that follows outlines participants’ recommendations, perceptions and acquired experience regarding Indigos’ educational needs and provides a more detailed answer to the second part of the research question.

Table 8 – Key educational needs and interventions suggested by participants

Table 8 – Experts’ recommendations and envisaged/successfully applied educational interventions
<p><i>1) Teach them accountability, consistency (given and received) and integrity – get their respect and establish boundaries</i></p> <p>Given Indigos’ powerful sense of self and strong, demanding personalities, while it is important to let them co-create some rules, the experts have noted that it seems equally important to expect them to honour such rules. Boundaries, consistency and accountability were all seen as necessary to mitigate unnecessarily rebellious behaviours, to encourage ‘fair-play’ and the giving and receiving fairly and in balanced measures. If Indigos expect consistency and integrity, they also need to be guided to understand and accept that others are equally entitled to expect the same from them – Indigos not only need to be met half way, they also need to learn to be accountable, the interviewed experts seem to have found.</p>
<p><i>2) Cultivate embodiment/physicality</i></p> <p>It was noted by the two Italian teachers that Indigos and children in general seem to learn much faster when computers and technology are used. It was however also noted that children increasingly find physicality clumsy, as revealed by PE, drawings and general lack of co-ordination. They propose mind-body disciplines (yoga, tai-chi or other martial arts) to encourage embodiment/grounding and to introduce playful forms of discipline that could facilitate awareness of physicality, despite parents’ resistance to them (apparently, playful</p>

activities and mind-body disciplines are sometimes seen as a 'waste of time' that would keep children away from 'learning anything useful'. The teachers have noted over the years to what extent parents seem to favour and encourage sports and disciplines of a competitive kind).

The British expert was keen on teaching ways of sensing and directing subtle and nourishing spiritual energies to the body, addressing physicality in a more subtle way. Awareness of energy underlying thoughts and attitudes could also help see their effects on consciousness, health and relationships, she maintains, facilitating empowerment and self-awareness.

Dynamic forms of meditation were suggested, also to help the children ground any perceived or creatively imagined subtle, nourishing energies in the body.

3) Earn students' respect by questioning and reviewing old ways of teaching and relating

Indigos are apparently confrontational and will not compromise if they are not met half-way. Experts interviewed have found that Indigos tend to respect adults only when they see an honest effort to evolve the status quo, which does not impose/control, but tries to understand and accommodate uniqueness in people, does away with hypocrisy and shows more integrity towards all that lives.

4) Make relevance of what they are learning clear

Indigos seem to have fast minds that process information of all kinds very quickly, so they get bored easily and their attention span is

short. If they do not see the point of doing an exercise or learning anything, they just refuse to do it, experts noted. So it appears that what helps considerably is linking what children are learning conceptually to its relevance, to its practical application in everyday life, making the relevance of any exercise clear to them.

5) Introduce dynamic forms of sensing, using, directing and embodying certain forms of subtle energy (dynamic psychoenergetics). Inspire uniqueness and teach them how to use intuition and hypersensitivity in empowering ways. Mastery of sensitivity and expansion of consciousness/awareness need to be part of Indigos' education.

Experts emphasise that passivity is not for Indigos, nor is mediocrity dictated by fear-based conformity. The British expert highlighted that Indigos apparently need guidance on increasing awareness and mastery of their hypersensitivity. If not, they will be confused and tend to shield themselves and deaden their strong perceptions, possibly seeking drugs or other forms of escapism. That is why 'integrated consciousness' and 'consciousness-based education' are deemed so important by the British expert.

6) Encourage heart-centred, unique self-expression without pushing Indigos to conform

As pointed out before, learning by rote, parrot-fashion, is rejected. Experts have learnt that expression of Indigos' unique talents needs to be celebrated and encouraged. Education, as it is conceived, attempts to prepare a future workforce for types of jobs that push people to conform, in the three experts' opinion. Indigos are happy and harmonised when they can express their uniqueness and soul-purpose, assured the British expert. She emphasises that Indigos seem to have strong, powerful, rebellious personalities - they need to shine and

follow inner authority, an inner locus of control. Being made to conform can inspire violent and even self-destructive behaviours, which can, and need to, be prevented, warned the British expert.

7) Provide help and guidance in finding purpose in life and creative expression of their unique talents

The interviewed experts pointed out that one of the ways of helping Indigos find their purpose is to encourage creative expression in general, not just in the arts. By expressing themselves creatively in different ways through different tasks, they will gradually find what makes them happiest - their inner guidance will find a voice more easily in directing their lives.

8) Encourage other empowering ways of knowing/learning

What also needs to be encouraged, according to experts, is awareness of emotion and respectful sharing or releasing of it, exchange of affection and support; insistence on only one way of doing or learning things or on logical processing would not lead very far with Indigos, they reported; it appears that their fast minds and perceptions do not function primarily in a linear, logical way - information obtained via the senses and by active intuition needs to be embraced and integrated as valid ways of knowing and learning, or so the experts have found.

Table 8 contains recommendations and guidelines regarding educational interventions and attitudes that seem to have worked successfully with Indigos. The table was compiled after receiving feedback from participants on a longer document, which represented and thematically grouped the contribution of their own interview in a way that eventually helped me find a possible answer to the research question. When sending feedback, as a later addition after the interview and the initial work on this study had been completed, participants also added a few extra comments on what they were really keen on conveying to others via the present study. I have combined and presented the extra data in Table 9 (see Appendix A), which also seems to summarise the main findings and key concepts derived from the present investigation. In essence, participants believe that:

- a) Creativity in all forms appears to be a key element of success in educating Indigos, especially in working with energy and using creative imagination, honing nonlinear thinking.
- b) Dynamic forms of meditation, grounding/stimulating embodiment and mind-body disciplines are necessary in all forms of education.
- c) There is a need for educators to question their methods and integrate new approaches, including letting children teach adults how to relate to them.
- d) Encouraging students to cultivate and hone intuitive, inner guidance, also via ‘energy work’, should be integrated in mainstream education, as such practices have been found to increase confidence and self-esteem and to lead to freedom from fear.

Above all, in the opinion and experience of all participants, *respecting children’s/individuals’ differences, rather than forcing conformity*, seems to be crucial.

5.3 Discussion

The great similarities found between my own interviewees’ responses (Tables 7-9) and the Indigo authors’ comments on observed characteristics and educational needs is indeed interesting, particularly in the case of the two Italian teachers, whose access to

translated material on Indigos was very limited. In fact, only one book, *The Indigo Children* (Carroll & Tober, 1999), had been translated and published in Italian at the time when they were teaching the ‘indomitable’, presumed Indigo class, and the book itself was soon discarded by them for being too general and culturally biased, and therefore, in the two teachers’ opinion, of not much practical use to them. They preferred to let children teach them about their needs. This reduces the risk of two out of three participants having been influenced by the literature in the field. The British Indigo expert never made any reference to existing Indigo literature, appearing to obtain information from her own observations and intuitive sources, but I cannot be sure whether or not her knowledge had also directly or indirectly been influenced by the available Indigo literature.

Another point of interest in this initial study is that pupils in the current 5-year cycle with whom the two Italian teachers are jointly working appear to be very different from the class to which they referred in the interview. These educators believe that only one possible Indigo might be among their class now, which, although statistically not significant, does not seem to confirm the predicted trend of over 90 per cent of current children being Indigo (Altaras & Tappe, 2011). There is another element all three interviewees seem to have in common and that is the strongly-felt wish to *raise awareness*, which they all highlighted and perceived as the most important step to take in the immediate future, whether hopeful this could be achieved or not. It is interesting to note that, although the three educators interviewed never referred to their educational recommendations as holistic, all the observations and educational interventions outlined above and in Tables 7, 8 and 9, would appear to indicate strong elements of holistic education principles (as outlined in the literature review). It is interesting to note that the two Italian teachers, by their admission, until meeting Indigos, had been working and teaching rather traditionally in mainstream education. It was through their own self-reflection (guided by a psychologist they had hired to observe their own behaviour, rather than children’s) that more holistic ways of educating were eventually developed by them and adopted in the Indigo class because these appeared to be much more successful with their ‘indomitable’ students.

In essence, Indigos’ educational needs and educational interventions that the three educators in the first study found successful mostly indicate a relatively revolutionary,

innovative approach to education which focuses on empowering children to be more self-aware, but also more self-responsible, as embraced by holistic education theories and vision (discussed in Chapter 2). Awareness of the body and embodiment of energies are also recommended, therefore even the integration and awareness of subtle energies seem to be recommended for practical purposes. One slight difference between interviews in this study seems to be found in an adjective participants used to describe Indigos' kind of intelligence and envisaged approaches and educational interventions to meet their needs. The two Italian teachers in their joint interview used the adjective *multidimensional*, by which they meant that the physical, emotional, mental and possibly spiritual dimensions were involved in these children's knowing and needed ways of learning.

The British Indigo expert referred to the same concept, describing it as *interdimensional*. When asked what she meant, she replied that Indigos seem to have a natural access to an 'integrated form of intelligence' (operating from an aware fusion of conscious and unconscious dimensions within the psyche), whose development, to her, needs to be celebrated and encouraged, especially by cultivating intuition, creative imagination and self-awareness (interestingly, this concept closely reflects Steiner's anthroposophy and his teachings). She feels this would help Indigos access information originating in other dimensions and *subtle realms of existence*, including the *Akashic Field*, also known as the Hall of Records. *Akasha* is a Sanskrit term meaning *ether* or space. This expression seems to be associated with theosophy and anthroposophy and it refers to information theoretically collected in a non-physical plane of existence, which allegedly contains the history of the cosmos and knowledge of collective human experience since the beginning of time (Bailey, 1954). Interestingly, systems theorist and philosopher of science Ervin Laszlo has written about the Akashic Field as a third, fundamental component of what is commonly perceived as reality, together with mass and energy (Laszlo, 2007).

Steiner promoted the development of the conscious ability to access the Akashic field in his anthroposophic movement of 'scientific spirituality' (Steiner, 1923), highlighted the importance of being able to merge the conscious and unconscious mind in the development of imagery, imaginal and intuitive abilities (Steiner, 1961, 1965) and created a model of consciousness encompassing thousands of years (see section 2.4.3.).

His model of education, which bears great similarities with progressive educators Assagioli's and Dewey's models (see, p.69, pp.105-106 and p.122), seems to address most of the points which the British expert raised in her interview – yet, she claimed that Steiner's educational format might be obsolete. She did not elaborate on this comment, except to say that much can and should be done in mainstream education instead, because what she refers to as 'consciousness work' (which I later came to define dynamic psychoenergetics) needs to be introduced in the mainstream system on the grounds of its practicality, immediate applicability and potential for sensitive students' empowerment and expansion of consciousness. Because of the potential ambiguity of her comment on Steiner's model, which could be interpreted in different ways, it might be worth trying to clarify what she meant; on the basis of her whole interview, I will offer below some extra comments, being aware of how passionately she felt about applying 'consciousness work' in mainstream education.

Despite being slightly confusing, what she seemed to be implying was not necessarily that Steiner's beliefs were obsolete, but that perhaps the dogma that seems to be currently attached to the application of his educational model in Steiner/Waldorf schools (Gidley, 2008a, 2008b) may not do justice to Steiner's original vision and might not be as helpful to the New Generations as might be implied. In fact, in her interview, she had also stated that she had noticed an increasing presence of Indigo teachers in mainstream schools, whose work and educational abilities needed to be encouraged in order to evolve education in mainstream contexts. She had also highlighted that responsibility for what is theoretically wrong in education needed to be shared by everybody, making it necessary for each individual to cultivate self-awareness and develop one's consciousness, without delegating responsibilities.

What she had also emphasised throughout the interview was that 'consciousness work' needed to be made more dynamic and easily accessible in mainstream schools in order to facilitate the inception of the developing new consciousness, to which she constantly referred (defined by various researchers as Integral/Authentic/Transpersonal – see section 2.4.3.). I discuss in Chapter 8 my own conclusions regarding psychoenergetics (which emerged also in my second study) and its potential to meet the needs of those developing towards self-actualisation/transcendence, hence towards Authentic consciousness.

Also noteworthy is that, among her observations and claims, the British Indigo expert interviewee commented, like most Indigo authors, that Indigos seem to ‘show us the future’, and she qualified this assumed characteristic in more detail by claiming that:

Indigos represent the future of humanity’s consciousness. They work from the head and the heart as well and are endowed with heart intelligence; they are particularly interested in how consciousness is entirely developed.

Intuitive and heart intelligence seemed to be the main trait she assigned to both Indigos and the humanity of the future. This observation is reflected in Tobin Hart’s transpersonal educational model (see sections 2.6.1. and 5.5 below). I find it interesting that in their search for new, successful ways of handling their challenging class, the two Italian teachers found they needed to be more flexible and loving and noticed that this attitude freed children to also be less challenging and more loving to their classmates as well. Indigos’ intuitive perceptions were also observed, as reported above. This heart involvement and intuitive knowing, which are points both interviews seem to have in common, appear to be part of Hart’s educational model (see below) and have also been studied scientifically in laboratory conditions. Research at the HeartMath Institute regarding the neurons found in the heart (called neuritis) appears to show that the organ of the body that generates the strongest magnetic field is the heart (Childre, 1999). Research results suggested that the heart’s magnetic field acts as a carrier wave for information that provides a synchronising signal for the entire body, with evidence that even the social sphere and energetic interactions among people are affected – it has been found that one person’s brain waves can synchronize to the magnetic field of another person’s heart (McCraty et al., 2004a). Furthermore, in researching the electrophysiological evidence of intuition, McCraty et al. found that the heart seems to have a role in the perception of intuitive information. In their words:

The main findings presented here are: (1) surprisingly, both the heart and brain appear to receive and respond to intuitive information; (2) even more surprisingly, there is compelling evidence that the heart appears to receive intuitive information before the brain...Overall, our data suggest that the heart and brain, together, are involved in receiving, processing, and decoding intuitive information. On the basis of these results and those of other research, it would thus appear that intuitive perception is a system-wide process in which both the heart and brain (and possibly other bodily systems) play a critical role. (McCraty et al., 2004b, p.1)

Whether heart/intuitive intelligence is a trait that has been emerging for the whole of humanity in the collective unconscious and embodied by so-called Indigos remains, at least for the moment, a speculation. However, this heart/intuitive intelligence has been consistently referred to by all three interviewees as they relate their experience with Indigos and their way of making sense of them and of a potentially emerging trait to be found in some children and adults.

Whilst remaining a sympathetic researcher towards intuitive knowing/learning and the Indigo phenomenon, my observations are not without criticism. To begin with, the Indigo phenomenon, to my knowledge, cannot be and, so far, has not been scientifically verified in any way (for example via measuring neurological differences or changes in the DNA), at least not through available mainstream technology; also, as reported in the relevant literature review section of this thesis, the phenomenon is said to be based mainly on New Age metaphysical assertions which were born, in part, as a reaction to excessive drugs (such as Ritalin) prescribed to hyperactive children (Whedon, 2004), which, admittedly, is indeed a very important issue likely to influence parents' observations of their children. Furthermore, my investigation of historical/social research that followed the first study (outlined in Chapter 2) revealed that the New Generations, (whether labelled Indigos, Gifted or otherwise) often seem to have hyperactivity in common, as also observed by the two Italian teachers. This, however, does not necessarily imply that an ADHD diagnosis defines one's child as either Gifted or Indigo, as might sometimes be inferred from the early Indigo literature. Diagnosed hyperactivity disorders might be more a 'sign of the times' and an unconscious cry for some needed changes in mainstream education, to which Indigos or other multi-labelled children appear to have a problem relating, as outlined in Chapter 2. In addition, as often pointed out by Indigo sceptics, any parent of difficult, rebellious offspring understandably prefers to think their children are 'special' and 'gifted' Indigos who represent the next step in human evolution, rather than accepting an ADHD diagnosis (Carroll, R., 2009, Witts, 2009, Anderson, 2003), as pointed out before. The issues just outlined appear to cloud and confuse information available on the Indigo phenomenon and make it difficult to study it in any great depth, even via educators' observations (some of whom, it could be argued, might have an agenda and be interested in promoting their educational model as the solution to all Indigos' problems) or via Indigos' self-reports (in that pressure from loved ones, or not fully developed

understanding of one's own characteristics, might impede deep and well thought-out replies).

On a more positive note, however, as Rosenthal and Jacobson (1968) concluded after their research, prejudging children as gifted and insightful unconsciously encourages children themselves to perform better, so there seems to be a positive side to the Indigo movement. The much less convincing aspect of the Indigo phenomenon becomes evident in Indigos' early books and claims of Indigos being 'spiritual', gifted, and a special gift to humanity (i.e. Carroll & Tober, 1999) and also in documentaries, where sometimes dangerous and possibly unreasonable pressures and expectations are placed (especially by hopeful parents) on young, trusting, presumed Indigo children to be more spiritually gifted than they truly are or than their psychological growth enables them to be in early stages of their lives and of their cognitive development (Twyman, 2006; another Indigo documentary shown on the Channel 4 television channel in the UK in 2006 was reviewed in Ronson (2006).

An aspect of the present study which I found interesting and intriguing was the absence of any mention of sound psychological growth and cognitive development to accompany the development/awakening of intuition, the embodiment of transpersonal energies or consciousness expansion, recommended by the British expert as a necessity for the future of education and the well-being of children and adults. I admit I find this absence potentially dangerous. As several professional practitioners and researchers in psycho-spiritual/transpersonal fields point out, spiritual narcissism is a danger that should not be underestimated and needs to be addressed and counterbalanced (Assagioli, 2008; Ferrer, 2000). Spiritual narcissism has been defined as 'distortions of the spiritual path, such as ego-inflation, self-absorption, spiritual materialism..., i.e. the misuse of spiritual practices, energies or experiences to bolster self-centered ways of being' (Ferrer, 2000, p.220).

Another point I find potentially alarming is that when highlighting the need to help Indigos find purpose in life as an envisaged intervention, it seemed to me that it was taken for granted that some kind of intuitive guidance should be given by adults. However, the concept of empowerment, also highlighted, would more logically presume that children's own transpersonal development would eventually provide them with a natural way, via inner guidance, to find and intuit their own purpose in life. Counting on

somebody else's vision, even that of a trained intuitive, one could argue, does not seem empowering and it might even be misleading. In fact, intuitive information comes often in a symbolic, archetypal language, it is obviously nonlinear and needs to be interpreted by the person concerned. It can take knowledge, maturity, extreme clarity and enormous experience to decipher intuitive guidance received both for oneself and for somebody else without 'polluting' it with one's unconscious expectations, wishes or potential inability to interpret certain symbols/archetypes that may instead be appropriate for the person for whom one receives intuitive information (Palmer, 1998).

In addition, regarding an observed and reported trend in younger and presumed Indigo teachers whom the British expert noticed, it is not entirely clear whether teachers are all envisaged to be Indigos or psychic to be successful or inspiring. One could argue that, as Assagioli points out, psychic is not necessarily synonymous with spiritual, and psychic abilities are only one aspect of transpersonal development, which, at least to Assagioli's mind, should preferably arise of its own accord, as the small self and the transpersonal Self gradually start functioning together in harmony in consciousness development (Assagioli, 2008). Moreover, repeated claims that Indigo consciousness is the future of humanity's evolution in the present study, as well as in the general Indigo literature, sound rather grand, based primarily on old prophecies (i.e. by American psychic Edgar Cayce or by the Hopi Indians, see Atwater, 2005) and, so far, unsupported by evidence. In spite of all the objections outlined above, to my interviewees, expanded consciousness, higher mental faculties and their connections with the Indigo phenomenon were all a reality, their experiential reality, which is arguably hard to contrast.

In this part of my investigation, I have reported my first study participants' claims faithfully and I cannot deny that I have found many concepts useful in my own personal life (for some reason, I have repeatedly been labelled Indigo myself and I have been interested in finding answers to a personal enigma, as well as clarity in this area, especially relevant for the New Generations). However, as a researcher, I still fail to find some claims or the need for a new label to classify only special individuals entirely convincing, particularly in view of the fact that other multi-labelled children and adolescents, as discussed in the literature review, appear to have many characteristics in common with Indigos. Furthermore, as Indigo sceptics point out, many Indigo

characteristics appear to be applicable to most people in different stages of their lives (Carroll, R., 2009), hence results cannot be easily *generalised*, especially in terms of establishing the existence or credibility of the Indigo phenomenon itself, which was not the focus of the present study in any case.

I find myself leaning more towards trying to identify an archetype, accompanied by new evolutionary needs, that seem to be emerging on a collective level, which Indigos, together with others, might represent. As stated in Chapter 2, the assumption of a possible emerging archetype/consciousness in the collective unconscious, affecting the Millennial generation in particular, might be just as likely to explain the presence of certain characteristics shared by many young people. In fact, on reflection, considering the species' natural evolution, it might be just as plausible to deduce that, all previous needs being met, the New Generations might be naturally evolving or gravitating towards the last two levels of Maslow's hierarchy of needs scale, namely self-actualisation and self-transcendence, as discussed in the literature review (Maslow, 1970, 1971).

The *changing needs and tendencies* (i.e. rebelliousness/hyperactivity, transcendental/intuitive acuity and technological aptitudes) reflected especially by multi-labelled members of the New Generations in general, outlined in the literature review and observed also by my own participants, would, for me personally, represent a potentially more useful and convincing concept to explore in further studies, rather than creating more divisions and separations among human beings by focusing on a new label to address 'Indigos' special gifts'. What I eventually found the most useful part of the present study was the richness of data offered with regard to envisaged and successfully applied educational interventions, which seemed to integrate many holistic principles. In fact, many of the educational suggestions and concepts participants shared appear to be included in the psychosynthetic model, applied not only in personal, psycho-spiritual development, but also in education at various levels, as previously pointed out. Assagioli's psychosynthesis also addresses self-actualisation and self-transcendence needs and tendencies, framing them within a well-structured developmental model that has been in use for decades also in several educational projects (i.e. Piechowski, 2009), as discussed in Chapter 2.

As a researcher, I could not have hoped for richer information – the constructed meanings and understandings which interviewed educators shared with me covered a wider area than I had anticipated and, as stated, themes that emerged from the first study guided my steps in choosing where/how to focus my second study and research, providing invaluable information and inspiration. The energy work described by the British expert, together with material on psychoenergetics published by the first participant in my multiple case study research, particularly intrigued me. It inspired my decision to include a question on this topic in my semi-structured interview used for the other three psychosynthesis experts who took part in my second study. It eventually added a rather unique focus to the whole research, as well as leading to interesting potential whole-study conclusions (outlined in Chapter 8). Conclusions relative to the first part of my investigation, the first Indigo study, follow.

5.4 Conclusions and implications

5.4.1. Summary of contributions

The first study has presented links between intuition, expansion of consciousness and holistic learning and it has offered some in-depth comments and observations concerning changing generations and needs, whether the label Indigo is accepted or not. It has also offered suggestions for potential educational interventions as envisaged and applied by all the experienced teachers interviewed, including the two Italians, whose work before their Indigo class, by their own admission, had not been either particularly creative or humanistically-informed. Yet, together with the British expert, they provided recommendations and descriptions which appear to be close to humanistic and transpersonal concerns. All participants emphasised the role that raising awareness has on empowerment and on introducing some needed changes within education. The British expert's contribution was particularly focused on the need to find and develop one's potential, on the necessity to train the mind to acquire expanded consciousness and to gain access to a wider field of information. All three participants certainly encouraged different ways of knowing and learning.

As a result of the present study and of further investigations into the possible wider applicability of the essence of characteristics found to be behind the Indigo phenomenon, namely self-actualising and self-transcending tendencies, (as detailed and

explained in Chapter 2), my next step was to consider how/whether/to what extent transpersonal-based educational interventions might inform potential developments of educational models, holistic and mainstream, that might meet the New Generations' needs more harmoniously and effectively than the current trends found in conventional education appear to do. One particularly alarming trend observed in mainstream education which arguably more urgently needs to be addressed and counterbalanced seems to be the tendency to keep children under control via abundantly prescribed drugs, whose long-term damage on the body and brain is still unknown. In fact, nothing might actually be wrong with many of these children, except that their behaviour might be reflecting/mirroring increasing collective unhappiness with the status quo, possibly highlighting instead that 'consensus reality' (social consciousness) might be based on obsolete values.

This investigation was not meant to offer 'proof' that the Indigo phenomenon truly exists. However, the great similarities in characteristics other Indigo authors report, which were also analysed by Masters's (2008) doctoral research discussed in the literature review, tend to confirm that an increasing number of people (independently of the label attributed to them) would appear to express a new archetype or a new consciousness and new values that seem to be emerging from the collective unconscious. At the very least, if the speculation of an emerging new archetype is rejected as a theory, it has been noted that the trends which an increasing number of individuals appear to manifest would seem to show an increasing tendency towards self-actualisation and self-transcendence, the top two motivational needs Maslow identified in his hierarchy of needs model (outlined in Chapter 2). New needs invariably require new solutions or adjustments in an existing paradigm. In all cases, changes arguably need to be contemplated and existing assumptions revisited if the overwhelming solutions found until now have been to drug 'hyperactive children', using Ritalin and other psychoactive substances. The implications involve not only education, but parenting and many other areas, possibly questioning certainties and values that humanity has held dear for at least a couple of centuries.

It seems to me that, in line with my participants' opinion, general awareness of noted changes in some members of the New Generations, whether labelled Indigo or not, does need to be raised, considering the price that the New Generations are paying. This study, besides filling a gap in academic research on Indigos, might provide another

means through which ‘awareness is raised’, as the first study participants seemed to feel so strongly about.

5.4.2. Critique of study

As previously stated, my aim was not to prove or disprove the validity or existence of the Indigo phenomenon, but to *understand* how European experts/educators who had been exposed to it for several years and encountered it through their work constructed meanings and implications thereof. While this small-scale, initial study could arguably be seen as relatively circular and limited in its scope, it has been successful in answering the research question and in providing clues as to potentially useful educational interventions for children/individuals showing a different consciousness or, at the very least, new needs. It has also provided inspiration as to where to focus my next research endeavours, broadening my horizons towards investigating an alternative, holistic and transpersonally inspired educational model that seems to address and integrate within the psyche self-actualising and self-transcending tendencies found to be in common between Indigos and other multi-labelled representatives of the New Generations.

Besides the study’s potential circularity, there was also a very real risk, with unstructured interviews, of obtaining a lot of irrelevant data that could not be used or would not address clearly the research question. This did not happen; however, data obtained were so abundant that much work and sifting of data became necessary in order to find what was useful and relevant to the research question. A little more structure in my interviews might have circumvented this problem.

5.4.3. Suggestions for further research

An interesting development of this study and an idea for further research might be to interview self-identified Indigo teachers and Indigo students, to compare what their perceived needs and expectations are and whether/to what extent they are met in their respective roles. In fact, while the present study has given voice to educators’ observations, a logical next step in this research field would arguably be to let Indigos themselves speak, preferably Indigos of all ages. However, the following points are important:

a) my focus is on practical steps already taken in terms of educational interventions,

- b) I am treating the Indigo phenomenon as representing an emerging archetype or consciousness affecting especially the New Generations,
- c) other authors of non academic books have reported Indigo children's testimonials, whether convincingly or otherwise (i.e. Carroll & Tober, 2001, 2009).

As a consequence, I am not persuaded that researching isolated Indigo characteristics and needs further would provide a lot of useful data– at best simply a repetition of what is already known about the presumed phenomenon perhaps (unless neurological or DNA changes could be measured and determine with absolute certainty which children can be labelled Indigo, according to their different biology). This is one of the reasons why I decided to broaden my horizons and explore whether representatives of the New Generations labelled differently from Indigos (i.e. ADHD or Gifted, as outlined in the literature review) might share some characteristics with them, which would indicate that the phenomenon could be more widespread than the relatively isolated Indigo movement. The results of this further investigation would appear to indicate that my supposition was at least partially founded, indirectly implying that the common traits found in Indigos and in the multi-labelled New Generations might be symbolic of a globally emerging archetype/need/consciousness (as discussed in the literature review and in Trotta, 2012). In fact, such tentative similarities found among differently-labelled children and adolescents (i.e. self-actualising/transcending tendencies) is an area that, to my mind, deserves further analysis and an investigation on a bigger scale in a future study (further suggestions outlined in Chapter 8). One small practical step in trying to understand the needs of the New Generations further might be represented by my second study, which investigates potential contributions to education from an existing, but not widely known, holistic educational model that addresses self-actualising and self-transcending tendencies, potentially offering safe ways of integrating them within the psyche.

5.5 Introducing the second study

One author active in the field of education and transpersonal research whom I subsequently realised I had not initially considered in sufficient depth in the literature covered before or during the first study, but only as a consequence of it and its results, is Tobin Hart, who has been investigating the theme of spiritual consciousness in children and youth (2004, 2006) and writing about ways of integrating wisdom in education

(Hart, 2001b, 2009), as outlined in Chapter 2. Hart is Professor of Psychology at the University of West Georgia and the co-founder of the ChildSpirit Institute, a non-profit educational and research centre that aims to understand and nurture the transpersonal dimension of children and adults. In his writings, as stated, Hart explores Integral consciousness and transformative education. In *From Information to Transformation: Education For the Evolution of Consciousness*, he explores how individuals know and learn; Hart connects teachings from the wisdom traditions, transpersonal psychology, consciousness studies and pedagogy and offers an ‘integrated approach (that) includes the education of the mind and the heart, balances intuition with the analytic, mastery with mystery and emphasizes developing wisdom over the mere accumulation of facts’ (Hart, 2009, p.2). He describes his emphasis on transformation thus:

Transformation is a movement toward increasing wholeness that simultaneously pushes toward diversity or uniqueness, becoming more uniquely who we are, and toward unity and communion, recognising how much we have in common with the universe. In this way, self-actualization and self-transcendence are not contradictory, but form part of the same process. We actualize our ever-expanding potential by transcending current self-structure (op. cit., p.13).

His words seem to echo and clarify the British expert’s shared concepts in the first study in particular, and his suggested methods of integrating wisdom in the classroom (discussed in Chapter 2) clearly reflect a transpersonal view of education and appear to also describe the teachings and vision behind psychosynthesis as a holistic education model. In my investigations, it had also become clear that psychosynthesis seemed to be used successfully by other education experts specialising in spiritual giftedness (i.e. Piechowski and others cited in the literature review chapter). The interesting connections here were:

- a) the considerable number of characteristics that spiritually-gifted youth seemed to share with the differently-labelled members of the New Generations described above and
- b) the choice of psychosynthesis by experts in education for the spiritually gifted in working with such children

Psychosynthesis-based general educational models have been used in different projects at different levels, (albeit by a limited number of educators who took care to write about their experience), from elementary to graduate schools. Gifted education experts’ choice

of adopting psychosynthesis, as well as Hart's work, represented for me a further confirmation that exploring how and to what extent the transpersonally inspired psychosynthetic educational model might inform holistic and mainstream education was appropriate as my next research focus. Furthermore, there seems to be a gap in transpersonal education research (highlighted also by Buckler, 2012 and Cunningham, 2011), which my study could also partially fill.

In other words, given the congruence of psychosynthesis with the characteristics of New Generation youngsters described in the first part of my investigation and its application in other educational areas cited above, the contribution that psychosynthesis might make to a holistic approach to education, not currently evident in mainstream schools, has been explored in my second study. In fact, my further investigation focuses on the use of psychosynthesis in other education-related activities that were informed and driven by Assagioli's general psychosynthetic model. This justifies the choice of psychosynthesis experts and educators as participants for the second study.

As outlined in the literature review chapter, Roberto Assagioli's work on psychosynthesis appears to address all the main points raised in the first study (i.e. multidimensional awareness, inner guidance, integrated consciousness, energy work in terms of raising self-awareness, use of creative imagination, right use of transpersonal energies, heart/intuitive intelligence, self-responsibility/actualisation/transcendence). Assagioli's work forms the basis of existing interventions in the educational field that I aim to investigate in the next phase of my research, which inevitably incorporate transpersonal themes, psychosynthesis and the development of consciousness. Assagioli himself left a large number of writings besides published books, only a few of which concern education, as discussed in Chapter 2; he 'psychologised spirituality' and was keen on re-introducing the concept of Soul in psychology and education (Daniels, 2005). However, his vision seemed to be eminently practical and gave great relevance to the synthesis and development of the psyche, including its transcendent aspects, to reach balance, harmony, wisdom and creativity at all ages in all contexts, independently or with professional help. Every person's uniqueness was always respected and emphasised in his teachings, which, in many ways, appear to be more relevant today than they were at the time of his writing. The study that follows sheds light on the contributions of psychosynthesis to holistic and mainstream education, as perceived by experts and educational pioneers in the field.

CHAPTER 6 SECOND STUDY FINDINGS CASE BY CASE

Reporting the organisation, analysis of all data and findings in case study research can be a very lengthy process and also confusing to read. I have, therefore, chosen to report in this chapter data presented in narrative form, including illustrative extracts/quotes (raw data from each expert's interview and from additional, previously published material) to represent clearly each interviewed expert's voice. Appendix D contains more detailed information regarding analysis of data obtained from interviews and previously published material, a summary of the work of each interviewed expert, the grouping of data into thematic categories, as well as findings in tabular format.

6.1 Mariella, Case Study 1: Presentation of data - thematic categories

The presentation of the five main thematic categories below includes illustrative quotes from Mariella's interview (raw data), as well as extra evidence (where relevant) from Mariella's book chapter and articles and from relevant websites. All sources used (illustrated in Chapter 4, Table 5) are clearly referenced after each quote; interview extracts/quotes are referenced using abbreviations which stand for interview number, page and line number from the original transcribed text. Longer quotes not embedded in text are reported in a slightly smaller font. Importantly, the choice of raw data and extracts from supplementary material to quote in each case study presentation was *dictated by the clarity with which the concept had been expressed by the interviewed expert*, rather than by any priority the sources of data necessarily had.

THEME 1 – THE VISION BEHIND THE WYSE EDUCATIONAL PROJECT AND THE SiE MOVEMENT, HENCE BEHIND MARIELLA'S WORK

This group of initial themes provides information on what drives the WYSE project. Mariella's impact and work on different programmes within this organised educational project, and on SiE (Soul in Education), its umbrella movement, however, provides relevant information that clarifies her vision and what she is trying to achieve in teaching both younger and older generations.

WYSE – The WYSE project was founded in 1989 by the late Marilyn Feldberg, an internationally-known psychosynthesist and pioneering soul educator (defined as an educator who recognises, in life and in education, the centrality of the soul, expressed via the inner guidance of the Higher Self). WYSE is affiliated with the United Nations as an NGO (non-governmental organisation) and claims to promote human evolution.

Their website clarifies that the acronym WYSE, World Youth Service and Enterprise (henceforth referred to as WYSE) means that youth (Y) the world over (W) are encouraged to unite in service (S) while developing their enterprising (E) potential. It also illustrates that the approach of WYSE is global, empowering, creative, experiential, values-based and *focused on inner leadership*, expressed both as a willingness to ‘engage in the issues and challenges we see around us’ and as a need to learn to be in inspirational contact with one’s inner leader, seen as:

The part of them [of each individual] that knows and understands the meaning and purpose in their lives. We encourage people to take up the leadership for themselves, to live responsibly and with greater awareness of both their own needs and the needs of others. Participants learn that to effectively lead others, they must first know themselves. (Wyse Intl., n.d.)

Soul education, the authentic self and perennial philosophy – The educators and trainers involved in the WYSE project are, like the project’s founder, soul educators, but not all are psychosynthesists. Soul education is intended to contemplate and facilitate students’ and educators’ awakening to the authentic self; the experience of soul education is theoretically education for wholeness. The pedagogy adopted by soul educators is explained in *The Wheels of Soul in Education*, where it is clearly stated that ‘the WYSE community... anchors the spirit and practice of soul in education’ (Kates & Harvey, 2010, p.ix).

I find it particularly interesting that the philosophy which guides the paradigm of Soul education is declared to be perennial philosophy, which openly embraces humanistic and so-called esoteric values (Huxley, 1944). As outlined above, this is also part of the vision of the WYSE project. Perennial philosophy highlights interconnectedness and is explained thus:

[It] states that within reality and the universe there is interconnectedness and a fundamental unity to which each individual has intimate connection through the inner, higher Self...Soul education has deep roots in theosophical and humanistic traditions.

These time-honoured traditions recognise and remind us of the fundamental existence of a higher Self or Soul. (Kates & Harvey, 2010, p.2, my italics)

Transitions and four WYSE programmes – Interestingly, WYSE was initially born to provide young children with guidance during transition times and when faced with choices as to which school to choose (after primary school and at the end of that 5-year cycle). These two initial programmes were available in the UK only and have now been suspended. The four transpersonally-based programmes being offered now cater for young adults (between 18 and 32) and elders (people over 50 years of age) in the following order:

First level – International Leadership Programme

Second level – Advanced Leadership Programme (open to those who attended the first level)

Third level – Transpersonal Educator Training, whose aim is to train future educators and group leaders in a transpersonal context (open to those who attended the previous levels)

As Mariella explains, ‘Despite the fact that the word “transpersonal” clearly appears only in the title of the third programme, the transpersonal dimension actually encompasses all levels’. (I. 1, p.2; 8-9)

The fourth programme, open to interested individuals above 50 years of age, focuses on intensive psycho-spiritual development and is called ‘A Gathering of Elders: Working with Wisdom’, but has a different theme each year. Mariella clarifies that the word ‘wisdom’ itself reveals the focus of this programme, in which ‘the transpersonal, spiritual dimension becomes even more important’. (I. 1, p.2, 15)

The vision behind Mariella’s work/involvement with WYSE and the SiE movement

Support of the young – WYSE was reportedly born to *support young people’s gifts and innate talents*; directors and course leaders believe that the new generations are those who will find solutions to the current global predicaments, which is one of the reasons why they invest in their education. In Mariella’s words:

WYSE believes in young people's wisdom, in their intelligence and creativity, in their abilities. If they are valued and offered support in the right environment, with the right conditions, young people are likely to come up with creative solutions that older generations have not been able to find, solutions to difficulties we are currently facing in the world. (I.1, p.5, 16-19)

Inner leadership and empowerment of the young – As explained above, one key concept pervading all the programmes WYSE offers is that of leadership. Mariella does not like that particular word because she feels it has ambiguous connotations. She clarifies that the concept refers to *inner leadership* which ideally lends wisdom to the actions of what will be our future leaders, whom WYSE hopes to help educate. She is keen on highlighting that:

Leadership [is] the ability to guide one's own growth and development, taking responsibility for oneself and one's actions...[it] is discovering one's abilities and inclinations, encouraging their healthy development (I.1, p.5, 9-11)...[It] stands for *empowerment* of the young (I. 1, p.5, 15-16).

Creative expression and self-discipline – Mariella explains that over the years other non psychological disciplines have been included in the multidisciplinary courses/programmes WYSE offers, such as theatre and the arts, global economics, international cooperation and the business world, yoga and martial arts, to name a few. The inclusion of the last two subjects seems to be for the purpose of helping youth learn *self-discipline in terms of thoughts and emotions*: 'To train this quality in the young it is very useful to guide them to practice 'disciplines' like martial arts and Yoga'. (Lancia, 2010, p.75)

Use of psychosynthesis – Mariella also explains the *role of psychosynthesis* within WYSE, used to promote growth and self-awareness: the first week of each programme is dedicated to self-transformation using psychosynthesis techniques made simple and offered in non technical and non therapeutic ways. Interestingly, facilitators/educators appear to be keen on welcoming individuals of every religious/spiritual persuasion, which seems to be the reason why they tend to avoid using the adjective 'spiritual' or even the word psychosynthesis:

in fact, the word psychosynthesis is very often not even used in our programmes. (I. 1, p.3, 10-13) ...we actually even use the adjective 'spiritual' with great caution...We prefer to leave young people free to assign to the word 'spiritual' their own meaning or none at all. (I. 1, p.4, 43-47)

Focus on experiential teaching/learning which leads to independence and freedom

– Educators/facilitators at WYSE use teaching styles that greatly emphasise *experiential learning* (as discussed in theme 4 below), in which they seem to have a lot of confidence. By letting attendees learn from direct experience and come to their own conclusions, educators seem to have decided that their techniques hardly require labels/adjectives or preconceived labels or conclusions. This appears to be one of the ways they encourage independence and freedom, as the ‘not reifying’ allows the kind of fluidity that enables people to come to terms with ideas in their own way.

The Elders, wisdom and service – Being the director of the Elders programme, Mariella emphasises that WYSE supports not only the role and development of the young, but also of more mature individuals whose important task is that of *providing wise role models* to be respected and emulated, which the new generations need and rarely find, in her opinion. Techniques used in this programme are typically transpersonal (vision quests in nature, rituals, meditating group walks, journalling, yoga, guided meditations/relaxations, storytelling by the fire, etc.), as detailed in the magazine article cited below.

The Elders programme focuses on *inspiring wisdom and self-awareness in the less young* and, as Mariella detailed above, transpersonal issues have even greater relevance in this programme. Mariella also highlights the concept of *service*, which appears to be key in the vision behind all WYSE programmes, hence behind her own work:

For a sound development of the younger generations, the elders – ...the models they provide, the support they can give to the young – are extremely important...The work of WYSE is becoming more and more intergenerational and sees the presence of older people at Youth Programmes (as facilitators, kitchen helpers, coaches) and of young people at the Elders Programmes as “helpers”... The theme of Service...being the “S” of WYSE, receives a special attention in all programmes, both Youth and Elders.
(Lancia, 2011, p.28)

Ethics in education and finding one’s dharma/purpose – One key concept that seems to pervade Mariella’s work as an educator is what she refers to as the *transmission of ethics*. In her book chapter, she writes at length about ethics and the task of soul educators. In one paragraph, she summarises what the task of a soul educator is and why ethics is so important to her:

The task of a soul educator is to help learners develop all the components of their spiritual nature, which includes the desire for knowledge, beauty, love, joy, justice. Ethics gives wings to education, and education is the only sensible long-term answer to the mass of problems accumulating over our heads. (Lancia, 2010, p. 73)

Mariella also highlights that the task of educators is to help youth find their *entelechy* (Aristotelian concept meaning ‘actualising one’s potentiality’), their *dharma* (ancient Indian concept signifying ‘universal order’). In other words, Mariella highlights the importance of helping the young find what their *potential and life purpose* is. Mariella shares her views and clarifies the importance/implications of finding one’s purpose thus:

An essential path to ethics – and to soul education – is identifying one’s *dharma* or ‘duty’. This ‘duty’ means guiding the young to gradually discover what they are here for, what they are fit for; what their task in life is. This is also a way to avoid widespread evils such as depression, uncertainty, insecurity and to find fulfilment in life. The pedantic ethics of outwardly imposed duty would thus be transformed into the enthusiastic task of doing what one has been born for, of developing one’s highest and most creative potentials, and the capacity for self-study. (Lancia, 2010, p.75)

Through this process of finding one’s purpose, duty imposed from external sources is transformed, at least to Mariella’s mind.

THEME 2 – OBSERVED EFFECTS ON ATTENDEES (and WYSE programmes’ potential shortcomings)

This group of initial themes illustrates not only the beneficial effects that Mariella perceives programmes attendees to report, but also the shortcomings observed by organisers and facilitators (likely to be relevant to the potential contribution of this model to holistic and mainstream education).

Mariella explains that when taking part in WYSE programmes, participants live a reality where empathy, support and co-operation are the norm and they gain *experiential knowledge of new ways of being*.

Positive inner changes as reported by attendees and observed by WYSE educators

– According to Mariella, among inner changes noticed in at least 50% of the participants (as reported by attendees and observed by course leaders) are:

- an acceleration of the maturation process,

- the creation of new models to live by, which include more wisdom in facing life's transitions (such as ending a relationship, facing death, pregnancy, etc.), in handling one's frustrations and potentially difficult emotions, as well as
- developing or manifesting a strong spirit of co-operation and service.

Mariella feels that these new models by which to live are indirectly having a positive impact on the collective unconscious. She notes that:

It is my impression that many of these young people have started to integrate within themselves and in the collective unconscious some new models – as to how to fall in love and how to split up, how a child is conceived, how to face a loss and even death. Their awareness appears to be growing, together with their wisdom. (I.1, p.6, 47-50)

Shortcomings – positive inner changes are often short-lived as a result of the impact of everyday reality.

The risk, however, is that once former participants return home and have to go back to a less supportive way of life, especially when trying to make a living in an unsympathetic world, their initial inner transformations and acquired values can end up being half-forgotten. Very often even their parents fail to be role models or to give the young some needed support to practice and integrate the new teachings, Mariella points out. This is something that WYSE's trainers seem to be aware of, so much so that they have been gradually setting up volunteer coaching to offer sustained support and to soften the impact of life under the current paradigm, to enable youngsters to continue integrating into their everyday life what they learned during the programmes. In Mariella's words:

We are organising advanced programmes and gatherings of ex participants, with voluntary coaches who make themselves available for regular contact and support via telephone or email. Such coaches try to help each participant bring into their everyday life what they learned and experienced during their WYSE time. (I.1, p.8, 7-11)

THEME 3 – THE ROLE OF EXPANDED CONSCIOUSNESS AND INTUITION

This thematic group defines intuition and expanded consciousness, key concepts in psychosynthesis, and highlights their role in Mariella's work.

The role of expanded consciousness and educating by example – Mariella seems convinced that individuals who have reached expanded consciousness (seen as self-

awareness, developed intuitive abilities and awareness of ‘right use of energy’ in one’s attitudes, thoughts and emotions), theoretically facilitated by psychosynthesis and psychoenergetics (as described in her book chapter and discussed below), automatically help the community by educating others by example, ‘by way of being and not by what they say or do’. (I1, p.8, 13).

The acquisition of an expanded consciousness allegedly leads to more care for the collective well-being and to increased self-authority, acquired by gradual reliance on one’s intuitive guidance from the Self/Soul. Mariella explains these concepts thus:

The wider our consciousness, the less opposition there is likely to be between individual and common good. The more our consciousness develops, the fewer norms and rules we will need; the more we approach the vibratory sphere of the Self or Soul, the more we will intuitively know what needs to be done. (Lancia, 2010, p.78)

Clearly, the development of one’s intuitive faculties leading to self-authority and wise, inner-directed action appear to be highly desirable in Mariella’s educational work.

Intuition as reliable guidance from one’s inner teacher, the (Transpersonal) Self – Mariella feels that Assagioli was right in pointing to intuition as a highly important psychological function in its own right as, she explains, it is through intuition that guidance from the inner teacher, the Transpersonal Self, reaches an individual’s conscious awareness, offering wise insights into every aspect of life and enabling him/her to make the right moves in any situation. Mariella clarifies that:

As to intuition, in Assagioli’s star diagram it is indicated as the most elevated psychological function and human faculty, situated at the top of the star. It is our dimension which helps us establish a clear contact with, and guidance from, our Transpersonal Self, bypassing our thought function and getting to the heart of any situation, thing, attitude, person, problem or event, offering us highly useful, immediate insights to guide our actions by. (I. 1, p.7, 45-49)

THEME 4 – WHAT THE TRANSPERSONAL VISION HAS TO OFFER (via psychosynthesis and psychoenergetics) AND WHAT THE TEACHING STYLES ADOPTED REVEAL ABOUT TRANSPERSONAL EDUCATION

This large group of themes gives information on how Mariella sees transpersonal work, what the teaching styles adopted reveal about transpersonal education and it offers

definitions of psychosynthesis and psychoenergetics. It also shows details of how her vision was influenced (and by whom).

The transpersonal vision and interconnectedness – The transpersonal is described below as a vision and a way of being which facilitates and encourages what Mariella perceives as a needed awareness of the interconnectedness of all that lives. She clarifies that:

Transpersonal is...an adjective, a vision...a way of being. (I. 1, p.4, 43)...It focuses on aims, values, on developing a sense of connection with all that lives, with nature and all sorts of other dimensions. (I. 1, p.2, 32-33)

Mariella feels that developing an inter-dependent consciousness and becoming less egocentric or self-obsessed are essential for a sustainable future.

Psychosynthesis and self-knowledge – On the awareness of inter-connectedness depends not only sustainability and survival, Mariella suggests, but also the harmonious development of one's psyche and true potential, which psychosynthesis aims to bring to the surface and integrate. The transpersonal includes psychosynthesis and the budding field of psychoenergetics.

Mariella defines psychosynthesis as a holistic psychology based on a comprehensive model which includes the full and harmonious development of human nature and potential, which it aims to integrate with the personality. She adds that 'the best form of ethical education is to help young learners develop self-knowledge, which supports them in the task of expanding their consciousness'. (Lancia, 2010, p.78)

Her educational model, as has hopefully become clear by now, is, therefore, consciousness-based, awareness-based. In other words, increasing self-awareness is at the heart of its teachings.

Psychoenergetics and expanded awareness – Mariella was trained by the late Sergio Bartoli, the pioneering founder of a community/ecovillage in Italy that promotes and practices psychosynthesis and psychoenergetics as experiential disciplines and as a way of life that encompasses self-awareness and expanded consciousness (self-transcendence, hence sense of self embedded in the totality).

Psychoenergetics, Mariella explains, encourages the awareness that everything is composed of energy and, as such, it is not only interrelated, but it apparently has a powerful effect on individuals' consciousness. This different awareness of the energetic component of what we define 'reality', in Mariella's view and experience, influences an individual's perception of matter, of health, of education and everything else.

The potential effect of a different, expanded awareness, it is argued, is likely to encourage individuals to base one's behaviour and actions on different values from the ones the current paradigm seems to support. Through psychoenergetics, Mariella suggests, it is also possible to learn the empowering effects of thoughts and emotions on consciousness and matter; in her view, psychoenergetics should be included in schools curricula, in that experiential awareness that everything is composed of energy and has an effect on everything else leads to empowerment and responsible action. She seems to treat psychoenergetics as an attitude and not in terms of techniques to be practiced, at least in this context.

Psychoenergetics as a new ethical paradigm – Last but not least, Mariella seems to consider psychoenergetics as an essential way of life which leads to ethical living as a result of the acquisition of an expanded consciousness/awareness. Mariella expresses clearly how she sees psychoenergetics as linked to the ethics of the future, in that spirituality might indeed imply 'knowledge and right use of energy' as also invisibly expressed by our thoughts, emotions and attitudes:

It is highly ethical to be aware of, care for the energetic dimension of life, and take responsibility for the quality of the energies in our attitudes, thoughts and emotions... Might we then see spirituality as right knowledge and use of energy? Indeed Assagioli (1988) posited the birth of a fifth force in psychology, which he termed *Psychoenergetics*, which goes beyond transpersonal psychology. This fifth force and its developments will certainly show that the new ethics is closely linked to psychoenergetics. (Lancia, 2010, p.76, original italics)

Teaching styles – the focus on experiential learning as another contribution of psychosynthesis to education and lifelong learning

Experiential learning in transpersonal education is viewed as more effective and immediate than imparting theoretical notions alone. Mariella explains that:

Psychosynthesis' openness to constant developments and the numerous exercises and techniques it offers makes it especially useful and suitable for young people's needs.

Youngsters have little patience for long, theoretical discussions. They prefer immediate experience and practice in whichever area is being discussed and taught. (I. 1, p.3, 26-29)

THEME 5 – ENVISAGED EDUCATIONAL CHANGES FOR THE NEW GENERATIONS BASED ON MARIELLA’S ACQUIRED EXPERIENCE

This group of themes further clarifies the teaching styles adopted in Mariella’s work and the motivation behind the changes she envisions for the education of the present and future generations.

Mariella’s belief in the transpersonal vision and education as the only way forward for humanity is strongly expressed in different ways. The spiritual dimension, to Mariella, needs to be cultivated and used to view any aspect of life, which includes the material. Clearly, Mariella recognises that mainstream acceptance of concepts such as ‘energy’ and ‘inner guidance’ would require a paradigm which is less materialistic than what is considered the norm today. Her educational model aspires to help individuals evolve beyond limiting beliefs, so that a new paradigm can gradually emerge.

The changes Mariella envisages are not necessarily to be found in structural reforms to education, she clarifies. What she envisages has much more to do with the evolution of consciousness from an ego-based to a transpersonal-based awareness and more integrated expression. These elements, as discussed above, include, to Mariella, awareness of interconnectedness with all that lives and following inner guidance for ethical living. This more multifaceted way of living, Mariella argues, clearly needs a kind of education which is very different from what mainstream education offers nowadays or from what is considered desirable by policy makers. In Mariella’s vision, *an ideal future education would require educators who are also transpersonally inclined, therefore able to teach what they have not only learned first, but also embody in everyday life.*

A consciousness evolution has to start with the individual, according to Mariella, whether the individual is a formal educator or an ordinary citizen. As previously discussed, to Mariella’s mind, any individual who personifies this new consciousness

automatically inspires and educates. Essential elements to educational futures Mariella expressed throughout the interview and in her published writings are as follows:

a) Educators as authentic role models,

What is needed is more aware teachers who have worked on themselves and acquired a higher, transpersonal vision and expanded forms of awareness. (I.1, p.8, 19-20)

b) Education for ethical thinking and behaviour, as directed by the Self or Soul via intuitive guidance.

c) The development of expanded consciousness and use of intuition as ways to achieve self-authority (inner locus of control with guidance from the Transpersonal Self).

d) Encouragement of creative and artistic expression, of contact with nature and beauty, and meditative activities which include the body (i.e. slow motions as in tai chi or yoga).

6.1.1. – Contributions to the research question from analysis of Mariella's data

The research question was:

How are the latest trends in the general psychosynthesis-based educational model contributing to holistic education according to experienced educators and how might contributions inform mainstream education?

The contributions from an educational model based on psychosynthesis to holistic and mainstream education that Mariella describes are listed below, followed by a summary of contributions from each theme that categorises her data. They are explored more fully in Table 11 (see Appendix D). Mariella's educational model contributes:

- a consciousness-based/awareness-based evolution towards a paradigm that accepts and makes space for the well-being of all and a sustainable tomorrow.

- Soul/Self as the centre of education, with intuition that takes care of tuition from within. Education from the Self leads to independence and freedom from limiting conditioning, to being ethical and self-responsible.
- Education that helps students find their purpose.
- Education that experientially explores and makes space for new ways of being; a form of education that teaches students to *be* and not only to do or know.
- Self-aware educators, which includes any adult role model, who educate by example, by way of being, by cultivating self-awareness and expanded consciousness.
- Expanded consciousness for interdependent awareness of all that lives, that is key to a sustainable future.
- Awareness of energy underlying all implies developing ethical principles in employing 'right use of energy' in one's thoughts, emotions and attitudes (psychoenergetics).

Summary of contributions from all 5 Themes

Just as Assagioli brought the concept of soul into psychology, Mariella brings the same concept into education for empowerment of the young. She also highlights that the concepts of *entelechy* and *dharma* should be brought back into education; in other words, actualising one's potential and finding one's purpose are seen as an integral part of education. Educators, Mariella points out, should help youth with these important tasks, so that the concept of 'duty' is transformed into an enthusiastic drive towards doing what one has been born for (Theme 1).

Mariella also focuses on experiential learning and experiential knowledge, which bring about new ways of being. Education should focus on being, not just on doing, and create new models to live by, which involve more wisdom in facing life's transitions and handling difficult emotions, educating the development of a spirit of co-operation and service. New ways of being, new models to live by, eventually have an effect on the

collective consciousness, improving the way life and living are conceived of, Mariella maintains (Theme 2).

Along similar lines, Mariella claims that educating by way of being on the part of teachers and adult role models is the essence of what her model contributes. Another contribution seems to be a focus on expanding students' consciousness towards more awareness of, and care for, collective well-being. Developing an interdependent, interconnected consciousness, essential for a sustainable future is key to Mariella, and is seen as an essential contribution of her model to education. Another contribution is reliance on inner, intuitive guidance from the Self for wise action, which leads to increased self-authority (Theme 3).

Her particular educational model focuses on ethical education. Helping students develop self-awareness and self-knowledge, in her view, supports them in their task of expanding their consciousness, which is key to her teachings. Her educational model's contribution to education is its focus on consciousness, on increasing self-awareness. Psychoenergetics, to her, contributes to the growth in consciousness. Awareness that everything is composed of energy, including thoughts, emotions and attitudes, which have an effect on everything and everybody else leads to 'right use of energy', to an ethical way of being, which respects all that lives, including oneself and others. Most importantly, seeing everything in terms of energy in a context of interconnectedness, inspires an individual to base one's behaviour on values, which is what she sees as sorely missing today. There are different levels to psychoenergetics – the focus in this educational context is seen in terms of attitudes and awareness, not explicitly in terms of techniques to be practiced. By offering a multitude of experiential exercises, psychosynthesis also offers experiential learning, which avoids lengthy discussions which bore students (Theme 4).

A major contribution of her educational model is that it aspires to help individuals evolve beyond limiting beliefs, so that a new, healthier paradigm that accepts and includes concepts such as awareness of 'energy', 'inner guidance' and 'authority from within', can be born. The key to education in this model is a development and expansion of a transpersonal, interdependent consciousness, with inner guidance for ethical living (self-transcendence). The focus is also on creating future leaders and future educators who are transpersonally inclined, who apply what they have learned in

everyday life in everything they do. The consciousness evolution/revolution this model inspires, and contributes to others, starts with the individual, who, as said, teaches by example (Theme 5).

I have summarised in Table 11 (App. D) Mariella's vision, teaching methods, aims, perceived attitudes to be taught and the contribution that psychosynthesis and psychoenergetics are seen to offer the world of education and lifelong learning.

The 'Findings Tables' for each case study (Tables 11, 13 and 15), reported in Appendix D, are the result of summaries of summaries of themes and data, which eventually revealed visions and aims that all three experts interviewed appeared to have in common, despite the different focus each expert placed on their work. Once such similarities were found, I decided to use in each of these tables clear headings that reflected such commonalities, in preparation for the cross-case analysis of data.

Findings and implications are addressed in more detail in the discussion chapter that follows (Chapter 8). Composite answers to the research question are presented in Chapter 7, the cross-case analysis. This chapter continues with the presentation of data from Case Studies 2 and 3.

6.2 Molly, Case Study 2: Presentation of data - thematic categories

The presentation of the five main thematic categories below includes illustrative quotes from Molly's interview (raw data), as well as extra evidence (where relevant) from Molly's books and articles and from relevant websites. All sources used (illustrated in Chapter 4, Table 5) are clearly referenced after each quote; interview extracts/quotes are referenced using abbreviations which stand for interview number, page and line number from the original transcribed text. Longer quotes not embedded in text are reported in a slightly smaller font. Importantly, the choice of raw data and extracts from supplementary material to quote in each case study presentation was *dictated by the clarity with which the concept had been expressed by the interviewed expert*, rather than by any priority the sources of data necessarily had.

THEME 1 – ECO-PSYCHOSYNTHESIS AND THE ECOLOGICAL SELF

Besides information on how/why Molly's current vision and projects have been influenced and inspired, this category offers some new definitions that her work contributed to psychosynthesis. Molly started studying psychosynthesis in 1971 and studied with Assagioli himself in Florence for five weeks in 1973. Environmental issues were always close to her heart and, in the late 1980s, she became interested in eco-psychology and in Joanna Macy's work (with whom she later wrote a book).

What Molly's transpersonal vision is about – awareness and participation with life, by co-creating reality in a balanced way. Molly has been keen on introducing eco-psychosynthesis, an ecocentric spiritual perspective, to the psychosynthesis community because of an individualistic, anthropocentric tendency she detected in the prevalent Western paradigm, which, she maintains, psychosynthesis partly inherited, and that she wished to correct. She *sees alienation from nature as being the root cause of many pathologies* leading to self-destructive behaviours as well. Here is how she describes her ecocentric spiritual perspective:

Western psychology in general has largely ignored humanity's relationship to the natural world. The destruction of our life support system is not included in its list of pathologies... We are beginning to see how our cultural alienation from nature engenders not only careless and destructive behavior toward our environment, but also

many common disorders such as depression and addiction... We can also move towards an ecocentric spiritual perspective, in which we see Spirit expressing itself through and in all life forms (Young Brown, 1999, p.2, original emphasis).

The Ecological Self, interconnectedness and embodied spirituality – What was once hierarchically termed the ‘Higher Self’ in psychosynthesis, Molly gradually started conceiving of as the ‘Ecological Self’ – an individual expression of a larger intelligence. This concept not only seems to avoid hierarchies, but also emphasises the interconnectedness and interdependence of all that lives, implying an embodied spirituality and conveying a sense of oneness with nature that the psychosynthetic notion of ‘Higher Self’ would hardly appear to do. Molly seems to emphasise the importance of embodied spirituality, which, she explains, entails using both inner impressions and sensory/energetic impressions from nature, the elements and the outside world in aligning with the Self and taking action. She elaborates:

Aligned in this way with the Ecological Self, I begin to sense where change wants to happen and where there is readiness to awaken. And I learn, more and more precisely, how I can participate in this transformation. (Young Brown, 1996a)

Another issue Molly sees as a ‘common Western fallacy’ that has also influenced psychosynthesis is the assumption that spirit and mind are superior to Earth and body, idealising the spiritual to devalue the physical. She sees this perceived division as an erroneous and misleading assumption and a way to run away from emotion and potential pain, hence from precious information that emotions often convey: ‘We tend to idealize what we think of as "spiritual" and devalue the "physical." We may climb up into the superconscious to get away from pain (from information!)’ (Young Brown, 1996b).

Escapism hidden behind the need to ‘transcend’ – Ecopsychosynthesis clearly supports the idea that the divine can be found in and through the body, our physical bodies, as well as the Earth. This is how Molly expresses her impatience towards what she perceives as false hierarchies and the seeming obsession to ‘transcend’:

I feel that one area of distortion that has occurred in the past, even in psychosynthesis, is that somehow we’re gonna ‘*transcend*’, we’re gonna go somewhere and have bliss and won’t even need to have bodies. I’m very impatient with that because I feel we have incarnated for a purpose in these bodies...I wanna be here in the most joyful and full way that I can. (I.2, p.9, 2-7)

As will hopefully become clear, ecopsychosynthesis as a transpersonal vision is thought to provide experiential techniques that can help heal one's self-imposed or inherited limits, so that one's gifts can be developed and freely expressed in service to oneself and the world. At least this is what Molly's teachings seem to focus on.

THEME 2 – DEFINING PSYCHOSYNTHESIS AND PSYCHOENERGETICS

The initial themes that form this category cluster help define psychosynthesis and psychoenergetics. They also offer details of how Molly's vision of psychoenergetics was influenced (and by whom).

Psychosynthesis as a 'complete psychology' and a natural process of development –

Molly defines psychosynthesis a '*complete psychology*', in that it includes the spiritual dimension which, having been part of all cultures/civilisations in recorded human history in one form or another, in her opinion, cannot be overlooked when contemplating the human psyche. She feels Assagioli's model reflects a natural process of an individual's growth and synthesis that occurs in the psyche, which Assagioli was simply describing, and offering ways to support that process. This is how Molly describes the ever-evolving nature of psychosynthesis:

Those who are involved in psychosynthesis are constantly thinking about it, you know, refining the concepts or bringing new ideas in, bringing in new techniques. It's a very dynamic and growing field. (I.2, p.2, 9-11)

Psychosynthesis and empowerment – The empowering techniques offered by psychosynthesis, Molly argues, are eminently practical in helping individuals reach wholeness and self-esteem:

A lot of today's "pop psychologies" are often seen as narcissistic, a pastime for affluent people to become even more self-absorbed. I see psychosynthesis and ecopsychology as profoundly practical, helping people transform whatever holds them back from bringing their gifts into service in the world. I see many people crippled by depression, anxiety, low self-esteem, poor relationships, and lack of love. Imagine what these people might contribute to their families and communities - even the entire world - if they were healed of these afflictions! I think psychosynthesis could help many of them become more loving, responsible, creative, and fulfilled (Young Brown, 1996b).

Psychoenergetics as a tool for healing and expansion of consciousness – Although only indirectly involved in the practice of *psychoenergetics*, Molly explains that she sees it as ‘a totally compatible and appropriate ground of inspiration’. (I.2, p.2, 19)

She uses psychoenergetics in its simplest form, namely to raise awareness of how one’s thoughts, attitudes and emotions affect one’s consciousness, relationships and even matter.

In association with the AAP (Association for the Advancement of Psychosynthesis), Molly produced a video in which the late Martha Crampton, a pioneer in the fields of psychosynthesis and psychoenergetics, explained how important working via the body was for *disidentification* purposes in psychosynthesis (Dummer, n.d.).

Crampton used psychoenergetics mainly as an energetic healing tool. Molly, like Crampton, sees psychoenergetics as another way through which attention can be paid to the body, an area Molly perceives as having received scant attention in the psychosynthesis community: ‘Many of us have been... trying to bring more body awareness into the work. So in a way that’s related to psychoenergetics, that focus on the body’. (I.2, p.2, 26-28)

In the video, Crampton clearly explained how both disciplines could be combined and used together fruitfully. As stated, she found that the typical psychosynthetic process of disidentification (from one’s roles, objects, emotions, etc., as explained in Chapter 2), which was once done via the mind alone, (i.e. via guided imagery and visualisation), was far more convincingly and effectively achieved via a ‘felt sense in the body’, which psychoenergetics healing techniques seemed to hone. Crampton also explained that she found in her work that once energy started flowing more freely, an individual could then eventually use their will to make different and more constructive choices in life.

In other words, she was saying that psychoenergetics seemed to add to one’s expansion of consciousness/awareness, synthesis of the psyche, ‘right use of will’ (in acting with clear motives) and integration of the personality also through bodily felt energetic releases. (Dummer, n.d.)

THEME 3 – THE ROLE OF INTUITION AND EXPANDED CONSCIOUSNESS

This group defines intuition and expanded consciousness, key concepts in psychosynthesis, and what they mean to Molly as applied to her work. Molly defines intuition as a channel through which the Self guides every individual and through which the conscious mind can be helped to grasp the bigger picture and make decisions. She explains that intuition is a very important function in psychosynthesis, it is present in everybody and expresses itself differently (more mentally, physically, emotionally or spiritually, depending on the person) in each person's life. As the Self is considered an essential experience for everybody, both the Self and Its voice, namely intuition, need only be discovered experientially, rather than described, maintains Molly.

She sees expanding one's consciousness as a way to bypass selfishness and to embrace interconnectedness with the ecosystem and all that lives, which, to her, is permeated by divine intelligence/energy.

Experiential discovery of intuition and the Self – As previously discussed, a key concept in psychosynthesis is the assumption that an individual's spiritual dimension can be personally accessed as a form of inner guidance occurring via the Self, a source of wisdom and guidance from within that Molly defines a 'unifying, integrating kind of energy', which each individual may experience differently :

I believe Assagioli was correct and that the Self is an essential experience for everyone. It is just a matter of helping people discover it rather than providing descriptions. (I.2, p.3, 12-13; and similarly expressed also in Young Brown, 2009b).

Molly offers a description of the faculty of intuition as a form of guidance from the Self which helps grasp the bigger picture: 'I really use it in every area of my life and consider it a channel, a sort of language through which the Self talks to us'. (I.2, p.7, 10-12)

Molly also emphasises that receiving intuitive guidance is an essential experience that needs to be experientially discovered more than theoretically described, clarifying also that the language of intuition is received differently by different people:

What is also important to highlight is that people receive intuition in different ways. I receive it a lot through emotion, and almost as a physical sense. If I feel maybe a little uncomfortable in a situation and if I can just stop and kind of tune in, then I can get a clearer picture. (I.2, p.7, 12-15)

Intuitive guidance used to stop living in fear – Molly argues that intuition can also act as a guide to the conscious mind by alerting individuals to danger, as well as opportunities. For this reason, she thinks that developing and following its guidance potentially enables individuals to stop living in fear and making fear-based, unproductive decisions/choices stemming from the reactivity of the ancient reptilian brain. Molly shares that:

Intuition is meant to be a way of protecting ourselves so we don't have to be fearful because intuition will tell us when something's wrong. So we don't have to be on guard all the time if we develop our intuition properly. This is a really interesting concept because people's fear is a major factor in making them behave in [unproductive] ways. (I.2, p.7, 16-20)

Her thinking was informed by Joseph Chilton Pearce's controversial theories on child development (Chilton Pearce, 1994, 1998), and she feels strongly that everybody should be encouraged to use intuition in their daily lives, including children:

I think that any way that we can find to encourage development of intuition in children and older people ... it's really, really essential because we can't possibly know everything and understand everything, decide everything with our conscious minds. Our conscious minds certainly aren't able to hold all that information and sort through it, plus we have a tendency to see things the way we wanna see them, rather than the way they really are. (I.2, p.7, 1-6)

Molly's concepts and teaching model seem to imply that intuition is the key to expanding one's consciousness, one's awareness. As intuition theoretically helps communication with the Self and it helps bypass fear, it can also allegedly help individuals perceive and communicate with a source of divine intelligence that, to Molly, pervades all, as discussed above.

Expanded consciousness and interconnectedness – Molly sees expanded consciousness as the ability to become conscious of the interconnectedness of all life and the ecosystem, of the spirituality or divine intelligence/energy that permeates everything. She feels that an expansion of consciousness would enable individuals to move beyond selfishness and materialism – a paradigm that, Molly observes, does not appear to make humans happy. She seems convinced that a natural development in consciousness towards a sense of oneness and service has been gradually coming to the fore. She elaborates that:

We've been focusing on and mainly accepting a strongly materialistic paradigm. Our consciousness, on a bigger scale, our needs really, seem to be expanding and moving more towards the spiritual, the divine, which is a word I like. (I.2, p.9, 1)

THEME 4 – TEACHING STYLES AND THE POTENTIAL CONTRIBUTIONS OF PSYCHOSYNTHESIS TO EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMES

Throughout these themes, Molly reveals adopted teaching styles that have proved useful and successful over the years. Innovations in psychosynthesis to counterbalance original shortcomings are also highlighted – being part of her vision and life work, these were deemed relevant in answering the research question.

The contribution of psychosynthesis – Molly sees the key concepts of the existence of a spiritual dimension, of the Self, of 'disidentification' and Self-identification (identification with the Self) as the most important contributions from the psychosynthetic model in creating centred human beings capable of facing life with serenity.

There is a specific contribution that psychosynthesis makes...And that is the idea of disidentification. The whole idea that we identify with something, whether it's a role, a subpersonality, a car, money, a job... anything we identify ourselves with also tends to limit us, in a way (I.2, p.4, 11-14) ... If we, on the other hand, disidentify from any kind of external thing, and rather identify with the Self, then that never changes, that's always present so whatever vicissitudes of life we face, we can remain serene and centred and act in an intelligent way. (I.2, p.4, 17-19)

In other words, Molly believes that disidentification and Self-identification help individuals expand their sense of who they are – from little egos to interconnected participants in the adventure of life, still endowed with individuality, but also part of a larger intelligence (Ecological/Transpersonal Self) that can guide one's actions and celebrate the diverse roles everybody plays, including one's own. In summary, she sees psychosynthesis as contributing to what she perceives as a needed shift in consciousness, from self-centeredness to *experiencing* and acting from the essential oneness in the web of life. What seems particularly interesting is the emphasis on *direct experience*, via the Self, of the interconnectedness and oneness with life Molly repeatedly refers to. Her teaching style, as explained below, seems to be experiential.

Teaching experientially and avoiding pre-conceived definitions/conclusions – Molly clarifies that, in her experience and opinion, any concept needs to be taught mainly by

facilitating direct, personal experience, using language an individual is comfortable with – in her words, ‘You use their language, really’ (I.2, p.3, 20). Some of the techniques she uses to facilitate direct experience are guided imagery, inner dialogue, meditation, journaling, drawing, role-playing, conversations with the inner Wise Being (the Self), introducing more abstract theoretical concepts gradually (Young Brown, 2009b). Molly particularly emphasises the importance of *letting individuals, children and adults, reach their own conclusions independently*, without being offered, or being guided to, pre-conceived conclusions:

I believe in providing [participants/attendees] with experiences or things to explore for them to come to their own conclusions. (I.2, p.3, 9-10)... If people don’t experience things for themselves, you can talk to them until you’re blue in the face and that won’t make any difference. (I.2, p.4, 30-31)

Molly insists on using simple, experiential techniques, free of complex, obscure labels to facilitate experiential learning and direct experiences.

There’s all kinds of ways of working with people to introduce [an] experience without using any kind of fancy words. (I.2, p.4, 22-26)...[In psychosynthesis], there is a clear sense that there is a spiritual dimension and that it should remain relatively undefined so that each person’s experience is gonna be different and you don’t wanna preclude anything (I.2, p. 4, 1-3)

It seems noteworthy that experiential learning and freedom to reach one’s own conclusions based on one’s direct experience seems to be a recurring concept, also strongly emphasised in the work of WYSE educators in case study 1.

THEME 5 – WHAT IS NEEDED IN THE EDUCATION OF THE NEW GENERATIONS BASED ON MOLLY’S EXPERIENCE AND OBSERVATIONS

This group of themes offers information derived from her teaching experience, which includes teacher training. It also highlights enlightened child rearing practices – a point that Molly seems to feel strongly about.

Developing critical and creative thinking that standardised testing cannot measure – Molly is very critical towards educational standards in the US and very much against standardised testing, considered inadequate for measuring critical and creative thinking, which, she feels, are essential abilities education should encourage. Precious

information available on how people learn, she argues, is not being used in schools or in training teachers themselves. She has this to say:

Critical thinking, creative thinking and kind of understanding oneself in the larger world – that can never be tested on a standardised test. So what I'd like to see happen is, for one thing, for the standardised tests to be banished from the schools. (I.2, p.7, 37-39)... I would like to see teachers given education in how the brain works, in educational psychology, you know, so they understand their kids, the kids they're gonna be teaching, and understand them at a very deep level. (I.2, p.8, 5-7)

Molly feels that supporting teachers and providing them with more complete training is paramount.

Empowering teachers – Teacher training is also viewed as highly inadequate. Molly has experience in that field and not only offers criticism, but also suggests remedial solutions, among which, perhaps unsurprisingly, is a basic training in psychosynthesis for teachers (or 'something similar', she said), which, Molly argues, would help them gain a deeper understanding of students and enable them to rely on stronger intuitive guidance, while also helping them to acquire *better management of their own emotions* and to understand their own inner lives and psyches better. She highlights how important personal growth seems to be for the present and future of education:

Of course I would love to see them [teachers] receive something like psychosynthesis, where they would learn how to manage their own emotions and be more centred and rely on their intuition more and all that sort of thing. Personal growth [for teachers] would be really important. (I.2, p.8, 7-10)

Molly's views seem to emphasise that an improvement in educational standards and provisions would require better trained and more aware adults, in order to provide students with role models by whom they could be inspired and guided.

Healthier role models, conducive environments and creative learning – Molly feels that once teachers are *more aware and empowered* and more support and guidance is made available to them, children would have the benefit of healthier role models who could offer more creative ways of learning. Among the *potential corrective actions to take* in this field, Molly strongly feels that the possibility of working in smaller classes should be guaranteed, as well as the *freedom for teachers to choose individualised and creative teaching methods*, with less interference from others in charge:

I'd like to see them [teachers] work with their kids in small classes and let them develop the curriculum for those kids specifically. The kids that they have in their classroom, not some standardised, imposed idea about what's supposed to happen. You can have general guidelines...for example, maths, reading, etc. How that is taught should be left to the individual teacher in ways that work with the kids they're dealing with. (I.2, p.8, 13-17)

To summarise, Molly feels that what children really need in order to learn is to be offered some guidance, a healthy role model and a conducive environment, since *their main learning modality is by observation*, after which they can teach themselves, she claims. She feels many of the hyperactivity problems that children seem to manifest today are due to policy makers' tendency to ignore how the prevailing paradigm may be causing learning disabilities and unhappiness:

They [policy makers] make kids the problem (I.2, p.8, 30). They ignore the most important aspect and don't ask the most important question, which is "what is it that we are doing that is creating that? How are we all contributing to this unhappiness kids are manifesting so blatantly?". (I.2, p.8, 30-32)

Molly sees the prevailing paradigm and the insistence to conform as greatly limiting children, adolescents and adult learners in terms of free, creative expression of their innate gifts. Education and lifelong learning, to Molly's mind and in her experience, seem to be all about evolving one's consciousness so that one could rely on inner guidance and self-authority – a trend that the young, as previously discussed in this thesis, seem to express naturally and increasingly clearly, but rarely having the benefit of role models to emulate.

An observed growing trend in the young – Besides her experience in public schools, Molly teaches many spiritually or ecologically-inclined youth. Despite acknowledging that whoever approaches her for psychosynthesis training or workshops is already open to spirituality, Molly has noticed that an increasing number of young people seems to be concerned about sustainability and the wish to create a better world. Their vision, Molly feels, would need to be supported also outside psychosynthesis circles via mainstream education. She adds:

This kind of training invariably attracts people who hear a different music, who think outside-the-box, in other words. (I.2, p.5, 38-40)...I am working with people who have chosen to become concerned about the larger world and to be activists and to be, you know, trying to create a better world... I'm just really...happy to see that happening

because Lord knows we need that energy, we need that intelligence and dedication to make the changes that are needed. (I.2, p.5, 36-38)

Whether the New Generations were born more aware and gifted or not, as previously discussed, remains a matter of speculation. Giftedness, however, at least to Molly's mind, can be encouraged. What to her would make all the difference seem to be healthy and supportive child rearing practices, made possible once adults themselves grow in self-awareness and expansion of consciousness.

Supportive child rearing leading to giftedness – Having read my University student page before our interview, Molly knew about my interest in the Indigo phenomenon and offered some of her own thoughts, based on her observations. To Molly, the so-called Indigo phenomenon is simply giftedness almost every child can naturally develop, given the proper support and environment:

I am aware of the Indigo phenomenon (I.2, p.6, 3)...I suspect it's always been there - gifted kids, kids that for some reason, whatever the reason...are fortunate that they have parents that didn't completely suppress and curtail them by wrong child rearing practices... and I believe such children are certainly emerging (I.2, p6, 4-9)

Viewing the phenomenon as a form of latent giftedness most people can access if reared in conducive environments, she places great emphasis on healthy child rearing practices and on helping parents become more aware of its importance. To Molly's mind, this form of support, coupled with the measures discussed above, would automatically create Indigo-like children and advance the evolution of the human species.

In other words, Molly feels that more awareness brought into healthy and supportive child rearing practices would certainly be a fundamental contributing factor to humanity's evolution of consciousness. She expresses this point emphatically:

I certainly think that child rearing practices are definitely one area we could address. There are parenting classes available more and more and I think people are aware that child rearing makes a difference and to give parents support so that they allow their child to be who they are rather than fit into what they should be. (I.2, p.6, 31-34)...I think there's quite a movement in that direction and, as that happens, more and more parents are raising their children consciously. (I.2, p.6, 9-14)

Raising self-awareness, especially in adults leading children, appears to be a constant theme in Molly's work. True support for creative self-expression, self-actualisation and joyful expression of one's talents, Molly seems to think, can only be given by aware

adults, who, once healed and helped to evolve their own consciousness (getting rid of limiting beliefs), could eventually provide healthy role models, teaching children mainly by example.

6.2.1. – Contributions to the research question from analysis of Molly’s data

The research question was:

How are the latest trends in the general psychosynthesis-based educational model contributing to holistic education according to experienced educators and how might contributions inform mainstream education?

The contributions from an educational model based on psychosynthesis to holistic and mainstream education that Molly describes are listed below, followed by a summary of contributions from each theme that categorises her data. They are explored more fully in Table 13 (see Appendix D). Molly’s educational model contributes:

- Education focused on developing human potential and on empowering individuals
- Reliance on an Ecological Self which encourages awareness of interconnectedness and counterbalances anthropocentric tendencies
- Embodied spirituality, which, as highlighted in this model, is a means of gathering information constantly, via intuition and multisensory awareness from within and from the natural world
- Cultivation and development of intuition as connection to an individualised form of collective intelligence that guides fearless action
- Psychosynthesis practices which lead to transformation and self-awareness, to right use of will in making choices (based on clear motives) and eventually to fulfilment and sharing of one’s gifts with the world
- Teachings relating to direct, experiential learning of Self and intuition, which helps to connect with a reliable source that gives serenity and feelings of safety and independence

- Awareness that educators and parents need empowerment, training and support, and that their first task should be to cultivate self-awareness, better management of their emotions and reliance on intuition, empowering children to explore their innate gifts
- Self-transcendence/Transcendent actualisation (in this case ‘ecological actualisation’, given Molly’s dislike for the concept of transcendence) and development of an interconnected, sustainability consciousness, which naturally leads to ethical living for a sustainable future

Summary of contributions from all 5 Themes

Education is seen in terms of lifelong learning, focused on developing human potential and on empowering individuals. Based on actualisation of an Ecological Self (individual expression of a larger intelligence), the ultimate actualising principle is seen as ‘ecological-actualisation’ (last point above), in preparation for the Great Turning – a shift from an industrial growth society to a life sustaining civilisation. The contribution of Molly’s model is an education that contains an eco-centric spiritual perspective, with the Divine/Spirit expressing itself through and in all life forms. This form of education is seen as necessary to counterbalance an anthropocentric tendency in the Western paradigm, whose psychology ignores the pathology lying behind a gradual destruction of our life support system.

Key to transcendent/ecological actualisation are forms of embodied spirituality and techniques that augment learning from multi-sensory awareness, from within and from the natural world. Intuition occupies centre stage in this model, as it aligns with the Ecological Self and guides fearless action in the world. Emotions and the body are seen as important and divine and as essential sources of constant information, which needs to be deciphered and given attention in education (Theme 1).

The contribution of educational models based on psychosynthesis and psychoenergetics, by including spirit, are considered more holistic and complete than mainstream models. They are based on ever-evolving psychosynthesis techniques, whose transformational effects help heal afflictions and bring fulfilment, in that whatever holds an individual back from bringing their gifts into expression and service to the world is transformed

and transmuted. Psychoenergetics as an awareness of the effects of attitudes, thoughts and emotions on consciousness, matter and relationships is seen as paramount. The inclusion of techniques that deal with energies and the body are seen as ideal, but very hard to integrate in holistic educational models, at least for the time being. The 'felt sense in the body' which energetic techniques would allow, however, could be cultivated by observing reactions and messages and guidance from the body (as in Gendlin's focusing techniques [see Gendlin, 1981]). Psychoenergetics assists with 'right use of will', in that acting with clear motives in making choices can only be possible once self-awareness and an expansion of consciousness is underway (Theme 2).

The Self and intuition, key to this model, need to be discovered experientially. Expansion of consciousness and increased self-awareness, key elements also, gradually lead to interconnectedness and to ecological actualisation. Multisensory knowing is based also on intuition received through the body and emotions. Constant information received helps build trust in a form of Divine intelligence pervading all, guiding one's steps safely and bypassing fear, and fear-based unproductive decisions. Reliance on intuition which, when listened to, alerts individuals to danger, should be encouraged also in children, Molly maintains. Ecological actualisation moves beyond a materialistic paradigm that does not appear to be making people happy (Theme 3).

Psychosynthesis informs education particularly in disidentifying from objects and roles and identifying with the Self, which never changes and is always present as part of a larger intelligence. Reliance on the Self gives serenity and should be part of any form of education, claims Molly. Psychosynthesis-based educational models contribute to a needed shift in consciousness, she observes. Direct experience of the Ecological Self should be encouraged and facilitated, rather than theoretically explained (Theme 4).

A psychosynthesis-based model would also inform mainstream education about the need to empower and support educators, by including in their training psycho-spiritual techniques that would encourage self-awareness, reliance on intuition for guidance from the Self, better management of emotions and more freedom in designing schools curricula. Teachers' personal growth is seen as vital for education, in that more self-aware adults provide healthier role models to inspire, teach creatively and guide students according to their individual needs, with no insistence to conform, claims Molly. Aware teachers, in Molly's view, would also take care of encouraging creative

expression and development of children's innate gifts. A psychosynthesis-based model would also take care of implementing supportive child rearing practices, which can lead to natural development of giftedness, clarifies Molly. Self-awareness and evolution of consciousness are seen as the main contributions to any educational model, with ecological actualisation naturally leading to ethical living for a sustainable future (Theme 5).

I have summarised in Table 13 (App. D) Molly's vision, teaching methods, aims, perceived attitudes to be taught and the contribution that psychosynthesis and psychoenergetics are seen to offer the world of education and lifelong learning.

Findings and implications are addressed in more detail in Chapter 8. Composite answers to the research question are presented in Chapter 7, the cross-case analysis. This chapter continues with the presentation of data from Case Study 3.

6.3 Ilene, Case Study 3: Presentation of data - thematic categories

The presentation of the four main thematic categories below includes illustrative quotes from Ilene's interview (raw data), as well as extra evidence (where relevant) from Ilene's books, articles and from relevant websites. All sources used (illustrated in Chapter 4, Table 5) are clearly referenced after each quote; interview extracts/quotes are referenced using abbreviations which stand for interview number, page and line number from the original transcribed text. Longer quotes not embedded in text are reported in a slightly smaller font. Importantly, the choice of raw data and extracts from supplementary material to quote in each case study presentation was *dictated by the clarity with which the concept had been expressed by the interviewed expert*, rather than by any priority the sources of data necessarily had.

THEME 1 – BACKGROUND, TURNING POINT AND KEY CONCEPTS IN HER ‘QUALITY PARENTING’ AND ‘QUALITY TEACHING’ WORK

The themes that make up this category offer information on how/why Ilene's current vision and projects have been influenced and inspired (and by whom). A turning point in her training highlights a key concept that informs her work and vision. This category also offers information on how Ilene's work contributes to and uses psychosynthesis.

As stated, Ilene used to teach elementary school children (4th grade). Later she was introduced to psychosynthesis and initially trained with Douglas Russell. She consequently formally trained as a psychosynthesis psychotherapist with Robert Gerard (who had worked very closely with Assagioli, allegedly contributing to his main book), with whom Ilene worked very closely also as a client, and learned experientially what was possible through psychosynthesis. She soon realised that psychosynthesis provided a method that she felt enabled her to help clients the most. The turning point which had the biggest influence on her work was a special class she took with psychosynthesisist Edith Stauffer on attitudes, which she decided to study more in depth via her PhD research. The essence of her vision is as follows, in Ilene's words:

What we believe about people affects how we treat them. And how we treat them influences who they become. (Val-Essen, 2010, p.34, original italics)

Ilene's work and core assumptions – At the core of Ilene's work lies the assumption that children's innate drive is to express their best self. According to Ilene, the Higher Self is in charge of children's and adults' growth and development towards expressing their highest potential. This assumption seems particularly prominent in the case of children; parents' and educators' main role, Ilene maintains, is to support this tendency to express children's best self in all possible ways.

There's two things that are the core of what I teach. One is the Quality Parenting Principles that basically say that children have an innate drive to express their best self. And that for me just changes everything with the parents because the assumption is that just like an acorn is designed to become a beautiful oak tree if it's given the proper environment, then children in psychosynthesis have a Higher Self that guides and promotes their growth and our job is to know that and to support it in every way that we can. (I.3, p.3, 24-29)

Subpersonalities and the 'lower self' – Ilene's work, as detailed in her first book (Val-Essen, 2010), revolves around teaching individuals, especially role models such as educators and parents, to learn to function from a centred self. As explained in Chapter 2, the more immature part of our psyche, in the psychosynthetic model, is relegated to the lower unconscious, hence Ilene's use of the expression 'lower self'. Unconscious needs and parts of us that occasionally throw tantrums or attract attention (via difficult emotions or seemingly unreasonable behaviours) because they want their (often opposing) needs met are referred to as 'subpersonalities' in psychosynthesis. They seem to be considered parts of us that have valid needs and characteristics that need to be met/addressed. Here is how Ilene describes them:

The part of us that goes out of control is sometimes called the "lower self." The lower self is like a child within us who hasn't learned a better way to cope. It's immature and primitive. None of us is immune; everyone has a lower self. In fact, we each have several lower-self characters that can show up under stress. These so-called "subpersonalities" try, in their own clumsy ways, to meet our needs. Our goal as parents is to learn from these characters and minimize the trouble they cause...Our subpersonalities show up when we feel stressed. In response, a subpersonality rides to the rescue and takes over; its sole purpose is to reduce our anxiety. (Val Essen, 2002, p.2)

Difficult behaviour on children's part is interpreted as one of their subpersonalities' cry for help and calls for wise guidance from adults, Ilene maintains, so that children can move beyond that specific subpersonality's temporary need: 'Our child is looking to us

to guide them so that they can meet whatever legitimate need that is within that subpersonality and move beyond it'. (I.3, p.4, 7-8)

The three levels of self – True to psychosynthesis, Ilene's work also assumes that individuals have three levels of self – lower, centred and higher – and that it is perfectly normal to lose one's centre at times and to function temporarily from a lower part of one's consciousness. The same cry for help the child expresses when behaving in a disruptive way is thought to be expressed by adults when they 'lose it'. There seems to be a certain universality to this tendency and Ilene seems keen on reassuring parents and educators that they are not expected to be perfect. In her work, she provides understanding and simple ways as to how to meet the unmet needs their subpersonalities might be expressing. She explains that:

Once parents begin to recognise that that's universal and that within that experience of 'losing it', there's always a legitimate need within that subpersonality, that's very comforting to them. And their job is to figure out what need within themselves do they need to meet, how can they support their child meet that need so that we can move beyond that fear state or that ineffective state and get back to centre. (I.3, p.4, 14-18)

Learning to function from the 'centred self' and the issue of equal respect – The solution when the above happens, according to Ilene, seems to be for adults to look for the message or need that the 'crying subpersonality' appears to express and to get intuitive guidance from the Higher Self so they can act appropriately to move beyond the subpersonality's negative emotion (hiding a legitimate need) and become centred again. Ilene stresses the need to treat each other with equal respect despite age differences:

The essence of the centered self is to hold an attitude of equality. That attitude reflects the understanding that "We treat each other with equal respect". Our age and experience are not equal, but we *can* see each other as equally worthy of respect. (Val-Essen, 2010, p.87, original italics and emphasis)

What Ilene seems to be saying is that to truly educate and support a child, increased self-awareness and better management of one's emotions are needed, so that a child can be provided with a healthier role model.

Teaching by example evolving oneself first – The essence of functioning from a centred self in Ilene's work, as I understand it, is that individuals teach by example; in

other words, if parents and educators are centred, children will mirror that, Ilene claims. Once adults learn that they are not exempt from functioning from the lower self at times, hence ‘losing it’ and reverting to potentially immature behaviours when stressed, they can stop placing unreasonable demands on themselves or their children and learn gradually to take care of their unconscious, unmet needs their subpersonalities manifest from time to time, as stated above.

Once they learn to take care of that in themselves, Ilene teaches, they can also guide their children in doing the same. As this compassionate work on themselves progresses, a more self-responsible and centred attitude becomes the norm for adults in time, which, Ilene maintains, children will tend to emulate.

Quality teaching™ and the key to success – Ilene’s Quality Teaching Model, she explains, is based on the same Quality Parenting Model described above. However, because attendees at UCLA would be mainly educators, the examples used were adapted for a different audience. Ilene explains that being parents, as well as educators, her courses’ attendees could reap potential benefits both professionally and personally. She teaches that the key to success is one’s *attitude of acceptance and support*. Ilene explains it thus:

Whether we’re using conscious listening with one child or angry sibling or with friends, the key to success is our *attitude*. If we’re genuinely interested and accepting – children and teens will feel that and appreciate it...They sense we want to help and trust that we’re capable. The opportunity to be supported in an atmosphere of acceptance is rare; children and teens soak it up like sunshine. When we accept that our children have problems, that we’re not to blame and that they’re just fine, we become more calm; we can hear more accurately what they’re experiencing. We become better facilitators and create the supportive environment they need to wrestle with life’s problems. (Val-Essen, 2010, p.245, original italics)

Again, increased awareness on the part of educators and parents would appear to place less pressure on themselves and their children who, to Ilene, mainly require modelling for them of a more centred behaviour.

THEME 2 – TEACHING EXPERIENTIALLY ABOUT GUIDANCE FROM THE HIGHER SELF THROUGH INTUITION

This category clarifies Ilene's adopted teaching styles and defines and clarifies the concept of Higher Self and the role of intuition (key concepts in psychosynthesis) in her life and work. This category also highlights the effects she observed on those who have been taking her advanced training; such effects seem to be relevant to the attitudes that her work tries to encourage.

Teaching experientially about the Higher Self – Ilene seems to prefer the use of simple concepts and experiential ways of teaching. She uses tried and tested psychosynthesis exercises when teaching about the 'Higher Self', such as the 'Ideal Model' exercise, which works on the assumption that despite all of us having three levels of self, some people spend more time 'being their Higher Self', showing more clearly wise, centred behaviours and desirable characteristics/qualities, than most people.

By inviting her course participants to choose their preferred role models among famous people, relatives or friends who seem to express their wisest self, she helps adults to identify and describe the qualities/behaviours they admire the most in others and can then emulate, cultivate and express. This exercise appears to facilitate in course participants the recognition of certain universal characteristics (i.e. courage, generosity, compassion, empathy and wisdom), which Ilene defines 'qualities of a transpersonal nature' that anybody can then integrate in their own lives if they so choose.

Interestingly, when teaching healthy child rearing practices, Ilene seems to choose to make this exercise experiential for adults by also asking them to identify moments when they and even *their children* have expressed their Higher Self. Ilene finds that invariably the desirable qualities that emerge from participants appear to be the same universal characteristics detailed above, often indicating growth and service. She provides a description of what typically happens during this experiential exercise in her experience:

You know, people talk about famous people like Martin Luther King and other people talk about their grandparents who are very generous, who are very supportive in the community, to their kids, you know... so for me it comes from inside and whatever their definition is, they are always very moved by that and they love the idea. Then I ask them when their children have expressed their Higher Self and when they express their [own] Higher Self and from that experiential moment, they really begin to tap into their own resources. (I.3, p.5, 16-21)

Ilene feels that intuition is the ‘voice’ the Higher Self uses to promote growth and wise behaviours in oneself and others. Intuition is a key concept in Ilene’s work and the focus of her second book (in preparation). While in her first book and quality parenting/teaching programmes her focus was on guiding people to function from a *centred* self, her advanced programmes and book try to teach people to function mainly from the Higher Self as guided by their own intuition. Ilene draws on the following definitions:

Defining the Higher Self – As noted before, Ilene seems to like to keep concepts accessible and simple. In psychosynthesis, the Higher Self is theorised to be found in the superconscious, the higher/more transpersonal part of an individual’s psyche (as illustrated in the literature review chapter). The psychosynthetic model holds that the Higher Self acts as the voice of the Soul, to be received mainly via intuitive guidance, which is recognised as one of the main faculties within the psyche that individuals regularly use.

Ilene’s definition of the Higher Self is simply and succinctly ‘*growth and moving beyond familiar behaviours and dynamics to express one’s highest and best, as directed from the wise teacher within*’. In one of her statements, Ilene explains that:

I use very simple language so the Higher Self to me is whatever we’re doing that’s forward movement. That’s one definition of the Higher Self. Because some people really don’t tap into let’s say the true Higher Self, but they’re moving to be in their centred self more often, then I like to say that’s the Higher Self, because they’re moving beyond what they usually do. So the Higher Self is growth. And another definition...would be inner wisdom, that wise teacher who guides and supports our growth. (I.3, p.5, 1-6)

Defining intuition – The definition Ilene provides of intuition seems once again simple and straightforward. To her, intuition is ‘*an inner knowing unconnected to the logical mind which stems from the wise guidance within, from the Higher Self, whose interest is for our growth and for the good of all*’. (I.3, p.10, 12-14)

Ilene feels that intuition includes and goes beyond logic, grasping the true meaning in our actions and words, seeing beyond facts and recognising the larger purpose. It also contains information that guides individual’s growth, healing and love (Chapter 5, book in preparation). In her interview, she states that: ‘It’s that part of us who always is in

touch with how we can better serve our growth in order to help others grow and be all that they wanna be'. (I.3, p.10, 14-15)

The key function of intuition to understand inner guidance, to inform one's choices and to assist children – As stated, intuition assumes a key role in Ilene's advanced teachings. In the unpublished chapter she sent me, Ilene emphasizes the importance of learning to recognise intuition's symbolic language, which often indicates needed action or some needed changes in one's status quo, which require action one might have been trying to avoid but which would assist one's growth. Learning to pay attention to intuition, whichever way it expresses itself for each individual, seems to be the best way to let one's intuitive abilities develop naturally, Ilene suggests.

It's simple: We can access the intuition by paying more attention to the cues in our lives or by remaining alert to our children's cues. By paying attention to the intuition in either direction, you'll strengthen your ability in both. (Chapter 5, book in preparation)

Because children's intuition is also expressed symbolically, she maintains, it is particularly important to learn to decipher and decode the messages their intuition brings through them, so that adults can assist them in their growth. In her words:

Since our children's intuition is often expressed in CODE, we need to be able to decipher their secret language... When we learn to decode their messages accurately, we become more skillful in helping them bring out their best. And, inevitably, we discover the best within ourselves. (Chapter 5, book in preparation)

Ilene's model, in other words, sees intuitive guidance as very central in educating, parenting and being/becoming one's best self. Developing one's intuitive faculty, therefore, appears to be essential to her. Experiential teaching and learning, in Ilene's model, also appear to be her preferred ways of training for expansion of consciousness. The exercises she chooses to use in her work are still those Assagioli devised and that she found successful in her own training.

Imagery, myth and storytelling as tools to facilitate experiential learning about consciousness expansion, the Higher Self or intuition – As discussed in chapter 2, *imagery* as a learning and transformational tool appears to have a prominent role in psychosynthesis. It seems to have been used in different ways since the inception of psychosynthesis and it is still used to facilitate experiential learning of rather abstract concepts such as the Higher Self and intuition. As Ilene explains below, myth,

storytelling, imagery work or desirable qualities to emulate (the Ideal Model exercise discussed above) seem to be favourite ways of facilitating learning by experience:

I try to do it mostly through qualities... and when people have ideal models of who they wanna be...[or] write a myth: 'if you could let go of all your resistance or whatever complexes you had, how would you move in the world?' So it's usually through storytelling or imagery or qualities... or stories of when some part of them just came through. (I.3, p.10, 1-3)

At times, however, experiencing transpersonal energies and potential unlimitedness, in Ilene's experience, gives rise to resistance, as the next theme explores.

Adverse reactions to advanced training and transpersonal energies – Ilene observed in her advanced courses that she offers outside the US that some people resist greatness or powerful energies from the superconscious. She notes, for example, that in some European countries, where glowing or standing out is not culturally acceptable or encouraged, once powerful transpersonal energies are accessed, they seem to be met with fear and tension, hence are partially blocked. This, in her experience, happens also in the US, although less dramatically. Here is how she describes her experience:

When I did the training on the advanced material that I told you about in this other book I've been writing, it would be really interesting to me. It's like the training would go to this amazing place and then all of a sudden it would be like chaotic. The people couldn't hold it. And I kind of hold it together for them and get them to that higher place again and then it was like more than they could take. And I watched that and I thought that that was really fascinating because it's almost as if that energy is a higher power than most of us are comfortable sitting with. We don't really know we're having difficulty with the energy so we pick on little, minor things that are going on as an excuse [to block the process]. (I.3, p.9, 1-7)

Transcendent potentials and the fear of one's greatness ('the repression of the sublime') – Interestingly, the resistance Ilene described when teaching advanced concepts related to Self-realisation (i.e. gaining access to the powerful and transcendent energies coming from the Superconscious and the Higher Self so that one's growth can be directed from the Self, rather than the ego alone) has been observed and written about before. In transpersonal circles, it is referred to as 'the repression of the sublime', as repression of higher human potential (Haronian, 1967). This suggests that expansive, transcendent energies and the potential to be free, to be Self-realised and use one's potential seem to scare some people. In essence, at its heart, this repression of the sublime seems to hide mainly a fear of change and unresolved issues of 'deservability'

and self-esteem. Arguably, it could also hide the fear of annihilation which the ego might manifest in a self-preservation attempt.

Interestingly, Maslow wrote about the unconscious fear of fulfilling one's highest purpose and of expressing one's greatness. He called such fear 'the Jonah complex', describing how individuals often preferred to evade their growth and chose not to rise above mediocrity by unconsciously sabotaging their development, avoiding the responsibilities and challenges involved in pursuing and actualising their highest potential, which their ego or 'persona' might find dangerous. This, according to Maslow, could be part of one's own and even of humanity's collective shadow resistance to actualising its highest potential; he felt it was important to become aware of this and to address it (Maslow, 1971).

In facing the 'fear of the sublime' that some of her advanced students seemed to experience, Ilene again used imagery to help individuals overcome their self-imposed, often acquired, limiting beliefs and behaviours. This apparent block, Ilene explains, seems to be met as part of the process of expanding one's consciousness.

Addressing the 'repression of the sublime' via imagery techniques – Human capacities for wonder, fulfilment, joy or creative expression, which, according to psychosynthesis, are an integral part of our superconscious, seem likely to have been cut off (or at least not encouraged) throughout humanity's recorded history. On the other hand, many of the unspeakable traumas humanity has experienced are likely to have been relegated to the collective and personal unconscious, and probably still exercising an influence on the collective psyche. This, in indirect ways perhaps, seems to be one of the central tenets underlying the psychosynthetic model. If humanity unconsciously fears and sabotages its greatness due to unacknowledged collective pain, it follows that useful techniques need to be found to counterbalance this tendency. In her work, Ilene has found that imagery, again, is helpful:

I had one client who said to me " I'm just too scared. I'm like a bird who's sitting on a branch of a tree and I'm too afraid to fly" and I spent 45 minutes having him as that bird finding the courage to fly and then his whole life changed in the real world. (I.3, p.8, 28-31)...People might get scared because the ego is not in the lead anymore and that's what they are used to. (I.3, p.9, 11)

What follows is a description of how Ilene sees psychosynthesis contributing to education and lifelong learning.

THEME 3 – THE POTENTIAL CONTRIBUTION OF PSYCHOSYNTHESIS AND PSYCHOENERGETICS

In this theme information can be found on the impact of Ilene's work and the contribution of psychosynthesis and psychoenergetics (as Ilene sees it). As discussed so far, Ilene's work focuses heavily on being centred and on living and expressing oneself from the wisdom of the Higher Self, thus expressing one's best self. Her whole work, first book and the one on which she has been working seem to be centred on these principles and on being guided by intuition. Like Molly, Ilene is not directly involved in psychoenergetics; from Assagioli's work and esoteric vision, however, she interprets it as a process of facilitating an energetic transformation and refinement of one's physical, emotional, mental and spiritual dimensions, so the wisdom and guidance from the Higher Self and the superconscious can be channelled more easily. The only way she seems to apply psychoenergetics in her work is in making individuals aware of the effects of attitudes on consciousness and relationships.

Ilene sees the potential contribution of psychosynthesis to education in terms of the relevance and importance placed on *intuition* and the *Higher Self* for optimum functioning as educators and parents in guiding and raising children. An attitude of unconditional support without an agenda is also fundamental in guiding children, as Ilene sees it:

I think part of that powerful attachment with your children is that you're so present to the child and without an agenda that you can hear the child's intuition, that voice of the Higher self, that voice of growth, that you can support that and that becomes the true teacher in the session. (I.3, p.10, 20-23)

Ilene recognises the centrality of intuition in any kind of communication between adults and children in any form of interaction. This seems to be the main contribution and gift of psychosynthesis, as she sees it.

Often we don't recognize the intuition in our children or ourselves — and become blind to its wisdom. As we learn to recognize the many ways the intuition expresses itself, we gain access to its insight, always with the intent to support growth and development, to reveal the next steps ahead. (Source: Chapter 5, book in preparation)

As mentioned above, another key contribution to children and adults' personal development, at least for Ilene, is the concept of a Higher Self, a wise inner teacher to guide one's development being available and directly accessible by everybody. To Ilene, a transpersonal vision with increased self-awareness and development of one's potential seems likely to bring out the best in adults (parents and educators) and children. She adds: 'if we want to be on the planet and be a world citizen, then the Higher Self is the source for that calling'. (I.3, p.11, 7-9)

THEME 4 – OBSERVED TRAITS EMERGING IN THE NEW GENERATIONS AND ENVISAGED EDUCATION FOR THE NEW GENERATIONS (BASED ON ILENE'S EXPERIENCE)

The initial themes grouped under this category yield information on her observations and work with representatives of the New Generations – observing how they act in the world to manifest their dreams, while at the same time working with adult educators and parents, appear to have informed Ilene's opinion on what educational developments are needed to truly educate the New Generations in a way that meets their needs.

In other words, deriving her observations from her teaching work with educators and parents and also from her psychotherapeutic work with children, adolescents and young adults, Ilene points out that the New Generations seem to be aware of a felt destiny as carers and healers of other people and of the planet, and that they appear to convey a sensitivity and an awareness which go beyond what previous generations their age would express in the past. Considering such changes in consciousness, a revision of the kind of education available to the New Generations is, to her, necessary.

A 'new breed' with stronger, inbuilt contact with the Higher Self – Ilene seems to believe that the New Generations were simply born with a strong link to their Higher Self and source of creativity and wisdom already in place, without the work normally required for that link to be established. She says that:

I have a lot of kids in my practice now and those children are...I always say it's just a different breed. (I.3, p.5, 31)...I know that there are children who feel they were born on this planet for their care for other people, and their desire to heal and change the planet is something way, way beyond what an ordinary child that age would feel or think or do. (I.3, p.6, 10-14)...I mean, the only answer for me is that their Higher Self is so much

more integrated in their everyday living than most of us even as adults, and we want to create as much space and support for these kids as possible, because these are the great leaders and these people can have an enormous influence actually inviting the Higher Self in their classmates and in their teachers. (I.3, p.7, 8-9)

Envisaged consciousness-education for the New Generations – a transpersonal attitude

Intuitive teachers – Ilene maintains (and teaches in her programmes) that *intuitive teachers* are needed for intuitive generations because when an adult is already comfortable with listening to one's inner guidance, to their Higher Self, Ilene seems convinced, they find it much easier to accept a child's inner guidance and to encourage the expression of their potential without limits.

If the teacher has had a chance to really express their own Higher Self, they are much more comfortable with listening to the voice of the child's Higher Self and believing, in a sense, that anything is possible. (I.3, p.8, 13-15)

In line with the SiE movement in case study 1, Ilene also feels that children's natural inclinations and interests should be considered when developing a curriculum, where the Higher Self leads the way with teachers' help, so that children's passion for learning is sustained and actualisation of their potential can be supported.

You would want to follow the children's interest and let their Higher Self lead them and, as the teachers, hold a container, but a container that gives them more freedom... so that they don't lose their direction. And they learn the skills that they need to do all that they want to do, so that the skills that they learn are based on their extraordinary interests..., so there's no resistance to the kids' learning because they are passionate about the process of learning, because a lot of what they are learning taps into their natural interests. (I.3, p.7, 30-35)

In summary, the Higher Self and intuition figure strongly in Ilene's envisioned education for the future generations. Those concepts and a different attitude towards students and their motivations represents the main contribution of psychosynthesis to the world of education, as Ilene uses it in her work. Other contributions to education from what, to Ilene, are the 'increasingly relevant' transpersonal values, are thought to be meditative practices, music, drama, arts, community support, connection with the Earth and with beauty in all its forms. Valuing the work of educators by increasing their salaries is also deemed very important for the future of education, as today many people simply cannot afford to go into a teaching career in the States, Ilene points out. The

usefulness of introducing meditation in educational programmes (and its relevance or inappropriateness) will be considered in the discussion section, Chapter 8.

The language of imagery – Ilene also points out that safer environments of acceptance with improved dialogue (in smaller classes) would decrease disruptive behaviours and facilitate not only contact with one’s inner guidance, but also more self-responsible behaviours in children. Understanding the language of imagery seems to be another key ability educators and parents should develop, in Ilene’s experience:

The most important thing is to have the teachers really trained so the teachers are able to hear the children intuitively. (I.3, p.7, 15-16)... I think it would be important that the teachers really recognise the power of formal imagery and also when children just talk in imagery. And that’s a lot of what...I do as a therapist. (I.3, p.8, 27-28)

6.3.1. – Contributions to the research question from analysis of Ilene’s data

The research question was:

How are the latest trends in the general psychosynthesis-based educational model contributing to holistic education according to experienced educators and how might contributions inform mainstream education?

The contributions from an educational model based on psychosynthesis to holistic and mainstream education that Ilene describes are listed below, followed by a summary of contributions from each theme that categorises her data. They are explored more fully in Table 15 (see Appendix D). Ilene’s educational model contributes:

- Self-awareness in educators and parents, which can be encouraged and trained using simple explanations and experiential, psychosynthesis exercises
- Awareness that safer environments of acceptance with improved dialogue (i.e. support without an agenda) and with self-aware, centred educators/parents naturally decrease disruptive behaviours, and bring about not only contact with one’s inner guidance, but also more self-responsible behaviours
- Attention to all the ways in which intuition communicates, which helps see and recognise how the Higher Self leads one’s development

- Awareness that attention given to the effects of one's attitudes is paramount
- Recognition that if parents and educators take for granted that children always want to do and be their best self, and observation of what happens when they do not, makes a difference
- Training that revolves around acting from a centred self, which helps children have healthier role models to emulate
- Focus on the importance of the development of one's intuition, which enables to recognise when a child receives inner guidance, and how to decode it; this ability, in turn, helps create children whose inner gifts and potential are encouraged. Educators need to develop their own intuition to be of assistance, Ilene maintains.
- Awareness that educators and parents need support in handling especially sensitive children, who are theorised to have been naturally born with a stronger link to the Self.
- Information on who the true educator is, namely, in Ilene's model, the Higher Self. She claims that children in education should be taught to learn skills based on their interests, stemming from inner guidance from the Self.
- Various techniques. Recommended are the use of meditation in schools and learning to decipher the language of imagery, plus support and self-awareness training for teachers, which are seen as essential requirements in schools.

Summary of contributions from all 4 Themes

Ilene's educational model focuses on training educators and parents to act as healthy role models that mainly function from a centred self, recognising and dealing with temporary lapses in behaving and acting from a lower self, from which nobody is immune. When feeling stressed, teaches Ilene, subpersonalities emerge in an attempt to have one's unconscious needs met or to reduce anxiety. Once adults learn to recognise and address such unconscious cries for help in themselves, it is easier to recognise that children normally want to do and be their best, highest Self. Disruptive behaviours on their part need to be seen only as a cry for help that needs to be addressed, for which

adults are not to blame, but can make a difference, adopting an attitude of acceptance and unconditional support without an agenda, Ilene teaches.

Increasing self-awareness in adults, in other words, helps them stop placing unreasonable demands on themselves and their children, facilitating an attitude of mutual respect. In other words, facilitating compassionate work on themselves in adult carers and teachers, gives rise to more self-responsible and centred attitudes, which children will tend to observe and emulate naturally.

Adults are also taught experientially, via psychosynthesis exercises, about desirable qualities stemming from the Higher Self, observable through respected people's behaviours and via reflection on moments when they or their children act from their best Self. More advanced programmes teach people how to function not only from a centred but from a Higher Self. This makes psychosynthesis teachings simple and useful in daily life, claims Ilene (Theme 1).

Teaching experientially about the Self and intuition involves also observing one's wise actions dictated by inner guidance and inner knowing. The Self is recognisable as growth and moving beyond what one usually does, thanks to one's inner wisdom. Exercises used are based mainly on guided visualisations and facilitating direct experience (via observation). Intuition occupies centre stage in Ilene's model, and its development is facilitated in many ways because, to act as role models and facilitate healthy development in children, adult educators and parents need to expand their consciousness and cultivate their own intuitive connection with the Self. Only then will they be able to recognise inner guidance through their children, often expressed in symbolic language that adults need to decode (Theme 2).

Psychoenergetics as used in Ilene's model focuses on attitudes. Becoming aware of the effect of one's attitudes on others, to Ilene, is vital. In order to allow the Self and intuition to become the teachers and the centre of any human interaction, including teaching, it seems important to Ilene to recognise that an attitude of unconditional support without an agenda is rare, immediately recognised and positively received, for optimum functioning as educators and parents in guiding and raising children. Training in recognition of the many ways in which intuition makes itself known in one's life forms part of her advanced courses. A transpersonal vision with increased self-

awareness and development of one's potential, to Ilene, is more likely to bring out the best in adults and children (Theme 3).

Sensitivity and awareness of one's purpose as healers and carers of other people and the planet has been noted in members of the New Generations with whom Ilene works. Their kind of sensitivity, Ilene claims, did not seem to be present in previous generations of the same age. She feels they have been born with a powerful connection with intuition and the Higher Self already in place, hence they need very aware teachers and parents. Space and support need to be created for such children as the future leaders and way-showers.

Ilene insists on intuitive generations needing intuitive teachers and parents because an adult who is accustomed to listening to the voice of the Self will more easily accept a child's inner guidance and encourage expression of their potential. The true educator, in Ilene's model, is the Higher Self and children in education should be taught to learn skills based on their interests, stemming from inner guidance. Educators and parents are encouraged to introduce meditation in mainstream education and to learn to understand the language of imagery, as well as to develop their own intuitive guidance. More support and self-awareness training for teachers are highly recommended (Theme 4).

I have summarised in Table 15 (App. D) Ilene's vision, teaching methods, aims, perceived attitudes to be taught and the contribution that psychosynthesis and psychoenergetics are seen to offer the world of education and lifelong learning.

Findings and implications are addressed in more detail in Chapter 8, the discussion chapter. Composite answers to the research question are presented in Chapter 7 that follows, the cross-case analysis.

CHAPTER 7 CROSS-CASE ANALYSIS

7.1. Cross-case analysis process

The cross-case analysis stage (outlined also in Appendix D) involves comparing and contrasting the information derived from each case study to reach an answer to the research question. While working on each case study, I gradually compiled Tables (Tables 11, 13 and 15 in Appendix D) in which data available were summarised and organised by topics discussed that would:

- shed light on each expert's work;
- reveal each expert's vision, aims and attitudes, which their work was trying to encourage;
- bring to light techniques that experts used, and their opinion on what psychosynthesis was potentially contributing to education and lifelong learning.

The Findings Tables for each case study were particularly useful in showing similarities, in that data had been grouped and organised under similar headings for each case study. Such tables provided not only information that led to within-case analysis and tentative individual answers to the research question outlined in Chapter 6, but also provided data to be cross-analysed later – what followed, therefore, was a process of comparing, contrasting and finding patterns among all case studies to get to a possible answer to the research question. Additionally, the information presented in Chapter 6, especially the summaries of thematic data gathered for each case study (sections 6.2.1., 6.3.1. and 6.4.1.), also helped to reach cross-case findings. Where the comparing of summaries and the comparing of the findings tables (Tables 11, 13, 15) matched, a clear pattern was found.

In other words, *finding patterns across all cases, similarities and differences, was my heuristic step at this stage*. The process of finding differences and patterns eventually revealed visions, aims and practices that all three experts interviewed appeared to have in common, and also where the focus each expert seemed to place on their work differed. The notes I took during this process became Table 16, which was eventually compiled to show clearly in graphic form the similarities and differences among all three case studies that had been found in the cross-case analysis process. Table 16 that

follows, therefore, contains a concise overview of information that, together with all the data previously analysed and Table 17 (which contains answers to the research question), eventually led to conclusions and implications, outlined in section 7.2. and discussed in Chapter 8.

Table 16 – Cross-case analysis

<i>Table 16 – Cross-case analysis</i>			
DIFFERENCES AND SIMILARITIES	CS1 MARIELLA'S WORK = Psychosynthesis trainer; Yoga teacher; Director of WYSE courses, in particular the Elders Programme	CS2 MOLLY'S WORK = Psychosynthesis trainer; Eco- psychosynthesis trainer and writer; counsellor; eco-activist	CS3 ILENE'S WORK = Workshop leader/trainer specialising in child rearing practices for parents and teachers; family therapist using the psychosynthesis model
Works as a formal psychosynthesis trainer	✓	✓	
Works as counsellor/therapist		✓	✓
Works with younger generations as educator (non mainstream) or psychosynthesis therapist	✓	✓	✓
Active use of psychosynthetic principles with a tendency to avoid the adjective spiritual and to avoid offering attendees pre-conceived conclusions. Emphasis on teaching and learning experientially	✓	✓	✓

Basic use of psychoenergetics (=awareness of the effect that one's thoughts and attitudes have on consciousness and relationships) for empowerment, to help others evolve beyond fear, familiar patterns of unproductive behaviour and inherited limiting conditioning	✓	✓	✓
Use of hierarchical language when referring to 'levels of consciousness' in their work (i.e. 'Higher' Self, 'lower self')			✓
Emphasis on increased reliance on intuition as the 'voice of the core Self' to achieve self-authority via an inner locus of control and guidance (in-tuition = tuition from within)	✓	✓	✓
Integration of body-based methods to improve awareness and management of energies behind thoughts, attitudes and emotions (seeking also contact with the elements and nature)	✓	✓	
Reliance on other non-psychology based disciplines (i.e. martial arts, business studies, artistic expressions) in their teachings and work	✓	✓	

Focus mainly on mind – strong reliance on traditional psychosynthesis exercises (guided imagery, story-telling, myths)			✓
Empowering attitude towards the New Generations and their (perceived) leading role in the future	✓	✓	✓
Emphasis on highlighting interconnectedness, co-operation and service	✓	✓	✓
Sees adults ideally as healthy, self-actualising role models and works actively to help them become more centred and self-aware, so they can teach youth by example and support them in finding their purpose	✓	✓	✓
Actively teaches and trains adults, educators and parents, in effective child rearing practices			✓
Promotes consciousness/awareness-based education, aiming at expansion of consciousness via increased self-awareness to support and empower oneself (and one's children/students)	✓	✓	✓

7.2 Answer to the research question

How are the latest trends in the general psychosynthesis-based educational model contributing to holistic education according to experienced educators and how might contributions inform mainstream education?

In answer to the research question above, an examination of common characteristics identified in all three psychosynthesis-based educational projects under investigation appears to highlight that the latest trends in the general psychosynthesis model applied to education seem to focus on:

- a) *Learning by experiencing*, in which learning and knowing is encouraged to be derived from direct experience, rather than from just theories leading to pre-existing conclusions. Direct experience, argue the interviewed experts, enables creative, independent learning which empowers learners to rely on themselves to draw their own conclusions (similarities to pragmatism and experiential education explored in Chapter 8);
- b) *Cultivating multiple ways of knowing* and learning, via intuition, the senses, the body and an interaction of body, emotions and mind to galvanise and open up to deep learning, acquiring potential information available from one's inner and outer worlds and senses;
- c) *Finding one's purpose in life* by creative exploration of one's preferred activities, subjects, innate talents, while actualising one's potential with the support of self-aware parents and educators, who, ideally, can (and arguably should) act as role models and provide unconditional support without an agenda, the interviewees claim. This, their agenda seems to dictate, would help sustain a passion for learning because it would entail exploring and learning about oneself;
- d) *Transcendent actualisation*, namely expansion of consciousness to achieve not only self-awareness, but what Maslow called self-transcendence, the step that follows self-actualisation. Latest additions to psychosynthesis-based educational programmes appear to address the development of a transpersonal identity and Integral/Authentic consciousness that perceives the self embedded in the totality,

which is thought to naturally develop and lead to concern and care for all that lives, for the creation of a sustainable future.

- e) *Awareness-based education*, with the contribution of psychoenergetics – the perception of energy underlying everything. This model holds that increased awareness (expansion of consciousness) of one’s ability to get to know oneself and especially the effects of one’s thoughts, attitudes and emotions on relationships, consciousness and matter (including the body) is highlighted and taught experientially (mainly through direct perceptions and self-observation). This is done to encourage a more responsible use of one’s mental and psychic energy in dealing with fellow humans, animals and the natural world.
- f) *Embodiment of transpersonal energies* via multisensory awareness. Through this kind of awareness, information from the Self is received through intuition, emotions and the body. Such information is made useful and applicable in everyday life; in fact, cultivating reliance on a dependable inner source of guidance for the development of self-responsibility and an inner locus of control is encouraged.
- g) *Education for being*, not just for *doing* and *knowing*, which can lead to the development of wisdom in facing life transitions, daily life and decisions regarding the future.

The first part of the research question focuses on finding potential *contributions from the latest trends* in psychosynthesis-based educational projects *to holistic education*, hence on what relatively new contributions might be found. A close examination of the potential contributions that the projects under investigation appear to have in common, listed above, reveals that some of them were not new to holistic education, in that they seem to be an integral part of the holistic education agenda in general (informed by humanistic and transpersonal psychologies, presented in Chapter 2 and further discussed and compared in Chapter 8 that follows).

What, instead, might represent potential contributions to holistic education might be the following:

- 1) teachings related to awareness of energy underlying all, which includes increased awareness of the impact that one’s thoughts, attitudes and emotions

appear to have on consciousness, matter and relationships (referred to above as *awareness-based education*, facilitated by psychoenergetics)

- 2) a focus on transcendent actualisation, which is about expansion of consciousness to include dimensions of life that go beyond the self (self-transcendence also known as transcendent actualisation). It also seems to be about educating human beings to engage in the world with a *sustainability* (Integral/Authentic) consciousness, aided by
- 3) the *embodiment* of transpersonal energies achieved via the engagement of multisensory awareness – *of different ways of knowing*, in other words.

Among all the characteristics found in common in the three educational projects under investigation (which represent the latest trends in the general psychosynthetic model applied to education), the three potential contributions just listed provide a possible answer to the first part of the research question. However, the contributions found also appear to answer the second part of the research question – *how might contributions inform mainstream education?* – in that such contributions also appear to address needs that research in educational futures and global trends (discussed in Chapter 2) seem to indicate as being relevant for the future of education and of civilisation. This will be further discussed in Chapter 8, but, as stated in the literature review (Chapter 2), curricula that emphasise *education for being* and *for wisdom* are being developed by other educators and researchers in more recent educational models which, however, unlike psychosynthesis, cannot count on a sound psychological developmental model which has been tried and tested and applied for decades.

In other words, in answer to the second part of the research question, findings from the present study seem to indicate that the three potential contributions to holistic education listed above can potentially inform and be relevant to mainstream education as well – in fact, one could even argue that all three potential contributions could be grouped into *one*, namely *psychoenergetics*, as detailed in Chapter 8. Table 17 summarises findings and the potential answers to the two parts of the research question discussed above.

Table 17 – Answers to the research question

<i>Table 17 – Answers to the research question</i>		
CROSS-CASE ANALYSIS FINDINGS	ANSWER TO FIRST PART OF THE RESEARCH QUESTION	ANSWER TO SECOND PART OF THE RESEARCH QUESTION
<p>What the latest trends in the general psychosynthesis model applied to education seem to have in common and focus on</p>	<p>Findings' potential contributions to holistic education (hence new contributions, from the latest trends in the general psychosynthetic model applied in the three educational projects under investigation)</p>	<p>Findings' potential contribution to mainstream education</p>
<p><i>Learning by experiencing</i> (conclusions not pre-given, but derived from direct experience)</p> <p><i>Cultivating multiple ways of knowing</i> (via intuition, the senses, the body and an interaction of body, emotions and mind)</p> <p><i>Finding one's purpose in life</i> (while actualising one's potential)</p> <p><i>Transcendent actualisation</i> (cultivation of self-transcendence and</p>	<p>Awareness-based education, facilitated by psychoenergetics</p> <p>Teachings related to awareness of energy underlying all, which includes increased awareness of the impact that one's thoughts, attitudes and emotions appear to have on consciousness, matter and relationships ('right use of energy').</p> <p>Transcendent actualisation, also known as self-transcendence</p> <p>A focus on transcendent actualisation, which</p>	<p>Findings from the present study seem to indicate that the potential contributions to holistic education can inform and be relevant to mainstream education as well, especially one, which is observed to potentially group all three contributions just listed, namely:</p> <p>Awareness-based education, facilitated by <u>psychoenergetics</u> (discussed in Chapter 8)</p>

<p>development of a transpersonal identity and consciousness that perceives the self embedded in the totality, to lead to the creation of a sustainable future)</p> <p>Awareness-based education (with the contribution of psychoenergetics, so that a more responsible use of one's mental and psychic energy can be encouraged in dealing with fellow humans, animals and the natural world)</p> <p>Embodiment of transpersonal energies (via multisensory awareness, to cultivate reliance on a dependable inner source of guidance for the development of self-responsibility and an inner locus of control)</p> <p>Education for being (which can lead to the development of wisdom in facing life transitions, and decisions regarding the future)</p>	<p>is about expansion of consciousness, to include dimensions of life that go beyond the self. It also seems to be about educating human beings to engage in the world with a <i>sustainability consciousness</i>.</p> <p>The embodiment of transpersonal energies</p> <p>Achieved via the engagement of multisensory awareness – of <i>different ways of knowing</i>, in other words.</p> <p>The above contributions appear to address needs that research in educational futures and global trends (discussed in Chapters 2 and 8) seems to indicate as being relevant for the future of education and of civilisation. <i>Education for being</i> and <i>for wisdom</i>, for example, are being developed by other educators and researchers in more recent educational models which, however, unlike psychosynthesis, cannot count on a sound psychological developmental model that has been tried and tested and applied for decades.</p>	<p>Psychoenergetics implies:</p> <p>Awareness of the energetic component of all that exists, including the effects that attitudes, thoughts and emotions have on matter and relationships; once that kind of energetic, multidimensional awareness is cultivated (by <i>embracing different ways of knowing</i>), interconnectivity is automatically felt, giving rise to a <i>sustainability consciousness</i>, to self-transcendence and a sense of service, due to a developed empathic awareness of all.</p> <p><i>This could imply, then, that the potential, main contribution of the latest trends in psychosynthesis-based educational model, both to holistic and mainstream education, is represented by psychoenergetics</i></p>
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The potential contributions of psychoenergetics and implications thereof will be discussed in Chapter 8. In fact, Chapter 8 begins with a brief exploration of psychoenergetics, which, as indicated above, seems to be an integral part of the contribution which the psychosynthetic general model can potentially make to holistic and mainstream education. After a discussion of psychoenergetics, similarities and differences among the three psychosynthesis-based educational projects investigated will be outlined and discussed.

However, there is also an important question that needs to be addressed at this stage, which is: why have psychosynthesis-based educational projects or teachings from the whole psychosynthetic model not yet found a place in mainstream education so far? In other words, why has psychosynthesis not become part of, or influenced, mainstream education? What is preventing transpersonal educational models from reaching mainstream acceptance? All these important and relevant issues will be explored in the next chapter, which ends by discussing implications, offering possible conclusions, a critique of the study and suggestions for future research.

CHAPTER 8 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

8.1 Discussion of findings – psychoenergetics

Before discussing my study's findings, in this introductory section I will explain how psychoenergetics seems to have acquired prominence in my study, as revealed by the findings outlined in Chapters 6 and 7, which highlight information about psychoenergetics obtained from the interviewed experts in answer to one of the questions in my semi-structured interview protocol (see Appendix B). This question came about after an initial review of the additional printed and published material available for the first case study (Mariella), which I scanned before the interview took place. Intrigued by the fact that Mariella had written a lengthy section on the topic in a chapter of the book to which she had contributed on the Soul in Education movement and pedagogy (Lancia, 2010), I inserted a question in the semi-structured interview protocol for all three case study participants. The question aimed to reveal how all three participants viewed psychoenergetics and how (if at all) they applied it to their own psychosynthesis-based educational project. The interview question for all interviewees was:

Do you have any experience of psychoenergetics, the new frontier of psychosynthesis or a new Fifth force in psychology, as envisioned by Assagioli decades ago? If so, how have you applied it to yourself and especially in your training of others? How does it integrate psychosynthesis in your opinion and experience (if at all)?

Interestingly, the findings of the present study seem to point to the possible relevance of psychoenergetics in the future, as discussed below. My suggested definition of psychoenergetics is as follows:

Psychoenergetics is any discipline or technique that helps develop awareness of how the energy behind thoughts, emotions and attitudes affects consciousness, matter (including body) and relationships. In psychosynthesis, psychoenergetics involves all psychological functions (intuition, imagination, desire/impulse, sensation, emotion, thinking) to assist self-awareness and promote expansion of consciousness.

In truth, however, little is known about psychoenergetics, in that it seems to be still a developing discipline, whether part of the transpersonal Fourth force or of a new force

in psychology, as Assagioli predicted. In fact, as previously stated, Assagioli envisioned the birth of a Fifth force in psychology that he called psychoenergetics, which would emerge once humanity's sensitivity to subtle energies started to show signs of increasing. Assagioli, however, left very little in writing. Here are his words, which I have translated from Italian:

Psychoenergetics derives from advances in modern physics and it has solid scientific basis, following Einstein's conclusions that matter is energy. As a new direction and dimension in psychology, the Fifth Force focuses on studying all forces existing in the universe and their inter-relationships:

- 1) Physical energies, from the subatomic to the astronomical, galactic level
- 2) Biological energies, which organise all that lives
- 3) Psychic energies of all kinds and from all levels
- 4) Spiritual, transpersonal and transcendent energies (Assagioli, 1973b, p.3)

For completeness of information and before discussing my study's results, I should add that there is currently a controversial branch of science called psychoenergetics. It is being studied and developed by Stanford physicist William Tiller, who has been researching consciousness, subtle energies and the physical effects of mind and intention on matter (Tiller, 1997, 2007).

There appear to be several applications of psychoenergetics. For example, the late Martha Crampton, as discussed in Chapter 2, has pioneered the use of psychoenergetics with psychosynthesis in the past decade for therapeutic purposes. In her interesting paper (Crampton, 2006), she explains that Assagioli, given his background in esoteric psychology, had a deep interest in subtle energy and foresaw a time in the future when this dimension would fuse with psychosynthesis work. Crampton points out that in Assagioli's time the use of psychosynthesis was more mental, and the importance of frozen energies in body/mind connected to trauma had not been given sufficient weight. She writes:

Though we were aware of the need to disidentify from the mind, it seemed more difficult to achieve this in the past than it is today (p.4)... Today the fields of subtle energy and energy medicine are rapidly gaining momentum... Powerful methods of processing psychic material have become available through body and energy-based therapies. (op. cit., p.18).

Crampton adds that movement and artistic expressions, now widely used among the vast array of psychosynthesis techniques, have been found to be helpful, as well as sound and brainwave entrainment, employed as a means to induce slower brainwave frequencies (alpha/theta), hence an expanded, more meditative state. Another useful technique seems to be Gendlin's 'focusing' method, which implies directing awareness to how one's body experiences and communicates emotion, intuition and inner guidance, bypassing ego defences and the rational mind (op. cit.).

More details of how psychoenergetics fused with psychosynthesis enriches both are found in Crampton's paper (2006) and appear to be based on techniques for healing/personal development inspired by ancient esoteric knowledge coming from India (chakras) and China (meridians and *chi* energy), a lengthy explanation of which is beyond the purpose of the present study. However, some additional reflections and suggestions regarding applied *dynamic psychoenergetics techniques* to be used in education and lifelong learning will be offered below.

What emerged from this study in terms of psychoenergetics use, instead, is a *focus on attitudes* that promote awareness of subtle energies and of the effect of one's thoughts and emotions/attitudes on relationships and matter. Used in education, the interviewed experts see the application of psychoenergetics as a way to promote self-awareness, self-actualisation and self-transcendence.

Interestingly, psychotherapist and psychosynthesis trainer Douglas Russell maintains that psychosynthesis already conceives of the human being as an energy system (Russell, 1981, 1982). Actions, images, emotions, and thoughts may be seen as basically varied forms of energy; because of this attitude, psychosynthesis seems to be naturally closely aligned with the Third, Fourth and Fifth forces in psychology (humanistic, transpersonal, psychoenergetics, respectively), Douglas observes, and various psychosynthesists appear to emphasize one of these three in their work, according to their personal inclinations (op. cit.). Assagioli himself seemed convinced that behaviour seen simply as energy enhances the possibility of self-awareness and transformation, as, by directing attention, one can more easily become aware of the effects of one's thoughts, attitudes and emotions on one's consciousness, matter and relationships and transform/redirect them for positive purposes (Assagioli, 1973).

I have been working on finding ways to use psychoenergetics in education and experimenting with various groups for about two years. This is very much work in progress and I will briefly share some of my own observations regarding psychoenergetics and its potential in practice. Techniques used depend on the creativity and openness of a course leader and participants, and should be kept playful and modified according to the individuals with whom a facilitator is working. Suggested ones to try are 'synchronicity practice' modules, through which one can explore and become increasingly aware of an organising principle behind life (some call it God) that seems to be operating in multiple ways via acausal and meaningful 'coincidences' taking place in one's life every day. This practice is about personal observation and possibly journal keeping, which makes each individual totally independent from any facilitator or analyst. A similar practice applies to intuition and it focuses on becoming aware of which form of intuition (physical, emotional, mental, spiritual) is more prevalent in each person and how to develop other ways of receiving inner guidance. Work that focuses on the effects of colour and music on mood and change in brainwaves is highly recommended, and can take place in playful and highly experiential ways. Cymatics (from Greek, meaning 'matters pertaining to waves'), for example, can visually show (via sand and a simple machine) how sound translates into geometrical forms and indicates the organising patterns of sound and vibrations. It was made popular by Swiss medical doctor and anthroposophist Hans Jenny (2001) and is connected to the ancient work of Pythagoras, which Hermetic philosopher and Rosicrucian Robert Fludd also explored (Godwin, 1979). The effect of music on one's mood/emotions, on altering brainwaves to enhance creative abilities can be experientially worked with, using music created by professional musicians and researchers (i.e. Jeffrey Thompson, Centre for Neuroacoustic Research, 2011).

I use multiple techniques and constantly create new exercises to try and experiment with. Space is limited here, so I will only very briefly (and tentatively) describe the essence of psychoenergetics besides the principles already outlined in the present study. The purpose behind psychoenergetics is to *encourage people to explore their innate imaginal abilities, which enhances creativity and inner power, plus unexplored potential*. Power, as history teaches, has been a very central concern for humanity for centuries and millennia. In the emerging Integral/Authentic/Transpersonal consciousness (discussed in section 2.4.3), power still seems to be central, but with an

important difference – this time, in the emerging structure (mode of experience) of collective consciousness, it seems that power needs to be developed from within (power over oneself), instead of being in the hands of few who rule many (power over others), so that each individual can govern themselves, develop an inner locus of control, and be self-responsible. For this process to be experiential, emphasising learning by direct experiencing, psychoenergetics also seems to be about learning to *merge the conscious and unconscious minds*, as, interestingly, the British Indigo expert in my first study had suggested for the education of Indigos.

In essence, psychoenergetics seems to be based on Hermetic principles, especially two of them, namely:

- 1) *As above, so below* (i.e. being able to observe to what extent the macrocosm is reflected in the microcosm of one's life and consciousness)
- 2) *As within, so without* (i.e. being able to observe to what extent one's life can change according to one's inner attitudes and ability to transform them. See definition of psychoenergetics resulting from the present study).

Hermeticism is part of the Golden Thread of ancient wisdom teachings underlying many esoteric orders of the Renaissance, alchemical (transformational) teachings (Godwin, 2007) and perennial philosophy (Hanegraaf, 2003) – all being academically studied today (Goodrick-Clark, 2008 – see section 2.2 in the literature review chapter). It seems to be connected to magical, imaginal thinking of the Magical and even Mythic structures of consciousness described in Chapter 2. In fact, the developing Integral consciousness advocated by Wilber (2000), among others, is theorised to include and transcend the pluralistic worldviews already acquired/developed in humanity's structures of consciousness in previous eras in order to generate cultural futures. In other words, the emerging Integral/Authentic/Transpersonal consciousness seems to be about *building for the future on the wisdom from the past*, which, arguably, needs to be rediscovered in terms of integrating new ways of learning (Wilber, 2000) also through updated education (Gidley, 2006); building for the future on the wisdom from the past (via modern techniques) seems to be about educating for Integral consciousness, argues Gidley (2007a, 2011). I share her views and, as a result of my two investigations and my preliminary observations regarding the practical applications of psychoenergetics, I

would also strongly advocate the need to integrate psychoenergetics in many forms at any level of education.

Interestingly, in my second study, Mariella (case study 1), seems to echo my own and Assagioli's vision regarding psychoenergetics. It has to be said, however, that Mariella trained with the late Sergio Bartoli, who several decades ago founded an eco-centre in Italy (Comunità di Etica Vivente) where both psychosynthesis and psychoenergetics were practiced daily as a way of life; courses at various levels appear to be ongoing, even if not advertised on their website (Comunità di Etica Vivente, n.d.). Information is found instead on an American network website with which the centre is associated (World Service Intergroup, an 'international network of ageless wisdom groups', n.d.). Courses offered appear to focus on esoteric knowledge (based mainly on Theosophy) and on areas seen as central to the development of consciousness, as outlined on the network's website:

Various schools and training courses are offered, on themes that are central to the development of consciousness:

Basic schools for integration of the personality (Psychosynthesis and Psychoenergetics)

Psycho-spiritual courses (including: Creative Meditation, 7 Rays Typologies, Service, Group Focalising; Esoteric Healing; Astrology)

In depth courses (Education, Art, Architecture, Economics, Naturopathy). (World Service Intergroup, n.d.)

My own investigations by that centre, carried out in order to gather more information on how psychoenergetics was taught for the purposes of the present study, have not yielded results – there seems to be great reticence from that particular centre in Umbria to allow investigations or to share information regarding their courses (not advertised on their website and not provided in writing when requested), to the point of secrecy. However, anecdotally, since the end of my investigation, I have met several people who trained with Bartoli himself and they suggest that the reticence might mainly have to do with the unwillingness to draw attention to the more esoteric side of psychosynthesis.

When I attended and presented aspects of my research at the International Psychosynthesis Conference in June 2012, I openly challenged what, by then, had become an evident tendency to hide the theosophical roots of psychosynthesis. During

my presentation, I argued that members' perceived access to 'secret' knowledge not openly shared with the world could unconsciously encourage in them a cultist, elitist attitude of which psychosynthesists had been accused before. This tendency, I argued, might do a lot of damage to the discipline, in that it might alienate potentially interested individuals and, more importantly, it might discourage the application of psychosynthesis in more mainstream channels, potentially preventing youth from benefiting from Assagioli's model in general. I also suggested that hiding the roots of the discipline seemed to be contributing to the problematic situation that transpersonal psychology and psychosynthesis already find themselves in (discussed in section 8.2.3. below). My objections and requests for clarifications were argued from the point of view of a transpersonal researcher who was sympathetic to the model (albeit critical of aspects of it) and, to my surprise, my objections were well-received and shared by several other people present in the room.

What emerged was that attempts to maintain the respectability of the discipline by hiding its esoteric roots (which, as described, tended to result in elitist attitudes) were dictated by defensiveness. Such defensiveness, some attendees claimed, was possibly due to a perceived, still prevalent, mainstream bias against esoteric or spiritual subjects – a vicious cycle, possibly fed by secrecy and resulting alienation. In fact, I suggested that in order to break the vicious cycle just described, an attitude of cooperation among the different educational projects might be a useful measure to adopt for the discipline to serve youth and become more mainstream, hence openly accessible to others. I clarified that these goals could be reached by adopting a willingness to join forces and present (especially to policy makers) evidence of the effectiveness of the psychosynthetic model applied in education.

In the rest of this chapter, I will review my study's findings, discuss similarities and differences among the projects investigated, present current research that seems to indicate how and why this study's findings might inform and be relevant to mainstream education, examine reasons why transpersonal education has only marginally been integrated in mainstream education, critique the present study, suggest future research developments and also discuss how the tendency to transmit values and knowledge from generation to generation, found in both mainstream and holistic education, might not be appropriate in the education of the New Generations.

8.1.1. Similarities and differences among the three projects

This exploratory investigation has presented findings from three case studies (educational projects) which represent recent applications of the general psychosynthesis model applied to education. The first case study yielded information on the work carried out by Mariella, especially her focus on some of the educational activities of WYSE international project. Courses for the adolescents and young adults worldwide appear to offer many subjects to train the future leaders and offer tools that might help them in the lifelong learning project of self-development, self-awareness and consciousness expansion towards awareness of the interconnectedness and interdependence of all life (self-actualisation/transcendence). Attendees are taught how to *be* and not only what to do and know, in that they are shown different ways of facing transitions in life. They are taught to see everything as energy, including emotions, attitudes and thoughts, and to be responsible regarding their use ('right use of energy' emphasised by psychoenergetics). The accent is on experiential learning and on freedom to reach conclusions independently. What seems less convincing, however, is the tendency to avoid the mention of psychosynthesis or the adjective 'spiritual' to prospective attendees, transpersonal or psycho-spiritual development clearly being a rather prominent part of all courses offered by WYSE. Given the information shared by Mariella, it is not clear why this agenda should remain hidden or not clearly stated. One could argue that particularly parents of younger children, if more fully informed, might object to a non transparent, potentially ambiguous agenda that underlies such courses. The dangers inherent in a tendency to hide the more esoteric side and roots of psychosynthesis have already been discussed in the section above.

The second case study shows how eco-psychology and psychoenergetics have come to update psychosynthesis, hence transpersonal/holistic education, which Molly considered to be influenced by Western anthropocentric assumptions and tendencies that she was keen to correct. Her model also appears to encourage the development of what Maslow referred to as self-transcendence (transcendent actualisation) in his updated hierarchy of needs discussed in the literature review (Chapter 2). 'Transcendent actualisation' is a step beyond simply actualising one's potential. It involves establishing a link with the Self for inner guidance and for expansion of one's awareness beyond the self, embedding it in a consciousness of interconnection of all life to create a sustainable

world. This is another example of *education for being* and not exclusively for doing, which is in common with Mariella's model. Like Mariella, Molly feels the need to create more balance in psychosynthesis, emphasising the embodiment of spiritual energies for consciousness development. Molly appears to be more critical though, in that she clearly states that psychosynthesis mostly ignored the embodiment factor, due to its inherited 'Western fallacy' regarding spirit and mind being superior to body, Earth and emotions, which Molly sees instead as a rich source of information. Mariella mentioned yoga, tai-chi and other physical techniques to discipline mind and emotions, so, being also a yoga trainer, she does place a focus on the body to promote self-awareness and expansion of consciousness.

While Mariella and Molly specifically refer to education being focused also on facing, integrating and educating emotions in order to handle life's transitions and challenges or to derive information from them, Ilene makes no direct reference to educating them, apart from handling unruly behaviours. Such behaviours, Ilene thinks, stem from subpersonalities which express adults' and children's unconscious needs, to be met or 'minimised'. Like the other two experts interviewed, Molly is not directly involved in applied psychoenergetics techniques discussed by Martha Crampton (2006), but all three interviewed experts still use psychosynthesis techniques to raise awareness of the impact and effect of attitudes, thoughts and emotions on consciousness, matter, body and relationships, even if with different emphases.

Only Mariella seemed very keen both in the interview and in her book chapter on introducing psychoenergetics in all educational programmes (as 'right, disciplined use of psychic energy' behind emotions, attitudes and thoughts, which she saw as the foundation of spirituality). However, in common with the other two experts, at least in educational projects for the general public, Mariella seems to promote psychoenergetics as an *attitude for which self-observation and the general psychosynthesis exercises are adequate*. No energy techniques, in other words, are offered in connection with psychoenergetics. In fact, another dimension of psychoenergetics conceived as an energy discipline would require specific techniques which appear to be connected to more esoteric teachings based on ancient Eastern beliefs and practices, as clarified by Crampton (2006) both in her article and in the video produced by Molly and briefly discussed in section 8.1 above. (As stated in Chapter 6, Molly co-produced a video

presented by the late Martha Crampton to make the relevance and use of applied psychoenergetics known to the public).

Molly seems to be very outspoken and keen on correcting imbalances and on making psychosynthesis a more respected, practically useful, updated and more widely known psycho-spiritual developmental and educational model, whose applicability she envisioned also in teacher training and healthy child rearing practices, explored through Ilene in case study 3. Ilene specialises in Family therapy, but also in educating teachers and educators about transpersonal principles, insisting on helping individuals train their minds and attitudes so they can be more centred and can gradually function more from their wisest self by listening to their intuition. Hers is another example of education for *being*, based on the *acquisition of wisdom*.

Ilene seems keen on simplifying psychosynthesis principles and making them easily available and practically useful to parents and teachers. Her special message is centred on attitudes and the effects they have on one's expectations and on other people's behaviours. In essence, a respectful, supportive attitude, to her, makes all the difference in families and in children's development, at home and in schools. Her approach, however, still seems to rely heavily on the mind and on rationalising and potentially dissociating from emotions, which is an aspect of psychosynthesis that not only Molly and Martha Crampton, but also other practitioners and observers have criticised (see section 8.2.1).

Interestingly, unlike the other two experts, Ilene seems particularly focused on the psychological and therapeutic aspects of psychosynthesis and not particularly concerned about updating the model or introducing new exercises – she appears to be using those originally devised by Assagioli which worked for her during her own training several decades ago, with hardly any additional ones borrowed from other disciplines, as, instead, often happens in psychosynthesis. In fact, unlike her two colleagues, Ilene still uses Assagioli's hierarchical language in defining levels of consciousness (lower/Higher Self), probably to make the concepts clearer without resorting to further, potentially obscure psychological jargon. Like Assagioli, she seems to count on imagination and the mind to discipline emotion. The involvement of the body's wisdom in personal development also seems to be less clearly defined than in the other two experts' work.

It is noteworthy that the concept of *interconnectedness*, of feeling one with the cosmos and with all that lives in developing one's consciousness and receiving guidance from the Self – the personal link to divine intelligence everybody is believed to have access to via their intuitive faculties – was emphasised much more by the first two experts. Ilene focuses on establishing a link with the Self for adults and children, but does not seem to highlight the benefits of becoming aware of interconnectedness in the same way. Her teachings seem to be more focused on raising children wisely and on more immediate family related concerns, rather than universal ones. Perhaps this aspect was not emphasised in the interview or in her book because she seems to be keen on clarifying her efforts to simplify concepts and make them applicable in daily life for the benefit of parents and educators. The advanced model Ilene has been developing moves from functioning from a centred self to what Assagioli termed 'self-realisation', hence to functioning directly from the Higher/Transpersonal Self in connection with the 'I'. Whether she intends to include more directly in her forthcoming book teachings regarding transcendent actualisation – regarding developing a consciousness embedded in the totality – I have no way of knowing at this stage.

Mariella clarifies that in the first week of any WYSE course experiential psychosynthesis exercises are used to promote self-awareness, but both the mention of psychosynthesis as a model of the psyche and the use of the adjective 'spiritual' are avoided. She claims that this is done to ward off any potential dogma and to allow attendees to make up their own minds as to how to conceive of a divine source of guidance. Criticism noted above notwithstanding, this 'learning-by-experiencing' attitude, that entails letting people feel free to draw their own conclusions from direct experiential learning, seems to be shared by all three experts, as outlined in Chapter 7, the cross-case analysis. It is interesting to note that this characteristic partially reflects Dewey's experiential education, which highlighted the need to have experience as central in the educational process, as well as the need to understand the quality of students' experiences; to him, education's main aim was to encourage freedom of thought. For an experience to be truly educational, Dewey maintained, it needs to lead to other experiences and to further learning (hence to have continuity), and also to meet the needs or goals of the learner (hence to have interaction [(Dewey, 1972)]).

Despite the differences among the three educational projects investigated and their potential shortcomings, all three experts seem to share *the same transpersonal aims, visions and agenda*, even if their work focuses on different areas of development. It seems clear that all three projects aim to *empower* individuals of all ages – students, educators and parents.

Common findings that emerged from the three case studies under investigation, which represent recent applications of the general psychosynthesis model applied to education, were outlined in Chapter 7. An analysis of common findings revealed that three in particular might represent the latest contributions of psychosynthesis to holistic education in general, as follows:

- 1) Teachings related to awareness of energy underlying all, which includes increased awareness of the impact that one's thoughts, attitudes and emotions appears to have on consciousness, matter and relationships (referred to in Chapter 7 as *awareness-based education*, assisted by psychoenergetics).
- 2) A focus on transcendent actualisation, which is about expansion of consciousness to include dimensions of life that go beyond the self. It also seems to be about educating human beings to engage in the world with a *sustainability* consciousness.
- 3) The *embodiment* of transpersonal energies achieved via the engagement of multisensory awareness – of *different ways of knowing* in other words.

One could even reasonably argue that psychoenergetics – the awareness of the energetic component of all that exists, including attitudes, thoughts and emotions – might actually underlie all of the above. The rationale behind this might be that once an individual is *multidimensionally aware* of the energetic components permeating all and impacting matter, relationships, body and so-called reality, the development of a sustainability consciousness and awareness of interconnectedness becomes a direct consequence, theoretically due to an acquired, heightened empathic awareness. The way the interviewed experts see it, the use of multiple senses, intuition included, would imply *embracing different ways of knowing from different sources* - hence the main contribution, both to holistic and mainstream education, of the latest trends in a

psychosynthesis-based general educational model could potentially be represented by *psychoenergetics* itself.

In fact, a recent study reported below will clarify how the other findings and potential contributions from the psychosynthesis-based educational projects investigated in this study (outlined in chapter 7) appear to be in common with transpersonal and holistic education in general, hence do not necessarily represent *new* contributions from the latest trends investigated in the present study. They might, however, be considered confirmations of existing trends in holistic education.

The three possible contributions to holistic education that this investigation revealed, as argued in the previous chapter (and summarised in Table 17), were tentatively grouped under the wider concepts of psychoenergetics, which, I suggested, might be viewed as the *one contribution* the present study makes which might be applicable to both holistic and mainstream education. The next section describes some current research, which, together with sections 2.2 and 2.4.3. in the literature review, helps situate the present study by examining and discussing other current points of view.

8.2 Current research and my study's implications

Recent research analysing hermeneutically all information found on transpersonal education, carried out by educator and transpersonal researcher Scott Buckler, reveals that scant recent resources have been found in the area of transpersonal education, the main writings dating back to the early 1970s and 1980s, which confirms that there appears to be a gap in research investigating transpersonal education and perhaps a lull or omission in investigating transpersonally-informed educational models. Buckler has compiled a list of practices and policies regarding transpersonally-informed education found in the literature, adapted here as follows:

- 1) Transpersonal education tends to unite a range of dimensions (cognitive, psychomotor, affective, spiritual);
- 2) There is a recognised need for both parents and teachers to undertake personal development to prevent 'their own distorted patterns of behaviour' being conveyed to the child (Maslow, 1971, p.181);

- 3) Practices should encourage mind/body integration – (i.e. mindfulness practice where a person concentrates on a physical task in an attempt to synthesise mind and body);
- 4) There is a recognition that the learning process should be made joyful;
- 5) Such education should be value-free and promoted by the teacher in the role of a facilitator;
- 6) Transpersonally and humanistically-based education generally promotes lifelong learning;
- 7) The discovery of the inner depths of the individual and the essential human nature are emphasised and encouraged;
- 8) Educational models should facilitate an appreciation of awe and beauty, especially in relation to encouraging awareness of the interconnectedness of all things (what Maslow terms ‘a unitive experience’);
- 9) An openness to experience is achieved through a pragmatic approach of linking theory to practice;
- 10) Noetic awareness characterised by mindfulness, serenity and a unitive perception should be taught and cultivated also in children;
- 11) Practices encouraged involve:
 - a) relaxation and meditation,
 - b) redirecting motivation (through reducing craving and identifying higher reaches of desire),
 - c) transformation of emotions (by cultivating emotional wisdom, for example reducing fear and anger while nurturing feelings of love and gratitude),
 - d) living ethically,
 - e) developing concentration abilities to calm the restless mind,
 - f) refining awareness to see the sacredness and connectedness of all things,
 - g) cultivating wisdom, practicing service and generosity (Buckler, 2012).

As can be seen, psychosynthesis applied in education appears to align very closely with the findings listed above, most of which were inspired by humanistic psychologists and early transpersonal researchers and educators. The present investigation, therefore, appears to confirm previous findings and trends in transpersonal education, which, as outlined in Chapter 2, focuses on transformation, on evolving consciousness that leads to self-reliance and self-actualisation, and on the cultivation of human potential.

Interestingly, occupational psychologist and futurist Mick Collins (2010) envisages that the ongoing process of actualising human potential and evolving consciousness requires, at this stage in human history and development, the use of various forms of intelligence in three different areas of actualisation:

- a) self-actualisation (individualised way of engaging human potential),
- b) transcendent actualisation/self-transcendence (transcendence of selfish, destructive behaviours and engagement of one's transpersonal potential within daily life) and
- c) ecological actualisation (deep transpersonal connection to all life and understanding of the effect of human action on the world). (op. cit.)

Ecological actualisation, in particular, encourages an expanded consciousness, a shift in self-perception, and reviews the individual self seen in relationship with others and with life in general; it also enables the recognition that human beings' potential includes the ability to connect deeply with a greater ecological reality. In other words, Collins concludes that individuals actualised on all three fronts *acquire a transpersonal consciousness*, identity and intelligence, characterised by an ability to connect with all life and by a profound awareness of the effects that human actions have on others and other forms of life (op. cit) – similarly to applied psychoenergetics discussed in this thesis. This seems to be the kind of intelligence/consciousness that at least two out of the three educational projects investigated in this study appear to promote via education.

Psychosynthesis, particularly through the developing discipline of psychoenergetics, as revealed by the present multiple case study investigation, would seem to have contributions to make which:

- a) are fully aligned with the early and the more current visions pertaining to transpersonal, transformative education,
- b) appear to address all three areas of actualisation that Collins envisages and
- c) also make new contributions, especially via psychoenergetics, as outlined above.

Furthermore, the contributions to holistic education from the investigated psychosynthesis-based educational projects appear to be in line with the needs and trends highlighted by educational futures research as well, as discussed below.

Educational programmes designer Anne Adams, introduced in the literature review, argues that in order to assist youth in facing a rapidly changing world, mainstream education should be more focused on educating the ‘being’ aspect of students, rather than the ‘doing’ aspect alone. For that purpose, more holistic models of educating for integral intelligence and educating for wisdom are increasingly being investigated and created, as discussed in Chapter 2 (i.e. Adams, 2011 and Hart, 2009). In her integral education model, for example, among other elements, Adams integrates what she calls ‘physical intelligence’, seen as ‘fundamental to an integral education experience’. She writes:

This embodiment of the physical has ontological implications. It communicates a particular reality and way of being that introduces students to what is real for them ...[which is] in their body, in their experiences, and senses. It also has epistemological connotations. What and how these students know as a grounded embodied individual influences the way they relate to knowledge; it is relevant to them on a very basic level. It is learning that is connected on many layers – energetic, cellular, muscular, sensory and kinaesthetic (Adams, 2011, p.82).

I see great similarities between her model and Molly’s and Mariella’s projects. In particular, I see also the potential here for the application of psychoenergetics.

Interestingly, in his recent research-based book, British expert in business studies and futurist Adrian Done discusses and analyses the 12 global trends that seem to be changing the world and suggests how such challenges can be faced with greater confidence and sense of purpose (Done 2012). When evaluating global changes in education and upcoming trends, he notes that education seems to be starting too young and lasting too long, arguing that institutionalising learning at an early age might compromise children’s natural learning of other human and family attributes and observes that this trend is likely to present problems in the long run. He also expresses his concern for mainstream education systems, which do not appear to be aligned with

the labour market. An opportunity for educators and policy makers to make a difference, he suggests, would be in:

reduc[ing] an emphasis upon purely achieving “empty” grades and refocus[ing] upon preparing young people for an enriching and rewarding life in which they can play a continuing active part in society and face-up to the inevitable trials along the way (Done, 2012, p.127).

Done’s book argues for a return of a kind of knowledge and education characterised by *wisdom* and by fewer experts and more generalists, which he describes as individuals with high quality knowledge across a broad range of important areas, so that more common sense can be exercised and wiser decisions made. The current trend seems, rather, that those in positions of responsibility are hoped to somehow acquire wisdom along the way – they were never trained to acquire that trait, Done argues. It is also emphasised that the tendency to live in denial of current and emerging challenges condemns humanity to repetition of mistakes, a risk Done blames on the current excessively fast lifestyles of constant noise and distractions. This, he maintains, drastically reduces time available to dedicate to, and really understand, profound issues at hand and face them successfully.

In other words, Done seems to be encouraging the development of transpersonal practices, such as reflection, times for withdrawal and mindfulness, which are deemed to stimulate insight to face problems with more wisdom. Done’s views seem to be reflected in Hart’s proposed transpersonally-based educational model (Hart, 2001b, 2009) and in summer camps courses organised in conjunction with Hart’s ChildSpirit Institute; both encourage not only the development of wisdom, but also the development of multi-sensory awareness, also discussed in Chapter 2.

Along similar lines, futurist researcher and visionary Mark Anthony has written extensively about a transpersonal theory and kind of intelligence that he calls ‘integrated’, which includes and emphasises intuitive thinking. Anthony seems convinced that humanity is evolving beyond rationality towards trans-rational awareness (Anthony, 2003, 2008b). He considers integrated intelligence as the result of developing a Transpersonal consciousness and as the clearest affirmation that all that lives is part of an interconnected intelligent cosmos, which, he claims, requires a redefinition of acceptable ways of knowing. To Anthony, integrated intelligence is an

innate ability to perceive and use intuition in everyday life and work which needs to be developed/reawakened (Anthony, 2010). He defines integrated intelligence as:

The deliberate and conscious employment of the extended mind... [which is a] state of personal consciousness whereby individual awareness is infused with a transpersonal awareness that transcends the confines of the individual mind and the limits of the sensory organs (Anthony, 2008a, p.233).

Anthony also points out that enough research has been carried out that demonstrates that a shift from an information age to a conceptual age seems to be in place, arguing that characteristics most in demand in the future are likely to come from right-brainers, those individuals described as pattern recognisers, empathisers, intuitive and creative. Transpersonal education and all three psychosynthesis-based educational projects investigated, as discussed, would appear to greatly favour and emphasise the development of intuitive faculties as a prominent part of their agenda. Incidentally, some of the research Anthony refers to has been reported also in *A whole new mind: why right-brainers will rule the future* (Pink, 2006).

Arguably humanity cannot evolve beyond its current state of crisis by using the same thinking that created the situation in the first place. Thus, transpersonal education, by insisting on evolving beyond inherited and socially constructed limitations to one's potential, might indeed be making a powerful contribution to the creation of a new paradigm. Ideally, such paradigm envisages wiser leaders and a new humanity, endowed with that different kind of thinking which may lead to alternative, more holistic solutions to current and emerging problems of a personal and collective nature.

Sociologist and educator Kingsley Dennis, introduced in the literature review, also seems to view recent changes and crises as reflecting the emergence of a new paradigm. In his recent research-based book Dennis analyses human, social and technological evolution, describing the great transformation humanity seems to be going through in terms of three co-dependent types of revolution – physical, psychic and cosmological (Dennis, 2012). Climatic changes, finite energy resources, a surge in popular protests as decades of corrupt/inefficient social systems face their nemesis (i.e. the Arab spring of 2011, the 'Indignados' movement in Spain and the increasing protests and turmoil in Greece and Italy, among others), all steeped in another subtle shift from an industrial-globalisation model towards a life-sustaining, ecological-cosmological worldview are

all discussed in Dennis's book. He argues that behind crisis events of the past two centuries seems to lie the emergence of a global 'empathic mind', which the young generations exemplify even in participatory action through their instant communications via the internet (including 'smart mobs' – instant organisation of protests). This kind of action is seen as a result of feeling empathically connected to one's peers from different cultures, all united to change a world that does not appear to meet their needs or to make people or the environment thrive (op. cit.).

Social critic Jeremy Rifkin, among others, seems to echo Dennis's view of a rising empathic civilization and sees the current shift in consciousness as being based on reaching out to others, arguing that in an increasingly energy-intensive, interconnected, globalised world, rational or faith-based forms of consciousness (which he sees as old consciousness) are no longer appropriate, in that they are constructed for earlier eras and ways of living, and are likely to bring about disaster if not evolved into an empathic way of thinking and living (Rifkin, 2010). Dennis also sees the Millennial generation, the Indigo phenomenon and characteristics found in these children, adolescents and young adults as part of a natural evolution of consciousness towards increased empathy and intuition emerging in youth as part of a global change and a paradigm shift occurring which, like educator and futurist Duane Elgin (2009), Dennis refers to as an emerging *living universe paradigm* (Dennis, 2012) based on interconnectedness and respect for all life.

As discussed in the literature review, educators, therapists and social workers increasingly report the changing nature of children. Clinical psychologist Linda Silverman, founder of the Gifted Development Centre, has studied gifted children for almost five decades and observes that the changes observed in recent generations (especially characterised by whole-brain learning and thinking) are remarkable when compared to characteristics found in the past, even in the gifted. Silverman (in Atwater, 2005) seems convinced that the explanation is *evolution of the human species*, which may become apparent first in the gifted. Although the present study has not established whether Indigos are gifted or otherwise, it has, however, pointed to similar characteristics found among differently-labelled generations, whether spiritually-gifted or diagnosed with attention or other learning and behavioural deficit disorders. I have speculated that, like Indigos, many representatives of the young generations might be

manifesting what Maslow described as self-actualising and self-transcending tendencies as symbolic of an emerging collective archetype or consciousness (discussed in Chapter 2). There seems to be a connecting link among all the areas/theories explored in this thesis that I was not aware of before I began this investigation.

As discussed in the literature review, Richard Tarnas seems to support an archetypal, cyclic way of viewing history and the natural evolution of human consciousness. Kingsley Dennis echoes Tarnas' views and presents in his book a speculative way of viewing the current cycle of collective consciousness development as interpreted through the ancient concept of the Hindu Yugas (great cycles). Such concepts were revisited and introduced to the West in 1894 by Swami Sri Yukteswar, whose book *The Holy Science* is still in print (Yukteswar, 1990) and whose concepts have recently been integrated with further research by Selbie & Steinmetz (2011). Very briefly, Dennis emphasises that information in the revisited Yugas seems to reveal that in the current cycle (*Energy Age*) humanity is entering a new age of subtle energy awareness and unitive consciousness (supported by organic unity and participation in a larger universal scheme) after a disenchanted, technological consciousness inherited from the Industrial revolution (Dennis, 2012). This developing Energy Age, Dennis argues, might explain the heightened empathy and intuitive abilities noted in younger generations, Indigos included, who, he adds, should not be singled out as special individuals, but should be viewed, instead, as proof that humanity seems to be changing and evolving; such changes, suggests Dennis, are naturally being manifested as innate tendencies and gradually introduced by the more recent generations (op. cit.).

It is also interesting to note, purely as an intellectual speculation, how this theoretical Energy Age seems to be associated with psychoenergetics, whose relevance the present investigation would appear to highlight. As argued in Chapter 2, there may, indeed, be emerging characteristics and needs arising from the collective unconscious (such as wholebrain learning, extended mind or awareness, with more empathy and intuition and self-authority manifested, as well as an inner locus of control), possibly signalling that a new consciousness, perhaps a new humanity with an 'Integral/Authentic/Transpersonal' structure of consciousness and mode of experiencing, might gradually have been emerging.

To summarise the point of this section and conclude, findings from both studies, particularly from my exploratory investigation into recent applications of the general psychosynthesis model applied to education seemed to reveal that transpersonal education might have a practical role to play in the whole development of future leaders in more ways than one. In fact, it would appear that the educational projects investigated employ teaching styles and practices whose agenda is to engage people in lifelong learning, through multidimensional self-development leading to self-transcendence, self-esteem and *reliance on an inner locus of control*. The aim of multidisciplinary transpersonal educational projects seems to be to encourage an expansion of consciousness which empowers individuals to rely on their own inner source of wise guidance. In other words, students are stimulated and encouraged to actualise their potential, while finding fulfilment in any chosen career, even business-related (exemplified by the WYSE project, for example).

The educational projects based on the general psychosynthetic model investigated in my second study appear to address all the needs observed in Indigos (reported by the experienced educators interviewed in the first study), and seem to be aligned with the current and future trends in educational curricula developments, as outlined above. This and all the issues discussed, including the possibility of an emerging new consciousness or paradigm, lead me to conclude that there appear to be several indications that point to a relevant contribution that psychosynthesis, in particular through psychoenergetics (whether as a transpersonal discipline or a new force in psychology), might potentially make to mainstream education – with an important proviso, however. As outlined in the literature review, psychosynthesis seems to have been successfully applied to educational models, earning grants and public funding in the UK; it is used in successful international educational programmes, yet it has not been adopted by mainstream education, despite being actively used for four decades outside mainstream channels. The following section explores potential reasons why this has not happened.

8.2.1. Potential reasons for ‘not crossing the divide’

Professor of Psychology and researcher Paul Cunningham laments that there seems to be a tendency to marginalise transpersonal psychology and notes that:

While transpersonal psychology has developed into a full-fledged scientific, professional, and academic discipline since its founding by Abraham Maslow more than 35 years ago, it remains on the margins of conventional mainstream scientific psychology (Cunningham, 2011, p.4).

Cunningham argues that because many transpersonal concepts tend to run counter to what is considered ‘official’ or perhaps ‘acceptable’ in mainstream orthodox Western psychology, it tends to attract fierce mainstream opposition for being ‘unscientific’ and too metaphysical, for neglecting evil and the shadow side (as discussed and defined in Chapter 2). It is even criticised by Christians, who accuse the discipline’s psycho-spiritual techniques and Eastern meditative practices of being ‘New Age pagan indoctrination’ and the transpersonal movement itself of being a cult (i.e. Cunningham, 2011, p.53; Branch, 2009). Indeed, social psychologist Walter Truett Anderson points out that, due to the attitude of some of its practitioners, psychosynthesis also inevitably runs the risk of being accused of cultism. He writes that it:

started out reflecting the high-minded spiritual philosophy of its founder, [and it] became more and more authoritarian, more and more strident in its conviction that psychosynthesis was the One Truth (Anderson, 2004, p.265).

Establishing whether both transpersonal psychology and psychosynthesis are truly cults and to what extent, as previously stated, is beyond the scope of this work. However, a brief discussion on determining a few characteristics of cult thinking and behaviour might be useful. Professor of Psychology and researcher Arthur Deikman has extensively investigated consciousness, meditation, mystical traditions and the problem posed by cult behaviour which, it seems, occurs frequently not only in spiritual groups, but also pervades a multitude of organisations and institutions in ordinary life. Deikman’s research has also shown that cult behaviour seems to be characterised by the following:

- a) compliance with a group
- b) dependence on a charismatic figure
- c) avoiding dissent
- d) devaluing the outsider (‘them-versus-us’ behaviour).

The conclusion of Deikman’s sociological and psychological studies is that, to a certain extent, nobody is totally exempt from cult thinking and everybody seems to be already

involved in it, however mildly – in other words, it transpires that hidden cult thinking operates unnoticed in everybody's daily lives to a minor or major extent (Deikman, 1994). Deikman's research seems to also indicate that power, surrender, fear, idealism, and even violence and sex in the most extreme cases, can easily be discerned as prominent issues in cultism, sometimes hidden behind charismatic missions, group narcissism and pervading secrets within a closed system (Deikman, 2003). Cults, and not only distasteful ones, appear to be mirrors of very common aspects of the human psyche, more or less consciously recognised, argues Deikman, echoing Mary Douglas's (1986) research on institutions (discussed in the literature review); in fact, as with institutions, no matter what dogma or purpose embraced, cult psychology seems to involve issues of belongingness, of compliance with the values and preferences of peers, of *dependency* wishes and a *need for outside validation for self-esteem*.

Deikman's research shows that the more unconscious an individual is about such deep-seated human needs, the easier it becomes for him/her to engage in cultist thinking. Needless to say, if embraced with no checks or balances, this kind of thinking can lead to tragic consequences already witnessed in the history of humanity. The key seems to be to understand how the relevant psychology works, in order to prevent its emotional grip from influencing decisions and behaviours, particularly those that require rationality (Deikman, 2003). Personally, I am not persuaded that allegations of cultist behaviour alone would explain transpersonal psychology and psychosynthesis not seeming to be fully accepted by academia, therefore other potential reasons are explored below.

Psychosynthesis psychotherapist Chris Robertson laments not so much that psychosynthesis as a discipline has a shadow, but that the shadow is denied by its practitioners. He clarifies that the tendency to feel special in a narcissistic manner, hiding behind spiritual grandiosity, defends against depression and projects the 'lower' onto others or 'gets acted out in the sorts of tyrannical grandiosity that is evident in the history of the psychosynthesis community' (Robertson, 1998, p.1). He adds that:

the importance of acknowledging limitations and of accepting the value of frustration are not widely embraced principles within Transpersonal Psychology circles and psychosynthesis in particular... This difficulty with boundaries and the desire to fly high are characteristics of what Jungians have called the Puer archetype. My image for classical psychosynthesis is this same Puer, the eternal youth, who... loves to fly off to

lofty heights far away from the painful world of human limitations (op. cit., 1998, pp.2-3).

In concluding his article, Robertson clearly states his point, which is that the discipline, he noticed, tends to attract a fair number of practitioners, educators and therapists who, rather than flying high, should be 'growing down' in order to reach wholeness. He maintains that engaging in shadow work, reframed as a mature approach to realising one's authentic nature, would be an advisable adjunct to the discipline (op. cit.).

As illustrated, transpersonal psychology as a discipline seems to grapple with complex issues that psychosynthesis is not exempt from. Scholars within the field of transpersonal psychology have even questioned its 'relevance and viability as a psychology for the 21st century' (Cunningham, 2007, p.41). Cunningham defends the discipline's relevance, but also criticises transpersonal psychology's fragmentation of paradigm, lack of cohesion and agreement among practitioners in many areas, including research methods, 'acceptable' research areas and the education of its students, with curricula contents arbitrarily decided by each course leader, due to lack of general agreement about what exactly constitutes transpersonal psychology (op. cit.). As a corrective measure, Cunningham argues that a comprehensive textbook which represents all areas of research within the field would contribute to more needed cohesion, credibility and respectability and, as a first step, he has written a 'primer' and made it freely available on the internet (Cunningham, 2011). Having said that, however, there still might be a (mainstream) potential bias against addressing or taking seriously the full potential and spiritual nature of human beings, which I will consider below.

The point I am trying to make is that the currently held worldview inevitably influences educational choices by policy makers and so does psychological research, which, itself, seems to be influenced by the potential limitations/biases of the prevalent paradigm – a vicious cycle. Cunningham observes that conventional psychology appears to manifest a prejudiced perception of humanity's psycho-spiritual nature and potential (Cunningham, 2007). Sisk (in Chapter 2) highlights to what extent 'fear of things spiritual' limits education and permeates all fields, alienating one's connectedness with the Self and others, with human history, the environment and the mystery of life (Sisk, 2008, Sisk & Torrance, 2001).

Human potential and what the mind, even a child's mind, can do, for example, is studied and researched by several disciplines and branches of psychological research, such as positive psychology, transpersonal psychology and even parapsychology. Unfortunately, however, such disciplines do not seem to be incorporated within mainstream undergraduate psychology curricula (Koltko-Rivera, 2006), and this fact would seem to support Cunningham's observations.

Scientist and social critic Mark Koltko-Rivera has researched self-transcendence and highlights the fact that institutional psychology seems largely unwilling to recognise the existence and need for inclusion of transpersonal, spiritual dimensions in mainstream psychological research (op. cit.). As proof of this tendency, he points out that the later, more complete version of Maslow's popular hierarchy of needs theory, which includes self-transcendence as a motivational step beyond self-actualisation, has been almost completely left out of psychology texts for over three decades. With very few notable exceptions, emphasises Koltko-Rivera, such texts have been presenting an inaccurate, incomplete version of the theory, leaving out the sixth stage - transcendent aspects. Yet, wider recognition of self-transcendence as part of Maslow's hierarchy, Koltko-Rivera argues, could have important consequences for theory and research, providing:

- (a) a more comprehensive understanding of worldviews regarding the meaning of life;
- (b) broader understanding of the motivational roots of altruism, social progress, and wisdom;
- (c) a deeper understanding of religious violence;
- (d) integration of the psychology of religion and spirituality into the mainstream of psychology; and
- (e) a more multiculturally integrated approach to psychological theory. (Koltko-Rivera, 2006, p.302)

Whether one considers the omission of the sixth self-transcendence layer in psychology texts a deliberate attempt to maintain the status quo or simply coincidence, it seems clear that ignoring this transcendent aspect of the human psyche also *limits information made available to policy makers*. Existing research in the field about what motivates individuals, what motivates learning, how the mind works, etc. does or should inform educational practices (as Lucas & Claxton [2010], outlined in Chapter 2, also argue). Yet, despite the efforts of Maslow and those who came after him, there still seems to be

an ‘information tank’ about what constitute human needs and potential that mainstream education seems to be missing out on. The result is that if a *less than complete* body of information and research regarding the human mind and what is possible in terms of different ways of knowing and learning is presented to policy makers, the chances of more expansive curricula being created are *reduced*, and, consequently, *so are educators’, parents’ and students’ choices*.

One cannot deny that the esoteric, theosophical roots that psychosynthesis and especially psychoenergetics seem to be steeped in may indeed discourage and prevent the adoption of the general transpersonal-based educational model. The transpersonal field, consciousness research included, is partly based on less orthodox, cutting-edge scientific research (often inspired by quantum mechanics – i.e. Dennis, 2010; Pregolato, 2010; Wolinski, 1993, among others), and on ancient Eastern teachings, practices and philosophies, whose principles are less known, hence tend to attract biased rejections. One example is the relationship between the physical body and the invisible energies of the Indian chakras, often marginalised despite being discussed and explored scientifically (i.e. Barsotti, 2010; Jawer & Micozzi, 2009).

It has to be said that human potential, with implications for human consciousness, has indeed been researched scientifically for over a century. Some of the most convincing, replicated laboratory studies in parapsychology (some even funded by the CIA in the 1970s – as reported by Targ [2012], one of the main researchers involved) are analysed and reported not only in peer-reviewed academic journals, but also in more popular research-based books written by high-profile, respected researchers (among whom are Grof, 1993, 2000; Mishlove, 1997; Radin, 2006, 2009; Sheldrake, 2012; Targ, 2012; Tart, 2009). Despite that, mainstream scientists still appear to diminish and/or ignore experimental research results in prejudiced ways for reasons that would appear to have more to do with maintaining the status quo and one’s acquired positions of power than with the inadequacy of the findings themselves – or so denounce and report all the authors cited above, presenting evidence thereof.

The alarming tendency just described appears to exemplify scientific and fundamentalist attitudes, which, one could argue, hardly serve the cause of science and scientific methods of research, nor would they appear to serve the cause of empowerment – of making widely available portions of truth and knowledge about the

mind's potential which for centuries have been kept hidden (occult) and in the hands of a select few. A notable exception, perhaps, might be the widespread acceptance of results from multidisciplinary studies on meditation, whose positive effects on health are now widely known, but towards which many fundamentalist religious individuals seem to remain biased against, mainly because the practice comes from the East (i.e. Branch, 2009). In essence, dogma, scientific or religious, sadly still appears to limit knowledge and development of full human potential in more ways than one.

In fairness, however, with regard to meditation and guided imagery techniques, the objections that could be raised to their application in schools are not necessarily related to a bias against psychosynthesis or the transpersonal, as illustrated below. The wish to introduce them in education, in fact, seems to be dictated by a widespread tendency to transmit to current and future generations what has worked in the past, without questioning *whether it is adequate to modern times, whether they really need it* or whether there may be other methods that might work more efficiently or more quickly in educating the New Generations.

8.2.2. Is meditation really necessary?

All three interviewed experts in this study seem to be keen on using imagery and meditation in their own work and see these as an important adjunct to conventional educational methods. I would argue, however, that some sensitive and spiritually active children might need to be shown how to use their hypersensitivity and how to *ground* transpersonal energies better. Some, as indicated in my first Indigo study and also observed by Ilene in the second study, may have been already born highly intuitive and, as Ilene suggests, already naturally in contact with guidance from the Self. In the same way that the New Generations do not deserve to be ignored or drugged (if misdiagnosed with ADD or ADHD, for example), they do not deserve or need to be 'spaced out' either, I would argue.

Interestingly, special education expert Thomas Armstrong, also a supporter of spiritually intelligent children, does not advocate evoking transpersonal experiences in children via meditative practices in schools either. He suggests that transpersonal experiences should be acknowledged and grounded, but not probed into by enthusiastic, at times competitive, spiritually-minded parents or teachers (Armstrong, 1985). This

point cannot be emphasised enough. I have witnessed several cases of the harm that well-meaning and spiritually enthusiastic adults can unwittingly cause. Some examples can be found also in Twyman's *Indigo Evolution* documentary (Twyman, 2006). Armstrong argues that children easily sense what is expected of them and, ever eager to please parents and carers, many would be forced to fabricate reported experiences to win love and approval and to appear special in the eyes of those on whom they depend, running the risk of failing to adapt to the Earth dimension and express harmoniously within it (Armstrong, 1985).

My point is that when wishing to integrate spirituality with education, it might be wise to reflect on whether passive meditation and guided imagery exercises would simply give children another skill to learn or worry about to please adults, or even whether such activities may dissociate their natural imagination from outer perceptions, feelings and bodies. Furthermore, when imagery is guided by another person, it may lose children's spontaneous imaginative abilities and make them conform to somebody else's will, dissociating from their own. Arguably all forms of artistic or creative expression might easily enable children to connect to and express the contents of their superconscious as well, without the need to verbalise the ineffable. Offering children and adolescents activities which they find enjoyable is likely to enable them to enter a natural meditative state of 'flow' in Csikszentmihaly's parlance (1991), possibly the best form of meditation, in that it is unstructured and unprompted, arising instinctively.

Perhaps energy sensing, playful exercises in nature where *dynamic* and quick forms of meditation can easily take place to ground their energies, painting and drawing, storytelling, drama/theatrical expressions and movement activities might connect conscious and unconscious dimensions within the child; ultimately such activities might contribute more to a child's wholeness and to a balance between body and spirit, between *adapting to the Earth dimension and remembering their spiritual source* (Armstrong, 2008). It seems to be a matter of finding the right balance, which may be particularly challenging with the new quick-minded, intuitive generations, who seem to embody a different consciousness. I would argue that questioning and wondering whether some techniques that have worked for decades need to be updated or integrated with something new might be healthy and might lead to further discoveries. However, it has been clearly noted in my findings (and in the relevant literature on educational practices discussed in

Chapter 2) that the same tendency to transmit values and techniques that have worked for previous generations to future ones without questioning their usefulness or relevance appears to be present both in mainstream education and in holistic and transpersonal educational models. I would therefore suggest that this potentially biased way of educating the young should be revisited and addressed on both fronts. Building for the future from the wisdom of the past does not necessarily imply replicating the same techniques from the past – many may need to be updated and adapted to modern consciousness. What follows, to conclude the discussion section, is a critique of the present study.

8.3 Critique of study

Given the different methodologies used in the first and second parts of the present investigation, I have kept critiques of the studies separate and provided two critiques instead of one, the first study having been critiqued in Chapter 5. As stated, both studies had an exploratory nature; in investigating what the contributions of interviewed experts' educational projects might be to holistic and mainstream education in the second study (Chapters 6 and 7), my purpose was also to find out about the agendas behind psychosynthesis experts' visions and aims underlying their work, as well as methods and techniques they used. I have explained in Chapter 3 my research strategy of having educators as participants for both studies and justified reasons for using interviews as data collection methods for my investigation.

One of my reflections for the second study in particular was that I have studied transpersonal psychology formally and have been involved in 'transpersonal work' for over two decades, but not with psychosynthesis in particular. Hence, I thought that the nature of interviews and the impersonal analysis of published material as extra data on which to rely could put me in a less biased position as a researcher than any attendance or observation could guarantee. I am still convinced interviews were the best choice in this particular exploratory study, but wonder whether my interview questions would change today, when my knowledge of psychosynthesis has considerably increased as a result of my investigations. Did my limited knowledge of psychosynthesis at the time limit the kinds of questions I asked?

Furthermore, the chosen methodology's potential of supplying different people's perspectives on the same theme, provided that participants with different expertise were found, was one of the main factors that attracted me to it. The opportunity of triangulating data by integrating my own interviews with extra material previously published by the same authors/participants in this study seemed also attractive. However, I wonder about sufficient triangulation of data and whether it has indeed counterbalanced the risk of circularity ever present in studies of this kind. The fact that all three educational projects, despite having a different focus and different targets, yielded very similar results (similar to each other and to existing holistic models) seems encouraging, in that participants seemed very willing to share thoughts, opinions and agendas without focusing on promoting their own educational projects over others. Mostly they were also relatively critical of the general psychosynthetic model, too. The greatest challenge in case study research has been to contain the excessive length that presenting and analysing data can involve. In fact, I have had to rewrite case study presentations several times to try to represent the experts' work and vision faithfully but reasonably succinctly, choosing a small selection of quotes from considerable amounts of raw data (both the interviews and the extra data available from previously published material), making the difficult choice of not giving priority either to interviews or the extra data, but choosing to report selected quotes according to the *clarity* with which a concept was succinctly reported by the interviewed expert. As said, I was also aware that the risk in this study was connected to its potential circularity, which is another reason why I had to be very careful in choosing methods of data collection and in examining also the hidden agenda behind the presented work. Whether I have been successful in analysing and examining results with the necessary depth and through unbiased filters remains, as always, debatable.

8.4. Conclusions

As pointed out before, the three psychosynthesis-based educational projects under investigation (representing recent trends in the general psychosynthesis model) appear to be in line with past and current holistic and transpersonal education. Interestingly, they also seem to be aligned with the first study's findings, in that the psychosynthetic model potentially seems to meet Indigos' educational needs which the first three

interviewed educators had identified. As recent futures research in education and global trends (discussed above) appear to indicate, contributions and new trends revealed by investigating three transpersonal educational projects potentially inform both holistic and mainstream education. They seem to be relevant to a changing world, in that they seem to address the need to develop wisdom, creative thinking, self-actualising/transcending tendencies and sustainability consciousness in future leaders, which recent research in other fields seem to indicate as desirable in the future.

Unlike other holistic models, the educational projects investigated are based, and can count, on psychosynthesis and transpersonal education, which have been established and active in research and practice for four decades. As discussed, psychosynthesis has been internationally applied in education and, due to successes reported, it has even earned grants and public funds. Yet, it has not ‘crossed the divide’ to mainstream education. Further research has revealed that complex dynamics appear to be connected with transpersonal psychology and psychosynthesis, which might impede or delay their full integration in mainstream channels. Biases against them, even in academia, have been outlined and so have the two disciplines’ shortcomings, which need to be addressed for successful merging of at least aspects of transpersonal education in mainstream channels (if not the whole model) for the benefit of the New Generations.

The ongoing, general mainstream tendency to ignore individuals’ spiritual dimension and to leave out research on human potential (revealing what the mind is capable of) based on cultural anthropology, positive psychology, transpersonal psychology and parapsychology research, as discussed, implies that:

- a) policy makers have less complete information than is, in fact, available,
- b) holistic forms of education are confined to private, expensive schools and
- c) parents’, educators’ and students’ choices are consequently seriously limited.

Mainstream attempts to preserve the status quo by not evolving education policies and schools curricula seem to force a type of conformity that might feed a dangerous tendency to misdiagnose or drug the young, which inevitably contributes to alienating parents and the New Generations from mainstream education. At the same time, as discussed, the defensiveness and tendencies towards secrecy, which give rise to elitist attitudes often found in psychosynthesis circles, also need to be addressed, as does the

fragmentation found in the discipline of transpersonal psychology. Shortcomings to address and balance have specifically been found to be:

- a) hiding its esoteric roots on the part of psychosynthesis,
- b) insisting on empirically measuring or hierarchically cataloguing mystical or transpersonal experience, hence marginalising the value of personal experience, qualitative ways of investigating transpersonal phenomena or multidimensional and multisensory ways of *experiencing* such phenomena, found in some transpersonal circles seeking to legitimise the discipline in 'scientific' ways and
- c) limiting the potential and exploration of psychoenergetics.

This last point perhaps needs to be explored in more depth. Given the potential of psychoenergetics to explore and develop human potential and to educate for an Integral consciousness, and the relatively limited use made of specific psychoenergetics techniques by the three psychosynthesis experts (whom I interviewed in my second study), the discipline itself could (and probably eventually will) be detached from psychosynthesis and even from transpersonal psychology. In fact, the discipline itself being based primarily on energy and awareness thereof, might be limited by the fear and defensiveness pervading both psychosynthesis and transpersonal psychology. As pointed out before, the latter two, in an effort to be 'respectable' and accepted by mainstream psychology, tend to deny or hide their more esoteric roots. However, as pointed out in Chapter 2, esoteric studies have now earned a position in academia and are being treated seriously in terms of their historical and developmental relevance for humankind. One could therefore argue that psychoenergetics, with its potential to aid learning by direct experiencing and its link to hermeticism, might indeed deserve to be treated as an emerging Fifth Force in psychology and in the study of consciousness and human potential. I would certainly hope that, because psychosynthesis and transpersonal psychology have an important place in understanding the mystery of life and of conscious experience, their shortcomings will soon be address convincingly. This would enable both disciplines to find the respect, credibility and approval which they have been seeking through less convincing means.

Finally, it has also been noted that the tendency to transmit knowledge from past generations to the next, at times without questioning its relevance, has been observed

not only in mainstream education, but also in holistic and transpersonal education. It is my contention that this potentially biased way of educating youth might need to be addressed on both fronts for education in general to serve the New Generations in the way they need, as further studies, suggested below, could help to ascertain.

8.4.1. Suggestions for future research

The study as a whole has provided some more information about Indigos and their needs, as well as speculations derived from existing research, whose analysis would appear to indicate that Indigos and other multi-labelled members of the New Generations might be developing into self-actualising/transcending individuals. As explained in the literature review chapter (Chapter 2), Maslow (1971) tended to associate self-transcending tendencies with plateau experiences; Cloninger (2004) has devised an internationally translated and widely tested Temperament and Character Inventory (TCI), which tests self-transcending attitudes. Buckler (2011) researched what he saw as Maslow's neglected new theorised motivational need beyond self-actualisation, namely self-transcendence, and created the PLEX, a psychometric way of measuring plateau experience (which Maslow associated with self-transcendence). I would argue that my own exploratory studies and potential conclusions regarding the change in consciousness that New Generations seem to manifest might be tested using a mixed-study research design; Cloninger's TCI and Buckler's PLEX could be used to explore whether youth's characteristics explored in the present study do indeed reflect self-transcending tendencies and plateau experiences. Such measurements, explored together with an interview to give participants a much more active voice than the present study allowed, might yield interesting results and give youth an opportunity to self-reflect in providing answers to deep questions and hopefully indications of what lies behind their behaviours and needs that seem so different from adults' expectations of them. Particularly in mixed-study research, I would argue in favour of the importance of giving a voice to any phenomenon being investigated, hence on using either interviews or printed, published material to analyse or, when possible, both sources of data and information – interviews being a preferred method, for reasons outlined in Chapter 3. The suggestion for further research just presented seems to be a logical step beyond my own exploratory investigations.

Another suggestion concerns the innovative contribution derived from the present study, namely psychoenergetics, which includes, and seems to borrow from, energy psychology; its applications, as derived from what little information is available, theoretically helps one's energies flow more freely and one's will to be directed towards more constructive decisions and choices, as Crampton (2006) explained. However, as said, still scant information is available on the possibilities of psychoenergetics. Psychoenergetic techniques, being applied via the body, appear to ground transpersonal energies and to spiritualise matter, so to speak, as they seem to connect all one's dimensions (physical, emotional, mental and spiritual), potentially advancing (and grounding in the body) an expansion of consciousness that seems to be needed to counterbalance past mistakes and assist the environment and the New Generations. Even mental techniques of observation, hence increased awareness of the effects of one's thoughts and attitudes on oneself and others, which, as discussed, seem to have been more or less directly used by the experts interviewed in the multiple case study investigation, appear to deserve further study.

Interestingly, the emerging discipline of psychoenergetics seems to be strongly associated with psychosynthesis and the transpersonal when linked with mental techniques, but it has the potential to go much further in developing human potential and an expanded Integral consciousness. Whether psychoenergetics still belongs to the transpersonal, as I would be inclined to assume, at least for now, or whether it represents a new Fifth force in psychology that goes beyond transpersonal psychology remains a question of speculation. For the present study, I am treating it as an emerging transpersonal discipline. Made more accessible at the moment via the interesting and simple techniques provided by energy psychology (Feinstein et al. 2005), psychoenergetics might offer a very rich field for future research; some has already been published in the peer-reviewed Journal *Energy Psychology: Theory, Research and Treatment*. Among psychoenergetics and energy psychology techniques is EFT – emotional freedom technique. It is said to be so simple and effective that children can easily use it independently when upset and in other circumstances when they need to feel empowered; in fact, it appears to be gradually introduced in schools in the UK (EFT UK, 2012). A study exploring whether EFT is found useful in schools and at home could be very worthwhile.

Very useful further research, as I see it, in addition to the mixed study design to explore and potentially measure self-actualisation tendencies in the New Generations suggested above, could come from two more different directions:

- a) A longitudinal study involving attendees of the WYSE project (or other holistic education programme) over a number of years could provide very useful data about how effective transpersonal education is found to be in a practical world, including career placements.
- b) A longitudinal study involving energy psychology practitioners and clients in providing data that could show how effective results actually are in the long run, and in what directions techniques employed have tended to develop. This could potentially inform the emerging field of psychoenergetics and eventually also its possible applications and relevance for the future of education.

A further exploration of such topics, I would argue, could potentially add further information about the importance of integrating awareness of energy in a futuristic form of multisensory education of the young generations. This is already present in some educational short-term projects, such as Hart's ChildSpirit Institute and summer camps in the US for intuitive and mystically-inclined children organised in conjunction with the Profound Awareness Institute, 'to understand and nurture the spiritual life of the young' (ChildSpirit, n.d.). In fact, a study of techniques used and the effects on the children attending those camps could also potentially provide very interesting data (it would, however, require extreme sensitivity, substantial funding, parents' permission and supervision while working with children).

It is with the wish to assist 'different from the norm' and energy-sensitive youth that the present, exploratory studies have been carried out. As outlined above, futuristic forms of multisensory education of the young generations that contemplate an integration of awareness of energy might be assisted by psychoenergetics and similar disciplines, in which my own research might help raise an interest. It is my hope that the present study might represent a small contribution towards the future creation of public forms of education that could be easily accessible to all those multi-labelled children and adolescents who, for the time being, still seem to be misunderstood. As articulated by an Indigo adolescent:

‘Where’s the guidance’?...If they [adults] are preoccupied in projecting their own difficulties onto my situation, they won’t be able to hear me, and consequently, they won’t see me... (Carroll & Tober, 2009, p.266).

I hope that my own exploratory investigation, despite not offering any definitive answers, might symbolise a first step in the right direction in both raising awareness of the various phenomena here investigated and in heeding Indigos’ call for adults to *listen* and to provide guidance to them, ideally through a form of ‘Education for Integral/Authentic Consciousness’. An educational model for the development of this theorised emerging consciousness would necessarily explore more fully unexplored human potential, which many representatives of the New Generations already seem to manifest. In building a new, more enlightened and sustainable future from the wisdom of the past, an Integral model of education would also need to make space for, offer guidance on, and encompass, multisensory ways of learning and modes of learning/experiencing from humanity’s past (Magical, Mythic, Mental structures of consciousness – discussed in section 2.4.3) and would transcend and include them all, enabling youth to interact with all that lives in a more empowered and responsible way. Whether adolescents would still rebel and reject this futuristic form of education, however, remains, at this stage, unknown.

APPENDIX A First study – process of analysis clarified by examples and data

The purpose of this appendix is to clarify the analytic process followed in the first study, making it available to researchers potentially interested in replicating the study. The present investigation was carried out in order to answer the following research question:

How do experienced educators describe and interpret the nature of Indigos and their educational needs?

The analytic process was outlined in Chapter 4; in this appendix I will provide further details of how I proceeded, showing some examples. The steps for analysis were the same for each case/interview. The first stage of the analytic process entailed a logical procedure of simply following the interview transcript and cataloguing large extracts under headings/titles, treated as initial themes, according to what the participants were saying. Here is an example of what (part of) initial theme No. 2 looked like:

What attracted attention – Children’s characteristics and what they had in common

What attracted our attention the most was above all resistance to any kind of rule and the fact that the kids were “indomitable”. They were always on the move, bored easily and didn’t pay much attention. However, most of them had a very fast kind of intelligence.

Undoubtedly strong personalities; they were resistant to rules, very creative, very fast intelligence but also prone to boredom and easy loss of interest. Some were a bit more stable, but most were rather volatile. However, interestingly enough, we quickly discovered that when they felt loved and we managed to create harmony, they invariably showed great affection among each other and with us, too. Very loving...

Yes, very true – however, what is important to point out is that any superficial observation would have defined most of these kids as borderline, as being labelled difficult children with special needs. But they were actually very active in offering suggestions and happy to be involved. Plus, they were extremely sensitive. We soon learned that we needed to show a lot of love when reprimanding them, always making them feel accepted. Never stupid or less than..., ever! They also did not tolerate lack of consistency – we always had to be very coherent or they wouldn’t forgive us and would challenge us. An ex colleague of ours (teaching English) at one point actually ran out of the class in tears – the problem apparently was this lack of consistency they registered in her, in her words and behaviour.

The initial process described above led to 16 initial categories/themes, which, for interview 1 for example, were as follows:

- Challenging phase re. teaching methods
- What attracted attention – children’s characteristics and what they had in common
- Comparison with other children of other class and crisis
- Interventions – how they coped
- Main success through creativity
- What children learned via interventions
- External verification
- Current class compared to Indigo class
- The intuitive factor
- Written material on Indigos
- New paradigms and needs
- Problems with education and policy makers
- The future of education
- New teachers
- Potential solutions
- Problems

My next step in analysing data was to re-read the whole original transcript, then the concepts now categorised to find out if some of the categories and concepts expressed were so similar as to be absorbed under a slightly different heading, gradually reducing the number of thematic categories. Revisiting the data a second time yielded 12 Categories, as follows:

- Challenging phase re. teaching methods
- Children’s characteristics that attracted attention
- How the other children in the Indigo class were different
- Interventions – how the teachers coped
- Success through creativity
- Current class (compared to Indigo class)
- The intuitive factor
- Reaction to published material on Indigos
- New needs
- Problems with education and policy makers
- The future of education and new teachers
- Problems, parental attitudes and potential solutions

The process of absorbing and gradually reducing themes was steady and lengthy. Because the interviews were very long, containing abundant details not always relevant to the research question, the next challenge became sorting out the relevant parts. An important process that I carried out at the same time was to notice and highlight repetitions of concepts found throughout the different themes. As an example, the section below shows that the concept of creativity had been emphasised and repeated several times and reiterated in more than one temporary thematic category (written in caps below), shown in bold in the following examples:

SUCCESS THROUGH CREATIVITY

The main successes we achieved with these kids were through creativity in many different forms. Decoupage, recycled goods, old pieces of furniture they would polish and embellish and paint ... it was a fantastic year that one, the last one in particular. Very successful. The problems obviously hadn't disappeared. We gradually learned how to cope with, and handle, them better. **Creativity is extremely important;** cognitive development is all very well and good, but **there has to be an outlet for creativity and it might just be different in different classes.**

NEW NEEDS

Old fashioned ideas relating to order and rigid rules just had to be abandoned. These kids need to see there is always more than one way of doing things. **Above all, creativity is what enhances any teaching and relating with these kids.** We are not sure what is going on, but there is a huge difference between the present class and the previous one – the other ones [Indigos] were so much faster, stimulating, motivated... (2, 4, 31-34)

Another technique I used, which I found helpful, was making a note of the intensity of emotion when expressing concepts, which I wrote in pencil beside the various extracts, so that I could see where the emphasis/priority was in what interviewees were trying to communicate.

Later in my analysis, I double-checked with the participants whether my interpretation of their meanings made sense to them and whether it represented faithfully the essence of what they were trying to convey, explaining that getting lost in the data was very easy and that what I was doing as a researcher was interpreting and trying to be faithful to their constructed meanings, but also answering a research question, which was in two parts as follows:

How do experienced educators describe and interpret the nature of Indigos and their educational needs?

The first part of the research question was trying to find out how the interviewees described and interpreted the nature of Indigos after working with them closely for five years in one case and 12 years in the other case. The second part of the question, instead, was trying to find out what interviewees had discovered about Indigos' educational needs, in other words which techniques or attitudes had been found successful with them.

Data revealed that the two Italian teachers in particular provided a lot of information highlighting differences found among the various 5-year-cycle classes. They were describing different cycles and mini-generations in their experience based on about 30 children every five years. They detailed how painful it was to see children's potential

unexpressed because their own families were not stimulating them in any way, but sitting them in front of the television, which, the interviewees claimed, taught children about consumerism and confused them about what was achievable and what was not. They talked about what they perceived as arrogance on the part of younger teachers, etc. Those tangents, however interesting, were not really relevant to the research question, which focused on their experience of presumed Indigos, or what they came to classify as Indigos, which was almost a whole class, and how they dealt with them, what they learned about their needs, what educational interventions they adopted successfully and what potential implications there might be in educating them. That was the information I had to extract, in terms of their experience and understanding *in answer to the research question*.

In other words, another vitally important step in analysing data for both interviews was to separate relevant information from what was not answering the research question. The challenge for me was not to get lost in the data. The steps I followed to extract smaller numbers of categories from the second interview, as said, were the same as those detailed above. The British expert's interview initially yielded 12 temporary thematic categories:

- Indigo characteristics
- Indigo consciousness
- What Indigos need
- Education for Indigos
- Changing paradigm
- Non-Indigos
- What children need
- Parents' role
- Her work and labelling herself as Indigo
- Interventions for children and teachers
- The role of intuition and consciousness/awareness
- Empowerment

The two tables below (Tables 6a and 6b) show how the initial temporary themes, found after my initial grouping of thematic categories for each interview, were fused into a smaller number of categories, and the logic behind this process. In other words, they show the process of focusing on information strictly relevant to the research question (particularly relevant concepts are emphasised in italics in the second column of each table).

Table 6a – First study, Interview 1: regrouping of initial themes into final categories

<i>Table 6a – First study, Interview 1: regrouping of initial themes into final categories</i>	
Main initial themes Interview 1 (Italian teachers jointly teaching a class of presumed Indigos for 5 years)	Grouping themes into a smaller number, merging similar concepts/contents describing (in italics) key aspects which the research question focuses on
Challenging phase re. teaching methods Reaction to published material on Indigos	The first two themes seem to provide interesting secondary data, but not primary data in answer to the research question
Children's characteristics that attracted attention How the other children in the Indigo class were different Current class (compared to Indigo class)	These three themes and extracts yield information on Indigos' characteristics and their (perceived) needs, hence appear to provide information that may lead to an answer to the research question
Interventions – how the teachers coped Success through creativity	The two themes here seem to reveal details and, above all, the essence of what worked in terms of <i>educational interventions the two teachers successfully implemented</i> and how, in their opinion, children were harmonised and empowered
The intuitive factor New needs	These two categories appear to yield information that guided the teachers' awareness and what they described as <i>creative and empowerment-based interventions</i>
Problems with education and policy makers Problems, parental attitudes and potential solutions The future of education and new teachers	Information in the last three categories seems to reveal mainly <i>concerns and problems with the status quo</i> , as well as secondary data regarding potential solutions and envisaged further interventions in education

Table 6b – First study, Interview 2: regrouping of initial themes into final categories

<i>Table 6b – First study, Interview 2: regrouping of initial themes into final categories</i>	
Main initial themes interview 2 (British Indigo expert)	Grouping themes into a smaller number, merging similar concepts/contents describing key aspects which the research question focuses on
Indigo characteristics Indigo consciousness What Indigos need Non-Indigos	These four themes and relevant extracts seem to yield information on <i>Indigos' characteristics and their (perceived) needs</i>
Education/lifelong learning for Indigos Interventions for children and teachers Changing paradigm	The contents of these three themes appear to reveal details and, above all, the essence of what the interviewees found to have worked in terms of <i>educational interventions successfully implemented with Indigo children and adults</i>
Parents' role What children need	These two themes seem to describe and list some <i>concern about the status quo</i>
The role of intuition and consciousness/awareness Empowerment Tara's work and labelling herself as Indigo	These last three categories appear to yield information that guided the second interviewee's awareness as to what was needed to empower Indigo adults and children, with some primary and secondary details regarding what appeared to her as <i>creative and empowerment-based interventions</i> .

Once both tables were completed, which highlighted little summaries of contents and focus found in each group of themes (reported on the right side of each table), I started looking at both thematically coded interviews and comparing them. The similarities found between initial themes from the two interviews, written in italics in the tables above, were noted. Before moving on working on cross-case thematic coding, however, I sent a highly summarised version of my understanding of their constructed meanings, observed Indigo traits and suggested educational interventions, which I had evidenced in analysing and coding each interview. The summaries were separately sent to the interviewees concerned for feedback. In other words, for anonymity purposes, the Italian teachers only received and commented on my interpretation of the concepts they shared with me and the British expert received my thoughts only on her interview. The purpose of this exercise was to make sure that the essence of the meanings intended by participants had remained unchanged. Feedback received confirmed that that was the case, and also contained as an added bonus further comments and thoughts on the most important concepts they wanted to share and to be represented (which later became Tables 8 and 9).

Once I was satisfied that the essence of participants' meanings had remained intact (according to their feedback) and that the three categories found in common in all likelihood contained information that could lead to an answer to the research question (as shown in the tables above in italics), my analytical and interpretive work proceeded more speedily. Relevant extracts from original quotes from both interviews were subsequently placed under the three common thematic categories found; answers to the research question were gradually found among data (presented in chapter 5). As stated, throughout this process the focus of my analysis was finding answers to the research question. In summary, the logical part of the analytical process consisted in regrouping, sifting by eliminating what was not relevant, in reducing quotes down to essential information, in the use of key words to summarise, of pencilled comments written beside emotional tones, etc. The heuristic part was driven by intuition and deep involvement with the data. It seems to me that the process was not only heuristic and logical, but also driven by common-sense, which should hopefully become particularly evident in considering the three common thematic categories eventually found that contained combined information (from both interviews) relevant to the research question, presented in Table 6c below.

Table 6c – First study, common thematic categories

<i>Table 6c – First study, common thematic categories</i>	
<i>The Indigo Phenomenon</i>	<i>Interviews 1 (joint) and 2(solo) – three participants in all</i>
1.	Indigo consciousness, characteristics and needs (as observed)

2. Empowerment issues and problems with the status quo
3. Educational interventions (envisaged and successfully applied)

Participants' feedback enriched the process and indirectly helped my analysis. The three final categories shown here (initially italicised in the tables shown above) turned out to be not only focused on the research question, but also on areas that all participants appeared to feel strongly about, namely *creativity, respect of uniqueness of students and empowering/creative methods and techniques to be used in educating Indigos, problems with the status quo and a wish to raise awareness regarding different educational methods to be used with different children.*

The main remaining task, once the common themes had been found, was to isolate key words and to extract concepts that would help answer the research question. Tables 6-9, mostly reported in this chapter, were created to summarise and hopefully clarify data extracted from the interviews, which eventually led to answers to the research question, making them visually clear and easily retrievable.

While Tables 6a and 6b above focused on themes from each interview and Table 6c focused on the final categories found in common, Table 7 in Chapter 5 highlights and summarises Indigo characteristics noticed by the experienced educators interviewed. Table 7 synthesises findings and participants' answers to the first part of the research question.

Contributions towards answering the second part of the research question – Indigos' educational needs and the educational interventions envisaged and successfully applied by participants – are summarised in Table 8, Chapter 5. Table 8 contains recommendations and guidelines regarding educational interventions and attitudes that seem to have worked successfully with Indigos. The table was compiled after receiving feedback from participants on a longer document, which represented and thematically grouped the contribution of their own interview in a way that eventually helped me find a possible answer to the research question (see Chapter 5).

When sending feedback, as a later addition after the interview and the initial work on this study had been completed, participants also added a few extra comments on what they were really keen on conveying to others via the present study, which I have combined and presented in Table 9 below. The following table also seems to summarise the main findings and key concepts derived from the present investigation and outlined in Chapter 5.

Table 9 – Key concepts that answer the research question

Table 9 – Key concepts participants were keen to convey in answer to the research question

Creative visionaries are being born...a new way of functioning is being born with them.

[Intuition], once developed, [helps] to master consciousness in its different expressions and leads to an empowered awareness that is not linear based.

Intuitive knowledge is linked to a multidimensional/interdimensional awareness, to integrated consciousness.

[Children] need a multidimensional approach...Active work which exercises and expands consciousness really helps, [as it] aligns Indigo children/people with their talents and purpose in life, harmonising them.

Creativity in all forms appears to be a key element of success, as well as:

- a) Dynamic meditation, grounding/stimulating embodiment and mind-body disciplines.
- b) Use of creative imagination and working with energy, honing nonlinear thinking.
- c) Letting children teach adults how to relate to them.
- d) Educators' questioning of their methods and integration of new approaches.
- e) Encouragement and empowerment, as well as development of self-awareness and responsibility.
- f) Energy work and use of intuition, which have been found to increase confidence and self-esteem and to lead to freedom from fear. Intuitive, inner guidance, is also likely to reveal one's purpose in life.

In the opinion and experience of all participants, respecting children's/individuals' differences, rather than forcing conformity, seems to be crucial.

APPENDIX B Semi-structured interview protocol for the second study

General interview guide – (personalised details for participant No. 3, Ilene, are shown in this example; very slight variations regarding specific line of work and expertise were applied in the other two interviews for the multiple case study research carried out for the second study)

- 1) Would you like to give me a bit of background re. your work with psychosynthesis as a trainer of parents, teachers, professionals (and young people if applicable) and anything you would like to share? This applies also to your work at UCLA and your book.
- 2) What brought you to psychosynthesis, to the transpersonal and/or to an expansion of consciousness, so to speak?
- 3) How important do you think intuition is in life, in education and in contact with the (Transpersonal) Self?
- 4) What would you say is the role of the Self in ‘education and lifelong learning’ in psychosynthesis and in your experience?
- 5) Why do you think it is important at this stage to embrace a transpersonal vision, considering that you teach and write about psychosynthesis? What changes do you think a transpersonal vision is likely to bring about in people’s consciousness, if any?
- 6) In your experience what can be taught and integrated within education and lifelong learning now, via psychosynthesis, that could not be introduced before? In other words what’s the innovation it brings?
- 7) How do you use psychosynthesis in your teachings, books, work in general, especially as it applies to teaching and training parents, educators and/or young people?
- 8) Do you have any experience of psychoenergetics, the new frontier of psychosynthesis or a new Fifth force in psychology, as envisioned by Assagioli decades ago? If so, how have you applied it to yourself and especially in your training of others? How does it integrate psychosynthesis (if at all)?

- 9) I am aware you've been teaching and training for quite a long time. Have you noticed any generational changes or emerging characteristics in the collective consciousness worth mentioning?

- 10) What is the future of education for the coming generations in your opinion? What changes would you like to see implemented in the near future (if any)?

- 11) As psychosynthesis embraces and promotes self-actualisation and Self-realisation/transcendence, therefore what we might call an expanded consciousness perhaps, what impact do you think living with such an expanded consciousness would have on life and on future education in general, if any?



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APPENDIX C - CONSENT FORM*

I have been fully informed about the aims and purposes of the project.

I understand that:

there is no compulsion for me to participate in this research project and, if I do choose to participate, I may at any stage withdraw my participation

I have the right to refuse permission for the publication of any information about me
any information which I give will be used solely for the purposes of this research project, which may include publications

If applicable, the information which I give, may be shared between any of the other researcher(s) participating in this project in an anonymised form

all information I give will be treated as confidential

the researcher will make every effort to preserve my anonymity

collected data will be securely stored, protected and safely disposed of once the whole PhD study is completed

.....

(Signature of participant)

(Printed name of participant)

(Date)

One copy of this form will be kept by the participant; a second copy will be kept by the researcher(s)

If you have any concerns about the project that you would like to discuss, please contact:

Patrizia Trotta, Via Gradisca 18, 21100 – VARESE, Italy. Contact phone number of researcher: (+39) 347 5754466 (Italy). Email: patriziatrotta45@gmail.com

An alternative person to contact is my supervisor: Professor Anna Craft, University of Exeter, Heavitree Road, Exeter, EX1 2LU, UK; email: A.R.Craft@exeter.ac.uk

*** This form was signed by all first study participants. For the second study, however, anonymity was not preserved, with participants' written permission.**

Data Protection Act: The University of Exeter is a data collector and is registered with the Office of the Data Protection Commissioner as required to do under the Data Protection Act 1998. The information you provide will be used for research purposes and will be processed in accordance with the University's registration and current data protection legislation. Data will be confidential to the researcher(s) and will not be disclosed to any unauthorised third parties without further agreement by the participant. Reports based on the data will be in anonymised form.

Italian version of consent form – MODULO PER IL CONSENSO*

Dichiaro di essere stato/a informata a proposito di questo progetto e degli scopi e metodi di ricerca usati. In conformità alla Data Protection Act 1998, relativo alla tutela della privacy e al trattamento dei dati personali, dichiaro di essere al corrente dei miei diritti come partecipante, elencati di seguito:

Non esiste alcun obbligo da parte mia di partecipare a questo progetto di ricerca e, se sceglierò di partecipare, sarò libero/a di ritirarmi in qualsiasi momento

Ho il diritto di rifiutare il mio permesso di pubblicare qualsiasi informazione che riguardi la mia persona

Qualsiasi informazione da me condivisa verrà usata solo allo scopo di questo progetto di ricerca e sono al corrente che potenzialmente potrebbe essere pubblicato

Le informazioni che condividerò potrebbero essere condivise da altri eventuali ricercatori che collaboreranno a questo progetto, ma, in tal caso, saranno in forma anonima

Tutte le informazioni che darò saranno strettamente confidenziali e trattate come tali

Sarà premura di tutti i ricercatori coinvolti di accertarsi che il mio anonimato sia rispettato e garantito

Registrazioni e dati raccolti saranno adeguatamente protetti, conservati in luogo sicuro e distrutti fisicamente ed elettronicamente al termine degli studi.

.....

.....

(Firma del/la partecipante)

(Data)

.....

(Nome in stampatello del/la partecipante)

Una copia di questo modulo sarà consegnata al/la partecipante; una seconda copia rimarrà in possesso della ricercatrice, il cui indirizzo e numero di telefono seguono.

Qualora sorgessero dubbi, domande o preoccupazioni in merito al progetto in questione, l'indirizzo a cui scrivere in Italia è il seguente:

Patrizia Trotta Via Gradisca 18/d, 21100 – VARESE, I. Numero di telefono: (+39) 347 5754466 (Italia)

Qualora sorgessero problemi relativi al rapporto con la ricercatrice di cui sopra, un'altra persona da contattare è il mio supervisore, la Professoressa Anna Craft presso la University of Exeter, Heavitree Road, Exeter, EX1 2LU, UK; email: A.R.Craft@exeter.ac.uk

*** This form was signed by all first study participants. For the second study, however, anonymity was not preserved, with participants' written permission.**

APPENDIX D Second study – grouping of data into themes and summary of findings

Introduction

Reporting findings from each case study without excessive length can be challenging. I have, therefore organised each case study's findings in the following way:

- 1) After a brief introduction of each expert interviewed and their use of psychosynthesis in their work, I have made clear what additional published data have been used to extract information relevant to the research question.
- 2) A table showing how initial themes became final categories has been provided as a second step.
- 3) Each final category and tentative findings have been outlined, and selected illustrative extracts/quotes (raw data from each expert's interview and from additional, previously published material) have also been provided, so that the interviewed expert's voice is represented clearly. This presentation of data in narrative form is found in Chapter 6.
- 4) Contributions and findings have been summarised in a table at the end of each case study below.

Interviews and additional data were used to answer the following research question:

How are the latest trends in the general psychosynthesis-based educational model contributing to holistic education according to experienced educators and how might contributions inform mainstream education?

All three participants in the second study have given consent to use their real name, having given permission to also use their previously published material for the purposes of this research, through which their name would be recognised.

CASE STUDY 1 - MARIELLA

Mariella Lancia is a former teacher of English (now retired) and a trained and experienced psychosynthesis educator and yoga teacher. She is a very active transpersonal (psychosynthesis-based) educator in three different areas:

- 1) As director of the Italian branch of the WYSE international educational programme (World Youth Service and Enterprise), she is in contact with WYSE centres all over the globe and informed of how each programme is developed abroad and how any shortcoming or problem is addressed.

- 2) As the creator, director and facilitator of the Elders programme (within the WYSE project), she focuses on multi-generational work, using transpersonal educational methods.
- 3) Because WYSE is part of a bigger movement known as SiE (Soul in Education), she also plays an active part in the development of that movement, attending international conferences and contributing articles to make SiE known.

As detailed in Chapter 4 (Methodology), data from my interview with Mariella were supplemented by other, previously published material that Mariella authored, as listed in Table 5. The process of analysing data has been explained in the Methodology Chapter.

Table 10 that follows shows how initial themes became final categories from which information relevant to the research question can be derived. The first three themes put in context Mariella's adopted and suggested teaching styles by introducing her vision that informs them. The last two themes, then, answer more directly the research questions. The final thematic categories for case study 1, as shown in Table 10, are as follows:

Theme 1 – The vision behind the WYSE educational project and the SiE movement, hence behind Mariella's work

Theme 2 – Observed effects on attendees (and WYSE programmes' potential shortcomings)

Theme 3 – The role of expanded consciousness and intuition

Theme 4 – What the transpersonal vision has to offer (via psychosynthesis and psychoenergetics) and what the teaching styles adopted reveal about transpersonal education

Theme 5 – Envisaged educational changes for the New Generations based on Mariella's acquired experience

Contributions to the research question from analysis of Mariella's data can be found in Chapter 6, section 6.1.1. Besides the thematic categories in Table 10, I have also summarised in Table 11 below Mariella's vision, teaching methods, aims, perceived attitudes to be taught and the contribution that psychosynthesis and psychoenergetics are seen to offer the world of education and lifelong learning. The 'Findings Tables' for each case study outlined in this Appendix (Tables 11, 13 and 15) are the result of summaries of summaries of themes and data, which eventually revealed visions and aims that all three experts interviewed appeared to have in common, despite the different focus each expert placed on their work. Once such similarities were found, I decided to use in each of these Tables clear headings that reflected such commonalities, in preparation for the cross-case analysis of data (see Chapter 7).

Table 10 – Mariella (case study 1): regrouping of initial themes into final categories

<i>Table 10 – Mariella (case study 1): regrouping of initial themes into final categories</i>	
GROUPING INITIAL 21 THEMES INTO FINAL CATEGORIES	FINAL 5 THEMES/CATEGORIES
<p>THEME 1: DETAILS OF THE PROGRAMMES WYSE OFFERS</p> <p>THEME 3: WHAT WYSE IS ABOUT – ITS MAIN FOCUS, WITH DETAILS OF MARIELLA’S WORK WITH ELDERLY AND WITH THE SiE MOVEMENT</p> <p>THEME 4: THE ROLE AND CONTRIBUTION OF PSYCHOSYNTHESIS IN WYSE’S WORK</p> <p>THEME 5: DETAILS ABOUT THE FOUNDER AND HOW SHE WAS INSPIRED TO SET UP WYSE’S PROGRAMMES</p> <p>THEME 6: THE EXPANSION OF WYSE’S PEDAGOGY AND INCLUSION OF OTHER SUBJECTS OF STUDY</p> <p>THEME 13: WYSE, RELIGION AND SPIRITUALITY</p> <p>THEME 14: THE CONCEPT OF LEADERSHIP IN WYSE PROGRAMMES</p>	<p>THEME 1 – THE VISION BEHIND THE WYSE EDUCATIONAL PROJECT AND THE SiE MOVEMENT, HENCE BEHIND MARIELLA’S WORK</p> <p>This group of initial themes provides information on what drives the WYSE project. Mariella’s impact and work on different programmes within this organised educational project and on SiE, its umbrella movement, however, provides relevant information that clarifies her vision and what she is trying to achieve in teaching both younger and older generations.</p> <p>[Initial themes: 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 13 14]</p>
<p>THEME 9: OBSERVED EFFECTS OF WYSE’S PROGRAMMES ON ATTENDEES</p> <p>THEME 10: WHY EXTERNAL EDUCATIONAL INTERVENTIONS MAY NOT BE</p>	<p>THEME 2 – OBSERVED EFFECTS ON ATTENDEES (and Wyse’s programmes’ potential shortcomings)</p>

<p>ENOUGH</p> <p>THEME 17: POTENTIAL PROBLEMS IN WYSE PROGRAMMES AND ACTIONS TAKEN TO COUNTERBALANCE THEM</p>	<p>This group of initial themes shows not only the beneficial effects programmes attendees report, but also the shortcomings observed by organisers and facilitators (likely to be relevant to the potential contribution of this model to holistic and mainstream education).</p> <p>[Initial themes: 9, 10, 17]</p>
<p>THEME 19: THE ROLE AND IMPORTANCE OF INTUITION</p> <p>THEME 20: IMPLICATIONS OF LIVING WITH EXPANDED CONSCIOUSNESS</p>	<p>THEME 3 – THE ROLE OF EXPANDED CONSCIOUSNESS AND INTUITION</p> <p>This thematic group defines intuition and expanded consciousness, key concepts in psychosynthesis, and highlights their role in Mariella’s work.</p> <p>[Initial themes: 19, 20]</p>
<p>THEME 2: DEFINING THE TRANSPERSONAL, PSYCHOSYNTHESIS AND PSYCHOENERGETICS</p> <p>THEME 7: TEACHING STYLES</p> <p>THEME 8: WYSE’S EXPANDED TRANSPERSONAL VISION</p> <p>THEME 11: THE TASK AWAITING HUMANKIND AND THE NEW GENERATIONS</p> <p>THEME 12: THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE TRANSPERSONAL DIMENSION IN WYSE PROGRAMMES AND MARIELLA’S WORK</p> <p>THEME 15: CONTRIBUTIONS AND INFLUENCES FROM OTHER TRANSPERSONAL</p>	<p>THEME 4 – WHAT THE TRANSPERSONAL VISION HAS TO OFFER (via psychosynthesis and psychoenergetics) AND WHAT THE TEACHING STYLES ADOPTED REVEAL ABOUT TRANSPERSONAL EDUCATION</p> <p>This large group of themes gives information on how Mariella sees transpersonal work, what the teaching styles adopted reveal about transpersonal education and it offers definitions of psychosynthesis and psychoenergetics. It also shows details of how her vision was influenced (and by whom).</p> <p>[Initial themes: 2, 7, 8, 11, 12, 15, 16, 21]</p>

<p>AUTHORS THAT INSPIRED MARIELLA'S WORK</p> <p>THEME 16: PSYCHOENERGETICS AND ITS POTENTIAL IMPACT ON CONSCIOUSNESS AND EDUCATION (also applicable to final theme 5 below)</p> <p>THEME 21: PERSONAL EXPERIENCE WITH PSYCHOSYNTHESIS AND THE TRANSPERSONAL</p>	
<p>THEME 16: PSYCHOENERGETICS AND ITS POTENTIAL IMPACT ON CONSCIOUSNESS AND EDUCATION (also applicable to final theme 4 above)</p> <p>THEME 18: ENVISIONED CHANGES IN THE FUTURE OF EDUCATION BASED ON HER EXPERIENCE AND OBSERVED BENEFITS OF APPLIED TRANSPERSONAL METHODS</p>	<p>THEME 5 – ENVISAGED EDUCATIONAL CHANGES FOR THE NEW GENERATIONS BASED ON MARIELLA'S ACQUIRED EXPERIENCE</p> <p>This group of themes compares teaching styles adopted in Mariella's work and projects she is involved in to the changes she envisions for the education of the present and future generations.</p> <p>[Initial themes: 16, 18]</p>

Table 11 Mariella – Case study 1 summary of findings

Table 11 Mariella – Case study 1 summary of findings Vision, aims and attitudes Mariella is trying to encourage through her work (as transpires from available data and as Mariella sees them)	Teaching methods/techniques used
<p>1) Self knowledge supports people in the task of expanding awareness/consciousness, getting rid of limited conditioning (i.e. guilt or self-blame and scarce self-esteem if one's natural inclinations differ from what the social consciousness of the time finds desirable, for example individualistic tendencies and constant competition). The aim behind her work appears to be to evolve consciousness to change the prevalent paradigm.</p> <p>2) Expansion of consciousness to revise acquired limiting conditioning and gain multidimensional awareness is seen as necessary because, to Mariella's mind, the more one's consciousness develops, the fewer external/imposed rules will be needed, thus circumventing potential fundamentalist attitudes. An expansion of consciousness would also enable individuals to move beyond selfishness and materialism, towards a sense of oneness and service.</p> <p>3) Psychoenergetics, Empowerment and Self-responsibility – accessing the vibratory sphere of the Self entails that one intuitively knows what needs to be done, Mariella claims. Growing awareness of the effects of thoughts, emotions and attitudes on consciousness, matter (including body) and relationships results in self-authority and self-responsibility. This acquired</p>	<p><u>Self-awareness exercises</u> via psychosynthesis (disidentification and Self-identification; guided imagery; inner dialogue; meditation; journaling; drawing; role-playing; art-work; story telling; conversations with the inner Wise Being/the Self) to connect all dimensions and levels of consciousness (physical, emotional, mental and spiritual/transpersonal).</p> <p><u>Mind-body disciplines</u> (yoga and martial arts) to help develop self-discipline in terms of handling one's body, energy, thoughts and emotions in a centred, aware way.</p> <p><u>Experiential learning/teaching</u> without offering pre-conceived labels or pre-derived conclusions – each individual at any age is encouraged to find and reach their own conclusions and to be independent and free. Any</p>

awareness, as Mariella sees it, empowers individuals and inspires more ethical and responsible use of energy in how one treats oneself, others and all living things ('right use of energy').

- 4) **Development of one's intuitive faculties** is seen as necessary to hear the Self's wise guidance and live ethically and authentically.
- 5) **Adults need to become healthy role models who teach by example**, Mariella claims, acquiring self-knowledge, expanding one's consciousness and supporting and empowering themselves and younger generations, the future leaders, as a result.
- 6) **Consciousness/Awareness-based education** – external structural reforms to education without aware teachers, to Mariella, will not lead to significant or effective changes. Evolution of consciousness as the basis of education and lifelong learning is considered the only way forward in terms of encouraging ethical living, self-authority and integrated psyches and as the only sensible long-term answer to a global crisis, which Mariella sees as the result of the currently prevailing paradigm.
- 7) **Experiential learning** – an ideal future education would require transpersonally-inclined educators who could teach experientially what they have experientially learned first, what they embody and continue practicing (i.e. being centred), thus inspiring trust and respect, as well as encouraging behaviour guided by inner wisdom.
- 8) **Finding one's purpose and actualising one's potential** – Inspiring youth to find their life purpose is seen as a fundamental task of educators, whose job,

concept, to Mariella, needs to be taught mainly by facilitating direct, personal experience, using language an individual is comfortable with.

Psychoenergetics as awareness of the effects of one's thoughts, attitudes and emotions on consciousness, matter (body/health included) and relationships. 'Right use of energy'.

Educating by example – Individuals with expanded intelligence and consciousness educate others by way of being and not by what they say or do (to Mariella, a centred personality is clearly felt and educates and harmonises others, too – i.e. manipulations and power games are avoided and respect is naturally given to all). Parents, adults and educators are ideally to be seen as convincing and wise role models (which self-awareness and lifelong learning contribute to).

to Mariella's mind, is to encourage students to explore different avenues and find what naturally gives them joy. Creative self-expression and following one's passion, to Mariella, encourage self-esteem and can potentially direct individuals' energies to constructive ends, avoiding self-destructive tendencies and depression.

- 9) **Interconnectedness, service and universality** of certain experiences or of desirable, transpersonal qualities to emulate and develop in oneself (i.e. courage, co-operation, compassion, etc.) appear to be key concepts to be taught experientially to encourage expansion of consciousness and actualisation of one's potential.

Contribution of psychosynthesis/psychoenergetics

Contribution of psychosynthesis: multiple and constantly updated techniques leading to self-awareness and experiential learning (direct experience of anything taught and learned). As Mariella applies it, it does away with lengthy theories youth appear to have little patience for, preferring direct experience as a way to increase self-awareness.

Contribution of psychoenergetics: expansion of consciousness, awareness of energetic component of all and of the effects that thoughts, attitudes and emotions have on consciousness, matter, including body/health (one's own and other people's) and relationships. It encourages 'right use of energy', hence more awareness and ethical, disciplined use/choice of one's attitudes, emotions, thoughts and behaviour.

CASE STUDY 2 - MOLLY

Molly Young Brown is a very active, highly respected internationally known author, pioneer and key-speaker in the field of eco-psychoanalysis. Besides developing two distance learning self-development courses – one on psychoanalysis and one on eco-psychoanalysis, she is also an international trainer, educator, activist, counsellor and consultant. She is very keen on encouraging research involving psychoanalysis.

Molly has experience working in mainstream education and, for a time, she was also involved in teacher training – experiences she apparently did not enjoy ‘due to the appalling state of education in America’, she reveals. In fact, Molly appears to be very concerned about the support children, adolescents and teachers are not getting in her opinion, about the effects of standardised testing in mainstream education, about what she sees as very poor teacher training/support and also about the need to improve parenting skills.

Molly’s current main areas of work are as follows:

- 1) She focuses mainly on teaching and *lifelong learning*; she works with people of all ages, teaching psychoanalysis-based, psycho-spiritual self-development courses leading to self-awareness, whose aim is to bring about a shift in collective worldview and values by *developing human potential* (first in individuals, but seen as a process likely to spread gradually) and by encouraging a connection with a divine source of strength, guidance, courage and love to face the challenges ahead.

In other words, she invests in *empowerment*, in personal change/development that, she seems convinced, will lead to social peace, justice and healthy environmental renewal and lets go of fears, doubts, sense of inadequacy or confusion. Besides needed structural changes/alternatives, she sees Self-realisation (being guided fully by the Self) as one of the main answers to what has become known as the ‘Great Turning’ – a theoretically emerging shift from an industrial growth society to a life-sustaining civilization.

- 2) Her eco-psychoanalysis integrates ecological issues, emphasises *interconnectedness* with all that lives and aims to develop ‘ecological-actualisation’. She works closely with Buddhist scholar, eco-philosopher and systems theorist Joanna Macy, introducing such issues to psychoanalysis. Her work focuses on cultivating an expanded consciousness of interconnection and interdependence and sense of self embedded in a sustainable world, hence on ecological actualisation (being linked with the Self and the totality. The same principle is also known as self-transcendence). *Experiential, multisensory, embodied learning* and *independence/self-reliance* are very highly emphasised in her teachings.

With regard to all psychological models, including psychosynthesis, Molly writes about their usefulness but also about the need to discard them when no longer reflecting one's experiences.

As detailed in Chapter 4 (Methodology), data from my interview with Molly were supplemented by other, previously published material that Molly authored, as listed in Table 5. The process of analysing data has been explained in the Methodology Chapter.

Table 12 that follows shows how initial themes became final categories from which information relevant to the research question can be derived. The first three themes put in context Molly's adopted and suggested teaching styles by introducing her vision that informs them. The last two themes, then, contribute more directly to an answer to the research question. The final thematic categories for case study 2, as shown in Table 12, are as follows:

Theme 1 – Eco-psychosynthesis and the ecological self (meanings and contributions)

Theme 2 – Defining psychosynthesis and psychoenergetics

Theme 3 – The role of intuition and expanded consciousness

Theme 4 – Teaching styles and the potential contributions of psychosynthesis to educational programmes

Theme 5 – What is needed in the education of the New Generations based on Molly's experience and observations

Contributions to the research question from analysis of Molly's data can be found in section 6.2.1. I have also summarised in Table 13 below Molly's vision, teaching methods, aims, perceived attitudes to be taught and the contribution that psychosynthesis and psychoenergetics are seen to offer the world of education and lifelong learning.

Table 12 – Molly (case study 2): regrouping of initial themes into final categories

<i>Table 12 – Molly (case study 2): regrouping of initial themes into final categories</i>	
GROUPING THE INITIAL 36 THEMES TO REACH A SMALLER NUMBER OF CATEGORIES IN ANSWER TO THE RESEARCH QUESTION	FINAL 5 CATEGORIES/THEMES
<p>THEME 1 – MOLLY’S BACKGROUND</p> <p>THEME 2 – WHY SHE BECAME INTERESTED IN ECOLOGICAL ISSUES</p> <p>THEME 3 – ECO-PSYCHOSYNTHESIS AS HER LIFE WORK</p> <p>THEME 9 – WHAT A TRANSPERSONAL VISION IS ABOUT</p> <p>THEME 17 – ‘THE GREAT TURNING’, AN ECO-PSYCHOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE</p> <p>THEME 34 – TRANSCENDENCE REVISITED AND THE IMPORTANCE OF ‘EMBODIMENT’</p> <p>THEME 36 – THE RISING OF THE ‘ECOLOGICAL SELF’ (VS THE CONCEPT OF THE HIGHER SELF)</p>	<p>THEME 1 – ECO-PSYCHOSYNTHESIS AND THE ECOLOGICAL SELF (meanings and contributions)</p> <p>Besides information on how/why Molly’s current vision and projects have been influenced and inspired, this category offers some new definitions her work contributed to psychosynthesis.</p> <p>[Initial themes 1, 2, 3, 9, 17, 34, 36]</p>
<p>THEME 4 – DEFINING PSYCHOSYNTHESIS</p> <p>THEME 5 – PSYCHOENERGETICS</p>	<p>THEME 2 – DEFINING PSYCHOSYNTHESIS AND PSYCHOENERGETICS</p>

<p>THEME 6 – BODY AWARENESS INTO THE PSYCHOSYNTHESIS MODEL</p> <p>THEME 10 – WHAT A ‘COMPLETE PSYCHOLOGY’ CONSISTS OF</p>	<p>The initial themes that form this category cluster help define psychosynthesis and psychoenergetics. They also offer details of how Molly’s vision of psychoenergetics was influenced (and by whom).</p> <p>[Initial themes 4, 5, 6, 10]</p>
<p>THEME 7 – THE ROLE OF THE (TRANSPERSONAL) SELF</p> <p>THEME 24 – THE IMPORTANCE AND IMPLICATIONS OF DEVELOPING ONE’S INTUITIVE FACULTIES</p> <p>THEME 25 – PSYCHOSYNTHESIS AND THE ROLE OF INTUITION</p> <p>THEME 32 – TRENDS IN THE COLLECTIVE UNCONSCIOUS</p> <p>THEME 33 – DEFINING ‘EXPANDED CONSCIOUSNESS’</p> <p>THEME 35 – MATERIALISTIC PARADIGM VS WHAT BRINGS TRUE HAPPINESS</p>	<p>THEME 3 – THE ROLE OF INTUITION AND EXPANDED CONSCIOUSNESS</p> <p>This group defines intuition and expanded consciousness, key concepts in psychosynthesis, and what they mean to Molly as applied to her work.</p> <p>[Initial themes 7, 24, 25, 32, 33, 35]</p>
<p>THEME 8 – HOW THE ROLE OF THE SELF CAN BE TAUGHT</p> <p>THEME 11 – THE SPIRITUAL DIMENSION AND INTERCONNECTEDNESS</p> <p>THEME 12 – INNOVATION PSYCHOSYNTHESIS BRINGS</p> <p>THEME 13 – IMPLICATIONS OF ‘SPIRITUALITY’</p> <p>THEME 14 – IMPLICATIONS OF THE ‘DISIDENTIFICATION’ PROCESS</p> <p>THEME 15 – THE IMPORTANCE OF TEACHING EXPERIENTIALLY (RATHER THAN</p>	<p>THEME 4 – TEACHING STYLES AND THE POTENTIAL CONTRIBUTIONS OF PSYCHOSYNTHESIS TO EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMES</p> <p>Throughout these themes, Molly reveals adopted teaching styles that have proved useful and successful over the years. Innovations in psychosynthesis to counterbalance original shortcomings are also highlighted – being part of her vision and life work, these were deemed relevant in answering the research question.</p>

<p>THEORETICALLY)</p> <p>THEME 16 – HELPFUL TECHNIQUES USED WHEN TEACHING ABOUT ABSTRACT CONCEPTS</p>	<p>[Initial themes 8, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16]</p>
<p>THEME 18 – HER TEACHING EXPERIENCE IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS</p> <p>THEME 19 – HER EXPERIENCE WITH A LARGE GROUP OF YOUNG ACTIVISTS</p> <p>THEME 20 – THE IMPACT AND CHARACTERISTICS OF YOUNGER GENERATIONS</p> <p>THEME 21 – THE INDIGO PHENOMENON AS SHE SEES IT</p> <p>THEME 22 – GIFTEDNESS AND PARENTAL SUPPORT</p> <p>THEME 23 – THE IMPACT OF ENLIGHTENED CHILD REARING PRACTICES</p> <p>THEME 26 – ENVISAGED CHANGES IN EDUCATION</p> <p>THEME 27 – HER EXPERIENCE WITH TRAINING TEACHERS</p> <p>THEME 28 – WHAT KIND OF SUPPORT TEACHERS NEED</p> <p>THEME 29 – WHAT TEACHERS’ ROLE SHOULD BE</p> <p>THEME 30 – HOW CHILDREN LEARN</p> <p>THEME 31 – WHAT HIDES BEHIND MEDICATING CHILDREN FOR ADD/ADHD</p>	<p>THEME 5 – WHAT IS NEEDED IN THE EDUCATION OF THE NEW GENERATIONS BASED ON MOLLY’S EXPERIENCE AND OBSERVATIONS</p> <p>This group of themes offers information derived from her teaching experience, which includes teacher training. It also highlights enlightened child rearing practices – a point that Molly seems to feel strongly about.</p> <p>[Initial themes 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31]</p>

Table 13 Molly – Case study 2 summary of findings

Table 13 Molly – Case study 2 summary of findings Vision, aims and attitudes Molly is trying to encourage through her work (as transpires from available data and as Molly sees them)	Teaching methods/techniques used
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Self knowledge, self-awareness and Self-realisation via personal change/development, to Molly’s mind and in her experience, lead to empowerment, social peace, justice, healthy environmental renewal and personal development. It lets go of fears, doubts, sense of inadequacy or confusion, seen as the result of the prevailing paradigm and inherited limiting beliefs. The main aim behind Molly’s work appears to be to evolve consciousness to move to a paradigm that is more empowering for individuals and all living things. 2) Eco-psychoanalysis and Embodied Spirituality - Molly sees alienation from nature as being the root cause of many pathologies leading to destructive and self-destructive behaviours as well. Her ecopsychosynthesis supports the idea that the Divine can be found in and through the body, as well as the Earth. Embodied spirituality (as full body awareness of divine guidance), which Molly’s work greatly encourages, entails using both inner impressions and sensory/energetic impressions from the outside world in aligning with the Self. The true educator is considered to be the (Ecological) Self, from which to receive wisdom and guidance via multi-sensory intuition received through the body or emotions or subtle spiritual inspiration. 3) Expansion of consciousness and awareness of interconnectedness to serve oneself and the planet – the ability to become conscious of the interconnectedness of all life and the ecosystem, of the spirituality or divine intelligence/energy that permeates 	<p><u>Self-awareness exercises</u> via psychosynthesis (disidentification and Self-identification, guided imagery, inner dialogue, meditation, journalling, drawing, role-playing, art-work, conversations with the inner Wise Being/the Self) to connect all dimensions (physical, emotional, mental and spiritual).</p> <p><u>Experiential discovery and development of intuition to conquer fear and receive inner guidance</u> – Intuition, seen as a channel through which the Self guides every individual and through which the conscious mind can be helped make decisions, needs to be honed so that individuals can stop being led by fear-based, unproductive decisions stemming from the reactivity of the ancient reptilian brain.</p> <p><u>Psychoenergetics</u> as training of the will to counterbalance a potentially unconscious victim stance –disidentification and Self-identification can be used to direct the <i>energy</i> behind individuals’ thinking and feeling towards more constructive expressions and empowering actions (not dictated by fear but</p>

everything, to Molly, would lead to well-being and to an expansion of consciousness which would enable individuals to move beyond selfishness and materialism, towards a sense of oneness and service (self-transcendence).

- 4) **Psychoenergetics and Empowerment** – to Molly’s mind, awareness of the energetic effects of thoughts, emotions and attitudes on consciousness, matter (including body) and relationships needs to be encouraged, in that an individual can be empowered to act with more awareness of one’s true motives, rather than simply reacting passively to one’s unconscious social conditioning or to what happens to them. More awareness leads to using and applying one’s ‘will’ more effectively, hence to choosing and acting with more wisdom.
- 5) **The Self and inspired action** - A connection with a divine source of strength, love and guidance could inspire an individual to find the courage to change their status quo and one’s behaviour when necessary and to act responsibly, Molly claims, using intuitive guidance and self-authority to face any potential challenges ahead.
- 6) **Self-responsibility and actualising one’s potential** - Young generations, as leaders of a truly sustainable future, need healthy role models, empowerment and unconditional support of who they truly are, without expectations regarding who they should be, being free to actualise their potential while being guided (learning by example) to be more self-responsible and self-aware, Molly maintains.
- 7) **Self-aware, centred adults as healthy role models encourage the development of innate gifts, helping themselves and their children find their purpose** – In Molly’s experience, with more support from adults, whether parents or educators, and with the benefit of healthier role models to emulate and be guided by, most children would be encouraged to develop their innate gifts naturally, instead of them being suppressed, as often still happens today.

by self-awareness and clear motives).

Educating by example - Individuals with expanded consciousness and an integrated, centred psyche educate others by way of being and not by what they say or do. To Molly, parents, adults and educators need to expand their consciousness to become healthy role models and provide healthy child rearing practices.

- 8) **Training the development of intuition to evolve beyond fear and inherited limiting conditioning** - Intuition is perceived as in-tuition (tuition from within). One of the functions of intuition, as Molly sees it, is to serve as an early-warning system to protect the individual from danger. Healthy intuition has a role in freeing humans from their fear-based reactivity coming from their reptilian brains, Molly maintains, hence the development of one's intuitive faculties is seen as fundamental, so that the Self's wise guidance, which considers the good of all, can be heard and individuals can live more ethically and authentically, without fear.
- 9) **Consciousness/awareness-based education and experiential learning** - In order to learn, children need to be offered some guidance, a healthy role model and a conducive environment, Molly maintains, since *their main learning modality is by observation*, after which they can teach themselves. To Molly's mind, an ideal future education would require educators who are also transpersonally inclined (not necessarily via psychosynthesis). A better understanding of their inner lives and psyches would equip such educators with better management of their own emotions and would provide them with stronger intuitive guidance through which they could relate to students in more profound ways.

Contribution of psychosynthesis/psychoenergetics

Contribution of psychosynthesis: Disidentification, Self-identification, development of intuition which helps to do away with fear and connects with a wise source of guidance; integration of the personality; better management of emotion by learning to be more centred; sense of oneness with all that lives. Availability of multiple techniques leading to self-awareness and experiential learning (direct experience of anything taught).

Contribution of psychoenergetics: Enhances awareness of the effects of one's thoughts, emotions and attitudes. When used in conjunction with energy psychology techniques, psychoenergetics can offer extra energetic support in terms of simple ways of healing emotional blockages and

trauma stored in the body, allowing energies to flow more freely. It can help spiritualise matter (the “felt sense in the body”) and connect all dimensions (physical, emotional, mental and spiritual), potentially advancing an expansion of consciousness.

As Molly sees it, both help integrate the personality and the psyche, disidentifying from ego-driven, often selfish and destructive needs and identifying with the Self, while developing a unitive consciousness with all that lives. *Both disciplines promote a form of spirituality that celebrates all forms of creation, including the body, connecting the human and the divine in a balanced relationship.*

CASE STUDY 3 – ILENE

Ilene Val-Essen is a trained and experienced Marriage and Family therapist, a psychosynthesis counsellor and an educator (her PhD is in Education). After a few years working as a teacher of small children in mainstream education, she decided to pursue further training and a different career and has since pioneered teaching and parenting models based on psychosynthesis. She is active in the following areas:

- 1) In her private practice as a therapist/counsellor, she works with people of all ages, including a substantial number of children, adolescents and young adults
- 2) At UCLA (University of California, Los Angeles), Ilene specialises in psychosynthesis-based healthy child rearing practices for parents and teachers
- 3) She also offers trainings for professionals worldwide in the use of her Quality Parenting™ and Quality Teaching™ programmes, which she is currently developing into advanced levels, bringing to the fore self-development and direct guidance from the Higher Self via intuition.

As detailed in Chapter 4 (Methodology), data from my interview with Ilene were supplemented by other, previously published material that Ilene authored, as listed in Table 5. The process of analysing data has been explained in the Methodology Chapter.

Table 14 that follows shows how initial themes became final categories from which information relevant to the research question can be derived. The first two themes put in context Ilene's adopted and suggested teaching styles by introducing her vision that informs them. The last two themes, then, offer contributions that help answer more directly the research question. The final thematic categories for case study 3, as shown in Table 14, are as follows:

Theme 1 – Background, turning point and key concepts in her 'quality parenting' and 'quality teaching' work

Theme 2 – Teaching experientially about guidance from the higher self through intuition

Theme 3 – The potential contribution of psychosynthesis and psychoenergetics

Theme 4 – Observed traits emerging in the new generations and envisaged education for the New Generations (based on Ilene's experience)

Contributions to the research question from analysis of Ilene's data can be found in section 6.3.1. I have also summarised in Table 15 below Ilene's vision, teaching methods, aims, perceived attitudes to be taught and the contribution that psychosynthesis and psychoenergetics are seen to offer the world of education and lifelong learning.

Table 14 – Ilene (case study 3): regrouping of initial themes into final categories

<i>Table 14 – Ilene (case study 3): regrouping of initial themes into final categories</i>	
GROUPING THE INITIAL 23 THEMES TO REACH A SMALLER NUMBER OF CATEGORIES IN ANSWER TO THE RESEARCH QUESTION	FINAL 4 THEMES/CATEGORIES
<p>THEME 1 - BACKGROUND</p> <p>THEME 2 - THE TURNING POINT IN HER PSYCHOSYNTHESIS TRAINING</p> <p>THEME 3 - DECISION TO GET A PHD TO STUDY THE POWER OF ATTITUDES MORE IN DEPTH</p> <p>THEME 4 - PSYCHOSYNTHESIS-BASED INNOVATIONS HER WORK FOCUSES ON</p> <p>THEME 5 - DIFFICULTY PARENTS EXPERIENCE WHEN TAKING PARENTING CLASSES</p> <p>THEME 6 - KEY TEACHINGS IN ‘QUALITY PARENTING’ PRINCIPLES</p> <p>THEME 7 - THE ‘QUALITY TEACHING’ PROGRAMME AT UCLA</p> <p>THEME 8 - THE THREE LEVELS OF SELF</p>	<p>THEME 1 – BACKGROUND, TURNING POINT AND KEY CONCEPTS IN HER ‘QUALITY PARENTING’ AND ‘QUALITY TEACHING’ WORK</p> <p>The themes that make up this category offer information on how/why Ilene’s current vision and projects have been influenced and inspired (and by whom). A turning point in her training highlights a key concept that informs her work and vision. This category also offers information on how Ilene’s work contributes to and uses psychosynthesis.</p> <p>[Initial themes: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8]</p>
<p>THEME 9 - DEFINING ‘THE HIGHER SELF’</p>	<p>THEME 2 – TEACHING EXPERIENTIALLY ABOUT GUIDANCE FROM THE HIGHER SELF THROUGH</p>

<p>THEME 10 - TEACHING 'THE HIGHER SELF' PRINCIPLE</p> <p>THEME 11 - ONE WAY OF TEACHING EXPERIENTIALLY ABOUT 'THE HIGHER SELF'</p> <p>THEME 17 - THE POWER OF IMAGERY, STORY-TELLING AND MYTHS (in teaching intuition and being the higher self)</p> <p>THEME 18 - THE FEAR OF EMBRACING FREEDOM FROM LIMITATION (the mini-death of the ego)</p> <p>THEME 19 - DEFINING INTUITION</p>	<p>INTUITION</p> <p>This category clarifies Ilene's adopted teaching styles and defines and clarifies the concept of Higher Self and the role of intuition (key concepts in psychosynthesis) in her work. It also highlights the effects she observed on those who have been taking her advanced training, whose relevance applies to the attitudes her work tries to encourage.</p> <p>[Initial themes: 9, 10, 11, 17, 18, 19]</p>
<p>THEME 16 - THE ROLE AND IMPORTANCE OF INTUITION IN EDUCATION AND PARENTING</p> <p>THEME 22 - THE CONCEPTS OF INTUITION AND THE HIGHER SELF AS THE CONTRIBUTION OF PSYCHOSYNTHESIS TO EDUCATION AND CHILD REARING</p> <p>THEME 23 - HER UNDERSTANDING AND EXPERIENCE OF PSYCHOENERGETICS</p>	<p>THEME 3 – THE POTENTIAL CONTRIBUTION OF PSYCHOSYNTHESIS AND PSYCHOENERGETICS</p> <p>In this theme information can be found on the impact of her work and the contribution of psychosynthesis and psychoenergetics (as Ilene sees it).</p> <p>[Initial themes: 16, 22, 23]</p>
<p>THEME 12 – HER WORK WITH CHILDREN</p> <p>THEME 13 - OBSERVED TRAITS IN THE NEW GENERATIONS</p> <p>THEME 14 - HER CONCLUSION ABOUT SUCH OBSERVED TRAITS (what seems to be happening on a collective level)</p> <p>THEME 15 - ENVISIONED CHANGES IN EDUCATION BASED ON WHAT CHILDREN TELL</p>	<p>THEME 4 – OBSERVED TRAITS EMERGING IN THE NEW GENERATIONS AND ENVISAGED EDUCATION FOR THE NEW GENERATIONS (BASED ON ILENE'S EXPERIENCE)</p> <p>The thematic group under this category yields information on her observations and work with representatives of the New Generations – seeing how they act in the world to manifest their dreams and working with adult educators and parents have helped to inform Ilene's opinion on what developments</p>

<p>HER</p> <p>THEME 20 - THE ROLE OF THE HIGHER SELF IN EDUCATION AND LIFELONG LEARNING</p> <p>THEME 21 - A TRANSPERSONAL VISION WHOSE TIME HAS COME</p>	<p>are needed within education to truly educate the New Generations.</p> <p>[Initial themes: 12, 13, 14, 15, 20, 21]</p>
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Table 15 Ilene – Case study 3 summary of findings

Table 15 Ilene – Case study 3 summary of findings Vision, aims and attitudes Ilene is trying to encourage through her work (as transpires from available data and as Ilene sees them)	Teaching methods/techniques used
<p>1) Self knowledge supports people in the task of expanding awareness/consciousness; tracing the unconscious roots of one's behaviour and recognising one's unconscious motives entail that one's actions are guided by awareness and founded on clear motives. The main aim behind Ilene's work appears to be to evolve consciousness to change the way relating and teaching are normally handled, growing beyond inherited limiting conditioning and learning to function from an aware, centred self. Difficult behaviour on children's part is interpreted as one of their subpersonalities' cry for help and calls for wise guidance from adults, so that children can move beyond that specific subpersonality's temporary need.</p> <p>2) Awareness of the energetic effects of attitudes on consciousness and relationships (psychoenergetics) - Attitudes and beliefs about people, Ilene maintains, affect one's behaviour towards them and shapes their future development. An assumption that children's innate drive is to express their best self apparently makes all the difference.</p> <p>3) Adults as healthy role models to facilitate empowerment – Adults need to discover the best within themselves first, modelling and creating an atmosphere</p>	<p><u>Self-awareness exercises</u> via psychosynthesis (guided imagery, myth, story-telling, the 'Ideal model' exercise to identify desirable qualities to develop and express from the wisest Self, journaling, drawing, etc.).</p> <p><u>Simplifying and making accessible</u> psychosynthetic principles, using a minimum of psychologically sophisticated expressions or labels (but still using hierarchical language when referring to levels of consciousness, such as 'Higher' Self, 'lower' unconscious).</p> <p><u>Experiential learning/teaching</u> – each individual is encouraged to find and reach their own conclusions after experiencing inner guidance or recognising</p>

of mutual respect to bring out the best in each child, Ilene claims. An expansion of consciousness would enable individuals to move beyond selfishness and materialism, towards a sense of oneness and service acquiring self-knowledge, to support and empower themselves and younger generations (the future leaders) as a result.

- 4) **Expansion/evolution of consciousness**– Evolution of consciousness is seen as the only way forward in terms of encouraging self-authority and integrated psyches.
- 5) **Consciousness/awareness-based education** – An ideal future education, to Ilene, would require transpersonally aware educators and parents, who would teach experientially what they have experientially learned first. An educator or parent who is comfortable following their intuition and functioning from a centred self, Ilene claims, would have no problem supporting and understanding children’s inner guidance, acting as a positive role model for them. A fundamental task of educators, as Ilene sees it, is to encourage students of any age to explore different avenues and find what naturally gives them joy, encouraging the development of self-esteem and potentially directing their energies to constructive ends once their life is seen as meaningful.
- 6) **The Higher Self and self-authority** – accessing the subtle sphere of the Self entails that one intuitively knows what needs to be done, Ilene claims. Her work focuses on learning to access intuition and one’s Higher Self experientially, particularly via guided imagery. Because the Higher Self is seen to be in charge of children’s and adults’ growth and development towards expressing their highest potential, parents’ and educators’ main role, as Ilene sees it, is to support

qualities they have already met/expressed that they wish to cultivate and emulate. By being helped to have an experience of what being guided by the Self feels like, adults are thus encouraged to be self-reliant and self-responsible, independent and free, especially in following their own intuitive guidance.

Educating by example -

Individuals with expanded consciousness and an integrated, centred psyche educate others by way of being and not by what they say or do, Ilene feels. To her, parents, adults and educators need to expand their consciousness to become healthy role models i.e. manipulations and power games are avoided and respect is naturally given to all, including themselves.

Psychoenergetics is used as a way to increase awareness of the effects of one’s attitudes on consciousness and relationships.

this expression in all possible ways in order to help develop self-responsibility and self-authority in children and themselves. This seems to be the essence of Ilene's vision and teachings.

- 7) **Development of intuitive guidance in parents and educators to decipher their own and children's inner guidance** – Intuition is perceived as in-tuition (tuition from within) and as the voice of one's Highest and Best Self. Intuition, to Ilene, needs to be developed not only to hear the guidance of one's own Higher Self, but also to decipher children's guidance and coded communication from their own Self, often received via imagery. Ilene teaches that intuition can be accessed by paying more attention to the cues in one's life, remaining alert to children's cues. If intuition is not listened to, she claims, inner messages regarding actions to take and changes to make, as well as possibilities for growth, healing and love, may be lost.
- 8) **Teaching by example** – Parents and educators, to Ilene, need to become aware that they are not expected to be perfect, but simply to recognise that the same cry for help the child expresses when behaving in a disruptive way is also expressed by themselves when they are stressed and some unconscious need requires their attention. By addressing and meeting that need, they can move beyond their temporary fear or ineffective state and learn to be centred. If parents and educators are centred, children will mirror that, Ilene maintains. To be more centred, adults need to look for the message or need their own 'crying subpersonality' appears to express and get intuitive guidance from the Higher Self, so they can act appropriately to move beyond the subpersonality's negative emotion (which is hiding a legitimate need) and *teach their children or students*

by example.

- 9) **Interconnectedness, service and the universality** of certain experiences or of desirable, transpersonal qualities to emulate and develop in oneself (i.e. courage, co-operation, compassion, etc.) appear to be key concepts to be taught experientially to encourage expansion of consciousness and actualisation of one's potential.

Contribution of psychosynthesis/psychoenergetics

Contribution of psychosynthesis: multiple techniques leading to self-awareness and experiential learning (direct experience of anything taught), especially of guidance from the Self via intuition.

Contribution of psychoenergetics: expansion of consciousness, awareness of the effects that attitudes have on consciousness and relationships.

The main contribution of psychosynthesis and psychoenergetics to the world of education, to Ilene, is the experiential way both facilitate awareness that a different attitude towards students and their motivations leads to a more empowering way of relating and being. In her teachings and experience, safer environments of acceptance with improved dialogue (i.e. support without an agenda) and aware, centred educators/parents naturally decrease disruptive behaviours and bring about not only contact with one's inner guidance, but also more self-responsible behaviours.

Other contributions from what, to Ilene's mind, are increasingly relevant transpersonal values are meditative practices, care for the planet and cultivating beauty in all its forms, including the arts. Ilene also feels that children's natural inclinations and interests should be considered when developing a curriculum where the Higher Self leads the way with teachers' help, so that children's passion for learning is sustained. *The Higher Self and intuition figure strongly in Ilene's envisioned education for the new and future generations.*

GLOSSARY of terms and abbreviations specific to this thesis

AAP – Association for the Advancement of Psychosynthesis

BERA – British Educational Research Association

EFT – Emotional Freedom Technique (energy psychology technique)

IPA – Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis

SiE – Soul in Education

TAT – Tapas Acupressure Technique (energy psychology technique)

Akashic Field, also known as the Hall of Records – *Akasha* is a Sanskrit term meaning *ether* or space. This expression seems to be associated with theosophy and anthroposophy and it refers to information theoretically collected in a non-physical plane of existence, which allegedly contains the history of the cosmos and knowledge of collective human experience since the beginning of time (Bailey, 1927). Systems theorist and philosopher of science Ervin Laszlo has written about the Akashic Field as a third, fundamental component of what is commonly perceived as reality, together with mass and energy.

Archetype – in psychology, the idea of archetype usually refers to a model, symbol or pattern of behaviour (and some fundamental characteristics thereof), a tendency to experience things in a certain way (acting as an organising principle of our perceptions and actions), often found in stories and myths, and psychically inherited through the collective unconscious – the container of archetypes. Popularised by Jung, the principle behind the archetype hypothesis was already discussed in Plato's times as collective mental forms the soul was aware of before birth (being, in that sense, innate). Jung saw archetypes as psychological organs. The Self, one of the main archetypes in Jung's view, for example, was seen as the regulator of *individuation* (see below for definition), while the Shadow is an archetype that often refers to a distorted or opposite image the ego has of itself, which contains disowned parts of the ego (its 'dark' side) and/or qualities the ego possesses but does not recognise, often *projecting* them or seeing them more clearly in others (Singer, 1994).

Consciousness-based education – a form of education based on self-awareness, which entails discernment (clear thinking), disciplined emotions, centred behaviour, basing one's actions on clear motives (right use of will), consistency, self-esteem and self-responsibility, developing a clear connection with one's inner guidance through an intuitive connection with the Higher Self and organising principle (i.e. divine intelligence) that pervades all, which Assagioli referred to as the Universal Self.

Core Self – see Higher Self

Dharma – ancient Indian philosophical concept signifying ‘universal order’, which implies duty to bring it about

Disidentification and Self-identification – a psychosynthetic process by which one learns to distance oneself from one’s roles, personas, objects, jobs, emotions, etc. (i.e. ‘I have this emotion, but I am not this emotion’). This process theoretically precedes the Self-identification process, thanks to which it is allegedly possible to align and identify with the Self, the wise teacher within, which eventually guides one’s life in tandem with the ego (Self-identification). The Self-identification process enables one to remain serene and centred, acting in an intelligent way whatever vicissitudes in life one has to face.

Energy work – defined by a participant as ‘becoming sensitive to and able to use *and direct* energy to affect consciousness and raise awareness of the effects of thoughts, emotions and attitudes on one’s life, health and relationships’

Entelechy – Aristotelian complex concept signifying action that leads to a kind of completion, in this thesis referring to ‘actualising one’s potentiality’.

Expanded consciousness – awareness of all aspects of one’s psyche, from the unconscious to the Superconscious. Awareness that one’s thoughts, beliefs, attitudes shape one’s reality and one’s life and that one has power to change oneself and improve one’s circumstances, using one’s will/intention, gaining self-mastery. Expanded consciousness is reached when the physical, emotional, mental, spiritual and energetic are all given equal importance and when one becomes aware of interconnectedness among all that lives, including the environment. It implies awareness not only of one’s own unconscious motives and immediate needs, but those of others. It also implies self-awareness and awareness of ‘right use of energy’ in one’s attitudes, thoughts, emotions and relationships (theoretically facilitated by psychosynthesis and psychoenergetics). An expanded consciousness also implies developed intuitive functioning, as well as self-authority.

Higher Self – in psychosynthesis, the Higher Self is imagined to be found in the superconscious, the higher part of an individual’s psyche and it acts as the voice of the Soul, to be received mainly via intuitive guidance, recognised as one of the main faculties individuals regularly use. A more modern school of thought sees the Self as enveloping all levels of the psyche, from the ‘lowest’ to the ‘highest’ (Firman and Gila, 2002). In Jungian’s terms, the Self is an archetype (see definition above) that leads to a transcendence of opposites within the personality (Singer, 1994).

Indigos – a selection of the population (mostly said to belong to the Millennial generation, but present throughout all generations) said to represent humanity’s new

consciousness. They have been observed to be energetic and excitable, rebellious, non conformist, gifted, intuitive and creative, with strong personalities and independence, very quick minds and manifested intolerance towards control, hierarchies, externally imposed authority and meaningless repetitive tasks. Strongly self-reliant, they seem to have an inner locus of control. They think outside-the-box, appear to have a sense of purpose and a desire to participate in causes and projects that serve humanity. They are often technologically-minded, but with a nonlinear way of functioning. Often manifesting wisdom beyond their years, many of them appear to be emotionally sensitive and empathic and also prone to allergies. Indigos' behaviour, apparently, is not dictated by social consciousness and rules, but by unique talents and passions they wish and need to express.

Individuation – spiritual process which ‘involves the integration of aspects of the unconscious into oneself, while simultaneously achieving freedom from unconscious compulsions..., gaining independence from social conformity in its move toward wholeness and autonomy’ (Kesson, 2003, p.26).

Integrated intelligence – the ability to draw on the extended mind, and its intuitive capacities, to live one's life successfully (Anthony, 2010a).

Intuition – psychosynthesis sees intuition as the most elevated psychological function (at the top of Assagioli's star diagram) and human faculty, as an inner dimension which helps individuals establish a clear contact with, and guidance from, one's Higher Self, bypassing the thinking function and getting to the heart of any situation, thing, attitude, person, problem or event, offering immediate insights by which to guide one's actions. As intuition can also have a protective function by warning individuals of danger, learning to develop the intuitive faculty can allow individuals to feel safe and stop being defensive or living in fear.

Jungian cosmological principles – the ‘inter-relatedness and inter-connectedness between the various domains of the universe and human experience’ (Kesson, 2003, p.24).

Metacognition – realisation of a unitive consciousness.

Morphic fields – concept similar to Jung's collective unconscious, proposed by British biologist Rupert Sheldrake and seen to represent a subtle medium through which objects/habits/behaviours seem to have an effect on each other without being in physical contact. (Sheldrake, 1981)

‘Learning-by-experiencing’ attitude – a dynamic spiritual approach and attitude to life and learning, thanks to which knowledge and self-knowledge can be gained experientially from a direct, personal and intuitive process of knowing.

New Generations – out-of-the-box and differently-labelled individuals (such as ‘Gifted’, those potentially misdiagnosed ‘ADD/ADHD’ who are, in fact, Indigos or

Gifted ‘Millennials’, ‘Visual-Spatial learners’, ‘Highly Sensitive’, ‘Right Brainers’ or ‘Intuitives’, to name a few), mostly, but not exclusively, children, adolescents and young adults, often born since the early 1980s to the beginning of the new millennium. They appear to manifest Indigo-like traits, such as strong personalities, overexcitabilities, independence, inner locus of control, strong intuitive abilities, concern for the environment or for social justice and intolerance towards ambiguities or what they perceive as hypocritical behaviours. They often seem to manifest self-actualising tendencies.

Noetic consciousness – associated with ‘knowing’, with having introspective awareness of the internal and external world. It implies that through semantic memory we can think about the world, and know that we are doing so.

Peak experience – joyous experiences of inspired creativity and insight, often accompanied by transpersonal states of unitive consciousness of a mystical kind. Spontaneous altered state of consciousness during which the ego is naturally transcended, which can be inspired by forms of meditation, intense feelings of elation and love when listening to special music or being surrounded by the beauty of nature. Such experiences tend to be unforgettable and affect an individual profoundly, even changing their worldview in some cases. Certain kinds of noted synchronicities in one’s life can have the same effect. Often associated with the concept of self-actualisation. According to Maslow, peak experiences can bring about recognition of one’s true potential and power, overcoming one’s unconscious sense of self-defeat, being ‘transient moments of self-actualization’. (Maslow, 1971, p.48)

Perennial philosophy – can be likened to a thread of spiritual thought that has been found in common throughout all eras, cultures and religious beliefs spanning the last 25 centuries. It can be seen as an ‘umbrella term’ describing universal and ethical teachings common to all the great religions, particularly their metaphysical traditions, which make up Western esoteric teachings (such as Gnosticism, Hermeticism, Theosophy, Neoplatonism and Alchemy, among others).

Plateau experience – associated with self-transcendence. Maslow noted that the plateau was a more stable state beyond temporary and spontaneous peak experiences (encountered by self-actualisers); he felt it was a less emotional and more permanent state which could be taught, cultivated and accessed at will. Maslow also noted that plateau was characterised by a new appreciation and expanded awareness of self and the world and also by the ability to acquire a holistic perception of life, including one’s relationship to other people, nature and other non material aspects (Krippner, 1972). Among the defining traits of the plateau experience were the acquisition of a *Transpersonal Consciousness*, which aligns the personality with the Self and perceives reality beyond appearances or socially constructed notions ‘independently of fears, desires, beliefs’, which grants ‘a perception of realities that ordinary consciousness cannot perceive but that are common in contemplation’ and manifests the ability to

recognise in everyday life and in ordinary states of consciousness a transcendent nature at work behind experiences, events, activities etc. (Hamel et al., 2003, p.12).

Psychoenergetics – any discipline or technique that helps develop awareness of how the energy behind thoughts, emotions and attitudes affects consciousness, matter (including body) and relationships. In psychosynthesis, psychoenergetics involves all psychological functions (intuition, imagination, desire/impulse, sensation, emotion, thinking) to assist self-awareness and promote expansion of consciousness.

Psychoenergetics techniques – any *mind-body* discipline or technique which enables a person to work with subtle energies, with life force (for example, energy psychology techniques, such as EFT or TAT and many others, which make use of ancient Chinese and Indian concepts that involve *chi/prana* (life force) through the stimulation of meridians and chakras, to free blocked energies/traumas held in the body). Other techniques involve the use of colours to affect moods and health; brainwave entrainment through sounds, specific music and even imagery (as in videogames and other technology-based biofeedback devices the HeartMath Institute devised) to improve performance or affect consciousness.

Psychoenergetics as science – psychoenergetics is also a branch of science that studies how consciousness/thoughts/intentions, seen as forms of energy, interact with and affect matter (research carried out by Stanford physicist William Tiller, 1997, 2007).

Psychoenergetics is experiential and it contemplates/activates awareness that includes but goes beyond the conscious mind; it integrates body, mind and spirit, highlighting the life force that permeates all life and the human body; it also fuses the psyche with energy/the life force, which potentially brings about a redefinition of one's perspective of reality, identity and lived experiences and it does so *via personal experience*, hence transforming and revolutionising one's worldview and the way thoughts and emotions can be disciplined and used more productively for increased self-authority. It provides new ways of relating and contributing to the world, fellow humans and all that lives.

Psychosynthesis – developed by Italian psychiatrist Roberto Assagioli, psychosynthesis can have more than one definition. In its non-therapeutic aspect, psychosynthesis can be seen as an orientation and general approach to the development of one's psyche that offers a variety of techniques for the synthesis and integration of one's personality and psyche, leading to self-awareness and self-actualisation. Psychosynthesis encourages self-awareness (knowledge of different aspects of one's personality) and the reconstruction of the personality around the centred self or the Higher self as a unifying centre.

Psychosynthesis is also a model of the psyche and a developmental approach to psychology that studies an individual's personality, including the Soul ('Higher Self') and gives great emphasis to the 'will' (intention) for personal responsibility and choice. The will, to Assagioli, could be used to direct one's personal growth, development and expansion of consciousness (self-awareness) by *acting to evolve beyond* one's habitual

responses, learning to make constructive choices. By including spirituality and higher states of consciousness, psychosynthesis was a precursor of humanistic and transpersonal psychology (the fourth force).

Repression of the sublime (also known as Jonah complex) – repression of the transcendent, of one's occasional transpersonal experiences or instances of expanded consciousness, of one's spirituality or felt need to be part of an intelligent, universal whole, which can have the unpleasant side effects of leading to cynicism, excessive rationalisations, inability to feel awe or make everyday life sacred.

Repression of the sublime can also entail fear of expressing one's higher human potential, potentially hiding unresolved issues of 'deservability' and self-esteem, as well as possible fear of change. The unconscious fear of fulfilling one's highest purpose and of expressing one's greatness was referred to (by Maslow) as 'the Jonah complex'. This complex describes how often individuals prefer to evade their growth and choose not to rise above mediocrity – this is done by avoiding the responsibilities and challenges involved in pursuing and actualising one's highest potential, which one's ego or 'persona' might find dangerous. This, according to Maslow, could be part of one's own and even of humanity's collective shadow resistance to the expression of highest potential (Maslow, 1971).

Self – see Higher Self

Self-actualisation – move towards developing one's potential reaching higher levels of development and realisation of a unitive consciousness as the I becomes more aligned with the Self.

Self-realisation – expanded and more inclusive sense of self embedded in the totality. It is the process of letting transcendent energies and guidance from the Self merge all levels of the psych, so that one's actions and desires are not only driven by the ego, but also by more lofty ideals and by the wisdom of the Self and divine intelligence operating for the good of all (which Assagioli referred to as Universal Self). Psychosynthesis recognizes the process of Self-realisation, of contact and response with one's deepest callings and directions in life, which can involve either or both personal and transpersonal development.

Shadow – 'dark', unacknowledged aspects of oneself and accumulated personal and collective angers, hurts, fears and insecurities, which tend to be out of reach of one's conscious awareness and often projected outside oneself (potentially giving rise to a typical 'us vs. them' dualistic and elitist mentality).

Spirituality vs. religion – spirituality is a 'dynamic, exploratory process which is rooted in personal, embodied experience', while religion 'codifies and sanctions particular archetypes' and 'emerges to contain, and to some extent, control the [spiritual/exploratory] process' (Kesson, 2003, pp.27-28).

Transpersonal concepts – ‘that which is concerned with ultimate capacities and potentialities that have no systematic place in dominant contemporary psychology’ (Kesson, 2003, p.24).

Transpersonal psychology – ‘transpersonal psychology studies human transcendence, wholeness, and transformation’ (Hartelius, et al., 2007, p.145). ‘Transpersonal psychology is concerned with the study of humanity’s highest potential, and with the recognition, understanding, and realization of unitive, spiritual, and transcendent states of consciousness’ (Lajoie & Shapiro, 1992, p.91).

Transpersonal Self – see Higher Self

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Graduate School of Education

Certificate of ethical research approval

STUDENT RESEARCH/FIELDWORK/CASEWORK AND DISSERTATION/THESIS

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READ THIS FORM CAREFULLY AND THEN COMPLETE IT ON YOUR COMPUTER (the form will expand to contain the text you enter). **DO NOT COMPLETE BY HAND**

Your name: Patrizia Trotta

Your student no: 590040433

Return address for this certificate: Flat 5, 12 Oxford Rd, Exeter, EX4 6QU

Degree/Programme of Study: PhD Ed

Project Supervisor(s): Prof. Anna Craft; (second supervisor: Dr Cheryl Hunt)

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I hereby certify that I will abide by the details given overleaf and that I undertake in my thesis to respect the dignity and privacy of those participating in this research.

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NB For Masters dissertations, which are marked blind, this first page must **not be included** in your work. It can be kept for your records.

Certificate of ethical research approval

Your student no: 590040433

Title of your project: "Voyage Into the Inner Dimensions of the Mind and Potentially Empowering Ways of Learning, Knowing and Being" – A Transpersonal Enquiry into Consciousness-Based Learning".

Brief description of your research project:

My project investigates the effects on participants' lives of training and exploring the inner dimensions of the mind to access different levels of consciousness; this will be carried out both as a participant and a researcher via written self-reflection and also by studying participants' self-reports on their perceived effects on their lives as a result of training the mind and/or their meditation/mindfulness practices which may take place in different centres of learning (schools or private centres).

At this stage I am still exploring whether to frame my research as single case studies, ethnography or some other form of phenomenological study. However, there will be an opportunity in January 2010 to undertake some pilot work that can help me identify participants for the main study, which is the reason why I am completing the ethical research approval form now. As indicated below, should my plans change, I will seek further ethical clearance.

Give details of the participants in this research (giving ages of any children and/or young people involved):

At this early stage of my research I am not certain yet how many participants (and what age ranges) will be part of my final study. Participants have not been identified yet. For my pilot study, however, it is anticipated that a small group of perhaps 5 or 6 participants might be sufficient, whose ages might range from 20 to 65; participation in this investigation will be on a purely voluntary basis, the potential pool being among people attending an intensive, experiential course which explores different states of consciousness and the use of creative imagination and intuition.

Should I pursue further research with younger people and/or children in the future, I will seek further ethical clearance.

Give details regarding the ethical issues of informed consent, anonymity and confidentiality (with special reference to any children or those with special needs):

Being a transpersonal psychologist and member of the British Psychological Society, I will strictly adhere to their ethical code of conduct http://www.bps.org.uk/the-society/code-of-conduct/code-of-conduct_home.cfm. As this is an educational research, BERA's ethical guidance will also be adhered to (British Educational Research Association) <http://www.bera.ac.uk>

Issues regarding respect, confidentiality, informed consent, safe guarding will be carefully considered as detailed below.

Informed Consent: Records of when, how and from whom consent was obtained, will be kept. A separate paper (Participation Release Agreement enclosed here which will be signed by participants) will give some details about my research and clearly inform participants that they have the right to

withdraw from the research for any and no reason at any given time and that data related to them will be destroyed. (Please find enclosed my Participation Release Agreement)

Respect: The views of every participant will be paramount in this study. I will ensure that these are listened to, respected and represented. Every effort will be made to also respect individual, cultural and role differences, including those involving age, disability, education, ethnicity, gender, language, national origin, race, religion, sexual orientation, marital or family status and socio-economic status.

Anonymity and Confidentiality: Names will be changed and anonymity guaranteed at all times. Information will also be coded to ensure anonymity and remain anonymous in the write up of the research. Records of the data collected (including transcripts and any audio recordings) will be stored in a secure and safe place. Electronic information will only be accessed by this researcher with personal username and password. This information will be stored on a secure system with virus protection. Electronic and paper information will be locked in a secure building. Collected written information will be destroyed by shredding and securely disposing it when no longer required. Any audio recording will also be disposed of digitally.

Give details of the methods to be used for data collection and analysis and how you would ensure they do not cause any harm, detriment or unreasonable stress:

This is a Transpersonal project which involves studying human experiences. This project's methods of data collection at this stage will involve elements of self-reflection (as a participating observer on the part of the researcher), narrative and written, reported experiences both from participants and from the researcher. However, should a participant be less comfortable with the written word and request a personal, unstructured, recorded interview I, the researcher, will be happy to work flexibly and accommodate participants' different requests. Debriefing will be offered at the end, as well as emotional support, warmth, empathy, listening and understanding during the process.

Given the nature of this enquiry and the pool of potential participants (from a self-development course not open to beginners), volunteers will be involved and experienced in transpersonal practices, therefore will have their own (already acquired) personal forms/ways of handling information and experiences that potentially bring transformation - their participation will be entirely voluntary and they will be made aware they will be sharing personal stories only to the extent and depth that will be comfortable to them.

Give details of any other ethical issues which may arise from this project (e.g. secure storage of videos/recorded interviews/photos/completed questionnaires or special arrangements made for participants with special needs etc.):

As outlined above, records of the data collected (including transcripts and any audio recordings) will be stored in a secure and safe place. Electronic information will only be accessed by this researcher with personal username and password. This information will be stored on a secure system with virus protection. Electronic and paper information will be locked in a secure building.

Collected written information will be destroyed by shredding and securely disposing it when no longer required. Any audio recording will also be disposed of digitally.

This researcher will ensure that every effort will be made to provide any necessary assistance to participants with special needs.

Give details of any exceptional factors, which may raise ethical issues (e.g. potential political or ideological conflicts which may pose danger or harm to participants):

Local cultural values will be respected at all times. At this stage I am not aware of, nor do I anticipate any exceptional factors which may raise ethical issues for this particular kind of research.

This form should now be printed out, signed by you on the first page and sent to your supervisor to sign. Your supervisor will forward this document to the School's **Research Support Office** for the Chair of the School's Ethics Committee to countersign. A unique approval reference will be added and this certificate will be returned to you to be included at the back of your dissertation/thesis.

N.B. You should not start the fieldwork part of the project until you have the signature of your supervisor

This project has been approved for the period: **Dec 09** until: **? Dec 2011**

By (above mentioned supervisor's signature): **[Signature]** date: **7/12/09**

N.B. To Supervisor: Please ensure that ethical issues are addressed annually in your report and if any changes in the research occurs a further form is completed.

SELL unique approval reference: **D/09/10/30**

Signed: **[Signature]** date: **4/01/2010**
 Chair of the School's Ethics Committee

This form is available from <http://education.exeter.ac.uk/students/>