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ACTIVE IMAGINATION, WELLBEING AND SEEING

Active Imagination, Wellbeing and Ways of Seeing:

A Phenomenological Inquiry into Experiences of Adult Learners with Visual Impairments

A Dissertation Presented

by

Steinberg Henry

Submitted to the Graduate School of Education

Lesley University

in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

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Ph.D. Educational Studies

Human Development and Learning Specialization

**Active Imagination, Wellbeing and Ways of Seeing:
A Phenomenological Inquiry into Experiences
of Adult Learners with Visual Impairments**

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Ph.D. Educational Studies
Human Development and Learning Specialization

Approvals

In the judgment of the following signatories, this Dissertation meets the academic standards that have been established for the Doctor of Philosophy degree.

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Dedication

To my sons, Zev Colberg and Imran Irwin

And my daughters, Glendora Seteira and Roberta D'Aura

To my wife Jeanne

In memory of my Father, Fred Alpheus Colberg Henry and my Mother, Daisy Augusta Andrew

Acknowledgements

In 2016, I was 61 years, visually impaired, and intellectually energized. I told my daughter Glendora, an occupational therapist by profession, that I think I should free-fall into the world of learning and see what it leads to and produces. She agreed, suggesting that I give it a try. I never turned back.

Through Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency, I received the support of Ana Deshetty of MicroSight Training Solutions. As technology assistant and JAWS certified teacher, Ana knows my learning journey better than anyone else having stayed the course with me from 2016 to 2023.

Yvonne Macrae recommended that I apply to Lesley and accommodated me at her house in Dorchester from which I was driven to Lesley University each day while in Massachusetts.

At Lesley's door, a young man named Kolin Perry waited patiently for me to serve as my sight aid throughout all my stay during residences. When he could not make it once, he sent his running mate Vladimir. Kolin remains forever in my psyche.

Alison Peltier and Theo Drigo, two Dominican buddies, accommodated me in the Winter of 2019.

Dr. Brenda Matthis communicated Lesley's acceptance of my personal statement and remains a faithful friend and adviser. Maude Petit-Frère guided me through the system's network of registration and finance. Bre Peterson-Lucas and Kyle Kuntz assured me of registration and payments, and the status of my finances.

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material as requested by professors with speed. Holly provided my library resources in a sense. How seminal. Dan Newman at Disability Services answered to my American Psychological Association (APA) troubles and issues.

Maybe I feel too much, but every professor in this Human Development and Learning program was helpful. I speak of Sal Terrasi, Linda Mensing-Triplett, Judith Conley, Kelvin Ramirez, Christopher Strickland and Stephen Gould. Ulas Kaplan will remain a kindred spirit having walked with me every step of the way.

Those students, adults, researchers, friends (how do I call you); you who sat throughout those residences and wrote posts unendingly; you who gave shape to my consciousness, how I care for each of you. Rusty Dollman, Brenda Stockdale and Lacey Klingensmith just stood with me.

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Dr. Leanora Ruff and I spoke about my study throughout in simple yet deep tones. Thanks, beautiful Jamaican woman.

Finally, this moment may seem trivial, but it's real: my wife fed me and asked that I take a rest; the grandchildren came home and broke my concentration; my children Glenney, Dess and Zev asked what I needed; Seraphine Cognet kept me focused, and I could talk with Nadine Edmond about the adventure and she would just answer Hmmm! Given the nature of this study, just imagine the love I have for you all! Then, the Spirit of the Living God would not be angry with me if that fire energy is called on finally from the ancient of days!

Abstract

Six female and two male adult learners who became blind between the ages of 20 and 75 years participated in this study conducted by a blind researcher. The purposely sampled eight were interviewed virtually by way of Zoom. In combination with Johnny Saldana's work on codes, this study used the NVivo framework for determining structuring categories, selecting node themes, code frameworks and final codes from the first interview. 291 codes were clustered under 26 node themes. NVivo's word frequency search and Word Tree were applied to clarify and lend a number value to participants' codes. The second interview, administered after participants had listened and read the first, was treated to the psychological features inherent in interpretive phenomenological analysis, and the relational research tendencies drawn from Carol Gilligan and Jessica Eddy which granted participatory voice to the marginalized, their wellbeing and ways of seeing. The expert group through their codes, provided answers to three research questions: (i) what value do adult learners with visual impairment say they place on using their active imaginations; (ii) what are the various imagination experiences adult learners with visual impairments report they encounter; and (iii) what do adult learners with visual impairments believe are the factors and conditions that promote and hinder the use of their imagination and active imaginations. The blind experts reported that active imagination permeated and enhanced their memory, that is, remembering; their visualizing and picturing, and energized the use of their other senses as they created in, and navigate personal and public spaces. Imagination experiences ranged from depression to strengthening of faith, the discovery of value in caretakers to final acceptance and wholeness. The factors and conditions that hindered or promoted were spread across their 291 codes and significantly, identified changing their impressions of themselves as the point of entrance to their healing and psychological wellbeing.

Keywords: active imagination, wellbeing, visualizing, picturing, senses, memory, mind's eye, blindness, faith, caretakers, acceptance, relatedness, autonomy, adult learners, phenomenology, interpretation

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CHAPTER ONE: Introduction

“The river of life/with fire in your eyes/what a wonder you are”

- Jimmy D Psalmist, “Great and Terrible” 2016

Among other influences, this sociocultural trajectory to Chapter One presents the unusual entry of a father/son relationship. That relationship fashioned in many ways this researcher’s approaches to ontology and a thriving epistemology. It is considered unusual because father/son relations signal in many cultures, tensions, issues of shame and guilt, power struggles and even suggest attempts by the son to kill the father. There is reference too, to the “primal father as the architect of domination” (Marcuse, 1987, p. 16). Domination was unnecessary, and we chose care, love and healing over killing. If the concept love in this study remains anathema to academia and scholarship it would not be the first time. Paulo Freire experienced the same among his colleagues in the field of pedagogy. But what Ken Carey calls the “love-centered motivational frequency” may well be the frequency on which 21st century humanity is designed to communicate, and as Carey further contends, “the only choice that brings freedom” (1991, p. 40). It has to be a freedom to “create and to construct, to wonder and to venture” (Freire, 2000, p. 123).

Let me hasten to add that my Mother was just as formidable having to deal with the growing awareness of her adolescent son who had just left high school and was beginning in the world of work. She had supported me economically and emotionally from childhood days into high school. When I left high school, she, a loving heart and mind, asked me to go look for my Father who had left home when I was about four. It was his timely turn to contribute to my development, and, until his death, he guided his adolescent son across that bridge to young adulthood and ultimately into the world of ideas. I am therefore inclined to issues of spirit,

psychology, human relations, communication, history, anthropology, philosophy and emanations from a minimalist existence. These were in part, his intellectual preoccupations and lived experiences. He was trained too in the French tradition, words of which he might have whispered to me as an infant. My Mother, an accountant for a transnational company purchasing bananas on the island of Dominica in the East Caribbean, never wanted to see me idle.

I could leap in thought to say that my Father and Mother sowed linguistic, perceptual and conceptual seeds in my consciousness at a tender age with implications for psychosomatic development and emotional intelligence, but even this could be read as what Kegan and Lahey (2001) referred to as the language of big assumptions (p. 8). Lev Vygotsky, proclaimed father of the sociocultural, added a more realist life occurrence that fits perfectly into my Caribbean infant experiences writing about a child who inevitably “embellishes his first words with very expressive gestures” (1978, p. 32). This, however, is not to suggest that there were no significant difficulties between infancy and adolescence.

For example, to correlate a bout of epilepsy that affected me at five, and the stuttering that followed it for more than 10 years with an adult interest in matters touching disability and communication in my adult life may well authenticate the idea that stages of development from infancy to adulthood are integrative by nature (Erikson & Erikson, 1997; Kohlberg, 1973, 1984; Piaget, 1983). Though stuttering is classified as a communication disorder, the possible correlation would surely have to be validated longitudinally. But it held possibilities as a useful developmental trace with implications for adolescent relatedness practices, cognition and communication.

Alternatively, there was no doubt among ophthalmologists and the medical profession in general that emergence of a visual impairment such as glaucoma in my adult life, could only be

traced to a genetic factor shared between my Mother and I. My Mother died at 81 years having been blind for the last 10 years of her life. She did not physically see, maybe except for a few shadows and a bit of light perception. While ophthalmologists and optometrists treated the glaucoma identified in my eyes in 1988 during my second year as an undergraduate at Canada's University of Windsor, it was my Father who cured the stuttering. At the time when the communication disorder manifested in my speech, I had no trace of glaucoma, neither had my accountant Mother been diagnosed with atrophy of the optic nerve nor retinal ganglion cell degeneration.

I was about 18 years and we were walking in his village where he lived and served as a village historian. I remember he asked me a question and I answered, "I, I, I, I," before the complete sentence could be produced. He looked at me and said in a stern tone, "stop, and think of what you want to say before you say it." That marked the end of stuttering to this very moment. From that early age, whether subconsciously or unconsciously, I had become aware of the living power in a spoken and possibly, a written word. I did not know yet the distinction between treating and curing but given the universal nature of an adolescent's ways of learning through confusion and identity confusion as described by Erikson and Erikson (1997), I was open to influences particularly by a Father who spoke the French language and was village historian. Additionally, I was at a stage when I listened to my parents, followed and read prescribed books including *The Social Contract* by Jean Jacques Rousseau, William Shakespeare's *Complete Works* which ignited my curiosity to find Plato's *Republic*, part of Albert Speer's *Au Coeur du Troisieme Reich*, Orlando Patterson's *The Sociology of Slavery*, and others in that line of reading which I discovered myself. I was reading every prominent West Indian writer of the time from George Lamming to V S Naipaul, Edward Brathwaite, Derek

Walcott, John Hearne, Frantz Fanon, C L R James, Aimé Césaire and Walter Rodney. The Reggae, Calypso and Cadence-Lyso lyrics of the time were couched in the revolutionary and paradigmatic social context of Marxist-reading Black Power intellectuals, and Africa-consciousness Rastafarians, influencing my adolescent mind and contributing years later to a Master's thesis on language, song lyrics and social change. Evidently, I was restless with burgeoning adolescent into young adult excitement when my Father asked me two questions and made one statement.

Faith, Mind and the Social Being

Faith

When I was 19 years, my Father asked me what is faith, and when I was 20, he asked me what is mind. After these two had been researched and discussed, he then proposed the ontological position (though neither me nor he called it so) that man as he referred to all human beings, is a social being. In this latter case, I did not know then the implications for epistemology, axiology and its values, neither did I in my early 20s understand methodology or even method (though as an adult I recalled my Mother patiently gathering census data in rural Dominica on behalf of the government's statistics department).

I did not know what faith was either and he directed me to read the book of Hebrews in the Bible. This shattered my boyhood and adolescent church perception which generally focused on Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. I would find out in adulthood (beyond silences of dominant church teachings on the matter) that Hebrews were Black people. In the book of Hebrews, I read that "Now faith is the assurance (title deed, confirmation) of things hoped for (divinely guaranteed), and the evidence of things not seen [the conviction of their reality—faith comprehends as fact what cannot be experienced by the physical senses]" (Hebrews 11:1,

Amplified Bible). I was being invited to believe in something even when I did not physically see it, as long as I had a trace/evidence of its presence. I remember not engaging in a religious argument over that definition with my Father. It meant something that had to be set in motion instantaneously and experienced. Consequently, I grew to know an energy beyond mere internalization and repetition of Bible verses in the mode of religious doctrine. I would learn that across (religious) cultures, there was an active and living spirit, meaning an energy, that came to life not only in words, but through images, sounds and in their cognition and use in discursive practices. Even from that age (maybe as a result of the French influence), words began to mean living and active constructions to me. Invariably, with that definition of faith, its corollaries and practices, I learned to trust my judgement, thinking and perception, always remaining open to possibilities. Today, I trace my understanding of intuition and autonomy as propounded by Assagioli (1973), Haidt (2007), and even Schopenhauer (2012) to that early definition of and conversations about faith during our country dinners. I had to think spontaneously. In my book titled *As She Returns*, first published in 2009, and again in 2021 under the title *As She Returns Now*, I wrote, “I enjoyed intuition; the faith element entailed in constructing a sentence not knowing the complete thought but pursuing it anyway” (p. 113). “In my opinion,” wrote Carl Gustav Jung, “faith does not exclude thought (which is man’s greatest weapon)” (1964, p. 84).

When I read Ryan and Deci (2000), and Deci and Ryan (2008) writing in their self-determination theory, about autonomy as a fire, a volatility, a spontaneity, the idea was clear because of my understanding of faith from that time. Then, of course, the macro issues of life experiences, ways of thinking in the positive; these all emerged as important and necessary derivatives of faith for dealing with the trauma accompanying loss of sight as an adult.

Later as an adult learner, I would discover that faith also referred to a particular approach in data analysis where the researcher was asked to be “faithful to the studied phenomenon” (Charmaz, 2004, p. 985).

Evidently, I developed throughout my life an affinity toward matters of faith and curious searching. In addition to soul, mind and body, matters of energy in the human spirit became meaningful to my everyday life. I would discover what I thought as a young adult to be true (but could not yet articulate) that numerous general concepts adopted in science such as energy and evolution are “not different in level than the posited axiomatic 'causal movers' in the sphere of religions” (Valsiner, 2000, p. 5). I, a child of African descent, would discover too that just as there is a physical body, there is a spiritual body, and the dance between cultures of East and West could “blend in exquisite harmony” (Zukav, 2012, p. 343). With utmost confidence and in the context of the spiritual, Zukav (2012) would predict that “physics curricula in the twenty-first century could include classes in meditation” (p. 343). As a young adult I had embraced meditation and yoga, sometimes to the concern of my Mother who did not like the shapes in and of the Indian yoga poses. As I developed, I adopted kriya meditation practices which emphasized “the action of volition,” which according to Johari (2000) made “the unmanifest sound” become “the source of the manifest word” (p. 25). Kriya meditation is vigorous in the use of breath, energy-producing, quickening the intuitive and mind’s thought-work.

Mind

At 20, I was asked what is mind. I did not know. For starters, my Father told me, “Mind is a composition of thoughts.” A few years later during young adulthood, while cruising through my favorite book of Hebrews, I discovered wisdom in a covenant which was made with the Hebrew people. Given that my inherited definition of mind was a composition of thoughts, there

was something to be known and understood in that covenant. It said, “I will imprint My laws upon their heart, and on their mind, I will inscribe them [producing an inward change]” (Hebrews 10:16, Amplified Bible). It must have been Great Spirit teaching me relevance in timely occurrences. Are the laws of nature or the universe itself inscribed on my psyche’s composition of thoughts? The implications for understanding the conscious, subconscious and unconscious levels in the process of adult generativity became far-reaching and wholesome, but I did not grasp the full implications for learning yet. I remember flowing with that covenant and its psychological impact was tremendous: the laws of the Spirit of the Living God were inscribed in my composition of thoughts. Keep in mind too that spirit transcends time and place, apparently, a validated expression of non-local consciousness. Just imagine how thrilled I felt as an adolescent slipping into young adulthood with an interest in astronomy. Invariably, I easily embraced the practice of meditation from the transcendental to the mindful to the art of living until I settled into a breath/heart twin combination that I, as an adult, designed myself. It seems strange to say, but I came upon a boundlessness that I intuitively and faithfully adopted as field of learning and knowing.

The concept covenant therefore, led me to a way of thinking and learning that I would characterize after Jack Mezirow as learning through soul. Mezirow (2000) cited Dirkx (1997) who wrote that learning through soul involves “a focus on the interface where the socioemotional and the intellectual world meet, where the inner and outer worlds converge” (p. 6). When in 2000, Roberts Avens made reference to soul in a Kindle edition of *Imagination is Reality: Western Nirvana in Jung, Hillman, Barfield, and Cassirer*, terms such as imagination, passion, fantasy, and reflection emerged. An entity or space was conceived as soul; one that was neither physical nor material, spiritual nor abstract. Evidently, such a liminal space was inherently

participatory, dynamic and unbounded. This convergence in motion or zone of liminality is likely to be a life-space that the visually impaired or blind understands completely especially one who lost sight as an adult having seen for most of their adolescent and young adult life. I would learn something fascinating in my adult life. Peter Kreeft has been described as a wise man in the Catholic community globally. When I last sourced his article in 2020, it was available. Two years later it was not, but that still did not contribute to forgetting what he had said though the 2020 source could not be found. The Catholic philosopher was saying that mind is one of the essential powers of the soul. The other was will. The revelation was epiphanic. Assagioli (1973) contended that “no amount of intellectual consideration and study can of itself take the place of the initial revelation” of the will, that twin of mind (p. 8). It is not insignificant that Schopenhauer (2012) used words and phrases such as “blood” determining the “form of an organism and its development,” and “organic activity” being determined by the activity of “internal life and by will” (p. 348). Drawing on one Colebrooke and his foray into Hindu philosophy, Schopenhauer, a leading European thinker in his time, could write that “will (volition, Yatna), exertion or expression of will, is a self-determination to action, which gives satisfaction. Desire is its occasion, and perception its motive” (p. 348). Schopenhauer (2012), even dared to reduce “life force to will” (p. 349). Apparently, there is inherent potential in the right use of the will. When used rightly, the will can provide capacity for “achieving self-actualization and Self-realization, and for solving major human problems” (Assagioli, 1973, p. vii). Self-actualization and self-realization are vital goals to blind people. Evidently, will’s twinning with mind, is energy-filled matter. I was, and I am planted in excellent places. Years later, I would hear the Nation of Islam’s Ishmael Muhammad declare that there is no thought without a word.

The Social Being

There was another matter for my young adult mind itself in an apparent psychological crisis between intimacy and isolation (Erikson & Erikson, 1997, p. 32). As a burgeoning broadcaster doing late-night, I had to learn that in addition to erotic love, there was filial and agape love too. In this movement, my Father taught me to appreciate that it was not about me only. At 22, the me only phenomenon was primary in radio and its call to personalities behind microphones and in air-conditioned studios. But who were we serving? When I would visit my Father, he, a village historian, would take me through his community introducing me to extended family, friends, and other villagers. At first, I resisted, found the handshaking too much and I believe he noticed I was tired of the presentation. He wanted me to relax among those I served. As expected, the other maxim issued. My Father presented the saying: “man is a social being.” I would understand this later to be distinctly French and sociologically significant. I believe he understood clearly his social responsibility in what Jean-Paul Sartre meant when he wrote in the first English publication of *Being and Nothingness* in 1956, that “through birth a Past appears in the world” (2001, p. 199). He was integral to me being formed.

But editors of Vygotsky’s *Mind in Society* were unequivocal about one matter: Vygotsky was quite sure that the “properties of adult intellectual function” did not arise from maturation neither were they “preformed in the child and simply waiting for an opportunity to manifest themselves” (1978, p. 6). For him they had active social origins -- a clear influence from French sociologists which was being shared with me during those village people encounters. The concept of relatedness (Ryan & Deci, 2000) is rooted in the social being’s behavior. Relatedness is integral to competence and autonomy in human activity and the three are at the heart of psychological wellbeing emanating from self-determination theory. When integrated in

individual life they harmonize community; a harmony I needed to understand then, as unfolding in the lived experiences of the village as well as the globe. I can now intuitively appreciate what Hammond meant by the social brain “wired to favor a communal view of the world” (2014, p. 25). Brown (2018) probed deeper, intimating that play shapes that social brain (a play and effortless/relaxed attitude is so essential when interacting with village people). Brown (2018) contended further, that play fostered empathy and thus relatedness, helps us navigate complex social groups competently, and “is at the core of creativity and innovation” (p. 106). This spirit or energy of play has informed moral judgement in Piaget’s child. Play is said to be a child’s work, remains at the heart of a child’s learning and can inform adult learner’s psychological crisis between generativity and stagnation (Erikson & Erikson, 1997). Play is an enunciation of active imagination.

I took to feeling that the combination of definitions of faith, mind and social relations had begun in me a vibrant pedagogy, open to transformative forms of learning. This form of learning transcended materialism. When once as a young adult I asked him why he did not support me economically, he wrote in French, “pour autant que je sache, la vie est remplie d’ erreurs, mais pour moi tu n’ es pas une erreur” / “As far as I know, life is full of errors, but to me, you are not an error” (Henry, 2021, p. 240). I have read and repeated this over and over in my head and each time its love and ontological significance deepened cycles in my inherent intelligence and being. Indeed, in the context of faith, mind and social beingness everyone is an intelligence. When I think and say that every human being is an intelligence and this way of seeing and knowing has guided my ways of relating throughout life, this should be considered a healthy bias. What an axiological revelation with implications for methodology; how participants are to be respected, protected and made part and parcel of the study given that today much research about persons

with disabilities does not involve persons with disabilities (Yeo & Moore, 2003). Moreover, I came to understand that as a social being, everyone had a story, and everyone's experiences mattered. A human being who suffered a disabling experience or loss had not ceased being human. Helen Keller said it best when she wrote, "the absence of a sense need not dull the mental faculties and does not distort one's view of the world, and so I reason that blindness and deafness need not pervert the inner order of the intellect" (2009, pp. 25-26). In fact, as will be seen in the historical/theoretical foundation of this chapter, phenomena can unfold in the mind's eye of the sighted and sightless. The sighted are those who see with the physical eyes. That which unfolds is phenomena that transcend physical seeing to find a field of conscious activity, or a living imagination at work, indeed, to find meaning-like formations in a thriving conceptual environment. Theoretically, this being in a conceptual environment suggests an interdisciplinary framework and flow. Citing Petter Næss, Roy Bhaskar of the school of critical realism describes this interdisciplinary integration as holistic (2010, p. 9).

Given that mind is boundless (even in its activity within the human body) having been inscribed with the laws of the universe, and twinned with will, invariably that conceptual environment is boundless, open to the grandest communication and theoretical order uniting body, mind, soul, spirit and cosmos. That which unfolds behind closed eyes can therefore be considered a conceptual and pragmatic resource to those who no longer look outside, but by dint of their blindness are directed to that inner space or field, what may well be described as an ecology, in and of itself, an abundant supply generating what Jonathan Tennenbaum calls a metaphorical communication of concepts. A resource is to be found in a tool, creative intelligence, knowledge accumulated over time, education and training systems, and lived experiences. Dr. Leanora Ruff who is blind, has reminded me that being aware of one's

resources, the purposes they can serve, and the means of getting to them, keeps depression at bay (personal communication, March 11, 2019). I can add to this my Father's counsel on dialogue: where error of opinion is tolerated, reason is there to combat it. Did not know he drew this from Thomas Jefferson. I would learn later from Diop (1991) that though reason lapses, "it does not get caught in a vicious circle; it progresses; it is accomplishing under our eyes the most formidable qualitative leap that it has ever made since the origin of the exact sciences" (p. 370).

In essence, I grew up a philosopher's child, a philosopher trained in the French language and tradition. I grew up with a Mother who kept me busy: school; caring for the cattle and its milking; going out to sea to sell agricultural produce in northern Caribbean island markets; and being involved in trades such as masonry and building. Being on the Caribbean Sea nourished my imagination and active imagination. Its laws were not those of the land. In between these two prominent figures of Mother and Father, were brothers, sisters, aunts, uncles, nieces, cousins, grandparents, teachers, pastors, people living in the same yards and those older women who provided services to a single mother working two or three jobs. They constituted a bio-social scaffolding of sorts, that dynamic support unit known in the Caribbean historically as the extended family. Vygotsky has noted that ". . . all higher psychological functions are internalized relationships of the social kind, and constitute the social structure of personality" (as cited in John-Steiner & Mahn, 1996, p. 195). Internalized relationships of the social kind were engendered by caregivers whom the Russian, Lev Vygotsky identified as the persons with whom human development started and starts, and on whom it depended (John-Steiner & Mahn, 1996, p. 195). Furthermore, I could classify as higher psychological function, or formula that was immediately internalized, the saying by my Father that "everything you need to heal is inside of you." I remember this almost 40 years later: the saying continues to run through my 21st century

body, mind and soul. 40 years later, I would read Ken Carey writing, that no one “is created without everything required to make healthy, wholesome decisions” (1991, p. 37).

I chose to mention these experiences and the extent to which they would be nurturing my thinking, not because I was dominated by or fearful of a father figure, or over-protected by a mother, but because they were, and emerged in my adulthood as positive, intelligent influences. Much would happen between those young adult years and my graduation into adulthood, but those influences mentioned above would percolate like a mountain stream through the experiences in and of my life. When as an adult my sight began to be affected, I reached for those tools and those I was acquiring as a life-long adult learner. If the visual impairment was genetic (as most of the medical literature showed) I had the emotions of both parents to deal with, particularly those of my Mother. With a mind that is boundless, a faith that does not retreat and a new body of knowledge transcending genetics (Fox, 2011; Lipton, 2006), steeped in the collected works of Carl Gustav Jung, the self-determination theorists in Richard Ryan and Edward Deci, and the sense anthropology of Gili Hammer and Constance Classen, I decided to press on to knowing and ultimately either to see as I did before or find new ways of seeing and being in the world.

Meditation and Imagination

It was therefore an act of courage and encouragement when I took off with this study having read *Conversations with Ogotemmeli*, a book by anthropologist Marcel Griaule. Ogotemmeli had lost sight from a gunshot wound, yet he continued to remain the wise man of his Dogon tribe of Mali, West Africa. Importantly, Ogotemmeli drew my attention to the liver’s role in wellbeing. I did not know of the liver’s impact on a person’s mood, emotional and intellectual state. I thought of the heart. The heart’s central role in physiological functioning as

taught in human biology and my early Christian tutelage contributed in part, to that way of thinking. Ogotemmel's focus on the liver was akin to that found in Chinese traditional medicine where the liver is regarded and treated as sacred and connected to the eyes. In an article titled "How the liver affects your Mind," excerpted from the book *Digestive Intelligence: A Holistic Vision of Your Second Brain*, the liver is said to keep the soul and is associated with the element of fire (Matveikova, 2014). Indeed, not only did I recall my Father's saying about fire spitting from his mouth when he prayed; it occurred to me that Ogotemmel was metaphysical too, thinking that the first misfortune in the universal scheme of things was "the oneness of God" (Griaule, 1965, p. 198). This again shattered my perception of the spiritual scheme of things, questioning my understanding of what could possibly have been written and inscribed on my heart, mind and matter with its energies, and these, as an adult learner who had lost sight in adulthood.

In 2010, an imagery experience emerged from one of the described symptoms of a retinal disorder stirring my active imagination experiences even further. Ophthalmology and optometry have identified what they call floaters which appear like cobwebs in front of a person's eyes. They are described as tiny clumps of gel or cells inside the vitreous that fills the eye. What a person sees are shadows these clumps cast on the retina (Boyd, 2019, para. 1).

While meditating in September 2010, I opened my eyes to see these shadowy webs moving clockwise in front my eyes. As observer, I proceeded to look straight into the center of those floaters. Suddenly, they shifted and faded. I found myself looking over a horizon. I closed my eyes and this full white ocean with a horizon appeared before me. There were no omniscient creatures with wings and eyes as in the Bible's book of Revelations, at least, not yet. There were only spheres. The first sphere to appear shined like the sun. There was one similar to a

representation of the dark of the moon. The retina was not simply for shadows; if anything, it was indeed the house of the spectrum of color (Schopenhauer, 2012). Various animal forms appeared, one being a prominent eagle to the left. I sprang up immediately and googled animals and meditation and came across the name Dr. Steven Farmer, a psychotherapist then located in Utah. I called and described what was happening. He answered warmly, “these animals are your friends. Ask eagle brother and snake brother to help restore your sight.” How could I, a Caribbean child baptized into Methodism, be asking “snake brother” anything? This novel way of seeing and Dr. Farmer’s way of knowing led me to finally recall and understand the caduceus -- double serpents on a staff printed on the prescriptions of those who took the Hippocratic oath in Western medicine. That revelation by Dr. Steven Farmer was resourceful. As I probed, Cheikh Anta Diop was corroborating my remembrances writing about Greeks “consulting works in the library of the Temple of Imhotep at Memphis,” still accessible in the 2nd century AD, where “seven centuries before,” Hippocrates, the father of medicine, was taught (1991, p. 283). The inherited art of medicine and the name Hippocrates came down from Greece to colony to appear on physicians’ prescriptions, its double-serpent symbols anathema to my childhood religious tutelage.

Dr. Farmer informed me further that in Stone Mountain, Georgia, I was sitting in lotus in historic Native-American territory for whom even the sap of a tree is vital and a bison prized. It seemed to me then that each place had its history, and the spirit of the land though not immediately empirically validated, was ever-present transcending temporalities. I learned that ecosystems are living entities and spaces, interconnected to the vastest spaces over time.

This phenomenological inquiry into visual impairment among adult learners may show therefore, that damage to the two physical eyes does not hinder functioning of the third and

mind's eye, neither does it inhibit flow of the energy in and of imagination and active imaginations. Western Hippocratic medicine refers to the mind's eye as the pineal gland, and Ayurveda calls it the Ajna chakra. In India's mind-body science of healing called Ayurveda, meditation practitioners consider it a spiritual chakra and a center of intuition. When the sixth or Ajna chakra was identified and thus full of energy as resource among its community of seven chakras, practitioners of Ayurveda spoke about increased imagination, enhanced visualization, clairvoyance, vibrant telepathy, and lucid dreaming (Fondin, 2015, para. 1). Visualization is critical in this study. Indeed, the active, increased imagination generated in and by the pineal gland or Ajna chakra (apart from its affinity to Jung's vibrant unconscious and archetypes, and over-beyond mere seeing), shows keen correlations with wellbeing (Kaplan et al., 2014). In addition, the pineal gland has been associated with the production of melanin, "one of the most important topics to be discussed during the 21st century," more particularly its "psychological and spiritual attributes" (Browder, 1989, p. 20). Browder (1989) contends further that melanin is a "gift from the Creator, which serves to protect the body and makes communication with higher levels of consciousness possible" (p. 20). Communication in this study is defined as the transference/exchange of meaning between intelligences. Evidently, there is wellbeing in the life of the individual who allows for and participates in Ajna expression and meaning-making. Moreover, the historical foundation (theoretical framework) segment of this proposal presents a rich discovery that invites consideration: imagery arrive at or emerge in the mind's eye to the delight or astonishment of an adult learner who is or is not visually impaired. These forms of communication come from intelligences as old as the original brain itself. As one student of the Georgia Association of Blind Students claims, we (not only the past) are the future! We need therefore withdraw ourselves from what Henry Bergson calls the action of the moment, learning

to find in the process, the power to value the so-called useless and “the will to dream” (2004, p. 51). The will to dream is as old as the first human. It is out of this desire to give power to an unrecognized resource, the perceived and subsumed useless that the problem statement emerges. It should be of no surprise that the statement of the problem to this study on active imagination, wellbeing and ways of seeing should refer to that which is not visible: a resource behind and in front of the eyes, indeed pervading the mind’s eye or Ajna chakra.

Statement of Problem

The imagination and active imaginations of adults who become visually impaired in their adult years as I did, are seldom if ever recognized as resources. A resource contributes to wellbeing and makes for positive use. They are seldom if ever recognized because a biomedical, linear, diseased-based model of medicine (Fox, 2011; Lipton, 2006; Williams, 1999) does not regard such experiences as tangible, real and measurable; neither are they recognized as resources likely to contribute to wellbeing, ways of seeing and learning among adults who are blind or visually impaired.

We are further categorized according to a plethora of disorders. We are described as living with other disabilities such as hearing loss, troubles with balance and sleep. Mainstream medicine speaks of us as persons living with developmental and intellectual disabilities, and diverse issues of the intellect. We are said to carry emotional problems, are usually depressed, anxiety-ridden, confused, disoriented, forgetful, and lacking focus or concentration to complete a task. We can be subject to injury, falling, hitting our heads, slipping, and walking into glass. Generally, less educated, most adults who are visually impaired, are unemployed (Zuckerman, 2004, pp. 6-9).

Still, disability advocate, Dr. Leanora Ruff and others likely to embody the lived experiences and bio-medical underlying conditions as described by Zuckerman, declares in her inner vision or imagination, “I see purple. I see white lights and I even have my own private series of fireworks! Our own private series of fireworks just bursting and I’m thinking, am I having another retinal detachment?” (personal communication, March 11, 2019). Leanora Ruff did not deliberately and consciously conjure those lights through an active imagination exercise. How many more retinal detachments could she have?

When asked to describe images in his mind’s eye, pervading his blinded eyes, Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency employee 66-year-old Ken Armstrong reported seeing “a warm void” (personal communication, September 20, 2018). These are functions of space and temperature which Armstrong did not consciously and deliberately spread or heat. Both Armstrong and Ruff lost sight during their adult years.

According to 24-year-old Dominican, Loik Charles, whose visual membrane was burnt while doctors tried to give oxygen to his premature body as a baby, “what I see is color. Rainbow color. Moving and dancing. I imagine an assortment of colors becoming one in a pitch-black background” (personal communication, December 26, 2018). “Becoming one” is a significant code, and a pitch-black background is source of light and color, and thus of knowledge. Loik Charles who has never seen the world per se, is Dominican, and in May 2022 graduated from the University of Incarnate Word, San Antonio, Texas with a Bachelor of Arts in Sociology and a minor in Marketing. Treasures are hidden in the dark, ancients say.

Helen Keller entertained these magnificent lines (drawn possibly in part from the Bible’s book of Job), writing, “Hast thou Entered into the treasures of darkness? Hast thou entered into the treasures of the night? Search out thy blindness. It holdeth Riches past computing” (2009, p.

55). Oliver Sacks in *The Mind's Eye* sounds enthralled writing “the sparkles, the visual storms, may come from my retina, but these visions, surely, must come from a higher level, must be constructed by my brain, calling, if indirectly, on its stock of images” (2010, p. 160). I submit that the brain’s resourceful stock of images is inherent to the collective unconscious, what Jung identifies as the deepest psychological structures of humanity, emerging through millions of years of human experience and rooted in our biology (The Jung Center, para. 3). Millions of years of human experience are rooted in the biology and psyches of the visually impaired too.

The blind or visually impaired who do not have the luxury of seeing outside, most times look meditatively within. I was aptly reminded by one CEO of a Caribbean association of persons with disabilities that blind persons are natural meditators. Should this be our select practice as we embrace our active imaginations? Distinguishing active imagination as Jung’s “most important discovery,” von Franz, who co-authored *Man and His Symbols* with Carl Jung, described the practice as “a certain way” of meditating “imaginatively,” by which one may “deliberately enter into contact with the unconscious and make a conscious connection with psychic phenomena” (1964, p. 232). Deliberately and conscious are two significant signifiers here. Should psychic phenomena not be of relevance to the blind? Active imagination is further compared with Eastern forms of meditation, such as techniques inherent in and of Zen Buddhism or Tantric Yoga (Jung & von Franz, 1964, p. 232). This is a tremendous and intelligent resource for use across cultures, and by people whether blind or sighted.

Kaplan et al. (2014) were decisive in their distinction of imagination. Their methodology and findings from a study titled “Microdevelopment of Daily Well-Being through Mental Imagery Practice” reflected their conception of mental imagery as “an overarching imaginal process that includes and transcends any particular sensation such as vision” (p. 88). They stated

further that the uniqueness and complexity of the imagery process “is not to be reduced to vision but may include other sensations as integral parts of an individual’s creative imagination” (p. 88). What is likely to happen when those who became blind take off from beyond their blindness, from within the blindness experience to create imaginatively, to justly produce from their active imaginations, a story they choose, to speak a narrative they decide on and to describe their vistas, feelings, emotions, dreams, perceptions, interactions, memories, images and image-making capacities as expression of their experiential journeys through their living environments, their systems, and visual impairment? In this resourceful context, they can no longer be described as afflicted and marginalized after a medicalized gaze, but as full-time participants in the world of practice and concept-formation. This is an undiscovered learning resource likely to serve and consolidate psychological wellbeing among the sighted and sightless.

Trouillot (1995) further consolidates inquiry when he writes that historical production can also be expressed through “the power to touch, to see, and to feel” and they “span a material continuum” (p. 38). To touch, feel and see are universal, even democratic ways and means of seeing and production. At the very least, they engage in an economic, material culture, its costs and anxieties. Evidently, imagination, active imagination and free play are resources to be used to enhance wellbeing and a sense of self among adult learners with visual impairments.

Unfortunately, this perception of an experience behind the eyes, at the level of the mind’s eye and its roots in the free-playing unconscious, seldom emerges -- floaters are treated justifiably (consistent with medical training), as stressful appearances, happening largely in front of the eyes of middle aged and older adults. Adults who became blind in their adult years do not inform themselves by looking into their selves, neither are they informed or educated through public health systems to look beyond physiological manifestations of a visual disorder. But little did we

know or think it: the eye was more than its physical manifestation. In *Mysterium Coniunctionis*, Jung would describe it as “a symbol as well as an allegory of consciousness” (1970, p. 53).

In what follows, it will be seen however, that descriptions of visions from an inner place or what Nobel laureate in Literature Derek Walcott calls metaphorically, the straits of Heaven have already been written to a world people living in times that have just begun to unfold. They are written inevitably, in a language (possibly mythopoetically) far from rational, logical and dualistic.

Historical Foundations (Theoretical Framework)

Thus, it is that what began in my understanding as an incurable, chronic, genetically derived disease, has at 55 blossomed into another phenomenon. The physiological phenomenon remains measurable: intraocular pressure, millimeters of mercury, optic nerve damage, blockages in the trabecular meshwork, retinal ganglion cell degeneration, disease of the central nervous system, similar to Alzheimer’s and dementia, but given the interpretation of Dr. Steven Farmer, simultaneously I am privy to the experience of a heightened sense of perception, an experience of my active imagination in full bloom. Active imagination itself has a vibrant evolution: as a therapeutic method, it was called the “transcendent function,” the “picture method,” “active fantasy,” “active phantasying,” “trancing,” “visioning,” “exercises,” “dialectical method,” “technique of differentiation,” “technique of introversion,” “introspection,” and “technique of the descent” (Jung & Chodorow, 1997, p. 24). One can well imagine that these would have been approached diligently, if not faithfully by Jung (2014), using “actions that are performed in a half-playful way on the magical object” (p. 46). When individuals enter the active space, Epstein et al. speak of the “uniqueness of each participant’s imagination” (2014, p. 82). Based on this Epstein et al. observation, the experiences seem to arise in everyone, even among those who are

not meditators, psychotherapist or psychoanalysts. At the same time, one wonders whether the unconscious is not akin to the spiritual and it alone holds in ferment any active universal phenomenon which it imparts at select times in the development of human civilization.

Consequently, it is to memory that I turn again to find recollections of a book (as in the case of Marcel Griaule's Ogotemmeli and his identification of liver and soul) shown to me by a one-time principal of the United Theological College of the West Indies. In remembering the book, it occurred to me that in a discourse on the visually impaired, the blind, or ways of seeing in and among the blind, a historical foundation or theoretical framework had to emerge from a more ancient field of consciousness -- the spiritual. The intuitions of the spirit as depicted below bear age-old characteristics emerging now in the third decade of the 21st century.

Ken Carey in his book titled *The Third Millennium* invited readers to close their physical eyes to see through eyes of spirit, "a pulsing network of implicit potential as real as any sensory realm, a vibrational reality that in an earlier age was called the kingdom of heaven" (1991, p. 22). This is an active, energy-filled principle. This pulsing network of implicit potential cannot be unusual for adult learners (particularly those who work from the inside) given their foundational requirement that transformative learning embraces a spiritual dimension (Freire, 2000; Knowles et al., 2015), though the text is complex prose. It is this phenomenological text with its beautiful complexity and prose that reaches understanding that van Manen (2007) thought "less accessible" to intellectual thought and concept formation (p. 24). It is precisely this less accessibility that conjured the will and mind of an adult learner to engage in concept formations granting resourcefulness to the images behind and in front of the eyes of the visually impaired or blind.

Dr. Leanora Ruff who is visually impaired describes this field in the mind's eye as a "conceptual environment" (personal communication, November 19, 2020). It is the field in which intentions and ideas are born out of a past, present and future simultaneously. To read Carey carefully is to find for instance that whole sentences, or parts thereof, which appear in Dr. Ruff's non-physical eyes speak to, and from the future. It is a place from which concepts intuitively emerge, are attended to and made real or disappear, but never lost. No one loses here, neither is anything lost. The phenomenon is participatory. It is the basis on which an Eyecology assemblage is formed and constituted. Conceptually, one only has to actively imagine the eye at the center of a number of concentric circles expanding into and beyond physiology, anatomy, drugs, surgery and ophthalmology, forms of nutrition, family history and genetics, social environments, learning environments, sense of history of human development, systems of teaching and learning, forces of nature, sources of light, the sun, moon and stars, the inevitable interconnection of these borderless frames and their active existences. Psychology is hereby called on to view the life-space, persons and their environment as one field (Lewin, 1946, p. 793). Indeed, one understands hereby phenomenology's interest with "the lived body . . . not the body of physiological mechanisms and chemical interactions" (Eatough & Smith, 2017, p. 197).

Moreover, Mezirow (2000) contends that in the context of transformative learning, knowing and seeing, adult learners in their living bodies and through their lived experiences, became energized and proactive on entering mind and its conceptual environment, engaging will, shifting taken-for-granted epistemological, logical, ethical, psychological, ideological, social, cultural, economic, political, ecological, scientific, or spiritual beliefs (p. 20). An adult learner who becomes visually impaired could therefore enter a conceptual environment becoming privy to the Eyecological assemblage wherein and whereby seeing is not restricted to eyes, their

anatomy and physiology. Their shift in thinking and seeing could be compared to intuition's speed, what Wellwood (1977) describes as "a clear perception of the immediacy of being" (p. 18).

Haidt (2007) writes of Robert Zajonc's review of evidence that the human mind is composed of an "ancient, automatic, and very fast affective system" with its higher levels of human thinking being "preceded, permeated, and influenced by affective reactions" (p. 998). In truth, emotional intelligence is integral to this very immediate, fast affective system. "It is the spatial—but not yet temporal—objectification of universal thought designs" (Carey, 1991, p. 22). Ryan and Deci's universal, if not inherent autonomy bears characteristics of that system. It is a living spatiality. It is embryonic, even emergent, and embodied. Intelligence, if not emotional intelligence emerges in such interactions between human bodies and their ecosystems or environments; cognition is engendered, made relevant to the here and now and provides possibilities for developmental change (Smith, 2005, p. 278). A collective, universal will and communication is inferred. This is an intelligence resource privy to all, even blind people.

Carey (1991) elaborated that that which stretches before the seer, is a world of "metaforms," "archetypes," and indeed, "a realm of intention waiting to materialize" (p. 22). This is a veritable conceptual environment; a resource producing innovative ways of knowing and invariably of seeing, thinking, and acting. This resource could be smothered or depressed by a dominant medical model with its emphasis on drugs and surgery for treatment and seldom for healing.

Epstein et al. (2014) instruct that the mind is known to discover "inner forms" called images that represent "desired states of being" (p. 74). These states transcend bodily structure and function to become being, itself an ontological matter informing consciousness, meaning and

emotions, if not ways of seeing and knowing bodies of knowledge and how they are constituted and expressed. Through active imagination and thriving active imaginations, these forms can be articulated using painting, writing, drawing, sculpting, weaving, music, dancing among others (Jung & Chodorow, 1997, p. 31). As for archetypes, they can only be described as spiritual, Jung argues, adding that in their effects they “can be healing or destructive, but never indifferent” (2014, p. 136). Here, we will conceptualize and conceive of them as healing, therapeutic, curative, resourceful and forever in interconnected ferment.

Carey (1991) wrote richly about a “spiritual scaffold” the “biology of the future,” a “blueprint,” a “latticework of intent and vibration,” and finally “the outline, the pattern for a finely woven, luminous biology of galactic and someday intergalactic extent” (p. 22). Could this not be a healing expression of what Vietnamese Buddhist leader Thich Nhat Hanh hails as interbeing? Writes Zukav (2021), “in one another, we seek the well-being of one another, and we experience that in one another” (p. 56).

The concept scaffold is critical not only to the implied relatedness, interbeing, spirit, experience and biology, but even to the configuration of the concept of Eyecology. Campbell et al. (2019) trace introduction of the concept of the scaffold to the love in Lev Vygotsky’s socio-constructivism (p. 367) but contend that it was Wood et al. (1976) who first developed the concept meaningfully. Importantly, scaffolding was used by Wood et al. (1973) to describe processes of interaction between adults and children as they sought to solve a problem. During scaffolding, learners are given temporary support to assist them with tasks they might not have been able to complete independently (Campbell et al., 2019, p. 367). The concept was aptly described as one explaining “a developmental and pedagogical process or strategy” (Campbell et al., 2019, p. 367). Moving beyond Vygotsky’s zone of proximal development, significant in the

process of learning and interaction between an adult and a child, scaffolding as a concept in the learning sciences has found spaces across disciplines, in biosemiotics for example. Semiotic scaffolding is said to be “closely linked with a concept of learning” (Campbell et al., 2019, p. 368). It is a concept describing organisms seeking and extracting “meanings through their interactions within their umwelt” (Campbell et al., 2019, p. 368). An organism’s umwelt is its world as it is experienced. Umwelt is further defined as the “biological foundations that lie at the very epicenter of the study of both communication and signification in the human [and non-human] animal” (Umwelt, 2021).

Scaffolding devices encompass a network comprised of individual cells, organisms, populations, or ecological units controlling their activities ensuring alignment and the meeting of the organism’s needs (Campbell et al., 2019, p. 368). When Carey (1991) highlights a spiritual scaffolding and relates that to the biology of the future and suggests that these are or can be revealed with eyes closed, a researcher who is blind is invited invariably to engage a resource such as that structured in the concept and context of the scaffold and its suggested interconnectivities. I think here simply of the fecund space between thoughts, and the use of the pronoun “I” in highlighting a significant psychological bridge in thinking. What an idea: the biology of the future takes shape galactically and is revealed within the mind and eyes to the amazement of those who historically, have owned the means of determining and producing knowledge. This is expression of a grand interconnectivity transcending and making nothing of class and the five senses. Outside and beyond the fences of the senses is a boundless learning ecology. The Eyecological is herein secured. Echoing Nader’s one unbounded ocean. Zukav (2021) writes eloquently, “It is an ocean without shores. It is everywhere around us and within us. We are not separate from the Universe, and the Universe is not separate from anything” (p.

23). Vazza and Feletti (2017) have identified the tools of communication already, contending that the total number of neurons in the human brain (some 86 billion) is almost equal to the number of “galaxies in the observable universe” (para. 11). Norman Doidge in *The Brain's Way of Healing*, contends that “when a person learns something new, different groups of neurons get wired together” (2016, p. 7). Doidge (2016) thereby reminds all of one of the fundamental laws of neuroplasticity: “neurons that fire together wire together, meaning that repeated mental experience leads to structural changes in the brain” (p. 7). Indeed, the practice of tuning in and willingly participating in the “rhythms” of this vast, interconnected universe has been practiced long. It is called sattva in India. Rhythm works at the core of the experience which entails the harmonious response to divine urge. Chinese speak of wu-wei, when they identify with the tao, itself the divine principle. For those like me, working by way of a covenant and faith it is the unification of their will to God’s will (Assagioli, 1973, p. 130). It is embodied, popular Egyptian belief that every individual soul is linked to a star which falls from heaven when that individual dies (Diop, 1991, p. 340). Dr. Jean Houston, one of the principal founders of the human potential movement deepens and unifies the matter, reminding all that we are in the universe and the universe is in us. These are powerful resources for human development and learning that should be communicated to those whose ways of knowing the world are no longer restricted to their physical eyes.

Apparently, the spiritual is not restricted to the biological neither is it anathema to the historical/theoretical having appeared for example, in the field of moral education and development by way of no other than Lawrence Kohlberg. While Kohlberg’s five (learning) stages were embraced in moral education and development discourses and education practices, the sixth was not wholly adopted because it was said to lack empirical validity. Moral values for

Kohlberg was at that stage based not only on an ethic, but on justice. This represents and symbolized a human being in full maturity and experience, capable of self-determination by their own means. But a human being was not thought of as having the capacity to reach that stage; as was stated, the stage was rejected for lack of empirical validity. Kohlberg did more. He developed a seventh stage which could be just as appealing to the visually impaired as the sixth would be in its call for justice and universal laws inscribed on their minds constituting a collective strength within and among them. Ironically, it was called a soft stage; references to soft stages are evident in a fluidly middle if not liminal space, and in communication literature highlighting those skills that bind even scaffold, communication flow between sectors of an organization. Importantly, in Kohlberg's conceptual environment, models of soft stage development describe the adult's attempt to "interpret the task of metaphysics and religion, the task of integrating the ideals of justice, love, and truth with one's understanding of the ultimate nature of reality" (Conn, 1985, p. 250). Finally, Kohlberg (1984) connected his stage descriptions or dimensions with the ecology that Kerry seems to describe. The seventh stage according to Kohlberg (1984) culminated in a "nondualistic sense of participation in, and identity with, a cosmic order," requiring the self to simply participate (Conn, 1985, p. 250). Participation may well be the order of behavior of images in the mind's third eye, and in the dream state within sleep. A process of observation can be described which arises through the mutual actions of an observer and the observed in that field. This is not a field of competition. It is a cosmic, communicative order, a spiritual enterprise pollinated with images. It is foundational. It is participatory, even collaborative.

Tony Nader, author of *One Unbounded Ocean of Consciousness* asked as recently as April 2021, whether both the empiricist and the idealist could be right. We need to, or hunger to

regain access to the forgotten and subsumed. I submit that the visually impaired and blind are better positioned to interpret and know the characteristics of those images, their mobility, form and even speed of appearances. This is a resource. van Geert and van Dijk (2002) in conceptualizing a dynamic system (and sounding like they had extrapolated from Jung's concept of the unconscious), glimpsed a way of describing the dynamic motion in imagination's full fire, selecting terms such as variability, flexibility, fluctuations, and perturbations to develop a relation at the very least with the untamable phenomenon. Sousa (2016) reiterated that the human brain (apparently in response to a loss too) has the incredible ability "to form images and representations of the real world or sheer fantasy within its mind's eye" (p. 266). This is a valued resource even to the sighted. Pietro Pietrini, Maurice Ptito and Ron Kupers settle the matter: no one should consider the blind brain a disabled brain but should in the fullness of resourcefulness, conceive of it as a justly "differentially able brain" (2009, p. 372). Moreover, spirit reaches into soul, soul itself constituting mind and will. When Roberts Avens made reference to soul in a Kindle edition titled *Imagination is Reality: Western Nirvana in Jung, Hillman, Barfield, and Cassirer*, terms such as imagination, passion, fantasy, and reflection emerged. An entity or space was conceived as soul; one that was neither physical nor material, spiritual nor abstract. Evidently, such a liminal space was inherently participatory, dynamic and unbounded in imagination. The soul with its intrinsic emotional intelligence, is even said to have a language, one without nouns or verbs, "with syntax composed of universal visions and perceptions" (Farrow, 2015, p. 40). Syntax, the arrangement of words and phrases to create well-formed sentences in a language, is not unfamiliar to imagination among and in the visually impaired and blind. Images and words reconstitute themselves along lit or darkened horizons within their vision-space. Evidently, "to live is to learn (or know) about the world through the scaffoldings of

previous experiences and previous generations (at the biological, cultural and personal levels)” (Campbell et al., 2019, p. 369).

An interpretive phenomenological analysis given its focus on “the unique lived worlds” of participants (Smith & Rhodes, 2015, p. 208), is therefore likely to facilitate this eliciting of experiences in a social environment where such experiences have been silenced, if not repressed; where such “vivid imagery” and a “thematic” storyline is “actively discovered” by the practitioner as it “spontaneously unfolds” (Smith & Rhodes, 2015, p. 313). It is this echo of faith in action, that spontaneity and its will to knowledge and knowing among the visually impaired particularly, that needs be overtly and consistently included in human developmental conceptual, if not paradigmatic learning circles.

Factors and Conditions Contributing to the Problem

In October 2020, Mark Riccobono, president of the National Federation of the Blind sent out a letter to his membership where he wrote about a relationship between blindness and institutional racism. According to the president, “18.7% of all African American adults compared to 7.1% of non-Hispanic white Americans have diagnosed or undiagnosed diabetes. We also know that access to the rehabilitation system among our Black friends is significantly more difficult than it is for others” (para. 2). Diabetes is known medically to contribute to cataracts, diabetic retinopathy, glaucoma and diabetic macular edema. Blood vessels of the eye can swell in the case of edema. Age-related macular degeneration is a problem too. In a 2006 study conducted by Klein et al., 6,176 subjects, aged 45 to 85 selected from six United States communities, were tested for (among others) epithelial depigmentation of the retina, neovascular lesions, and geographic atrophy using a measure that identified macular degeneration. The prevalence of age-related macular degeneration was 2.4% among Blacks, 4.2% among

Hispanics, 4.6% among Chinese and 5.4% among Whites. In fact, macular degeneration is said to be the leading cause of blindness among Whites. Not only are all consumed; the issue of access to the rehabilitation system remains critical. Commenting in “Employment Barriers for the Blind and Visually Impaired,” World Services for the Blind identified barriers to all races, to include transportation (usually when living for example, in rural America and trying to get to work); lack of training (training including accessing transport, train and bus stations); negative attitudes from employers (who wonder how potential employees would get to work in the first place); and lack of workplace accommodations (which, says the Job Accommodation Network, can cost on average about \$500 and that cost is not the employer’s responsibility). Emphasis that the Americans with Disabilities Act (1990) places on modes of transportation for persons with disabilities, particularly the blind or visually impaired, should not be underestimated.

Employment and access to it can determine the nature of self-concept and sense of self-esteem, and how relationships are formed and kept within and across families, groups and community. Anxiety, depression and loneliness can raise intraocular pressure and spur emotional imbalances.

The Annual Disability Statistics Compendium produced by the University of New Hampshire's Institute on Disability, puts the employment of Americans, aged 18-64, with visual impairments at 45.5% for 2020. DisabilityStatistics.org run by Cornell University, has the employment of Americans, aged 18-64, with visual impairments at 46.2% for 2019. In 2018, 32.2 million Americans between the ages of 18 and over reported experiencing vision loss; of these 32.2 million American adults, 13.7 million males and 18.5 million females report experiencing significant vision loss. The implications for employment across the world’s richest economy are dire among such persons. According to American Foundation for the Blind (2020), persons reporting difficulty seeing, even while wearing glasses or contact lenses, or those who

report they are blind and just cannot see, fit the specification of what constitutes vision loss. There is room here for formally introducing active imagination practices among these many groups threatened by visual impairments, but so far, government institutions such as the National Institute of Health have not announced their wholehearted interests in such methods for engaging the blind and visually impaired.

Of course, beliefs persist worldwide that associate disability with evil, witchcraft, bad omens or infidelity (Ntale et al., 2002, as cited in Yeo & Moore 2003, p. 573). Then there is a hierarchy of disabilities (Nichols, 2019); the non-inclusion of visually impaired and blind persons in conferences concerning them; funding for select disorders (macular degeneration receives greater funding than glaucoma); and the broad medicalization of what Garland-Thomson (2002) calls a lived body, a knowing-body (p. 3). Nick Fox presents the concept of the body-with-organs which medicalizes, turning “bodies into patients, healers, carers and their careers into health professions, chemicals into medicines, and episodes of ill-health into case histories and archives of disease” (2011, p. 370). Thus, it is that the embodied self (so essential to healing in its calm) suffers an inherent instability (Garland-Thomson, 2002, p. 5).

There is the negative impact of stigma, identified by Branscombe et al. (1999) which accentuates “decreased self-esteem” (as cited in Bogart, 2018, p. 158) on the part of persons with disabilities. Persons with disabilities along with the wider society often hold low expectations of themselves (Yeo & Moore, 2003, p. 573). If only the “Courtesy Rules of Blindness” (See Appendix A), had written into its textual entrails: you may not see it, but I carry a treasure behind those blind eyes. Ask and I will tell!

Williams expresses our dream of emancipation in the crisis when he describes the body as an ancient representation in this world, a structure of lived experience that does not cease, and

importantly, “the foundational basis of meaning, imagination and reason” (1999, p. 798). The code “foundational” is critical. I could hear Foucault in this text and its reference to power-knowledge, who constructs that knowledge, its syntactic formation and who owns it and the body behind and within whose eyes it chooses to touchdown. As for the foundational basis of meaning, a matter emerges here: words do not have content in and of themselves, “but if they encounter someone who listens to them, they become something” (Moro, 2018, p. 20). Not only is listening absolutely crucial, and meaning-making social; simply by speaking their experiences, adult learners with visual impairments become makers of evidence. It is becoming obvious that inclusion of our knowledge gleaned through imagination experiences and articulation of our active imaginations holds important benefits for future human development and learning. Davis and Harrison (2013) remind us that social justice transcends “expressed values” to engage using “our knowledge, skills, and power to construct educational practice” that allow “access and inclusion in the learning process” (p. 12). The non-inclusion of the active imaginations and imagination experiences of adult learners who became visually impaired in their adult years does not only deny our universal interconnectivity; it denies the core of human integrity, creative intelligence, and its infinite possibilities. This study, therefore, wholly adopts experiences of adult learners who are visually impaired and positions them as significant contributions to theorizing, epistemology, ontology, axiology and methodological innovations.

Known and Possible Consequences

Almost three million people were predicted to be affected by age-related macular degeneration by 2020. 4.1 million were impacted by diabetic retinopathy and some 900,000 threatened. The Center for Disease Control (CDC) reports that 17.2% of Americans over 40 years of age have a cataract in at least one eye (about 20.5 million people). By 2028, it is

expected that over 30 million people will have cataracts. Three million people have glaucoma (NVision Eye Centers, 2022, paras. 1-4).

The imagination cannot not serve nor emerge in intelligent forms and metaforms in the service of those thus affected. Surely, imagination and the use of active imagination can impact positively the course of emotions accompanying identified eye conditions. von Franz agrees that the imagination, like intuition and dreams, comes from a body of subliminal material; material consisting of all urges, impulses, and intentions; all perceptions and intuitions; all rational or irrational thoughts, conclusions, inductions, deductions, and premises; and all varieties of feeling (Jung & von Franz, 1964, p. 25). It is an emotional melting pot. It is a fascinating wellbeing resource bubbling in and for the visually impaired. It is the unconscious and it is worldwide in each and every human consciousness waiting to be actively engaged (Assagioli, 1973) by the visually impaired adult learner as well.

World Health Organization reports that globally, one billion people have a vision impairment. Approaches to alleviation include drugs and surgery, but an additional wellbeing resource may well be in the mind's eye, indeed in the imagination and its activation through deliberate intervention. I place in the words 'active imaginations' after each statistic. This one billion includes those with moderate or severe distance vision impairment or blindness due to unaddressed refractive error (123.7 million active imaginations); cataract (65.2 million active imaginations), glaucoma (6.9 million active imaginations), corneal opacities (4.2 million active imaginations), diabetic retinopathy (three million active imaginations), and trachoma (two million active imaginations), as well as near vision impairment caused by unaddressed presbyopia (826 million imaginations) (World Health Organization, 2020, paras. 4-5). Foundation Fighting Blindness reported in 2022 that the costs associated with vision loss in

Canada (a member of the North American continent) are \$32.9 billion yearly, and over 8 million Canadians are at risk of losing sight. As of 2020, Canada had a population of 37.7 million. Its landscape is fascinating, inviting those who still care to imagine.

In 1997, the Commonwealth collaborated with Caribbean countries to host a Caribbean disability conference. The theme was telling and timely. It read: we are an opportunity, not a burden. The “we” whom the theme identified numbered some one million Caribbean people who were visually impaired. They had something to share with the world, but was their dismissal another error of life? We do not know yet how to collectively shift our perception by way of imagination from disease to other ways of seeing and knowing.

Throughout human history persons who are blind have been teachers, philosophers, artists, entertainers, fabulous songwriters, lawyers, chief executives, poets, writers and more. How would they have evolved if they did not become familiar with themselves and their other abilities, other ways of knowing and doing? Are they in some way acquainted in part with Jung’s observation that many artists, philosophers, and even scientists owe some of their best ideas to inspirations that suddenly spurt, and appear from within the unconscious? Would this happen behind, in front of and within the eyes of the rich and not those of the millions of the poor? Would they arise behind the eyes of the sightless and not those of the sighted? We often think of the access opportunities offered, homes they grew up in and the social beliefs systems at the time, but what when they are disturbed by their own emotional unease? Rather than kill themselves, visually impaired and blind persons should be encouraged and supported in the healing of themselves by actively looking into themselves and articulating their immediate human experiences, their lifeworld or life-space.

Purpose of the Study

Imagination and active imaginations are drawn and tapped into and used and experienced daily by adult learners who are and became visually impaired or blind. The purpose of this study therefore is:

- to find out whether there is a relationship between faith and spiritual matters and the eyes and the wellbeing implications for an adult learner who became blind;
- to facilitate and listen to processes by which adult learners with visual impairments identify and describe their imagination experiences and active imaginations as they unfold in their various environments, and to use these for understanding ways of applying active imaginations to ways of seeing and wellbeing;
- to find out how adult learners who became blind in their adult years, feel about themselves at present, their experiences, the challenges encountered and how they overcame them;
- to find out what the sighted can learn from the blind;
- to determine what the experiences of the blind can contribute to epistemological, ontological, methodological and axiological developments in adult learning, and learning in general.

Guiding Research Questions

The three questions below will percolate as thread through this study. They determine the structure of questions in the Interview segment of this study and its follow up probes. They are:

- What value do adult learners with visual impairment say they place on using their active imaginations?

- What are the various imagination experiences adult learners with visual impairments report they encounter?
- What do adult learners with visual impairments believe are the factors and conditions that promote and hinder the use of their imagination and active imaginations?

Definitions

Active Imagination

According to Joan Chodorow, editor of *Jung on Active Imagination*, there are many forms of active imagination allowing us to separate ourselves from the unconscious contents, but in the field of that unconscious, we must remain “alert” and maintain a “self-reflective conscious point of view” (p. 22). Invariably, some of the terms used to describe active imagination suggest “a specific meditative procedure and concentration on inner voices or images” (Chodorow, 1997, pp. 24-25). It can be auditory, transcending sense organs. Active imagination can therefore be considered an engagement; an engagement with the forces in and of imagination through art, dance, sculpting, body movements, daily negotiation of spaces that involve determinations of space, object and the body in relation to all and much more. Not all active imagination activity is deliberately meditative. In the everyday lives of adult learners, active imaginations drawing on imagination and active imagination, come into use when that adult solves problems, pictures, visualizes, negotiates interior and public spaces and constructs remembrances.

Adult Learner

Knowles et al. (2015) characterize the adult learner as being a self-directed, experiential, and problem-centered approach learner (p. 2). An adult learner is said to learn through various approaches such as the behaviorist learning theory, humanism, cognitive learning theory, constructivist learning theory, social constructivist theory, and brain-based learning theory.

Eyecology

Eyecology is composed of the word eye and cology drawn from ecology. Eyecology is influenced by Arne Næss' idea of ecosophy which is derived from the word ecology, "the study of interrelationships," and sophia, "wisdom" (2008, p. 1). Eyecology attempts to build an assemblage after the ideas of Fox (2011), exploring interrelationships among the eye and all that is likely to influence its seeing and knowing, both biologically and in the context of its surrounding past, present (whether distant or near), and future interrelated systems, beings and remembrances. To actively imagine an Eyecology design, one can think of the eye at the center of concentric circles and all other surrounding "nested arrangement of structures" or "system properties" (Bronfenbrenner, 1977, p. 516) unfolding from that center to the great vastness.

Imagination

Chodorow (1997) wrote of Jung defining imagination as "the reproductive or creative activity of the mind in general . . . fantasy as imaginative activity is identical with the flow of psychic energy" (p. 29). The concepts are rich: reproduction, creativity, fantasy, and psychic energy. Chodorow (1997) could state confidently that Jung believed that even if we are children or adults and whether we are conscious of it or not, "imaginative activity goes on all the time . . . expressed in many ways including play, dreams, fantasy, creative imagination and active imagination" (p. 29). Imaginative activity goes on all the time, even now.

Impairment

The Americans with Disabilities Act (1990) writes of physical and mental impairments. An impairment is that which inhibits. An impairment is a functional limitation within a person which can be physical, mental, or sensory (Barnes, 1991, as cited in Yeo & Moore, 2003, p. 572).

Marginalization

Yeo and Moore (2003) in their call for inclusion of people with disabilities in research provide a reasoned definition for marginalization. They write of traditional development research being conducted by “nonpoor, nondisabled outsiders questioning people about their lives” (p. 577). In addition, research methods “often exclude” people with impairments (p. 577). Moreover, “many participatory methods” are visually based excluding those with visual impairments (p. 577). Williams (1999) writes of the World Health Organization describing impairment as “abnormality in the structure or functioning” (p. 803). A visual impairment is an abnormality in the eye body and its function, with implications for seeing and navigating the physical world. This exclusion leads to marginalization. According to Yeo and Moore (2003), given that 10% of any population is disabled, exclusion of “the knowledge and talents of a significant proportion” of any nation’s population represents “an inefficient use of human resources” (p. 578). The greatest statement against marginalization comes from the disability movement itself: nothing about us without us!

Ways of Seeing

This is based largely on operations of the senses other than sight, that is, touch, hearing, taste and smell. These other senses give participants who do not see innovative access to the world and ways of knowing it. Qualities inherent in touch and the senses in general are reflected on by Hammer (2013); Classen (1997); Pink (2010); and Howes (2003). Blind people also see the world through their intuition, feeling and emotion (Damasio & Carvalho, 2013; Haidt, 2001; Jung, 1970). Other ways of seeing are proffered by and through the mind’s eye providing vistas on inner environments, clairvoyant skills, the ability to communicate with insight, to dream and vision inner dimensions of the human psyche (Browder, 1989).

Wellbeing

Among its many uses, a psychological term, which in the context of human development and learning, draws its unity from what protagonists Ryan and Deci (2000), and Deci and Ryan (2008) identify as competence, autonomy, and relatedness. Kagitcibasi (2012), drawing on the works of Dasen (1984), Keller (2003), Nsamenang and Lamb (1994), Serpell (1977, 2009), and Super and Harkness (1986, 1997), observed that across many groups in Africa, social competence along with technical and practical skills is the mark of intelligence (p. 7). Individual will and intrinsic motivation, social relations and the ability to get along with others contribute to wellbeing. Wellbeing transcends mere happiness or hedonia, uniting with eudaimonia to constitute what Henderson and Knight (2012) refer to as a desirable state. Eudaimonia itself connotes a full sense of self-actualization (Deci & Ryan, 2008). It is transcendence.

Contributions of the Study: Significance

The imagination and active imaginations to be described by participants in this research are known by those participants but seldom articulated. This study facilitates this dynamic telling, allowing those experiencing the phenomena to say what it is and what it means to them. The concept “blindness” is likely to be shifted in meaning to embrace the concept of wellbeing and so contribute to enhancing the ways the visually impaired see and know themselves (more as resourceful than afflicted; as assets rather than liabilities).

Given that adult learners who became visually impaired are asked to describe and give meaning to their experiences, a novel methodology of telling the story can emerge considering that the observation is of the inside with its active imagination flows. What constitutes adult ways of learning could be further enhanced; fresh insights could be realized from the telling of those visual experiences which surely inform power in narratives, issues of memory and

emotional intelligence, learning methodologies, adult learning, dimensions of wellbeing and neuroeducation.

This study is significant to leaders in the advocacy and scientific communities. I think of Dr. David Calkins, Chairman of Glaucoma Research Foundation and Director of Vanderbilt Vision Research Center. Dr. Calkins sent me several of his research papers on glaucoma and they all reflected finally, that search for a cure. Dr. Calkins wrote “. . . my research group was the first to show that glaucoma dysfunction shows up early in the visual brain” (personal communication, December 2, 2020). Was there a hearing brain, a touch brain or an olfactory one? The idea of the visual brain caught my attention.

Mark Riccobono, President of the National Federation of the Blind told me in a telephone conversation that the blind were not different from anyone else in their ability to learn. When I told him about my work with active imagination and wellbeing, he responded, “that’s the kind of discussions blind people should be having” (personal communication, April 15, 2021). He expressed interest in blindness initiatives and wished me well.

Dr. David Jacobson, an endocrinologist in Atlanta, Georgia expressed interest in my findings given that his office held education classes for diabetics and among them were persons with visual impairments.

I have never met Richard Davidson, but I appreciate his work with the Mind and Life Institute where he serves as a board member. He is a neuroscientist whose presentations on perception and memory are of implicit significance to this work. I submit that my work could serve to enhance Mind and Life Institute research with regard to perception and the blind or/and visually impaired. Additionally, Richard Davidson is founder of the Center for Healthy Minds, an organization that speaks of transformative learning, compassion, mind, and wellbeing. At that

Center they write of the four pillars of wellbeing in awareness, connection, insight and purpose (2021), concepts seminal in and to human development and learning.

Also, I have relations with Hadley where their adjusting to blindness programs are proving to be effective spaces for exploring capacity in resourceful blind and visually impaired persons. These adjusting to blindness series guide blind people through the emotional troubles that tend to accompany sight loss.

In January 2022, the government of Dominica through its Ministry of Dominicans Living with Disabilities, invited me to be a member of its Disability Commission. I am a member of the advisory committee of Christian Record Service, and they are always looking for innovative ways of thinking about the blind. Their methodologies could be strengthened and deepened through this work.

I think of several special education teachers who I have come to know; agencies for disability in the Caribbean particularly those focusing on the blind; persons involved in Special Olympics for instance where visualization as technique can be introduced and studied; educators and schools professing social justice seeking justification for their stances; public health educators; legislators and disability policy makers desirous of enhancing disability policy; sociologists of health and illness; wellbeing psychologists; activists and self-advocates. These individuals, groups, organizations and professionals engaged in disability issues globally, from the advocacy, treatment or cure perspective could find in this study, traces and sources for conceptualizing afresh the parameters of their activities into the 21st century. Given 21st century technology, and as a self-advocate with a background in communication studies, media production and development issues, I would like to establish relations with a US-based

international media house to explore possibilities for representing people with disabilities, particularly the blind, in its programming.

Delimitations/Limitations

Delimitations

Delimitations describe the boundaries that the researcher has set for the study. This study adopts interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) as select methodological approach and its uses of open-ended questions with semi-structured probes. The sample $n=8$ is comprised of adults between the ages of 20 and 75 who lost sight within that period of their lives. Throughout this study, there is the tendency not to distinguish between visual impairment and blindness by using various measures such as 20/200 to describe a condition that permits one person to see an object 200 feet away while another has to go as close as 20 feet to see the same. Persons who are blind speak of being visually impaired and use the terms interchangeably.

Limitations

This study did not have face-to-face access to participants. This was in part because they lived in seven different states and, in a context of COVID-19, face-to-face meetings were not advisable. This study does not plumb depths in eye diseases, neither does it overtly look into the visual impairment situations and experiences of persons of other countries. Moreover, this study does not discuss the sense of hearing, implying in the process that this entire study is indeed an exercise in hearing. The researcher uses the screen reading software, JAWS, to read.

Interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA), the methodology adopted in this study, uses small samples; there is no claim to generalizability. The intention is that by metaphorically shining a light on a small area, as suggested by Oxley (2016), the whole could be illuminated (Creswell & Poth, 2017; Larkin & Thompson, 2012; Smith et al., 1999). Perspectives presented

by participants in this study are distinctly theirs. Interpretative phenomenological analysis requires that the thing in itself be told with the researcher granting much time, space and diligence to drawing out the experiences from participants with minimal tendency to bias or preferred ways of seeing and knowing. While the sample size is eight, it is so composed that both males and females are presented. In fact, two African American males participate in this study. The other six participants are female comprising two Whites, three Blacks and one Afro-Latina.

Finally, the study seeks to be diligent in its development of questionnaires, interview techniques, the categorization of codes, code choices and pattern or theme recognition.

Chapters

Chapter Two provides a review of the literature. Concepts used in constructing the title of the study are reviewed. Therefore, the literature pertaining to the concepts active imagination, wellbeing, ways of seeing, phenomenological inquiry, experiences, adult learners and visual impairments are reviewed. In Chapter Two, the pronouns “I” and “we” will not be used and the text will relate to the future, the past and when cited in a quotation, the present. But surely, the tense of the text will change following Chapter One.

Chapter Three presents a description of the sample, methods of selection, instruments for eliciting responses, interview questions and steps taken to ensure participant anonymity and confidentiality. Interpretive phenomenological analysis (IPA) will be explored as the method adopted for purposes of theorizing and guiding the theme and code development process with the support of the software NVivo. In Interview 1, NVivo will be used to query relations between codes to determine frequency of appearances of terms that provide strength to the codes spoken by participants regarding their lived experiences. Interview 2 will be analyzed by way of the observations inherent in the listening guide as developed by Gilligan and Eddy (2017). This

listening guide searches for empowering moments in participants narration of their experience focusing on the pronoun “I” and moments of contradiction and justice formation. Participants’ views on wellbeing will be drawn from Interview 2 as a representation of their ways of healing and empowering themselves.

Chapter Four presents the results/findings in response to the study’s three research questions. All responses for Research Questions 1, 2, and 3 will be drawn from and based on participants narratives. Three or four findings will be identified for Research Question 1, and in the case of Research Question 2, imagination experiences will be drawn from participants narratives and listed. In response to Research Question 3, factors and conditions that promote and hinder the use of imagination and active imaginations will also be drawn directly from participants codes without querying their experiential value. In addition to a psychological interpretation adopted during interpretive phenomenological analysis, further theorizing will be conducted by way of dynamic systems theory and the language of developmental science and psychology, thus enhancing the strength of the findings and participants authenticity. Throughout, strains of philosophy will percolate through the findings in response to the phenomenological urge itself.

Chapter Five summarizes the previous four chapters extracting their most salient points. Here the researcher adopts the role of expert opening up a discussion on the body of work, and future research possibly emanating from the work with implications for other methodologies. Recommendations are also made. The importance of the work to education leadership and to human development and learning will be discussed and a call for action made on behalf of the representative participants and those they represent in microcosm.

Conclusion

Chapter One presented a glimpse of the sociocultural context which in part shaped the spirit and thinking of this researcher. Of the matters arising, one remains principal: the role of a father in the life of his son during the period when adolescence was giving way to young adulthood. The encounter was deepened when the father became teacher shedding light on concepts at the heart of modern philosophical thought; concepts such as faith, mind and reason all in the spirit of the French language. Not only was the mother vision-impaired; the son would use that body of knowledge developed with the father in addition to a mother's wisdom to understand a phenomenon of blindness which incidentally had been passed on to him manifesting itself during his adult years. As a result of that experience, a medical and psychological discourse percolates throughout this text. In the process of human development and learning, in fact, in the processes of education of an adolescent, it has become clear that the child's father is seminal.

Chapter One presented a statement of the problem, constituting blindness as a resource and producing three research questions likely to draw out possibilities of a resource. In fact, an integrated interdisciplinary historical and theoretical framework would provide a conceptual environment granting a just place for articulation to the visually impaired and blind. Chapter One further presented the purpose of the study and those terms and concepts likely to be used throughout and their definitions. Interpretative phenomenological analysis methodology was identified, emphasizing briefly the significance to be drawn out from the language, essence, meaning and value in experiences of adult learners with visual impairments, considered herein as the expert group.

CHAPTER TWO: Literature Review

“What you seek is seeking you.”

- Rumi

This review shall in its execution, work with the concepts and terms evident in its title: “Active Imagination, Wellbeing and Ways of Seeing: A Phenomenological Inquiry into Experiences of Adult Learners with Visual Impairments.” The concept “imagination” will be explored first being the phenomenon here to be activated. Second, literature exploring active imagination, wellbeing, seeing and ways of seeing, phenomenology, experiences, adult learners and visual impairments will be generated and generally, made relevant to the statement of the problem, the purpose of the study and its three research questions. In the case of a phenomenological inquiry, literature concerning phenomenology, and the methodological implications of epoche or bracketing will be reviewed in this chapter. Interpretive phenomenological analysis emerging from phenomenology, philosophy and psychology has much to share with researchers today and its findings will be summarized as an overview to Chapter Three.

How the concepts imagination, active imagination, wellbeing and ways of seeing relate to the ethos of adult learners who are visually impaired or blind and who became blind in their adult years concerns this study given the general idea that the visually impaired, like most persons with disabilities are thought of as having a low sense of self-esteem (Bogart, 2014; Bogart et al., 2018). Indubitably, self-esteem among vision-impaired persons, persons who are blind and those with disabilities in general needs salvaging and redeeming. It is a matter that calls invariably for a researcher who is also visually impaired to stand on the side of those who are said to have lost confidence in themselves. This study therefore posits an epistemological and

ontological statement. Indeed, the study takes an axiological stance: a social justice call percolates through this entire review.

Imagination

Karen Horney in the 1950 publication titled *Neurosis and Human Growth*, cited the word imagination some 82 times. Horney (1950), generally recognized as a Neo-Freudian psychologist, wrote the following concerning the imagination: the imagination shifts “gradually and unconsciously” (p. 22); imagination “permeates all psychic and mental functions in the healthy person” (p. 32); it is imagination enabling us to do so when we feel the “joy or sorrow of a friend” (p. 32); it is our imagination at work when we “wish, hope, fear, believe, plan” (p. 32). Imagination can be productive or unproductive, bringing us “closer to the truth of ourselves—as it often does in dreams—or carry us far away from it” making our actual experience “richer or poorer” (p. 32); imagination has an injurious side: the “subtle and comprehensive distortions” of reality (p. 33); and imagination has sufficient “power to brush off pain and suffering” (p. 34). Horney (1950) wrote finally about an individual who by force of “intellect and the power of his imagination,” could “visualize things not yet existing” (p. 377). In the above instances, the imagination was a catalyst, a vital element, an emotional rush, in and of every activity, part of dreams, daydreaming, a flight of fantasy in the neurotic, a distortion, a rational or unconscious activity, a liminal space and grandiose or big assumptions. Most people do not know that: they live in and use their imaginations daily and they are resourceful.

In *Man and His Symbols*, a text dedicated to the analytic work of Carl Jung, contributor Aniela Jaffé wrote of artists continuing on their way of “inwardness and

imagination” (1964, p. 317). At yet another pivotal point in *Man and His Symbols*, Jolande Jacobiin, another contributor, in the chapter titled “Symbols in an Individual Analysis,” observed that the power of concentration reaches its limits and breaks, allowing the “stuff of fantasy” to penetrate “without restraint” allowing the one in the process of that broken concentration to get “a glimpse” into regions of the unconscious “where our imagination has free play” (1964, p. 348). Artists feed on that free play. Adult learners with visual impairments using their imagination are likely to experience inwardness, and without being directly aware of it, tap into and find value in fruitful resources in and of the unconscious.

Although Freud was aware of the “archaic and mythological thought-forms” constituting the unconscious, Jung (1968b) stated that it remained for Freud of an “exclusively personal nature” (p. 3). Though Jung (1968b) did not doubt existence of a “superficial layer of the unconscious” which he dubbed the personal unconscious, he was convinced that this personal unconscious rested upon a collective unconscious which is not derived from personal experience, is not a “personal acquisition, but is inborn” (p. 3). The collective unconscious, the home of imagination, is therefore “identical in all men” constituting “a common psychic substrate of a suprapersonal nature . . . present in every one of us” (Jung, 1968b, p. 4). Carl Jung would state later that “Everything psychic is pregnant with the future” (1970, p. 58).

In *Symbols of Transformation: An Analysis of the Prelude to a Case of Schizophrenia*, Jung’s editors commented on the psyche’s far-flung nature and depth, locating its origins not in recent times; the psyche’s “ancestry goes back many millions of years” (p. xxiv). The psyche appears to be tantamount to the collective unconscious. Is the personal therefore, ever in touch with the collective? Given that fantasy is the “clearest expression” of the psyche (Miller, 2004, p. 43), and as Jung observed, fantasy “is just as much feeling as thinking; as much intuition as

sensation” (Miller, 2004, p. 43), there must be moments of communication, even unbroken communication between and within the personal and collective, the conscious and unconscious. It is highly impossible for an adult learner with a visual impairment or who is blind to escape these qualities of fantasy or imagination in action in everyday life in feeling, thinking, sensation and intuition. Miller (2004) brought all into a coherent state, concluding the idea that while consciousness permits us to function in our daily lives, the unconscious “compensates and complements by providing symbol, fantasy, intuition, and collective images” (p. 15). Collective images constitute the imagination and its active imaginations as products.

Jung (1966) in *Practice of Psychotherapy: Essays on the Psychology of the Transference and Other Subjects*, spoke of another set of resources, evidently associated with the psyche. They are “symbolic primordial images which have served to build up and differentiate the human mind” (p. 12). Images are energetic, dynamic processes in and of the imagination. These images cannot be contained intellectually, neither are they scientific concepts which must be made “clear and unequivocal” (Jung, 1966, p. 12). They constitute imagination, “universal perceptions of the primitive mind, and they never denote any particular content but are significant for their wealth of associations” (Jung, 1966, p. 12). Their wealth of associations is their communicative capacity. They are accessible to anyone, even to those in the throes of neurosis. In *Psychology and Religion*, Jung (1969) was convinced (after having read St. Augustine on archetypes) that the products of imagination were “always in essence visual” (p. 518). Jung (1969) contended that their forms must have “the character of images and moreover of typical images” (p. 518).

Imagination even has a common house or field with intuition. Jung and von Franz (1964) cautioned that intuitions do not only supplement that of the “rational intellect and its application to a specific problem,” neither are they solely the prime domain of poets and artists; physics, “the strictest of all applied sciences,” depends to “an astonishing degree” on intuition working by way of the unconscious, the house of imagination (p. 82).

John Dewey must have visited that house numerous times, remarking with subtle historic consciousness that the “engagement of the imagination is the only thing that makes any activity more than mechanical” (1923, p. 167). This statement is loaded. Not only is the imagination “as much a normal and integral part of human activity as is muscular movement,” Dewey contended further that “it is by imagination that symbols are translated over into a direct meaning . . . so as to expand and enrich it” (1923, p. 167).

Jaimar Tuarez, a psychology student at the Central University of Venezuela with a fascination for, and curiosity in things neuropsychological dropped a blog titled “What part of the Brain Controls Imagination?” Tuarez (2021) pointed to “the occipital cortex . . . involved in vision and . . . important for recreating visual experiences, and the posterior precuneus (located internally between the two cerebral hemispheres)” (para. 6). Science Direct (2015) related the precuneus to recollection and memory, information integration, matters of perception, mental imagery strategies, retrieval of episodic memory, and affective responses to pain (para. 1). It is important to note the closeness suggested in this description, between seeing and remembering, imagination and memory.

Evidently, memory is in imagination, as imagination is in memory. In their brilliant article titled “The Future of Memory: Remembering, Imagining, and the Brain,” functional neuroimaging studies revealed to Schacter et al. (2012), that remembering the past and imagining

the future activated “a common brain network during these two forms of mental activity” (p. 678).

Queensland Brain Institute at the University of Queensland, Australia, explored where memories were likely to be stored in the brain. The institute in its deliberations, wrote about explicit, implicit and short-term memories. Explicit memories were divided into episodic and semantic memory. Episodic memories were those concerning things that happen to someone, while semantic memories were about general facts and information. Importantly, the regions of the brain that store different kinds of memories are interconnected. Episodic and semantic memories which constitute explicit memories were said to be stored in the hippocampus, the neocortex and the amygdala. Motor or implicit memories were said to be stored in the basal ganglia and cerebellum, while short-term, working memories were stored in the prefrontal cortex. Among all peoples including the blind, the neocortex is involved in sensory perception, the generation of motor commands, the all-important spatial reasoning and languages. Information from the hippocampus is passed on to the neocortex over time.

The amygdala is prized in this study because it is involved in emotion memories, that is, it remembers the emotion attached to particular events in one’s life. Surely, this would include the memory of sight loss and the emotions which accompanied the first diagnosis. The Queensland institute mentioned sadness, anger, joy, shame, guilt, and one may add, overcoming. The communication between the amygdala, neocortex and hippocampus is critical in determining the sustainability and stability of a memory. The amygdala plays a crucial role in forming new memories related to fear. While fear can haunt the newly-emerging blind, no blind person doubts the power felt in bravery when navigation skills for instance, have been competently overcome. The blind person’s brain and its frames of reference are unique in their modes of perception and

creativity. Therefore, there is much to be gleaned in the very words and codes of participants in this study when they tell their stories of sight loss and imagine and remember their imagination experiences.

By way of an essay titled “Why we Need a New Kind of Education: Imagination Studies,” Stephen Asma requested that imagination be shifted from “the periphery” and made “the foundation of all knowledge” (2022, para. 1). Asma (2022) was of the view that imagination could not be restricted to the classic understanding of mind. Not only is imagination dynamic; it is, he argued, a part of “the organism’s pragmatic attempt to get maximum grip on its changing environment” (para. 12).

Imagination draws on “many brain-processing areas, such as perception, emotions, motivational/conative areas, memory, image representation, executive planning,” and more (Asma, 2022, para. 12). In fact, imagination is described as a “brain-based (embodied) system of capacities and applications” (Asma, 2022, para. 12).

What is of particular discourse significance to this study is Stephen Asma’s departure from the categorization of imagination as fantasy and fantasy as fleeting dream. Modern culture needs to appreciate that imagination is ever-present and evident in “everyday conversation, daydreaming, map navigation, political strategizing, scientific hypothesizing, moral reflection, field surgery, cooking, reading and lovemaking,” among others (Asma, 2022, para. 14). Adult learners telling their lived experiences with blindness is, therefore, an act of imagination. Additionally, imagination “generates our human biases, our visual communication grammar (also music, dance, etc.)” (Asma, 2022, para. 20). These are well-known in imagination conversations, but then Asma (2022) throws in “our political tribalism, our search for meaning, our scientific research programs, and our virtual rehearsal space for social life” (para. 20). Still, it

can be said that imagination is simultaneously ancient, modern and active among all peoples globally, if not universally.

Active Imagination

In *Practice of Psychotherapy: Essays on the Psychology of the Transference and Other Subjects*, Jung (1966) hails creative activity and the works of all human beings to have their origins in creative imagination. Jung and Chodorow (1997) conceived of active imagination and creative imagination as basically the same process, however, while creative imagination is engaged with works of art, religion, philosophy, and society, active imagination focuses on the personality (p. 48).

The story runs that following his break from Freud, Jung experienced significant lethargy and forms of depression. Joan Chodorow recollected that Jung as a middle-aged man in 1925, conjured a time when he was between 10 and 11 and imaginatively immersed himself in that play stage, “deeply engrossed” in the effortless building of games (Chodorow, 1997, p. 21). Even as an adult, Jung realized that the child in him was alive, confirming Piaget’s theory (1983) and his findings concerning play and development of a child’s moral judgement (1997) and the extent to which these effortless, relatedness experiences percolated way into adulthood and old age (Erikson & Erikson, 1997). Clearly, active imagination prescribes play where effortlessness and intuition are twinned.

In *Aion: Researches into the Phenomenology of the Self*, Jung (1968a) observed that active imagination in its play ethos produced a “series of pictures” (p. 243), in addition to “symbols of wholeness” (p. 223). Jung (1968a) rightly equated that wholeness with the self and archetypes, and through his immersion or introspection into his own self and psyche, Jung came

to know that these archetypes were in the first place “dreams and visions” and in the second, “products of active imagination in which symbols of wholeness appear” (p. 223).

At one point in *The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious*, Jung (1968b) described active imagination as “visionary meditation” (p. 215). Pictures and images were continuously streaming between appearances and disappearances. In that said volume, active imagination was then for Jung (1968b) a “method . . . of introspection” devised to observe “the stream of interior images” (p. 190). Pietkiewicz and Smith (2014) citing Silverman (1993) described a method as “a specific research technique” (p. 7). Still further, in *Aion: Researches into the Phenomenology of the Self*, Jung (1968a) used that technique of introspection or visionary meditation to tap into “thoughts, feelings, and affects . . . alive in us which we would never have believed possible” (p. 19). This practice (if not already actively at work in their everyday imaginations) could surely enrich the lives of adult learners with visual impairments if only they were not hindered by themselves and a particular culture of perception. Chodorow (1997) who came to know Jung’s methods well, identified dance as one of the expressions integral to active imagination; an everyday practice and “long-lost piece of history” (p. 17). These active imaginations in thoughts, feelings, emotions, dance and works of art are resources accessible to those who, by virtue of visual impairments tend to look inward to encounter images as much as to experience emotions of wellbeing at both the micro and macro levels, in exercise sessions, while playing a musical instrument, working with 3-dimensional objects, developing methodologies for teaching the blind, negotiating public spaces and the interior of architectural structures, or in times of silent introspection.

Given Jung’s methodology of introspection, active imagination and imaginations are used therefore, to coax material from the unconscious toward the threshold of consciousness and, in a

sense, catalyze the transcendent function. The transcendent function in its tendency to coherence and dynamism, acts as a mediator to bring unconscious imagery into dialogue with consciousness (Miller, 2004, p. 24). It was only through fantasy, Jung contended, and the “symbol-producing capacities of the unconscious” (Miller 2004, p. 42), that opposites could be reconciled. Thus, it was that fantasy and symbol became critical in and to Jung’s thinking about the transcendent function.

Jeffrey Miller’s *The Transcendent Function* was introduced by Jean Chodorow who presented and edited *Jung and the Active Imagination* in 1997. Miller (2004) was seminal in his observations of Jung’s transcendent function, calling for that middle ground or realm to be celebrated. Evidently, active imagination united conscious and unconscious in Jung’s world, and Miller (2004) validated this. Still, Welwood (1977) had identified some 16 senses in which Western psychology had used the concept unconscious as an explanatory term and believed that psychology in the West needed to reformulate the notion of the unconscious as “a separate mental region” (p. 2). Avens (1980) drew attention however, to Jung’s concern that Westerners should be mindful when borrowing from the abundance of the East not to confuse the rational with the spiritual. Importantly, Frantz Fanon, a French Caribbean psychiatrist, described Jung as an innovator, calling him “cosmic Jung” (2008, p. 151). Yet, Fanon argued, that though Jung wanted to go back to “the childhood of the world,” he went back “only to the childhood of Europe” (2008, p. 190).

Indeed, editors of Jung’s *Mysterium Coniunctionis*, Volume 14 of his collected works, found reflected therein “new and fascinating aspects of the history of the European mind” (1970, p. vi). French sociologist Michel Foucault would caution

however, that “man is a recent invention” within European culture even if one were to take the 16th century as point of entrance (2005, p. 386). Implications for understanding Western interpretations of consciousness could still not be underestimated.

Even while Jung reported a separation between the ego and consciousness in Freud, Vaillant (1993) found wisdom in the ego, salvaging Freud’s deliberations. Jung (1970) had constituted the ego as “a relatively constant personification of the unconscious itself, or as the Schopenhauerian mirror in which the unconscious becomes aware of its own face” (p. 107). Arguing that ego incorporated “defense and adult development and creativity,” Vaillant (1993) concluded that the final and decisive “developmental ego tasks are wisdom, the fusion of care and justice, and the capacity to consider the needs, rights, and past histories of others even as we pay heed to those same facets in ourselves” (p. 8). In effect, ego was not always seen as a negative entity. In *Aion: Researches into the Phenomenology of the Self*, Jung (1968a) revealed that in the second century the ego “was considered the exponent of an all-embracing totality, the self” (p. 223). According to Jung (1968a), it is a thought that “by no means all psychologists are familiar with even today” (p. 223). These perspectives encourage and promote growth.

Interpretively, in the fusion of care and justice, there is much that blind persons can teach the seeing. In truth, in *Mysterium Coniunctionis*, Jung would work with that finite split and duality established at the time by Freud for instance, between the ego and the unconscious, and move on to salvage their emerging bonding and unification in his transcendent function. Interestingly, Schopenhauer (2012) cited a passage from Plato where the Greek philosopher said, “after our original nature was cut in two, each half longed for the half belonging to it, and would come to it again” (p. 238). This seems to be the epistemological history of Western philosophy and culture.

Tony Nader in his *One Unbounded Ocean of Consciousness* does not write about consciousness as a layer containing an ego separated from the unconscious, but like Miller, Chodorow and Jung in deeper reflections, found a unity of opposites. In fact, Nader (2021) found transcendental consciousness. The mind is said to be quieted, the transcendental being moves beyond excited mental states and dives into a “silent,” “peaceful” and sometimes “luminous awareness” (p. 55). This sounds like a zone of acceptance. No “particular thought” emerges, neither is there any “object of perception” since the field is a participatory one (Nader, 2021, p. 55). Indeed, it is a coherent relatedness space, an “experience of something beyond the senses, mind, and intellect” (Nader, 2021, p. 55).

Could Nader’s transcendental consciousness be similar to what Jamaica’s Rastafarians call consciousness which they equate with knowledge, intelligent insight, awareness, and wisdom? Surely, an ecology of consciousness seeks out the pathology and faces it squarely, allowing consciousness to be “awake and open to itself” (Nader, 2021, p. 55). Consciousness that is awake and open to itself is fearless, unable to resist sharing “love and conscious contribution of love” (Nader, 2021, p. 98). This is an expression of relatedness, so integral to wellbeing. Cell biologist Bruce Lipton has observed that the blood of a person in love is different from the blood of a person living in fear. This latter shuts down the immune system (Lipton, 2020). Consciousness is now fearless confidence and awareness. Transcendence of the age-old historic separation has been achieved inevitably. It is therefore not surprising, though revelatory in the third decade of the 21st century to read Zukav (2021) writing that the universe is “alive, intimate, compassionate and wise” (p. 23). Intimate is a significant signifier. Gary Zukav’s intimation is likely to

be the consciousness that Epstein (1989), Marks (1999), and Valentine (1999) were referring to when they placed imagination as an “integral aspect of human consciousness” (Kaplan et al., 2014, p. 74). Imagination’s activities impact details inherent in emotional experiences (Kaplan & Epstein, 2012). Since feelings, emotions and images are intimate in the development in and of active imaginations, to know that they rise into, and in consciousness, and impact psychological and physiological states (possibly among vision-impaired and blind people), is significant resource to their wellbeing (Kaplan et al., 2014).

Wellbeing

As already suggested, not only did feelings arise with emotions and imagery; the concept wellbeing did not escape the splitting or dualizing so common in the evolution of European thought and scholarship, and even that too experienced the inevitable transcendence. Bradburn (1969), in the historic context of that split or duality, identified two wellbeing traditions: one referred to as the hedonic tradition and the other the eudaimonic wellbeing tradition (as cited in Dodge et al., 2012).

The hedonic tradition emphasized constructs such as happiness, positive affect, low negative affect, and satisfaction with life (Deci & Ryan, 2008). Dodge et al. (2012) stated that these approaches would be evidenced in works of Bradburn (1969), Diener (1984), Kahneman et al. (1999), and Lyubomirsky and Lepper (1999). Deci and Ryan (2008) were of the view that eudaimonia -- over beyond mere happiness -- denoted the actualizing of one’s full potential, and “living as one was inherently intended to live” (p. 2).

Aristotle, among others of his time, was said to speak of wellbeing or the good life in relation to the eudaimonic which meant among other dimensions of being, “contemplation and virtue,” “justice,” “living authentically,” and developing one’s potential “in pursuit of

meaningful goals” that transcended the personal need to serve both the individual and the society (Henderson & Knight, 2012, p. 198). Evidently, the eudaimonic tradition ran along lines of positive psychology and human development. Dodge et al. (2012) sourced the eudaimonic tradition in modern works of Rogers (1961), Ryff (1989a, 1989b), and Waterman (1993). It was clear that the two traditions were not “mutually exclusive” (Waterman et al., 2008), and the two “pursuits” could impact each other (King et al., 2006, as cited in Henderson & Knight, 2012, p. 202).

Then Henderson and Knight (2012) identified emergence of the concept flourishing, which did not lessen the significance found before and inherent in pleasure and meaning. Its protagonist was Martin Seligman, a positive psychologist. Henderson and Knight (2012) in adopting the concept “flourishing,” described the union or unification as the “desirable state,” when both hedonia and eudaimonia were flourishing “simultaneously” in any individual (p. 202). The psychological is evident in the concept flourishing. Given the breadth and depth of research that flourished and flowed actively out of self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 2008; Ryan & Deci, 2000; Ryan et al., 2017; and Vansteenkiste et al., 2020), spawning the concept of psychological wellbeing, this study’s wellbeing focus will be on the psychological.

Through empirical work, Richard Ryan and Edward Deci came to identify three needs, essential for “facilitating optimal functioning of the natural propensities for growth and integration, as well as for constructive social development and personal well-being” (2000, p. 68). The three are: the needs for competence (Harter, 1978; White, 1963), relatedness (Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Reis, 1994), and autonomy (deCharms, 1968; Deci, 1975, as cited in Ryan & Deci, 2000, p. 68).

Competence

Erikson and Erikson (1997) trace development of competence to the infant, calling it a “rudimentary strength” and were of the view that any effort at mastery in the growing human being entails integrating “all the maturing methods of verifying and mastering factuality and of sharing the actuality of those who cooperate” (p. 75). Competence connotes psychological and cognitive strength. Indeed, though discussing competence, the concept relatedness emerges implicitly in Erikson and Erikson’s observation.

For Vansteenkiste et al. (2020), competence “concerned effectiveness and mastery.” A sense of happiness if not of satisfaction was produced with its attendant neurologic and neuroscientific implications, when an individual got opportunities for “using and extending skills and expertise” (p. 3). Mastering the use of braille or a cane by the visually impaired serves as an example. There is the downside, when individuals do not demonstrate mastery and effectiveness leading to feelings of failure and helplessness.

Ryan et al. (2017) cite White (1959) who proposed the basic need for competence, suggesting intrinsically, an ability and need for dealing with the physical and social environment. Kagitcibasi (2012) found out that what is referred to as social competence across “many groups” in Africa is tantamount to a quality of social intelligence involving sensitivity to the needs of others, beneficence, and taking responsibility for and being respectful of others (p. 7). To these Kagitcibasi (2012) added (and the source is fecund) practical and technical skills, considered marks of intelligence and social competence (Dasen, 1984; Keller, 2003; Nsamenang & Lamb, 1994; Serpell, 1977, 2009; Super & Harkness, 1986, 1997). A desire to learn has to be ever-present in the visually impaired adult. However, Ryan and Deci (2000) have cautioned that

“feelings of competence will not enhance intrinsic motivation unless accompanied by a sense of autonomy” (p. 72).

Autonomy

Vansteenkiste et al. (2020) stated that autonomy referred to the experience of volition and willingness. Its satisfaction produced experiences of “integrity . . . one’s actions, thoughts, and feelings are self-endorsed and authentic” (p. 3). Persons whose practice of autonomy is thwarted, experience being pushed in unwanted places and situations usually accompanied by conflict and its implications in neurosis. Minorities or persons with disabilities can experience this hindrance and displacement of a sense of autonomy.

Ryan and Deci (2000) draw on the works of deCharms (1968) in constructing their description of autonomy as an “internal perceived locus of causality” (p. 72). This has implications for self-concept, self-esteem and building of fearless confidence behind blind eyes. Vision-impaired and blind persons claim to walk by faith, not by sight. Close to 10 authors wrote a faith and healthcare series for the *Lancet* and they could conclude that clinicians and physicians should take the time to understand their clients if they are to provide “professional, compassionate, and empathetic care respecting a patient’s autonomous wishes” (Tomkins et al., 2015, p. 1783).

Vallerand et al. (2008), having searched the literature, concluded that environments that support and foster autonomy expression come to realize “qualitatively superior forms of motivation characterized by high levels of self-determination” (p. 257). Consequently, these intelligence shifts make for and are open to “more adaptive cognitive, affective, and behavioral outcomes” (Vallerand et al., 2008, p. 257).

To think about autonomy in a positive sense (transcending the discourse as to whether autonomy is integral to an individualist culture and relatedness to a collectivist culture), is therefore to invest the adult learner determined to overcome limitations or perceived negative changes in life with a positive psychology. It is too, to tap into possible regions of beliefs and spirituality given autonomy's inner sensibility. Thus, it is that issues of faith, healing, cure, and care cannot be separated from autonomy in the adult learner who is visually impaired given the history and practicality of faith and a positive psychology in posttraumatic growth and overcoming of disorders or pathologies.

Relatedness

Vansteenkiste et al. (2020) state that warmth, bonding, and care, are synonymous with relatedness. People like to feel connected, and significant to others. The opposite of that sense of belonging to a group or community can contribute to feelings of social alienation, exclusion, and loneliness. Blind people can feel lonely. Deci and Ryan (2008) saw the three qualifying needs for wellbeing function better when unified, citing Devine and colleagues who "incorporate relatedness and competence within autonomy" (p. 8). Seldom could they escape the ultimate unification. Kagitcibasi (2013) in her study of adolescents, reminded those who did not know, that the dynamic in autonomy and relatedness "is the key to understanding the self, and family is the main developmental niche for the self" (p. 223). In Jung's works, self and wholeness are semantically and psychoanalytically synonymous. Epstein (1973) recognized and hailed features of that wholeness in his research, remarking that "if the horizons of psychology were more spacious than they are . . . theories of personality would not need the concept of self or of ego except in certain compound forms" (p. 404). Those complex, hyphenated forms (themselves, expressions of relatedness), included self-knowledge, self-image, ego-enhancement, and ego-

extension (Allport, 1955, as cited in Epstein, 1973, p. 404). The need for that connection with self to be extended into “feelings of inclusion and harmony” at that group and family level is paramount (Kelly et al., 2008; Sheldon & Bettencourt, 2002, as cited in Vansteenkiste et al., 2020, p. 9). Evidently, Vansteenkiste et al. (2020) drawing on the observations of Baxter and Pelletier (2019), shifted relatedness from the individual to the community into care for the “broader society,” “the universe,” and indeed, into a “relatedness with nature” (p. 9). Jung’s symbols in fire, light, and the “finest of all symbols of the libido . . . the human figure,” (1967, p. 171) intuitively come to mind. According to Northrop Frye, in the imagination, fire to Bachelard (1987) represented “internal heat” to the warm-blooded mammal; sparks of a seed; vitality; its flames an inherent phallic symbol; its transformative power, tantamount to a purgation, indeed, an all-consuming ontological embrace (p. vi). Though not visible on the bodies of humans, fire-like consciousness, is a given in the internal organs of blind and sighted people. Even relations between the human figure and a guide dog can be factored in; communication with animals and plants (given Native American cosmologies) can no longer be ruled out in this 21st century field of learning, imagination and consciousness. In this regard, it is worth noting that Baxter and Pelletier (2019) were of the view that human beings have a basic psychological need for nature; a sort of nature-relatedness, maybe itself already existing meaningfully as essence in human consciousness, ostensible in the works of Jung, and suggested in the hermeneutic phenomenology of Husserl, Heidegger, Sartre, and Merleau-Ponty and those on whom the phenomenological was built including Lambert, Fichte, Hegel and Kant.

Ways of Seeing

It is critical to physically see the world and thus know the world, but when diagnoses report, among other changes, “atrophy of the optic tracts and optic chiasm”

(Pietrini et al., 2009, p. 370), other ways of seeing, possibly through imagination and active imaginations, must be adopted using the other senses and insights inherent in intuition, emotions, colors, mental imagery and in some Eastern cultures, by way of the Ajna chakra or mind's eye. In the segment which follows, the literature will look at touch, feeling, the mind's eye and intuition as other sense media to knowing. Feelings and memory run beneath these discourses.

Touch

According to Classen (2020) “a fear of blindness probably lurked behind many of the denigrations of touch, for touch was the symbolic opposite of sight” (p. 285). Touch is of value to the adult learner who lost sight in their adult years, but it is also their way of knowing the world. It is one of their ways of seeing the world they remember. Touch does not see. Touch gives insight. Touch is relational. Schopenhauer (2012) cited vision as one-sided, but touch provided “the data for cognition of size, shape, hardness, softness, dryness, moisture, smoothness, and temperature, etc.” (p. 56).

After three years of ethnographic research with 40 mostly congenitally blind women in Israel, Hammer (2013) sought to produce a “fresh approach to the discussion of the researcher's gaze” and the methodological implications of such rethinking (p. 1). Gili Hammer as researcher, was not blind. Not only did Hammer (2013) have to contend with, place aside, or bracket her sightedness; it was imperative to create a “sensory knowledge” that could qualify for use in qualitative work (p. 2). In fact, Hammer (2013) wanted to promote a “multi-sensory” approach to social research (p. 1), citing in the process the works of Classen (1997), Feld (1996), Howes (2003), Pink (2010), and Stoller (1989). Pink (2010) hailed promotion of a sensory anthropology as opposed to an anthropology of the senses, where the former (as is the case with this study) engendered interdisciplinarity and embraced principles informing a sensory approach and the

sharing of research methods across disciplines (p. 333). Palmer et al. (2010), in their call for an integrative education, echoed Pink's findings when they stated that researchers need to give the "most rational defense" to "nonrational forms of intelligence such as bodily knowing, relationality, intuition, and emotion" (p. 24). Furthermore, Pink (2010) cited Engels (2009) who critiqued Howes' attachment to "modalities of perception," calling instead for sensory anthropology to turn its focus again to experience and perception (p. 332). Implications for methodology cannot be underestimated.

Invariably, a fresh, if not palpable epistemology would emerge. Holding hands while walking with these women; agreeing to be massaged by one; walking together into coffee shops and elevators revealed what Hammer (2013) called after Wacquant (2003) "fleshly companionship" (as cited in Hammer, 2013, p. 6). It was Wacquant (2015) who requested recognition of the "reality and potency of carnal know-how, the bottom-up, visceral grasp of the social world" (p. 3). Through engagement with these, humans acquire intellectual understanding and a capacity for dexterous handling -- a departure from, and transcendence of the dual, linear, and prescribed ways of knowing (Wacquant, 2015, p. 3). Still, even while touch provides a sense of connection with the world, a blind person is likely to feel lonely even in the midst of companions. This is so evident when blind people visit museums. Having visited one, Helen Keller mused, "Imagination puts a sentiment into every line and curve, and the statue in my touch is indeed the goddess herself who breathes and moves and enchants" (2009, p. 8).

In *Seeing Through Touch*, Grosvenor and Macnab (2013) reported that as early as the beginning of the 20th century, to be precise, in September 1913, and educator of blind persons named G. I. Walker had written lucidly that "whatever arouses thought, and stirs

interest in form, shape, color, weight, size, height, depth and the hundred and one accompaniments must inevitably strengthen and quicken the powers of the blind” (p. 45). These excerpts would lose their purity through paraphrasing. Clearly, touch in Hammer’s ethnography, allowed these women to see, evaluate and know dimensions of their female researcher. “Touch . . . annihilates distance and physically unites the toucher and the touched” (Classen, 2020, p. 277). This is a vast and intimate ontology granting active imagination competences and thus meaning to the being of those whom anthropology of the senses would deem subjects. Invariably, the concept “intimacy” emerged in Hammer’s experiences, but it was used as Classen (2007) meant it, that is, as one inviting an “intimate engagement” (Hammer, 2013, p. 5). Such a relatedness touch was between “people and between objects and people” (Classen, 2007, as cited in Hammer, 2013, p. 5).

Hammer (2013) called for attention to be given to power relations and “the researcher’s gaze,” and for critical consideration to be granted to the researchers’ and the participants’ sensory experiences, their micro-interactions in the field and their influences on knowledge production (p. 4). Clearly, there is much intelligent activity that the brain of the blind person memorizes. In this study, blind participants remembered what they saw, when they saw, and those images activated and enhanced their imagination experiences. Their sense of touch remembered and sometimes registered feelings of disgust. It should please them to realize however, that visual cortical regions, because of their association, are capable of “processing and interpreting” information transported by touch (Pietrini et al., 2009, p. 367).

Feeling and Emotion

Antonio Damasio and Gil Carvalho were clear about origins of feelings, and they are ancient. To talk about ancient is to conjure the unconscious, fantasy, active imagination and the

active imaginations. The two contend that “the fundamental elements of body state mapping, sentience and feelings imbued with valence are likely to be far older than our species, and probably even older than the advent of cerebral cortices” (2013, p. 149).

Today, when the complex cerebral cortex of primates contributes to cognition, memory, language, reasoning and imagination, feelings are incorporated, enriched and refined.

In *Mysterium Coniunctionis*, Jung (1970) wrote about a patient who used a pencil or pen to make representations of dreams and suddenly turned to use of color to do the sketching. According to Jung (1970) this “is generally the moment when merely intellectual interest gives way to emotional participation” (p. 248). Indeed, like emotions, “colors are feeling-values” (Jung, 1970, p. 248). Inna Segal, author of the eBook titled *Secret Language of Color Cards*, was confident that color could contribute to healing emotions, gaining intuitive insights, igniting creativity, and positively affect individual feeling and self-worth (2011, p. 8). Color can reassure. Arguing that the days of drab interiors are over, Tara Rae Hill stated that evidence points to a clear correlation between “healing and interiors that are stimulating” (2008, p. 6). The link between color and physiological responses has been well-established. When exposed to red for example, “an individual’s pituitary gland sends signals to the adrenal gland and adrenaline is released” (Hill, 2008, p. 6). Color therefore matters to the emotional wellbeing of blind people who do not see it externally but remember it or feel their emotions represented in its flashes in accordance with a positive achievement, in the midst of their stimulated retinal detachments for instance, and in the throes of an active mind’s eye or Ajna chakra.

Immordino-Yang and Damasio (2007) identified an overlap between emotion and cognition, emotion so central to active imagination. Emotions are central in learning,

memory, decision making, and creativity, “as well as high reason and rational thinking” (Immordino-Yang & Damasio, 2007, p. 8). Though Damasio and Carvalho (2013) draw a distinction between feelings and emotions, both provide information for knowing and seeing the world. Seeing in this context could be used to mean remembering, invoking memory in the seeing process. Damasio and Cavarlho’s repertoire of feelings included thirst, food, and air hunger (the urge to breathe), different kinds of pleasure and pain, disgust, fear, sadness and joy, social responses such as contempt, shame, compassion, and admiration (2013, p. 143). Though experiences related to vision, hearing, touch, taste, and smell “commonly cause” and contribute to feelings, they are however not feelings “in and of themselves” (Damasio & Carvalho, 2013, p. 143). Whether the differences matter to those who are blind is what matters here. Prinz (2005) has argued that all emotions have feeling potential. “All emotions are perceptions of bodily states, and those perceptions can be conscious. So, there is no example of an emotion that could not, under the right conditions, be a feeling” (p. 17). This is a matter of interest likely to be resolved by interviewees/participants who are blind and engaged in this study. It is clear however that like the relatedness chemistry in touch, “feelings constitute a crucial component of the mechanisms of life regulation, from simple to complex” (Damasio & Carvalho, 2013, p. 143). According to Helen Keller, “The keenness of our vision depends not on how much we can see, but on how much we feel” (2009, p. 30).

Mind’s Eye

Anthony Browder asks how it is possible to see with the two eyes closed and provided the answer. “It is possible because when you sleep you see with your inner eye” (1989, p. 85). This inner or mind’s eye is said to be located at the center of the head at the brow level (Johari, 2000; Judith, 2016). Zion (2014) locates four sites where the mind’s eye could be located: (i)

behind the eyelids; (ii) in the center of the brain; (iii) behind the forehead; and (iv) floating in the air in front of the head (p. 84). It is called third eye, Ajna chakra, pineal gland and the eye of clairvoyance (Browder, 1989, p. 85).

In Ayurvedic medicine, one of the world's most ancient holistic healing systems developed in India, the name Ajna means command center and its purposes are intuition, seeing and wisdom. Seeing is significant here. Kavanagh (2020) stated that the Sanskrit name Ajna translates into English as "perceive" and "beyond wisdom" (p. 115). The color attached to it is indigo and its orientation, self-reflection. When that sixth chakra is balanced, it is said to produce clarity, inspiration, and vision (Judith, 2016, p. 134).

Chakra is the Sanskrit word for wheel and the seven chakras are said to flow from the base of the spine to the top of the head. These wheels were considered vortexes of energy (Herring, 2009, p. 1).

Judith (2016) recorded the mind's eye development age to be at 12 and above; the threshold of school-age slipping upward into adolescence (Erikson & Erikson, 1997). The psychological crisis or dialectic tension which the 12-year-old has to deal with ultimately combines industry and inferiority to produce competence, itself an expression of intelligence and psychological wellbeing. From the moments in infancy to those of adulthood and old age (and this is debatable), transcendence may well be ceaseless, just as the flow which arises at age 12 from the root chakra through the sacral, to figure dynamically in the Ajna chakra and finally to be set free at the crown at the top of the head. The fifth chakra for example, constitutes a vibrational bridge and link between the heart and the head, offering from within the neck and throat "a balance within life between thinking and feeling" (Zion, 2014, pp. 144-145). Judith (2012) has observed a

matter of interest to those visually impaired or blind who are mentally oriented and experience blockage to their fifth or throat chakra. They slip into depression because of their inability to communicate. Those who are physically oriented, who experience a fifth chakra blockage, for example, tended to communicate “without content, or without knowledge or creativity to back them up” (p. 366). This throat chakra or thyroid gland in Western biology determines body metabolism. Johari (2000) has remarked that a yogi who “has passed through the Vishuddha Chakra at the throat to the Ajna Chakra at the forehead, transcends the five elements and becomes freed (mukta) from the bondage of time-bound consciousness” (p. 30). Thus it is, that when an adult learner or anyone is asleep, particularly between the hours of 2 and 6 am, the pineal gland or Ajna chakra secretes the hormone melatonin which Browder (1989) has contended “literally bathes the brain,” creating the condition for inner visions to emerge and unfold (p. 85).

Daily, blind people report using the energy produced in their mind’s eye to picture, visualize and imagine places they intend or wish to go to. The active imaginative abilities of visualizing the past, creating positive pictures of the future, and fantasizing (Herring, 2009, p. 15), are articulations of an Ajna chakra. Singh (1993) could therefore describe the seven-chakra system of which the Ajna is sixth, as “probably the most archetypal paradigm of existence ever devised” (p. 118). In fact, one of the lines in a prayer spoken when a person needed to cleanse the Ajna chakra stated, “I AM now free from the bondage of ego-attachment” (Shumsky, 2013, p. 214). This is an expression of the transcendent function.

Blind adult learners engage the eye in their mind to imagine actively, numerous physical exercises, challenges and experiences from solving mathematical problems, picturing pathways,

steps, doorways, the interior of their houses and the life spaces in which they engage others, even as they sense their emotions and senses adapting to environmental cues.

Horney (1950) presented an individual who on account of an amazing intellect and imagination could “visualize things not yet existing” (p. 377). This use of the mind’s eye by blind people or persons with visual impairments can serve to inform professionals in the sports business, or even teachers developing methods for teaching mathematics to their blind or sighted children. Sighted students can use their imaginations the way blind people do in the processes of learning.

381 participants involved in six different forms of sport were administered a 37-item questionnaire to determine their use of imagery. Hall et al. (1990) discovered among other practices that (i) though athletes often visualized themselves as winning, they seldom saw themselves losing, but could imagine themselves as not performing correctly; (ii) in preparation for their high-level performance, athletes reported a high use of imagery; (iii) athletes tended to emphasize visual imagery when the use of imagery in motor skills is being considered; (iv) athletes use imagery more in times of competition than in practice; and (v) using imagery kept athletes focused on the upcoming event, intensified their self-confidence and kept them in control of their emotions (pp. 7-8).

Charlotte Reznick is a child educational psychologist, an Associate Clinical Professor of Psychology at University of California, Los Angeles. Reznick has used visualization techniques that Olympic athletes have used for decades to help children be winners. These techniques were being taught to parents who would use them to remove fear, for instance from their children’s way of imagining their outcomes in any game. Among Reznick’s nine imagination tools as they were called, are ways of dealing with

doubt, fear, and low confidence. In the case of fear, the child is asked to take a few breaths (essential to the beginning of any visualization practice); picture anything that creates hesitancy in thinking or emotion; and during the exercise, concentrate on confidence, that is, the feeling most likely to help in overcoming that fear or hesitancy. In fact, the child is asked to fill her whole body with confidence through her intention and breath (2020). Each breath the child takes through a particular nostril can alter metabolism of the autonomic nervous system regulating in the process, involuntary physiological activity (Telles et al., 1994). Interestingly, the child may be asked to summon an animal guide or spirit/guide, an animal the child likes that makes them feel brave, giving them the power and strength to overcome -- expression of a biophilic instinct, if not an inherent intuitive tendency to relate to forces in other forms of life. Not only is the child asked to visualize the joy of winning; before this, the child is encouraged to look at the win, picture by picture (paras. 3-7). Zion (2014) has argued that humans are “naturally wired for visualization,” which incidentally, is served by intuition (p. 85). Yet, Matthew Lieberman in “Intuition: A Social Cognitive Neuroscience Approach,” has been able to discern that in Western culture “the legacy of intuition has been less than inspiring” (2000, p. 109). Despite this cultural dismissal, Lieberman (2000) could describe intuition as “a phenomenological and behavioral correlate of knowledge obtained through implicit learning” (p. 110).

Intuition

Kavanagh (2020) was convinced that a brow or Ajna chakra that was functioning fully contributed to us “trusting” our intuition (p. 115). When Ajna is not balanced (one gathers in relation to the other six chakras or vortexes along the length of the spinal cord into the brain), Kavanagh (2020) identified “over-intellectualizing” to a general evasion of emotional and spiritual wellbeing and a “struggle with self-acceptance,” including difficulty accepting the

“shadow side” (p. 116). But the shadow should be faced and communicated with. That communication can begin by way of traces and trickles, essentially, by way of intuition.

Blind people must face and work with their shadows each day, grappling with the troubles and issues encountered as they negotiate within diverse systems; as they fight with emergent impressions of themselves that a disorder has forced them to internalize. In the process, they become adept at observing their inner sensibility and mind’s eye. This inner seeing balances feelings, emotions and modes of cognition. Dean Koontz defined intuition as seeing with the soul (as cited in Kavanagh, 2020), while the Institute of Noetic Sciences in Petaluma, California describes intuition as an inner knowing. When American singer and songwriter Stevie Wonder says he is blessed with inner vision, he sees from within. This is an ancient, ever-living resource. According to Pearson (2010), “if we stop for a moment and think about it, our ability to imagine the world around us, in the absence of stimulation from that world, is perhaps even more amazing” (p. 1).

Overton (2015) noticed that the concept intuition emerged in the works of Kant, a protagonist in the relational revolution which was concerned about “forms of process . . . the nature of the universe, nature, and science” (p. 12). Among the writers involved in that relational revolution were Heraclitus, Leibniz, Kant, Schelling, Fichte, Hegel, James, Dewey, Pierce, Bergson, and Whitehead (Overton, 2015, p. 12). Schopenhauer (2012) concluded the matter, writing sweepingly that “all intuition is intellectual . . . without the understanding it would never come to intuition, to perception, apprehension of objects” (p. 285). These are needed for it to become “a cognition” (Schopenhauer, 2012, p. 285).

Assagioli (1973) recognized the importance of inspiration and intuition, stressing that the adult learner with visual impairment for example, should be open to these “incentives” and welcome them (p. 156). Yet, Assagioli (1973) warned that persons who open to these “impulses” must be careful, immersed as they are in a “psychic ocean, enveloped in a psychic atmosphere” (p. 157).

Haidt (2001) presented the idea of intuitionism, arguing that when people grasped a moral truth, they did so not through any complex process of thinking and reflection, but by “a process more akin to perception,” in which one “just sees without argument that they are and must be true” (p. 814). Sees here connotes know. Haidt (2001) described intuitions as “quick, automatic evaluations” (p. 814). Haidt (2004) recorded William James saying, “If you have intuitions at all, they come from a deeper level of your nature than the loquacious level which rationalism inhabits” (p. 287). Lieberman (2000) could write with some assurance that intuition is “the subjective experience of a mostly nonconscious process that is fast, a-logical, and inaccessible to consciousness that, dependent on exposure to the domain or problem space, is capable of accurately extracting probabilistic contingencies” (p. 111). The subjective experience is evident in transformative learning or shifts to positive psychology and thinking, where adult learners who are blind for example, become focused on how to negotiate and act on their own purposes, values, feelings, and meanings, “rather than those . . . uncritically assimilated from others” (Mezirow, 2000, p. 9).

Whether intuition is supported by imagination and memory and vice versa remains phenomena of research interest. In this regard Henry Bergson’s observation that “memory . . . is just the intersection of mind and matter” (2004, p. 8) remains intriguing and formative phenomenon throughout this study.

Phenomenological Inquiry

Essence, Being and Meaning

While Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1962) thought phenomenology to be the study of essences, C L R James regarded essence as the movement of negation, and Dilthey (2010) cited essence as having “constant change as its other side . . . any change incorporating outside influences into a unitary life-nexus is at the same time defined by this nexus” (p. 263). This is a problem-solving methodology; this movement of negation. Merleau-Ponty (1962) believed that all problems “amount to finding definitions of essences . . . essence of perception or the essence of consciousness” (p. 6).

Gearing (2004) like Oxley (2016) carried an additional view. The latter believed that phenomenology was about the philosophical study of being (Oxley, 2016, p. 56). Gearing (2004) contended that Heidegger’s ontology shifted from the study of essences “to a study of being- in-the world, wherein hidden meanings were sought and interpreted within their respective contexts” (p. 1434). It is possible now, to find value in C L R James’ definition of essence as the movement of negation given Zukav’s view that nonbeing also is. “Both Being and Nonbeing are that-which-is. Everything, even ‘emptiness,’ is that-which-is. There is nothing which is not that-which-is” (2012, p. 341). So, is phenomenology the study of consciousness, essences and being? One thing is for sure according to Allen-Collinson (2011), ontologically and epistemologically, phenomenology offers a “third way” with the view that the external world, the body and consciousness “are all fundamentally intertwined” (p. 51). Allen-Collinson might have used the adverb “intrinsically” to modify intertwined.

Rooting observations in the works of Cohen and Omery (1994), van Manen (1990) had noted that to ask for “the being of something is to call for an understanding of its nature or meaning” (as cited in Dowling, 2007, p. 134). Indubitably, phenomenology, according to van Manen (2000), is fascinated too with meaning, desirous as it is of seeing into the “heart of things” (p. 12), and into the heart and minds of people. The question becomes, what does the phenomenon mean to participants; what is prevalent among all participants as they experience a phenomenon or energies emanating from its diversified meanings? Evidently, they experience a conceptual environment and its field states of impairments too. A fixed meaning did not produce understanding for Freeman (2011), but in order to produce understanding, meaning had to be “generated” and “transformed” (as cited in Chan et al., 2013, p. 10). As for what the data generated; in order to discover meaning there, one needed “an attitude open enough to let unexpected meanings emerge” (Giorgi, 2011; Lopez & Willis, 2004, as cited in Chan et al., 2013, p. 10). In the context of emergence and the allowing of material deemed intelligent as lived experience to flow, Moustakas (1994) cited Husserl saying that researchers must look to what “is inwardly experienced or otherwise inwardly intuited” (p. 84). Dilthey (2010) attempted to codify that lived experience, describing the phenomenon as “a unit whose parts are connected by a common meaning,” adding that “the category of meaning first manifests itself in memory (whenever we remember)” (p. 254). Memory is truly significant to blind and visually impaired people who lost sight during their adult years. They could be considered therefore, to be harbingers of novel meaning and possibly of hermeneutic theorizing.

Phenomenology and Hermeneutics

Chan et al. (2013, p. 10) cited Embree (1997) who identified seven approaches to phenomenology, namely, descriptive (transcendental constitutive) phenomenology, naturalistic

constitutive phenomenology, existential phenomenology, generative historicist phenomenology, genetic phenomenology, hermeneutic (interpretive) phenomenology, and realistic phenomenology. Chris Dawson in his translation of Hans-Georg Gadamer's *Praise of Theory*, concluded that hermeneutics means mere interpretation, though over time it has come to mean the line of thought explored by Gadamer, Paul Ricoeur, and other followers of Heidegger (1998, p. xxviii). Langdridge (2007) stated that descriptive and hermeneutic (interpretive) phenomenology are the two classical approaches guiding the majority of research in psychology (as cited in Chan et al., 2013, p. 10). It is clear that phenomenology originated and originates from psychology and philosophy (Creswell & Poth, 2017, p. 11). Maura Dowling, on the frontline in nursing research, would reiterate emphatically that “phenomenology without hermeneutics can become shallow” (Todres & Wheeler, 2001, as cited in Dowling, 2007, p. 132). This study adopts the hermeneutic by way of interpretative phenomenological analysis. A few succinct observations regarding methodology will now be made concerning Husserl’s concept of epoche or bracketing given that phenomenology comes alive when it is applied in methodology wherein a researcher is asked to look carefully at the thing that matters.

Epoche

It is significant to note that Husserl sourced his early understanding of epoche to the warnings of, if not guidance from his parents who were of Greek roots. His understanding of the concept epoche and the behavior it subsequently provoked contained as he said, the voice of his parents, “an expression of their concern, a warning to be alert, to look with care, to see what is really there, and to stay away from everyday habits of knowing things, people, and events” (Moustakas, 1994, p. 85).

Allen-Collinson (2011) noted that there have been “nuances of meaning and underlying differences” between the concepts bracketing, epoche and reduction. Husserl used the terms interchangeably (Allen-Collinson, 2011; Gearing, 2004; Tufford & Newman, 2012). In spite of the terms used to name it, the whole phenomenon was aimed at tapping into that “essence of experience and looking beyond preconceptions” (Tufford & Newman, 2012, p. 84). It is worth noting too that many of the phenomenologists who worked with and were students of Husserl, would go on to develop their own ideas and approaches; individuals such as Heidegger, would reject the concept of phenomenological reductionism, advocating for the full comprehension of the “lived experience . . . in essence, an interpretative process” since “bracketing out preconceptions was neither possible nor desirable” (Cohen & Omery, 1994; Heidegger, 1962; LeVasseur, 2003, as cited in Tufford & Newman, 2012, p. 84).

Views differ as to when such a bracketing should begin. Chan et al. (2013) recommend that bracketing be well planned “before entering the data collection and analysis process” (p. 8). Giorgi (1998) advocated for keeping bracketing within the analysis phase while Glaser (1978, 1992) asked the researcher to be aware of preconceptions at the start of the research endeavor. In addition, Rolls and Relf (2006) needed bracketing to begin at the start of the project when it was being conceptualized and recommended that the process be continued throughout the research (as cited in Chan et al., 2013). It is therefore critical that researchers identify the processes of bracketing they wish to participate in, given that “the methods of bracketing are not mutually exclusive and may complement one another” (Tufford & Newman, 2012, p. 89). Indeed, the phenomenological attitude calls forth the researcher’s sense of enchantment and wonder, proffering an opportunity for an adult to suspend adult knowledge and preconceptions, and view the world “through the fresh, excited, naive eyes of childhood” (Allen-Collinson, 2011, p. 53).

Chapter One allowed this researcher to produce a sociocultural perspective touching the ontogenetic and phylogenetic (John-Steiner & Mahn, 1996; Vygotsky, 1978). Use of the “I” and “we” forms as van Manen (2016) suggested, enhanced the truth value of the narrated experience and demonstrated the integrated nature of one's experience with another, strengthening the conviction that “the experiences of others are the possible experiences of oneself” (pp. 57-58). Interpretative phenomenological analysis is committed to understanding phenomena from a first-person perspective and its practitioners openly believe in the “value of subjective knowledge for psychological understanding” (Eatough & Smith, 2017, p. 193). Kathy Charmaz (2004) who addressed a conference on advances in qualitative methods using Irving Goffman as case-writer, counseled that we enter a phenomenon (a conversation and dialogue in the case of this study) in order to “discover what is significant from the viewpoints and actions of people who experience it” (p. 981).

Technically, the process of bracketing begins in Chapter Two where the literature captures what scholars and researchers have been saying about the concepts forming the title of this study. Essentially, the ideas captured in the seven concepts forming the title of the study are not new; if anything, the literature pertaining to all the concepts keep changing fast. The literature is allowed to form a sort of theoretical space in which the sayings of participants in themselves can proliferate further meaning patterns. Theorizing matters, not mere theory.

Chapter Three deepens the bracketing or epoche where the stories of participants sharing the phenomenon of blindness begin to be presented. Bracketing is in question at this point. van Manen (2016) wrote of this stage when the researcher is asked to practice

“the art of being sensitive . . . to the subtle undertones of language, to the way language speaks when it allows the things themselves to speak” (p. 111). Moustakas (1994) recalled Gadamer (1976) guiding a researcher, stating that in the hermeneutic circle as methodological process, “prejudgments are corrected in view of the text, the understanding of which leads to new prejudgments” (p. 10). At yet another point, Gadamer (1976) said of the hermeneutic process that it involved “a circle through which scientific understanding occurs, through which we correct our prejudices or set them aside and hear what the text says to us” (p. 10). Charmaz (2004) however openly admitted involvement in spite of the bracketing process. “Entering the phenomenon also means that your active involvement with data shapes the analysis. A few descriptive codes and a powerful computer program do not suffice” (p. 981).

Chapter Four is again another expression of *epoche*, where findings in themselves are allowed to inform the research questions. Here too, select theory is integral to expanding the process. Even here, the codes and findings must be allowed to generate not just theory, but theorizing.

Chapter Five brings all previous four chapters together and the researcher is allowed to return with an explicit voice into the discourse and its recommendations. Could this be a unity of opposites, the opposites being the bracketed phenomena and the suspended sociocultural analysis with its “I” and “we”? Could this be altogether the movement of negation all in all given that the first was denied and the second, third and fourth the negation of the first constituting essence, thus being and meaning? It seems after all, that “to know is to see, and to see is to look . . . to the essences of the experience being investigated” (Gearing, 2004, p. 1433). Overall, consistent with interpretative phenomenological analysis, this may well represent in part, the three phases of

bracketing: (i) abstract formulation, (ii) research praxis, and (iii) reintegration (Gearing, 2004, p. 1435).

Experiences

Experiences are lived. van Manen (2007) wrote that in Husserl's words the term lived experience signified "givenness of internal consciousness" (p. 16). In *The Conscious Mind*, David Chalmers was of the view that "consciousness is mirrored by the structure of awareness, and the structure of awareness is mirrored by the structure of consciousness" (1996, p. 225). This he would call "the principle of structural coherence" which he further described as a "central and systematic relation between phenomenology and psychology . . . and phenomenology and underlying physical processes" (Chalmers, 1996, p. 225). Tony Nader pressed the matter to a zone of pure consciousness however, stating that "at the basis of everything is a grand field of consciousness, a primordial consciousness which is non-material and non-physical" (2021, p. 227). That field of consciousness, Nader (2021) located "beyond time and space, beyond beginning and end. It is absolute, non-changing and always equal to itself" (p. 227). This is a semblance of Husserl's givenness. Despite what may seem to be their abstractness, these are utterances of inclusivity. These are justice expression statements, endowing with immeasurable grace, anyone with a brain, body and an inner being, essentially, an ontology. Such a purity as described by Nader is everyone's gift for intelligent expression. van Manen (2007) drew closer to that purity when he wrote about truthful intelligence. Where could that intelligence be sourced? One would have to go to the "primal impressionable stream of preconscious life that (is now inseparable) becomes interpretatively available to our understanding as lived experience" (van Manen, 2007, p. 16). This is the important source and resource defining non-tangible forms of consciousness not anathema to the transcendent function. There is an external world that

engages this primal source; their interaction so central to human development and learning. Therefore, a physical and ideological structure within which adult learners with visual impairments encounter imagination experiences or lived experiences in front or behind their eyes will be constituted.

Uri Bronfenbrenner described these aspects of the ecology as constituting “nested arrangements” (1977, p. 516), signifying “interactions of living systems” creating “new forms (scaffoldings and resources) for meaning-making” (Campbell et al., 2019, p. 357). The four systems are referred to by Bronfenbrenner (1977) as the microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, and macrosystem.

Experiences in a Microsystem

A microsystem is the “complex of relations between the developing person and environment in an immediate setting containing that person (e.g., home, school, workplace, etc.)” (Bronfenbrenner, 1977, p. 516). Adult learners in this study are regarded as developing in a network of complex relations with implications for interdependence, learning and imagination. Home, school and work each have their intricate systems in modes of communication, methods of pedagogy and learning, architectural design and organization of community, town or city spaces. Challenges of commuting to work by way of metropolitan transport, Lyft or Uber, elicit select cognitive patterns, emotional surges, feelings, modes of communication and behavior. Esther Thelen wrote that “everything counts in producing behavior” (2005, p. 260). Settings are constituted themselves by what Bronfenbrenner (1977) calls “factors of place, time, physical features, activity, participant, and role” (p. 516). When detailed, meaningful experiences can be identified within this circle, deepening systems within the microsystem.

Valsiner (2000) noted that within the microsystem, the individual experiences the “particular immediate life context in personal terms” (p. 128). When the context for a visually impaired or blind person is home and that home is peaceful then the experience is positive. With experience being living, the positive feelings impact other persons and relations between systems. The experience could also be insecure, ambivalent, or outrightly negative, wrote Valsiner (2000), impacting negatively the “feeling tone” (p. 357) of persons within that home setting. It is the ecological space within which blind persons first begin to find hope for recovery following the trauma of sight loss. In discussing depression, Smith and Rhodes (2015) identified emotional and behavioral changes (possibly within household settings) likely to arise in adults who have lost sight. These include sadness, emptiness, disinterest in living, emergence of hopelessness, negative cognitions when negotiating the self and the world, and when assessing future possibilities. Within that individual body that is losing or has lost the ability to see the world, may arise distortions in thinking, and a diminished capacity for concentration. The Ajna chakra lies in a state of tension. Adults who have lost their sight may withdraw from others within the very home too, settling for isolation and its consequences (pp. 197-198). Within this zone of depression experienced by blind people in a microsystem, the sociological family in caretakers can become psychologically significant providing or withholding support for those going through the process of sight loss and self-restoration with implications for autonomy, and subsequent wellbeing.

Experiences in a Mesosystem

A mesosystem is comprised of “the interrelations among major settings containing the developing person at a particular point in his or her life” (Bronfenbrenner,

1977, p. 516). Rogoff (2003) spoke of “ecological transitions . . . as people shift roles or settings” (p. 47), with implications for psychology and states of calm. Essentially, “the processes operating in different settings are not independent of each other” (Bronfenbrenner, 1986, p. 723), though each may be considered as being different.

The capacity for shifting between microsystems would represent an articulation of what Kagitcibasi (2012) referred to as social competence, that is, a quality of intelligence with regard to self and others. It is an active imagination and intelligence that is engaged when an adult learner who is visually impaired for instance, moves from home to church and from a familiar dyad to a triad or a congregation in a church constituting a mesosystem. Bronfenbrenner (1977) emphasized “the overlaps and communication between settings and information in each setting about the other” (as cited in Rogoff, 2003, p. 49). Communication here is defined as the transference/exchange of meaning between intelligences. Meanings are interpretations of social formations, implying learning, memory and knowing (Campbell et al., 2019). It is or has to be assumed to be a living space; what Lewin (1946) called long ago, a lifespace. Bronfenbrenner’s nested arrangement of structures can be set in dynamic motion where boundaries adopt a flow structure between systems and the exercise becomes positioning an adult learner with a visual impairment actively within those systems, their stresses and therapeutic conveniences.

Experiences in an Exosystem

An exosystem extended the mesosystem to embrace “other specific social structures, both formal and informal, that do not themselves contain the developing person but impinge upon or encompass the immediate settings in which that person is found” (Bronfenbrenner, 1977, p. 516). They are highly influential, encompassing among other structures, the world of work, the neighborhood, the mass media, agencies of government (local, state, and national), the

distribution of goods and services, communication and transportation facilities, and informal social networks (Bronfenbrenner, 1977). Aspects such as public policy form part of the exosystem (Rogoff, 2003). It is not difficult to actively imagine how those systems are interconnected in a free or any other market system, influencing thinking and behavior. This is a living ideological space flexibly constituted to affect tangibly the micro, meso and detailed, if not invisible operations of the exosystem. The economic, social, educational, legal, and political systems which form the micro, meso and exosystems, constitute as a whole, the macrosystem (Bronfenbrenner, 1977).

Experiences in a Macrosystem

Macrosystems are fluid, being conceived as “carriers of information and ideology” (Bronfenbrenner, 1977, p. 517; Rogoff, 2003). They “endow meaning and motivation to particular agencies, social networks, roles, activities, and their interrelations” and they do so explicitly and/or implicitly (Bronfenbrenner, 1977, p. 517). Here one finds the commercial, religious and power interests defining the “top-down reorganization of the socio-ecological hierarchy” (Valsiner, 2000, p. 130). Sociologically, Bronfenbrenner’s nested arrangements of structures appear nominally functional, until the systems are set in critical motion. The lived experiences of diverse races within religious organizations come alive. Belief systems and ideological orientations emerge from behind their normal invisible and intangible statuses. Medical professionals extend their gazes and respond to the policies of the pharmaceutical industry. Blind persons as a minority feel the implications of lack of access, and the person with a wheelchair knows what it means to encounter inaccessibility. Valsiner (2000) was of the view that Bronfenbrenner’s systems allowed for the seeing of “connections between various levels

of organization of person-environment relations” (p. 130), though Rogoff (2003) held the view that Bronfenbrenner’s presentation of separations of the nested arrangements “constrained ideas” touching the relationship between the individual and cultural processes (p. 48). What is different now (and not unfounded given the chord of coherence strumming through this review) is that the lifespace of the blind adult learner has been set in dynamic motion wherein the particularities in each system are brought to life, even to the point that their microsystems affect each other and no system shifts or builds a scaffold without affecting another. In such an arrangement, to speak is to do.

Language, Identity and Experiences among the Vision-impaired

In October 2021, President of the National Federation of the Blind, Mark A. Riccobono, from within his meso and exosystems, called the collective of 50,000 active members, blind people. His speech then was titled “On Blindness, Equality, and Achievement: Who Defines Us.” It was a stunning stance. American Psychological Association has recommended a unique nomenclature to be used when speaking about “blind people.” Authors, educators and researchers were not permitted to select names with negative connotations to represent them and their lived experiences. The National Federation of the Blind President used identity-first language as “an expression of cultural pride and a reclamation of a disability that once conferred a negative identity” (American Psychological Association, 2019, para. 5).

Bogart (2014), following on social identity theory, agreed that affirming one’s disability identity enhanced wellbeing, yet contended that it is a rare phenomenon, that is, affirmation of disability identity (Dunn & Burcaw, 2013, as cited in Bogart, 2014). Bogart (2014) cited Darling (2013), Dunn and Burcaw (2013), Nario-Redmond et al. (2013), Swain and French (2000), and Wright (1983) who thought a disability identity involved feelings of solidarity, affinity with

others who share the phenomenon of blindness for example, pride, sense of activism, and the finding of value, meaning, and benefits in experiences of disability. In the context of active imagination, feelings are so powerful, conjuring emotions and speedy epistemic cognition. These facilitate transcending the notion of disability as a loss or limiting of opportunities where the capacity for relatedness or the development of social competence is thwarted. People with disabilities are thus constructed as not having opportunities to “take part in the normal life of the community on an equal level with others due to physical and social barriers” (Kristiansen et al., 2009, p. 19).

The American Psychological Association by way of Brown (2011), Brueggemann (2013), Dunn and Andrews (2015) and their “in person-first language,” chose “person who is blind” (American Psychological Association, 2019, para. 5). Identity-first language and in person-first language were considered wise choices to be used interchangeably (American Psychological Association, 2019, para. 8).

Using identity first language to speak about blind people or persons who are blind, Mark Riccobono crossed major psychological barriers in the collective history of such a disability movement. Blindness was not to be feared or ashamed of. Moreover, from its past to the present, race continues to influence the course and development of the federation to the extent where its impact has gone over beyond what was ever imagined. Agencies for the blind still generate difficulties; the public’s negative perception of the blind persists. Technology experts still waste their innovations on the blind having not consulted with them in the first instance; and the blind still struggle with their own misconceptions and those manufactured by others (Riccobono, 2021). Those barriers and conditions are still real.

Adult learners with visual impairments are seldom if ever included in determining in significant ways, the course of research. They are generally excluded from social, economic and political institutions and interactions; lacking the power to influence in critical ways, policymakers and researchers (Yeo & Moore, 2003). Little do these policymakers realize: to talk about blind is to talk about a positive attribute (Riccobono, 2021). This study regards blindness and visual impairment as experiences producing bodies of knowledge, unique relationships with self and others, and ways of knowing and advocating that were better delivered by those experiencing the disability phenomenon. Blindness experienced in this study as a lack and a resource becomes a matter of vital ontological interest. The lack is the loss which has to be perceived differently by the blind, and the resource is the base energy which produces the will to search beyond the lack, or physical limitation. In fact, the brain knows light is not flowing to it and gives the non-seer additional visual resources and other senses for engaging their life and its ecological spaces.

A Body Discourse

Garland-Thomson raged against medicalization of the body deemed to carry a disability and judged only on the basis of that disability. In addition to addressing broad feminist matters such as the category woman, Garland-Thomson (2002) addressed the status of that knowing-body, “the lived body, the politics of appearance, the medicalization of the body,” among others (p. 3). Eatough and Smith (2017) find reference in the lived body, arguing that phenomenological interests find ontological and axiological value in the lived and living body, not the body of “physiological mechanisms and chemical interactions” (p. 196).

Through medicalization, more and more of everyday life experiences in and of the body have come under the influence and supervision of the medical profession (Conrad, 1975; Zola,

1983). Conrad (1992) placed medicalization into three levels: the conceptual; the institutional; and the interactional (p. 212). The conceptual level involves using a medical model and vocabulary to define the problem or even a nomenclature for the disorder (macular degeneration, retinitis pigmentosa, diabetic retinopathy, intraocular pressure, retinal ganglion cells and cataract). In the case of cataract, that word also means a large waterfall. The language is often complex and excludes most non-medical practitioners. At the institutional level, organizations can receive benefits for adopting that medical model, its definitions and approach to a problem, but interestingly, the routine work is done by non-medical personnel. At the interactional level, physicians are involved directly: doctor/patient relationship is basically a top/down communication relation and prescriptions may be given in response to a social and not a biological problem (Conrad, 1992). These interactional, institutional and conceptual matters have not been the preoccupation of Conrad alone. Philip Vannini, Simon Williams, Nicholas Fox, Bruce Lipton, Michel Foucault, Rosemary Garland-Thomson and thousands of others have attempted to take back that body so necessary for integration into mind, soul and spirit. At the very least, they have called for another way of perceiving a disorder or disability and their calls are social justice calls.

Nicholas Fox for example, has critiqued a “biomedicalised body-with-organs” both as the health site, and importantly as “an ontological element of sociological analysis” (2011, p. 361). This way of seeing and experiencing the body as organic is understood, but not expedient. In fact, it was founded on a model reaching back to the days of Hippocrates and Galen to the present day, with no regard to its Egyptian origins (Diop, 1991). Fox (2011) indicated however that Foucault (1976) demonstrated diligently

how over the last 300 years “hospitals” had arisen to meet the need for observation of that unfolding organic body and the “archiving” of its history (Fox, 2011, p. 361). But how diligent have they been? Bruce Lipton from a formidable discourse in epigenetics has said again and again that mind, perception and indeed environment controls genetics, and genetics determines the character of lives experienced. But can this be incorporated into the corporate milieu that medicine has entered? Lipton (2021) makes way for people’s beliefs in any transformative and healing process, asking justifiably, is the doctor’s opinion the truth. Conrad (1992) confronted the matter stating that in a “highly-stratified society” (with Bronfenbrenner’s nested arrangements considered in dynamic motion and each person tapping unconsciously into processes of active imagination) medicalization may well have “implications for social justice” (p. 212). This was even more the case for societies that were highly stratified (Conrad, 1992, p. 212). Meriah Nichols had already described a disability hierarchy with implications for social justice. According to Nichols (2019), a disability may define us, but it should never be allowed to limit us. Having a disability that defines us grants us immediate value, and profound meaning to our lived experiences. It represents a shift in culture and beliefs that empower people globally who share a disability phenomenon.

While in 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) had identified one billion people as having a visual impairment globally, as of February 2021, the Organization was reporting 2.2 billion. Among the contributing factors were uncorrected refractive errors and cataracts. The World Health Organization expressed the view that 50% of the 2.2 billion cases of near or distance vision issues could have been treated and avoided if only economies of majority population countries could afford it and reach their distant and rural populations. In fact, the WHO concluded that people who are blind or visually impaired are more likely than those with

full sight to experience poverty, ill-health and disease contributing to a life-long state of disadvantage. These are reports of the world's most reputable institutions under whose canopy the world's nation-states find significance and meaning, many as democracies. They have found no room yet for articulating a resource paradigm in the imagination or active imaginations of the visually impaired or blind since these cannot be immediately measured or validated, neither can they be systemically controlled by a determined medical establishment. This study acknowledges value in a medical profession, yet reaches still to embrace Fox's notion following on Deleuze and Guattari's construction of a body without organs which will later complete this literature review.

Historic Americans with Disabilities Act and Other Voices

Drafters of the revolutionary Americans with Disabilities Act (1990) centered the body because the body embodies difference and its challenges. The Congress had over decades documented issues affecting persons with disabilities and it can be said that since the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 1975, and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, much has changed, but much remains difficult. The Act recorded a culture that at the time of its drafting and before, perceived and treated persons with disabilities as occupying "an inferior status" (Americans with Disabilities Act, 1990, para. 7). Also, the Congress had found that while other minorities had recourse to justice, persons with disabilities "have often had no legal recourse to redress such discrimination" (Americans with Disabilities Act, 1990, para. 5). Kirk Adams, the American Foundation for the Blind President believed however, in the timely and effective emergence of the Act. When the Act promulgated that it was illegal to discriminate against people with disabilities, the bold statement "brought people with

disabilities into the conversation with other groups who've experienced systemic oppression" (Adams, 2020, para. 8). 14 years later, in 2004, blind people were still generally not educated, and as a result remained unemployed and in poverty (Zuckerman, 2004, p. 9). From what Oliver (2018) found out 28 years following the Americans with Disabilities Act (1990), films, television and newspapers continued to "devalue" persons with disabilities of whom blind people or the vision-impaired form part (p. 47). Films are instruments of influence in American culture.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention observed that as of 2012, 4.2 million Americans aged 40 years and older "suffered" from uncorrectable vision impairment, out of which 1.02 million were blind. The word used was "suffer." Critically, that number was predicted to more than double by 2050 to 8.96 million due to the increasing epidemics of diabetes and other chronic diseases and the nation's rapidly aging population. In the next 30 years, a revolution in ways of seeing and perceiving behind the eyes was not being theorized and the text was intent on its facticity and predictive quality. At yet another point, the Centers with its capacity for prediction, reported that approximately 6.8% of children younger than 18 years have a diagnosed eye and vision condition. Nearly 3% of children younger than 18 years were diagnosed as blind or visually impaired, defined as having trouble seeing even when wearing glasses or contact lenses. This is sad, but emotions are not expected to enter literature reviews. In one final extract from the Centers, 93 million adults in the United States were estimated to be at high risk for serious vision loss, but only half had visited an eye doctor in the past 12 months (2020, June 9). The American people are creative and imaginative, only this time those owning and holding the means to treatment and control do not listen to them.

In a wide range of autobiographical accounts, Georgina Kleege remarks poignantly, "apparently, beauty is wasted on us because we can't see the reflection in the mirror" (2006, p.

3). In *The Blind Advantage*, Bill Henderson wrote, “I recognize that although being blind did pose some challenges, it did not hinder me from the essential aspects of my work as a principal. In fact, in some ways, blindness created some opportunities for me” (Henderson, 2011, p. 4). Writing in *My Heart is Not Blind*, Michael Nye said, “For many, ‘blindness’ suggests a lack of awareness. If that is true, then everyone is blind to what they don't know” (2019, p. 3). In *Touching the Rock*, John Hull wrote, “although I am reluctant to admit it, blindness is, for me, a kind of religious crisis” (1992, p. 51). Faith would enter the lives and imagination experiences of adult learners in profound ways. Mark Riccobono did not think about being blind anymore since the phenomenon had become part and parcel of who he is (2021). Stephen Kuusisto, author of *Planet of the Blind*, mused enigmatically. “Like John Metcalf, the nineteenth-century British architect and road builder, I keep my blindness as a private puzzle” (1999, p. 41). These represent indicators of growth, albeit qualitative, and thus, meaningful ones.

Tedeschi and Calhoun (2004, p. 4) used the term posttraumatic growth to present an inventory for measuring such growth. The two identified a number of concepts used over time to represent that change and these terms or concepts are clearly in line with those appearing in this review. They include: positive psychological changes (Yalom & Lieberman, 1991); perceived benefits or construing benefits (Calhoun & Tedeschi, 1991; McMillen et al., 1995; Tennen et al., 1992); stress-related growth (Park et al., 1996); flourishing (Ryff & Singer, 1998); positive by-products (McMillen et al., 2001); discovery of meaning (Bower et al., 1998); positive emotions (Folkman & Moskowitz, 2000); and thriving (O’Leary & Ickovics, 1995). Learning and overcoming permeates these concepts.

Adult Learners

Experience is the “living textbook” of adult learners (Knowles et al., 2015, p. 20). The experience of vision-impairment and blindness is what the eight adult learners in this study live through, learn from and interpret. Understanding its phenomenology, that is, its essence, being and meaning is their learning activity: they are in “a continuous effort to negotiate contested meanings” (Mezirow, 2000, p. 3). In this tension of negotiating meanings, that is, trying to decode what the disorder or impairment means to them, their learning and overcoming can only be described as transformational. Implicit in this transformation is another matter: an appreciation for that impairment. That they should express appreciation for that disability may seem at odds with the split, mechanistic model eager to medicalize their bodies, but Tedeschi and Calhoun (2004) declared: “appreciating a disability, giving it value, need not require that it be preferred in and of itself; just that its ramifying meaning is valued” (p. 6). With its essence steeped in the unconscious, the imagination, wrote John Dewey, “is the medium of appreciation in every field” (1923, p. 160).

Transformative Learning and its Usefulness

Jack Mezirow is a leading proponent of transformative learning. In *Learning to Think like an Adult*, transformative learning was related or connected to an appreciation for “epistemic cognition” (Mezirow, 2000, p. 5). According to Deleuze, that which is epistemic concerns the “association of ideas,” and “associations without passions are blind, but then passions without associations would be empty,” (1991, p. 16). Epistemic cognition is a passionate engagement in which learning is a process where the learner uses earlier interpretations of an experience to “construe” a novel or “revised interpretation” of an experience (blindness for example), to better understand the “meaning” of that experience “as a guide to future action” (Mezirow, 2000, p. 6).

Adult learners draw on images they recall and have memorized, symbols they can remember and picture, sense reactions such as smells and tastes so vital to gestation and of course, social relations and gatherings, “affective interactions” garnered through the culture or by way of caretakers (this latter influence so central to the sociocultural in Lev Vygotsky). Mezirow (2000) believed that adult learners use these frames of references, or remembrances (considered highly individualized), to “make analogies to interpret” (p. 6) their new living experiences (coming into blindness, or losing sight), and how their bodies of acquired knowledges or epistemic resources can guide them in novel ways. Evidently, adult learners in this study became mindful learners. In what follows, and in the context of adult ways of learning, succinct reviews will be done of the humanism of Carl Rogers and Abraham Maslow, and the social constructivist approach of Lev Vygotsky. These will be followed by pivotal observations touching brain-based learning theories and what they infer about the capacity and ability of adult learners who became visually impaired or blind between the ages of 20 and 75 years.

Humanist Learning Theory

In 1969, Rogers presented the elements of humanistic psychology. These revealed the other capacities and abilities of human beings over beyond that which had to be quantified to be of any value. These included (i) personal involvement wherein the person’s feelings and cognition mattered in the learning process (like imagination, subjectivity and inclusion were valued); (ii) a profound sense of self-initiation which stated that even when the stimuli came from outside, the sense of discovery and of comprehension came from within, challenging behaviorist practices, and thus opening up the individual to novel ways of knowing; (iii) pervasiveness, which stated that learning

made a difference in the behavior, attitudes, and the personality of the adult learner; and (iv) the autonomous capacity of the adult to evaluate (an inherent intelligence), knowing in the process of learning whether the exercise met expectations, personal needs, and whether the learning process illuminated “the dark area of ignorance” being experienced by the individual (Knowles et al., 2015, p. 15). Evidently, humanism concerned itself with the person’s body, mind, soul and spirit, essentially, the whole, integrated person as was reflected in the works of Abraham Maslow and his hierarchy of needs.

Maslow wrote of the need for personal, emotional, and financial security and the need for health and wellbeing. One can only imagine the unification of hedonic and eudaimonic practices during these relatedness processes. It is no surprise therefore, that Maslow’s identification of the need for social belonging and love, focusing on friendships, intimacy and family parallel Ryan and Deci’s call to relatedness. The fact that relatedness is not developed in the absence of autonomy points to the role of the family in supporting the adult learner who loses sight, for example, providing the emotional support so critical to making use of learning instruments and technology, cognitive clarity, decision-making, and awareness. When these integrate, the adult learner feels a sense of awareness that learning is taking place.

When adult learners going through the traumatic processes of sight loss realize the need for self-esteem as Maslow calls it, they feel that intrinsic urge to learn. They arrive at a place where self-acceptance becomes central to their overcoming and growth. In fact, acceptance alone is absolutely essential to learning after sight is lost. When each individual blind person has overcome the trauma and depression in and of sight loss and reaches a level of comfort with self and other, even to the extent of helping others who are blind and those who are sighted, this moment of actualizing self, mirrors the experience of transcendence. For Maslow (1970), self-

actualization meant the “full use of talents, capacities, potentialities, etc.” (p. 150). This is learning. This is an expression of Jung’s transcendental function and reflects images of Nader’s unbounded ocean of consciousness.

Social Constructivist Learning Theory

With specific regard to the adult learner’s narrative, this review examines Vygotsky’s concept of word-meaning and that of word sense. Vygotsky drew an insightful distinction between the two. Mahn (1999) cites Vygotsky describing a word sense as “dynamic, fluid, and complex . . . the aggregate of all the psychological facts that arise in our consciousness as a result of the word” (p. 345). Essentially, a word sense changes, but the word meaning in the dictionary remains fixed (Mahn, 1999, p. 345).

To surround the word and diagram of an eye with its word sense for example, is to conjure the words sclera, conjunctiva, cornea, aqueous humor, ciliary body, trabecular meshwork, iris, pupil, lens, retina, retinal ganglion cells, optic nerve, and in between these, the macular, fovea, rods and cones and Schlemm’s Canal. In considering the word sense for Schlemm’s Canal for instance, the Latin equivalent would be sinus venosus sclerae. The language is not English. Moreover, that part of the eye was said to have been discovered by the German anatomist Friedrich Schlemm. The verb discovered remains one of historic and etymological significance. But the other words identifying the anatomy of the eye are more than just their known meanings. In processes of social interaction, that is with more than just one person in conversation, Vygotsky (1987) stated that “meaning is internalized into an individual’s sense with the meaning of the word in inner speech as an individual meaning, a meaning understandable only in the

plane of inner speech” (Mahn & Fazelehaq, 2012, p. 5). This plane of inner speech resembles expressions of Jung’s unconscious. According to Mahn and Fazelehaq (2012), “Ultimately, the word’s real sense is determined by everything in consciousness which is related to what the word expresses” (p. 5). Everything in consciousness related to what the word expresses suggests an important learning resource whose structures and functions are interrelated and much deeper than consciousness itself. Moreover, while word meaning in the Vygotskian sense tended to remain fixed, Wallerstein (2009) indicates that words (or pronouns such as “I”) may not be fixed after all and their use and meanings transform them into word sense, where concepts particularly evolve, “often shifting meaning and use, over time” (p. 118). The word sense in the blind has to be fantastic, given that seeing with its novel frame of reference in blindness, produces more than what the patient has been told about self by a medical or educational institution. There is therefore tremendous ability in the differentiated brain housing a blind eye.

Brain-based Learning Theory

Sousa (2016) was intrigued by the amazing ability of the brain to “integrate disparate and seemingly disconnected activities” alive in “specialized areas . . . into a unified whole” (p. 188). This is an expression of consciousness becoming.

A simple representation of the three-pound brain of an adult was presented by Stephanie Clemons who chose to describe that brain as having three areas with the brain stem being the lowest area. Importantly, the brainstem connects the cerebrum of the brain to the spinal cord and cerebellum. That brain stem is made up of four sections “in descending order” (Basinger & Hogg, 2022, para. 1). They are the diencephalon, midbrain, pons, and medulla oblongata. These four cohere to ensure vital functions such as motor functions, attention, breathing, consciousness, blood pressure, heart rate, and sleep (Basinger & Hogg, 2022, para. 1). The mind’s eye or pineal

gland, so vital to visioning and dreams, opens during sleep, itself one of four states of consciousness, the other three being the dream, wake and transcendental states. Crumbie (2022) has described the diencephalon as being comprised of the epithalamus, thalamus, subthalamus, metathalamus, and hypothalamus. Reference to the hypothalamus is made when the limbic system is being described as if they extend into each other's domain. The medulla oblongata is the point at which the brain and spinal cord connect in every human. Editors of Encyclopedia Britannica note that the pons works with the medulla oblongata to generate the respiratory rhythm in and of breathing. Activities of the pons was said to be fundamental to rapid eye movement (REM) sleep.

The limbic system above the brain stem is said to deal with memory and “emotion” and an individual's decision-making capacity (Clemons, 2005, p. 3). Four primary parts make up the limbic system: the amygdala, the hypothalamus, the thalamus, and the hippocampus. The thalamus has much to do with alertness and consciousness, while the amygdala is known so far, as pivotal in identifying emotions, and stimuli that contribute to fear and threat. Additionally, the limbic system has a special function of regulating the endocrine systems within which is located the pituitary gland known as the master gland in the endocrine system. Cleveland Clinic noted that the pituitary holds responsibility for a number of matters in the human body including growth, metabolism (how the body transforms and manages the energy from the food eaten), reproduction, response to stress or trauma, and lactation. This is an intelligent structure which reflects upon, and has the capacity to heal itself to wellbeing if only the path to it and its adjoining ‘neighbors’ is known and learned. The meditative aspect of active imagination and active imaginations can serve as points of deeper entrance.

The third area, known as the cerebrum, is described as being “divided” into the right and left “hemispheres” (Clemons, 2005, p. 3). The left and right hemispheres are in constant communication by way of the corpus callosum. Though presented biologically as separate, their function is integrated, and so is their exchanges of intelligence. The cerebrum is a true zone for active imaginations and imagination in its bloom. Knowles et al. (2015) contend that most “cognitive processing” and “long-term memory” takes place in the cerebrum (p. 219). The frontal lobes of the cerebrum are just behind the forehead and are considered to harness the executive functions of the brain. Knowles et al. (2015) refer to that area as “the control center for learning” (p. 219). It is known to invent, create, write, and calculate; “its characteristics define our individual attributes” (Clemons, 2005, p. 3).

Sousa (2016) identified left-brains functions such as “analysis, sequence, time, and speech” recognizing “words, letters, and numbers. It processes external stimuli” (p. 189). At yet another point, Sousa (2016) pointed out that the left hemisphere “understands” the “literal interpretation of words” (p. 188). It must be phenomenological. The left brain is said to be “analytical, evaluates factual material in a rational way, perceives the detail in visual processing, and detects time and sequence” (Sousa, 2016, p. 188). Zamarian et al. (2009) knew a left brain which performed simple arithmetic computations (as cited in Sousa, 2016, p. 188).

The brain’s right hemisphere is said to be related to “music, art, strong emotional responses, intuition, images, and summarizing” (Clemons, 2005, p. 3). It is an integrated organ. The right brain processes “internal messages” (Sousa, 2016, p. 189). Sousa (2016) observed that the right brain gathered information “more from images than from words, and looks for visual patterns” (p. 190). The right brain “interprets” language, looking for “body language, emotional content, and tone of voice” (Sousa, 2016, p. 190). These offer ways of knowing and seeing.

According to Sousa (2016), the right brain “specializes in spatial perception; recognizes places, faces, and objects; and focuses on relational and mathematical operations, such as geometry and trigonometry” (p. 190). Mobility is thereby enhanced. Knowles et al. (2015) wrote of the cerebellum. The cerebellum, often called the little brain, is located at the back of the brain, and underlies its occipital and temporal lobes. The cerebellum takes up 10% of the human brain, yet it constitutes 50% of the brain's total number of neurons (that total placed at 86 billion). Most of what the cerebellum outputs are to the body's motor system. Among its detailed functions relevant to everyday living of the blind and visual impaired, the cerebellum provides for balance, coordination of muscle groups to produce “fine and clear movements, addressing some aspects of cognition” possibly language and motor learning (Knierim, 2019, paras. 1-5).

Nader (2021) contends sweepingly however, that “nobody actually knows what the link is between the neuronal structure of the brain and the internal subjective experience, what scientists call qualia” (p. 44). Qualia are the “seemingly unmeasurable” and qualitative aspects of human subjectivity such as “feelings, the appreciation of color and music, the sense of attraction and aversion” (Nader, 2021, pp. 44-45).

As will be made clear in Chapter Three and Four, adult learners with visual impairments engage the brain to the maximum, and given their seeing challenges and their acceptance of blindness as a life expression (also an emotional engagement), is their perspective or framing of ideas, unique in and of itself? The fact that blind people use language, and influence the word sense and its multiple psychological registers, meanings, images and remembrances, can blind people be said to engage logical reasoning and a simultaneous cluster of emotions? “If you ask people with no education

in psychology how they reason,” Knauff and May (2006) stated, “many of them say that they rely on visual mental images” (p. 161). Moreover, numerous cognitive psychologists claim that reasoning “is inextricably linked to seeing in the mind’s eye” (DeSoto et al., 1965; Kosslyn, 1994, as cited in Knauff & May, 2006, p. 162). Within its mind’s eye and pineal gland located in the epithalamus, the brain produces images, “the real and the fantastic” (Sousa, 2016, p. 266).

Does positive speech or positive self-concept and self-esteem support brain development and learning? The implications of the use of language or for that matter, the act of speaking for brain-based learning cannot be underestimated. Sousa (2016) presented a few statements indicating inevitable learning, not simply because of the active history of human biology or the human psyche, but because the brain knows itself and possibly, the thoughts running along neural paths in another brain. Processing taking place in one hemisphere is shared as natural function or neighborly love, with the other hemisphere by way of the corpus callosum. There is, therefore, recorded harmony between the hemispheres and they complement each other. Moreover, an individual benefits from the “integration of the processing done by both hemispheres and is afforded greater comprehension of whatever situation initiated the processing” (Sousa, 2016, pp. 191-192). Sousa described naturally occurring coherent phenomena, well-known to arise during transcendence and active imagination/meditation practices with implications for knowing the brain better, learning and possibly, healing disorders of the eye.

For a long time, it was taught in medical schools and medicine in general that a neuron was the only cell in the body that did not form itself again or regenerate. The prevailing knowledge was that people were born with a fixed set of neurons and there was no neurogenesis, wrote Knowles et al. (2015, p. 220). According to Knowles et al. (2015), Gross (2000), Sousa

(2011), and Tokuhamma-Espinosa (2011) contend that this is not true. The brain has the ability to adjust to changes and move its functions from one area to another in the event of damage. Its infinite interconnections and possibilities are known by and to itself. Tracey Noel Tokuhamma-Espinosa who collaboratively espoused these viewpoints, was assured that a human being had the inherent capacity and ability to learn throughout a lifespan (2011). These are therefore exciting times for educators and researchers “working to cure neurological diseases such as Alzheimer’s” (Knowles et al., 2015, p. 220). It was not unusual therefore to find Vanderbilt University's David Calkins drawing “comparisons between glaucoma and other age-related and/or progressive neurological diseases such as Alzheimer’s, Parkinson’s, and amyotrophic lateral sclerosis” (2008, p. 18). Is it also exciting times in which to explore the collective voices of adult learners with visual impairments possibly tapping into their understanding of the central nervous systems by way of self-reports, their experiences of diabetic retinopathy, retinitis pigmentosa, macular degeneration and the uses they make of their active imaginations and imagination experiences to better understand power in the human brain and its interconnectivity with the body and its vast historic ecology? Blind people adopt other frames of reference.

Visual Impairments

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention noted that in the United States approximately 12 million people 40 years and over have their vision impaired. Of that number, one million are blind, three million have vision impairment after correction, and eight million have vision impairment due to uncorrected refractive error. Refractive errors are evident in myopia (near-sightedness), hyperopia (farsightedness), astigmatism (distorted vision at all distances), and

presbyopia that occurs between ages 40–50 years. Persons are unable to read documents close up; a problem that can be corrected according to the Centers, by eye glasses, contact lenses or surgery. Uncorrected refractive errors and cataracts are the leading causes of vision impairment and blindness (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2020). Visual impairment and blindness run along the lines of a continuum. The disorder progresses from an impairment to partial and total blindness, and the blindness impairs.

Age-related macular degeneration, choroidal detachment, diabetic retinopathy, intraocular lens dislocation, Leber congenital amaurosis, retinal detachment, retinitis pigmentosa, retinopathy of prematurity and vitrectomy for floaters are among the many disorders of the retina (The American Society of Retina Specialists, n.d.). Though glaucoma is considered a disorder of the optic nerve, degeneration of the retinal ganglion cells form part of its symptoms. These retinal diseases can be traced and mapped in the central nervous system.

National Center for Biotechnology Information (2001) stated that though the retina or neural portion of the eye is located peripherally, it is actually “part of the central nervous system” (para. 1). In addition to producing a physical eye, that central nervous system houses a mind's eye or pineal gland with image-making capacity. Mano and Fukada (2007) state that the pineal gland, an organ that has developed only among vertebrates and “retains photoreceptive function in many nonmammalian species” (p. 11) is the “most prominent and well-developed extraocular photoreceptor” (p. 11). They added that molecular and phenotypic evidence indicated “a close evolutionary relationship between the pineal gland and the neural retina of the eye, particularly within their photoreceptor cell lines” (p. 11). Maxwell (2009) wrote of the dorsal thalamus, particularly the epithalamus, “supporting association of the pineal gland . . . with the sahasrára chakra” (p. 819). Anodea Judith in *Wheels of Life* provided a detailed description of the

diverse elements of the Sahasrára chakra, which is the seventh chakra above the sixth and Ajna chakra, pineal gland, or mind's eye. This Sahasrára or crown chakra has "thought" as its principal element; the same thought that Maurice Merleau-Ponty describes as always having a witness. Indeed, between the thought and its witness is pure awareness. Its psychological state is "bliss" and its primary gland is the pituitary, though it is associated with the cerebral cortex and central nervous system. Not only is "gold" its metal; its corresponding verb is "to know" (Judith, 2012, p. 318). One can speedily intuit that the corresponding verb for the mind's eye, third eye, Ajna chakra or pineal gland has to be "to see."

Judith (2012) was of the view that a fundamental search for meaning is "the basic drive of the crown chakra in all experiences prior to samadhi, (where meaning becomes obvious)" (p. 325). Of the three levels of samadhi, there is one known as dharmamegha or the "Cloud of Virtue" samadhi where the yogi "sees without eyes, tastes without tongue, hears without ears, smells without nose, and touches without skin" (Gabriel, 2019, para. 25). These are attributes of transcendence, the transcendental function, a coherent brain, the one unbounded ocean of consciousness, and elements of a grand neurodivergence.

Mental Imagery and Visual Impairment

The retina is constituted in a color spectrum, and if the retina responds to light, it is possible through active imagination, to stimulate the retina with suggested images of color. Macular degeneration for example, takes off late and leaves the patient's sight intact for many years before the onset of blindness; the "retinal periphery" remaining "functional" (Lasker, 2014, p. 5). Mental images could be suggested to that retinal

periphery, not to cure macular degeneration as such, but indeed, to allow those engaged in the phenomenon to better understand it. Such an achievement could erase traces of anxiety and depression.

Not only does mental imagery have “a distinctive capacity to evoke and sustain emotions” (Holmes & Mathews, 2005, 2010); mental imagery is known to change human experiences in a “desired direction” (Sheikh, 2003, as cited in Kaplan et al., 2014, p. 74). Mental imagery is considered a therapeutic practice and process where “the mind discovers the inner forms called images that represent desired states of being” (Epstein, 1989; Kaplan & Epstein, 2012, as cited in Kaplan et al., 2014, p. 74).

Kaplan and Epstein (2012) recruited 82 undergraduates over a three-week period to explore the effects of “mental imagery practice on psychophysiological coherence, measured as heart rhythm coherence” (p. 297). The 82 were randomly allocated to three groups: a mental imagery group, thought monitoring group, and a control group. Researchers wanted to tap into psychophysiological coherence or body/mind integration. They cited the Institute of Heart Math Research Center, which described psychophysiological coherence as being associated with “sustained positive emotion, high degree of mental and emotional stability, constructive integration of the mental and emotional systems, and increased synchronization and harmony between the cognitive, emotional and physiological systems” (McCraty et al., 2001, p. 17, as cited in Kaplan & Epstein, 2012, p. 298). Simply by presenting mental imageries over a three-week period to a group of students, researchers expected them to experience “increased synchronization and harmony” between their “cognitive, emotional and physiological systems” (Kaplan & Epstein, 2012, p. 298). Variables could intervene, but generally, barring severe underlying conditions, these achievements would be applauded in the case of the depressed

vision-impaired. Therapeutic benefits of mental imagery are no longer in question. There are psychological gains in the healing of depression (Gilbert, 2009) and improvement of overall well-being (Watanabe et al., 2005, as cited in Kaplan et al., 2014, p. 74). Given the active nature of blind people's imaginations and imagination experiences, the challenge remains in part, discovering novel ways of seeing blindness in order to live with it or balance the mind that thinks about and experiences it. Other ways of thinking can contribute too to wellbeing and ways of seeing. The example of Arthur Schopenhauer is pertinent. Schopenhauer placed black and white at either ends of a spectrum and between these two ends, ran the colors red, orange, yellow, green, blue and violet. Though he was amply influenced by Indian thought, darting "to the library at the mere mention of a philosophical connection between the ancient Vedas and Kant's philosophy" (Barua, 2008, p. 45), Schopenhauer did not mention a color equivalent to the chakra between the eyes or brow chakra, the third eye, mind's eye and pineal gland. The color indigo did not appear along Schopenhauer's color spectrum. What is important to this study in the context of imagination experiences, is that those who are blind or visually impaired, who see colors, were more likely to relate them to the disorder of their retina or optic nerve. But in Ayurveda each of these colors can be aligned to a chakra and a chakra to parts of the body, emotional tendency, colors and sounds transcending the mere physical. Each of the colors in the retina identified by Schopenhauer (minus indigo) will now be juxtaposed with a few chakra features.

For instance: the red/root chakra/base of the spine/associated animal is the elephant praised for its strength; orange/sacral chakra/below the belly button is where the self is established, and is considered the root of sexual organs; yellow/solar plexus

chakra/abdomen/the intermediate stage of self-discovery; green/chest/heart chakra/two intersecting triangles forming a hexagram symbolizing union of male and female; blue/neck/throat chakra/represented with 16 petals covered with the 16 Sanskrit vowels/communication; indigo/between the eyebrows/brow chakra/the subtle center of energy; and violet/top of the head/crown chakra/highest spiritual center, pure consciousness containing neither object nor subject. As in the case of Kreeft on mind and will in Chapter One and the disappearance of sites, the page named Luck in Stones from which this substantial chakra information was drawn had ceased to exist in 2023.

The challenge falls outside and transcends the medical model, its anatomy and physiology, incorporating broader factors into the eye assemblage as Nick Fox would call it.

Nick Fox and the Body Assemblage

Nick Fox, drawing on the ontology of Gilles Deleuze, a French philosopher, and Félix Guattari, a French psychoanalyst and political activist, marked an important departure from a dominant culture's way of seeing and knowing. To capture the body-without-organs, Fox constructed an assemblage where, as can be anticipated, the body affected and was affected by its ecology; essentially, being alive was much more than simple biology and its disorders or impairments. A novel way of thinking had to be adopted by those vision-impaired or blind who were desirous of living with their bodies and minds, and indeed, 21st century possibilities were endless; from Carey's conceptual environment, universal interconnectedness and integration, into Jung's unconscious, their archetypes and transcendent function to Zukav's quanta, Ayurveda's gift to the world, and Nader's visible and invisible unbounded ocean of consciousness. There was too, power inherent in intuition, emotion, image-making, relatedness, community and other cultures ways of knowing facilitated through vast variations of

communications technology. Blind people needed a fresh education, a neurodivergence so to speak, and an intrinsic motivation or desire to learn again. Fox suggests one way of beginning this emancipation and social justice march. It begins with taking back the body, brain and mind, and giving them one's own meaning using select treasures of knowledge and wisdom which the culture does not openly ascribe to.

In Fox's assemblage or construction, the "biological" aspects of embodiment were "decentered," yet "biology and physicality" were retained "as a necessary but not privileged component of the body" (2011, p. 362). Fox was in search of a phenomenon that constituted the body as participant. Here are a few of the various descriptions provided for this assemblage.

In Fox's assemblage: organs such as the eye were simply one element, and neither biology nor the social "was privileged over the other" (2011, p. 362); the health and illness assemblages were "no longer properties of an organic body, but emergent features of relationships between bodies and other elements" (2011, p. 362); the body related and moved, affected and was affected by others, and developed in "unpredictable ways in a kind of chaotic network of habitual and non-habitual connections, always in flux, always reassembling" (p. 364); every aspect of "living, and our experience of the world, contribute to these assemblages" (p. 364); relations of power-knowledge that have operated as dominant were "never stable or eternal . . . as functional elements" of the body-without-organs assemblage (p. 364); assemblages could be elaborated "from disparate elements that could be material, psychic, social or abstract/philosophical" (p. 364). Finally, Fox (2011) stated that the assemblage would vary from person to person,

“contingent on the precise relations that exist as a consequence of experience, beliefs and attitudes, or from bodily predispositions” (p. 365). This way of thinking liberates.

As an example, Fox provides an “eating assemblage” for an adult comprised of “hunger - mouth - food - appetite - tastes - money - shopping - dietary choices - time and many other relations particular to the context and experiences of the individual” (p. 365). One can only imagine the Eyecology: the eye assemblage of the blind. This concerns ways of seeing. It is an ontological and axiological stance with emancipatory interests, themselves inherently, expressions of social justice. This study in its entirety is a social justice document claiming in part the body for those who experience impairments and blindness and a voice for persons with disabilities in general. It is worth noting that Nick Fox was of the view that unpacking a person’s assemblages can “enable understanding of how a person may respond to her/his environment, her/his experiences of illness and healthcare, and may be the basis for therapy or support” (Fox & Ward, 2008a, as cited in Fox, 2011).

Thelen (2005) understood this unpacking alluded to by Nick Fox, noting that stable patterns could be changed through disruption or breaking up of the “habitual way of thinking or moving” (p. 270) and such disruption could come from “an internal or external factor” (p. 270). Thelen (2005) would add that lived experiences emerge from a number of “interrelated organic . . . factors” and “any number of those factors may also be an entry to disrupt those patterns” (p. 270). This is where the skilled therapist came in and made the disruptive entry (p. 270). Thelen (2005) suggested that such an entry could be through “self-reflection or narrative, through establishing new relationships, through learning new behavior, through movement, or through art” (p. 270). Both the therapist and client became immersed in their active and creative imaginations.

It is indeed, amazing that change resides in a broken body so visible and yet too invisible to a culture that prides its intelligence only on the visible and tangible. The literature review continues to inform the scaffolds and bio-linguistic and psychological threads throughout this study. The psychological is informed by a psychoanalytical tendency, itself rooted in fields of the unconscious binding the ego yet setting it free, creating images, feelings, colors, sounds that inform an impaired body, and a mind itself open to negotiating axiological spaces, people's justice issues, unforbidden places, buried and hidden routes, universally-designed buildings in search of care at times and at others, in search of self and other. What you are seeking is seeking you said Rumi. Methodology has been salvaged after all, vindicating Vygotsky who was convinced that the search for method was in fact the most important problem of the research enterprise and adventure, particularly one designed to understand "the uniquely human forms of psychological activity In this case, the method is simultaneously prerequisite and product, the tool and the result of the study" (Mahn, 1999, p. 342).

Conclusion

This chapter explored literature pertinent to the concepts appearing in the title of the study. Either in depth or in breadth, literature regarding imagination, active imagination, wellbeing, ways of seeing, phenomenology, lived experiences, adult learners and visual impairment, was strung together, one concept's segment integrated into the next. Interpretative phenomenological analysis which emerged implicitly in this review will be used to introduce Chapter Three and its foray into methodology and the thematizing and coding of 16 interviews from eight participants who became blind as adults. A constant theme running through this literature review was the unity of opposites and an ultimate transcendence. Additionally, pathways to conceptualization, theorizing, practice and indeed methodology, that is, ways of

doing emerged from the body of this review, pointing essentially to a methodology in formation. Chapter Three will present that methodology, its interviews and their modes of inquiry, the themes emerging from participants interviews and traces of participants codes emerging from those themes. While the literature review was concentrated in this chapter, its sources will serve to inform theorizing in Chapter Three and further within the findings in Chapter Four.

CHAPTER THREE: Methodology

“Blind people differ from each other as much as sighted people do.”

- John M Hull

This chapter will first present brief and specific contributions that four well-known phenomenologists made to interpretive phenomenological analysis. That will be followed by descriptions of the rationale behind the sampling process. How participants were sought and contacted will be explained, and synthesis of information in letters, and forms of consent shared with them will be presented. Participants will then be described, and the interview guide and its dimensions elucidated. That will be followed by a description of the interview process, the researcher’s interview technique, and how the data was recorded and transcribed (Smith, 2021). How the narrative conversations from Interview 1 produced categories, codes, the use of coded frameworks, node themes and their codes will then be presented.

Since this study used two sets of eight interviews, the second set was administered to allow interviewees to clarify matters arising in the first which they themselves felt they had not done to their satisfaction. In addition to framing a select question for probing participants thoughts, the researcher presented a select set of two questions which was asked of each. In this latter case, the eight adult learners with visual impairments were asked to capture the wellbeing theme percolating through this study, by speaking about a possible distinction between healing and cure. Their answers were evaluated in part, by way of the listening guide as developed by Carol Gilligan and Jessica Eddy with influential traces on wellbeing from Richard Ryan and Edward Deci. Their “I” statements were particularly important and throughout this study were referred to as “I” scaffolds, serving as indicators of shifts or changes in participants psyches,

imaginings and emotions as experienced during interpretation of the blindness phenomenon and its overcoming.

Contributors To Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis

Interpretative phenomenological analysis is drawn from three areas in and of the philosophy of knowledge, namely, phenomenology, hermeneutics and ideography. Each finds reference in the other not only through convergences in their historical development, but primarily in the ontological and axiological reality that they care about human wellbeing and value lived experiences. Four known Europeans have been associated with the historic development of the phenomenological, interpretative and their attendant analytic approaches.

German philosopher Edmond Husserl (1859-1938) thought that in order to be phenomenological, humans needed to “disengage from the activity and attend to the taken-for-granted experience of it” (Smith, 2021, p. 8). What was/is experienced in the consciousness of the individual was therefore of great significance to Husserl and was and will be expanded throughout this study. Interpretative phenomenological analysis researchers as inheritors of this fruitful approach have found value in Husserl’s counsel on reflection, and a diligent and systematic focus on the “contents of consciousness,” and “our lived experience, which is the very stuff of life” (Smith, 2021, pp. 11-12). “Consciousness,” wrote Tony Nader, “is the hidden stuff that carves itself into objects, planets, stars, animals, humans, and all that exists in our universe” (2021, p. 23). Indeed, consciousness and lived experiences of participants were reflected in and interpreted from their remembrances and immediate interpretations.

The German philosopher, Martin Heidegger (1889-1976) believed in giving meaning to every being. Heidegger’s concept of being, therefore represented “a practical and revolutionary engagement with the world,” involving “self-reflection and sociality, affective concern, and a

temporal existential location” (Smith, 2021, p. 13). Empathy and compassion, if not the body proper, emerged inevitably in Heidegger’s text. Heidegger’s contribution to interpretative phenomenological analysis was and is seminal, drawing on the centrality of language, relationships and objects. When the subject of death appeared in Heidegger’s *Being and Time*, it was designed to encourage and stimulate reflection on life, its meaningfulness, its cyclic changes and surprises. To be specific, a blind person’s being in the world, or any other person for that matter, could be considered (to apply Heidegger’s words), always “perspectival, always temporal and always in-relation-to something” (Smith, 2021, p. 13). Being became doing. In this context, every human being’s consciousness and thus resourcefulness, is an active given, a living presence.

French philosopher Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1908-1961) redeemed or salvaged for example, the body of a person who was blind and imbued it with meaning -- its right to be here, its prerogative to hold a pivotal space in the world, its perceived ecology and as a consequence a right to speak its experiences in and interpretations of its being in that world. Therefore, an embodied being’s right to life-long perception remained at the core of Merleau-Ponty’s work. Smith (2021) contended that Merleau-Ponty perceived “body-subjects” where and when that body was no longer “conceived as an object in the world, but as our means of communication with it” (p. 14). The means were inherent (though probably not recognized then) in all bodies. Merleau-Ponty, much to the benefits of interpretative phenomenological analysis, addressed the body in that world, over-beyond any economic value. That body (which came into this world with its resources for being and knowing that world) shaped our way of knowing about the world too. In fact, its practical activities and relations became more critical then, than logical and abstract

interpretations; sensations mattered (even a sense anthropology) and were seminal to that body's existence in the world. Importantly, emotional experiences became pivotal with Merleau-Ponty's spawning of the concept embodiment (Smith, 2021, pp. 14-15). Embodiment denoted the ever-present consciousness as fundamental.

French philosopher and playwright Jean-Paul Sartre (1905-1980) believed as a phenomenologist that humans were ever-becoming. Humans were ever-developing, in process, in the throes of existence, thus Sartre's famous saying, "existence comes before essence" (Smith, 2021, p. 15). Not only did Sartre depart from both Husserl and Merleau-Ponty with that statement touching essence; Sartre embraced Heidegger's ontology. It was an ontology engaged actively in the definition and redefinition of being, more particularly, being in the world (invariably with a body though Sartre did not make that explicit). Thus, it was, that the Self, with its inevitable essence and characteristic wholeness (Epstein, 1973; Jung, 1968b; Jung & von Franz, 2017), was for Sartre not an entity to be discovered, but "an ongoing project to be unfurled" (Smith, 2021, p. 15). Not only does Sartre's analysis secure semblances of experiences at work in consciousness and vice versa, nor actors at work in the world and their potential interpretation of that world; features of embodiment, interpersonal relations, the affective and moral nature of individuals everywhere emerge (Smith, 2021, p. 16).

Interpretative phenomenological analysis and this study have therefore earned from these four phenomenologists the significance of beauty in transcendence and transcendental consciousness; the privileges entailed in living in the world where every being matters; the value in and of each and every human body, its communications and perceptions capacity, and of course, the ever-becoming nature of human life and indeed, consciousness. These phenomena salvage the essence of virtue in any psyche and body, more so, that of the blind. These are

vibrant resources. In this regard, a statement has to be made regarding the value in the interpretation of blind participants in a study being conducted by a researcher who is blind too.

A Quintuple Hermeneutic

Two matters are of important interest here. First, the individual is not regarded as separate from the observed in interpretative phenomenological analysis, but as an active, imaginative, ever-becoming being in the world, woven physically, psychologically and spiritually into a family fabric, whether nuclear or extended. Second, in the process of interpretative phenomenological analysis, a researcher exploring the phenomenon is not necessarily known to have direct access to nor share in the phenomenon. This was the case of Hammer (2013) who interviewed and conducted ethnographic work over a three-year period with 40 women, most of whom were congenitally blind, different in age, marital status, ethnicity, and originating from diverse geographic locations in Israel (p. 3). Interestingly, Gili Hammer's document was titled "This is the anthropologist, and she's sighted." Oxley (2016) would claim and identify two "filters" in Hammer's approach, where in the first, participants expressed their perception of the experience, and in the second, the researcher then interpreted what participants had said (p. 55). There had to be a third in the active phenomenon of blindness itself. Oxley (2016) had adopted a critical realist epistemology which she felt fitted with the concept of the data being interpreted through a double hermeneutic. But what when both the researcher and participants shared the phenomenon and were not sighted? Five filters are possible: the active phenomenon itself; the interpretation of the phenomenon by the participant/experiencer; the telling of the interpreted experiences; the interpretation of the narrative/experiences by a researcher who shares in the phenomenon; and the consolidation of researcher and participant interpretations in the hermeneutic text and study.

In this vein, and in the context of the hermeneutic, like Hammer would, Charmaz (2004) urged the researcher to struggle with “ambiguity and bewilderment,” in order to sense “hidden meanings” gaining a “deeper understanding of the phenomenon” remaining aware that “significant meanings are often liminal, unstated, and unacknowledged” (p. 981).

Researcher Attitude

In Chapter One Kathleen Charmaz had suggested the concept faithful to serve as the adjective describing how the exercise should be conducted. Charmaz (2004) used the synonym fidelity, to denote “accuracy, thoroughness, completeness” (p. 985). Accuracy for Charmaz (2004) meant “excavating the implicit meanings in our participants’ statements and actions” (p. 985). In the spirit of Interview 2 and the listening guide of Gilligan and Eddy (2017), the concept “excavating” is geological as much as it is archaeological, suggesting multiple layers or fields of meaning to be dug up from regions of the unconscious, a field of pure consciousness, and in fact from hidden meanings or quintuple interpretations of the experience of blindness. Moreover, Heidegger (the recognized leader in the field of hermeneutics and thus interpretation) had counseled that in interpreting, when something “within-the-world is encountered as such, the thing in question already has an involvement which is disclosed in our understanding of the world, and this involvement is one which gets laid out by the interpretation” (2010, p. 190). Consequently, and indeed, phenomenologically, it is always the individual experiencing the shared phenomenon who has to be accorded primacy in the process of valued and thus meaningful interpretation.

Idiographic/Analytic Method

The idiographic takes interest in this idiosyncratic presence, “seeking particular truth in the single, intensively studied instance” (Wallerstein, 2009, p. 112). Essentially, idiographic

research emphasizes and finds value in particulars and specifics in human experiences and social life; its reach of interest includes discourse, history, language and “context that relativize the knowledge gained to the individuals and situations studied and to those doing the inquiry” (Elliott et al., 1999, as cited in Wallerstein, 2009, p. 126).

In this study therefore, there is the matter to be interpreted, the process of interpretation by an experiencer, the passing on of what is interpreted, the interpretation of what has been passed through a range of formulas, and consolidation of both researcher and participant interpretations knowing clearly that they share the phenomenon. This is a process touching selection patterns, the use of language, the formations of meanings, the search for like meanings, the putting together of like and unlike interpretations, their conceptual and theorizing possibilities and particularities.

Two methods of data treatment will be adopted: one that uses categories, coded frameworks, node themes, codes, and querying processes to draw relations out of selected codes by way of the NVivo software. As pertains to the second interview, the researcher will seek to have participants authenticate their first interview, its meaning to them, the lacunae if any. All eight are required to muse on healing and cure, and the environment’s contribution to their wellbeing when the matter emerged in the dialogue.

Sample Rationale

Eight adults between the ages of 20 and 75 (n=8) made up the sample. Pietkiewicz and Smith (2014) recommended that interpretative phenomenological analysis researchers (working with between six and eight participants), should concentrate “more on the depth, rather than breadth of the study” (p. 11), to produce in

the process “quality rather than the quantity of data” that permits and produces “insightful analyses” (Larkin & Thompson, 2012, p. 104).

The group was purposively sampled and homogeneous, constituting that identified expert group, sharing in, and living the phenomenon (Oxley, 2016, p. 59). It was necessary to find a “defined group” for whom the research problem held “relevance and personal significance” (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014, p. 11), and who could offer a “valuable perspective” on the experience (Larkin & Thompson, 2012, p. 103). Such an experience (and in this case, blindness) had to be lived. In Table 1, this study’s eight blind participants were each given a pseudonym to protect their identities.

Table 1

Basic Characteristics

Name	Sex	State	Race	Education Level
Abri	F	TX	Black	Some college
Deb	F	VA	Black	Master’s
Eris	M	GA	Black	Bachelor’s
Kate	F	AK	White	Bachelor’s
Liz	F	CA	Afro-Latina	Some college
Nil	M	GA	Black	Master’s
Tanj	F	MA	White	Master’s
Tsaf	F	FL	Black	Bachelor’s

The level of participants’ education was not known prior to contact, so they were not selected on the basis of their qualifications. Both Abri and Liz had some college education representing two of the 1,151,500 Americans who reported having a visual disability with some college education. The remaining six with bachelor’s and master’s degrees formed part of the 598,000 between the ages of 21 and 64 who reported a visual disability (National Federation of the Blind, 2016). The researcher did not know the races to which the participants belonged prior to their initial communication. Though a significant variable, what mattered was the shared and

common experience of sight loss as adults between the ages of 20 and 75, access to a laptop, and their ability to make an independent decision to speak.

After they were individually reached, each participant was sent a Consent Form (Appendix B), and a copy of the Interview Questions (Appendix C). The Consent Form described the study, and what was expected of the participant if a decision was made to be involved. The participant was assured of anonymity, the right to participate or not, and to withdraw from the study at any time. It must be stated that when participants were contacted, they agreed to do the interview on a specific date. How the finding and contact processes were conducted for each participant will now be described.

Recruitment Process

Abri

This researcher reached out to a family friend in Houston, Texas who was asked about existing groups, agencies or organizations concerned about blindness issues. The group which the family member had no affiliation with, a family member who is sighted, was identified by the name iBlind Users Group. The telephone and email address for the president was sent to this researcher and that president was contacted. He was sent a Letter Requesting Participation and recommendations for participation (Appendix D) and asking for his support. The president sent out a collective email to the membership and over 30 members would respond. Without knowing anyone, the researcher chose the one who replied first by email (others would follow later). The participant selected, referred to as Abri throughout this study, was contacted and sent the Interview Questions and a Consent Form. The first interview was conducted on June 30, 2021 and the second on July 19, 2021.

Deb

The chairperson of the Advisory Committee of Christian Record Services was informed of the study by way of the Letter Requesting Participation and made a number of recommendations. Christian Record Services is a Nebraska-based institution providing services for some 120,000 visually impaired/blind persons across some 70 countries.

One of these persons recommended was Deb who was contacted using numbers provided by the advisory chair. Deb was sent the Interview Questions and the Consent Form which was signed and returned. The first interview was conducted on August 4, 2021 and the second on August 13, 2021.

Eris

Eris was recommended by a former director of Disability Services at Georgia State University department of Disability Services who was apprised of the study. Eris was contacted and received the Interview Questions and a Consent Form which was signed and returned. The first interview was conducted on May 20, 2021 and the second on July 20, 2021.

Kate

Kate was recommended by the program director, Orientation and Mobility specialist at the Alaska Center for the Blind -- an institution found after this researcher decided to search for agencies concerned with issues of blindness in Alaska. Nate Kyle, the program director was the first choice, but he would reveal that he lost sight as a teenager through a gun incident and so did not meet the criterion. Nate Kyle was sent the Letter Requesting Participation. Kate would be recommended and contacted. Kate was sent the Interview Questions and Consent Form which was signed and returned. The first interview was conducted on July 14, 2021 and the second on July 22, 2021.

Liz

Liz was contacted by way of the senior impact project client and mentor at Society for the Blind located in Sacramento, California. Society for the Blind serves 27 counties in northern California. The senior impact project client and mentor was recommended by the chair of Christian Record Services' advisory committee. Though the impact officer was the one recommended initially for participation, she became sick and recommended Liz, a blind orientation and mobility instructor to take her place. Liz was contacted and sent the Interview Questions and Consent Form which was signed and returned. The first interview was conducted on July 8, 2021 and the second on July 23, 2021.

Nil

Nil was recommended by a former director at Georgia State University's department of Disability Services. He was contacted and agreed to participate, was sent the Interview Questions and Consent Form which was signed and returned. The first interview was conducted on May 13, 2021 and the second on July 28, 2021.

Tanj

Tanj was identified by the researcher after recommendations were made by a committee member regarding possible interviewees/participants at Perkins School for the Blind, located in Watertown, Massachusetts. Tanj was identified by a receptionist who received the call. Tanj agreed immediately to participate in the research, was sent the Interview Questions and the Consent Form which was signed and returned. The first interview was conducted on May 14, 2021 and the second on August 6, 2021.

Tsaf

Tsaf was recommended by the chair of the advisory committee of Christian Record Services. Tsaf agreed immediately and was sent the Interview Questions and Consent Form which was signed and returned. The first interview was conducted on June 3, 2021 and the second on August 2, 2021.

The eight participants had lost sight between the ages of 20 and 75, with the youngest being at age 32 at the time of the interview and the oldest at age 63. Kate had been blind for only three years, and Tanj for six. The other six had been blind for an average of 22 years. It was likely too that those who had been blind for shorter periods would have a more traumatic experiential story to tell having not accepted or come to terms completely with the phenomenon. Their code frameworks were likely to be emotion and narrative ones, expressing feelings, psychological changes, and moments of coming to terms with their self-concept respectively.

Table 2

Age at Time of Sight Loss

Name	Age at time of interview	Age at time of sight loss	Years of blindness
Abri	35	21	14
Deb	63	23	40
Eris	50	25	25
Kate	36	33	3
Liz	35	20	15
Nil	50	25	25
Tanj	32	26	6
Tsaf	39	26	13

Interview Guide and Dimensions

Two interviews were conducted with participants linking up using their phones or laptops either from their homes or offices. The researcher operated from home in the state of Georgia. The first interview was comprised of open-ended and semi-structured questions (Appendix C).

The second interview was shorter and comprised of semi-structured questions developed by the researcher drawing on contents of matters arising in the first interview.

Interview 1 contained representations of the study's three research questions with seven prompts to each question. The questions were representations, having been worded differently from the exact research question though capturing its meaning. There were times however, when in the dynamic flow of the conversation, the exact research question was asked of participants and answers were indeed meaningful and thus significant.

Prompts served as guidelines but were not necessarily used in the order in which they appeared on the interview schedule. Their use depended on the flow of the conversation and that conversation was the participants' to determine and indeed interpret. Prompts sought to uncover those coded dimensions: expressions of feelings, emotions, cognitive experiences, and transition periods and to probe these even further. This below are the representations of the research questions and their possible prompts. Representations of research questions, and examples of possible prompts.

Table 3

Research Questions

Guiding Research Question	Representation	Example of Prompts
What value do adult learners with visual impairment say they place on using their active imaginations?	How does your use of active imagination enrich your life?	How much has your life been enriched by the things you've learned to do? When you realize there was more to you than visual impairment or blindness how did you feel?
What are the various imagination experiences adult learners with visual	You are a visually impaired adult learner. You do not see outside but have a relation	Describe the images you experience behind or in front

Guiding Research Question	Representation	Example of Prompts
impairments report they encounter?	with images arising behind your eyes. What do these images behind your eyes tell you about the meaning of your life purpose as a visually impaired or blind person?	of your eyes when you close them. Would you describe them as images you remember or are they images you've never seen before?
What do adult learners with visual impairments believe are the factors and conditions that promote and hinder the use of their imagination and active imaginations?	How did you make that shift from seeing to not seeing, from a loss to what seems to be a learning and wellbeing resource?	What does visual impairment mean to you and your life's purpose now? Looking back on it all, how were you impacted emotionally when you lost sight?

Researcher Interview Technique

Van Manen (2016) in discussions on interview techniques, recommended a dialogic approach. In the case of the first interview, lived experiences data were gathered, while in the case of the second, the researcher engaged the interviewee/participant in a “hermeneutic interview” where the two reflect on contents of the first interview, turning “the interviewees into formal participants or collaborators in and of the research project” (p. 59). The first and second interviews varied in duration as shown below.

Table 4

Interview Duration

Interview Name	Duration (hh:mm:ss)
Abri Interview 1	1:04:38
Abri Interview 2	35:15
Deb Interview 1	55:46
Deb Interview 2	47:47
Eris Interview 1	1:01:38
Eris interview 2	43:18
Kate Interview 1	1:14:49
Kate Interview 2	45:35

Interview Name	Duration (hh:mm:ss)
Liz Interview 1	1:18:13
Liz Interview 2	1:14:58
Nil Interview 1	1:01:14
Nil Interview 2	47:08
Tanj Interview 1	1:29:14
Tanj Interview 2	1:10:48
Tsaf Interview 1	1:07:22
Tsaf Interview 2	45:49

In the case of the second interview, two similar questions were asked of each participant. They were:

- (i) Is the world a sentient place? You use all your senses . . . do you get the feeling now that you can learn from everything, that everything is reaching or touching you? What is the difference between healing and cure?
- (ii) Do you say you speak to, or can you have a conversation with the pictures in your mind or the images you imagine?

Though these two questions could produce a yes answer, this was unlikely given the conversations preceding emergence of these specific questions. Then again, the wording could be changed consistent with the preceding dialogue. So, to summarize, there were (i) questions which the interviewee needed to explore further, given her/his answer in the first interview; (ii) there were questions emerging from Interview 1 which the researcher needed to ask of the participant; and (iii) there was a set question for all participants.

Transcription

16 interviews were conducted using Zoom meeting and a Zoom link was sent to each participant one day before the scheduled meeting. That Zoom link was prepared by the researcher's technology assistant and sent to him. It was then sent on to the

participants by the researcher who connected with the interviewee on the scheduled day. When the meeting began the video was turned off for both the researcher and participant. One day following the audio recording, the participant was sent the audio copy. That would be the case for both interviews one and two. The upload to the transcription services would occur later that day or the following day.

A transcription agency located in Scotland was identified as offering the most cost-effective service with a turnover occurring within one day. The recorded audio would be uploaded to the GoTranscript site by the technology assistant using the researcher's credentials. It is significant to note that GoTranscript, the transcribers, would convert audio into text, getting as close as possible to the spoken text. This meant inclusion of um's, uh's, hmmm's, pauses, repetitions of pronouns at times, and invariably, words that were not immediately decipherable. The duration of each transcribed interview was placed at the bottom of the transcription.

Transcribers would sometimes identify interviewees by their first names since the researcher called that name during the interview process and the transcription system tended to use that name throughout, but they had no idea who that person was. That copy was sent to the participant using Dropbox. The pseudonyms were later affixed.

Tools in the Listening Guide

In addition to the use of NVivo and the first interview to produce themes from its analysis, Interview 1 and Interview 2 more particularly, were designed and integrated to consolidate patterns and leads to the research questions and the tangential matters lying outside these results. This meant the adoption of a specific listening method.

The foundations of that listening method adopted was developed by Carol Gilligan and Jessica Eddy. Here is a summary of their overall views on listening as drawn from "Listening as

a Path to Psychological Discovery: An Introduction to the Listening Guide.” Gilligan and Eddy (2017, pp. 76-77), had observed the following over periods of time:

- that listening produced knowledge;
- that voices speaking on the margins of society can be and usually are silenced;
- when people speak with an “I” voice they should be listened to;
- listening is different from coding, that is merely placing words, phrases and paragraphs into categories;
- a researcher needs to take the time to listen and not rush to categorize;
- researchers need to leave spaces for surprise and discovery;
- persons should be approached not as subjects but as experts within their experiences;
- the act of listening represents an act of respect;
- a researcher should listen for major themes, emotional uprisings, meaningful images and recurring metaphors;
- a researcher should observe movements in and of the narrative “I” and emergence of significant gaps

The recommendation that listening is different from coding, that is merely placing words, phrases and paragraphs into categories, is advanced here in this study. This study’s processes of flow move by way of interview immersion, category formations, accompanying codes, code frameworks, observing themes from the codes, the pointing out and recording of node themes, their aligned and interrelated codes. These codes are further made specific to the research question, codes drawn from participants seeking to suggest an epistemology, ontology and values in a state that was ever-becoming, one that spoke to the integrity and wellbeing of eight (if not nine) blind participants. Second, the observation and recommendation by Gilligan and Eddy

(2017) that persons should be approached not as subjects but as experts within their experiences, point to the meaningfulness granted to narratives in Interview 2. While Interview 2 will not be processed by NVivo, by way of the researcher who is blind, Interview 2 will serve to give legitimacy to participants themselves and their mode of language use.

For instance, overcoming a traumatic experience meant for this “expert,” willing herself out of a broken place in one instance, while for the other, rising out of traumatic feelings meant gaining access to tools and facilities. They are both resourceful and meaningful. The “expert” codes selected as examples, though drawn from Interview 1, are just as legitimate.

I felt like I was missing something because I couldn't see well enough. Um, I felt like I was defective. It-it was always coming from a broken place. Oh, I'm visually impaired.

I'm visually challenged. I'm low vision. You know, always trying to explain the fact that I couldn't see, that I was broken, that my vision was messed up. Now that I've just adopted the word blind, um, I feel like a whole person. (Liz: Int 1)

Another participant gained access to information in alternative ways. This marked a level of acquired social competence.

Of course, you're dealing with the frustration of losing, a very, um, vital sense, you know, being able to see. So, a lot of my memory around that is around the trauma to adjusting to acquiring information in alternative ways. (Nil: Int 1)

The word “memory” could be further coded in the context of active imaginations. The decision to adopt the name “blind” represented an act of imagination, identity, competence, and a profound activation of autonomy. Given the nature of literature gathered in this text on wellbeing, the transcendence to a state of feeling better or the “memory around that” is captured by these participants through their daily wrestle with the meanings of their traumas. Thus, each

participant can be treated as the expert in their experiences. This is why what they recall in Interview 2, though simple, will determine in many ways the quality of meaningfulness drawn from their deliberate reflections on the blindness phenomenon. Additionally, listening for a participant's embodied voice, emotion and interest, that which is returned to frequently, which brings joy, sadness or feelings of strength, subsequent achievement and overcoming trauma, or asking them to expand on those experiences, is formative. It is pivotal to the discovery of Self as wholeness, that wholeness itself being pollinated by products of active imagination and imaginations.

Michel-Rolph Trouillot reminded us further that the authentic subject and their historicity may not even be identified from their direct quotes. Indeed, "there may be something irreducible in the first person singular" (2016, p. 27). Gilligan and Eddy (2017) contended that the very use of the pronoun "I" produces changes in the psyche. Indeed, the scaffolding of a sentence, in which "I" could appear ("I" being a factor and function in the verb "to be"), has foreshadowed for Moro (2018), "the typical human cognitive process" in the "judgement that we make about things" (p. 43).

Participants Embodiment and Emergent Characteristics

As practice, each participant was approached as an intelligence consistent with the embodiment theory propounded by Linda Smith. According to Smith (2005), intelligence "emerges in the interaction of an organism with an environment and as a result of sensory-motor activity" (p. 280). The idea that "much human intelligence resides in the interface between the body and the world" (Smith, 2005, p. 286), is significant in the works of Maurice Merleau-Ponty, and the body throughout this work is salvaged, if not

redeemed in the works of Rosemary Garland-Thomson and Nick Fox over beyond its biological characteristics.

Esther Thelen identified “contributions of embodied processes: perception, movement, and their emotional accompaniments” and was concerned that in the production of many cognitive accounts, the parts played by “perception, emotion, and especially movement” were deemed “secondary to mental activities,” but they were in fact “part of the causal web of behavior throughout life” (2005, p. 260). The embodiment factor that grants intelligence to each participant will become significant, when codes in words, phrases, sentences and paragraphs are drawn from their responses to constitute emergent themes, concepts and processes of theorizing.

The second movement in the evolution of codes in this study, is constituted under the concept of emergence. Not only does the researcher point participant sayings to a critical expression of the literature on the subject of lived experiences with blindness; participants produce new and different ways of experiencing, if not seeing the experiences of blindness through these emerging codes as they evolve into further and continuing themes. Says Smith (2005), the idea of emergence is founded on the principle of the “temporary but coherent coming into existence of new forms through ongoing intrinsic processes” (p. 278). These new forms, in the context of embodiment as propounded by Merleau-Ponty, and the ever-becoming as produced by Sartre, are ongoing intrinsic processes and interactions in the lives of participants who are blind. These new forms or innovations are produced between researcher and participant too during the dynamic of the quintuplet process. Moreover, those participants sharing lived experiences are, as all human beings, justly “bound to the physical world in real time through multiple modalities, through vision, audition, touch, smell . . . and balance” (Smith, 2005, p.

290). In addition to “balance,” which the participant Liz codified as one of the senses central to her blind students, she would add “common sense” and “time sense” (Liz: Int 1).

In what follows, the approach to the process of forming categories, identifying appropriate codes, framing the codes and developing node themes and their subsequent codes will be provided. These flow patterns were all designed to answer to the research questions; answers which will be elicited from expert participants to serve in formulating results in Chapter Four.

Exploratory Method and Intuitive Codes

Before any formal code selection practices were adopted, the researcher during an immersed reading following an exploratory method, assigned a list of self-developed labels dubbed intuitive codes, representing notes and ideas flowing out of the absorbed reading experience. The approach was personal and open-ended and served to begin consolidation of categories and point to possible code selection, node theme development, code titles, further codes, concept and theory identification. An example of such an intuitive code could be written in parenthesis into the transcript with an asterisk on the inner face of the left parenthesis for speedy find by a blind researcher whose sources are electronic documents.

The exploratory code could be thus constituted, from Deb for example: (*Teacher/Special Ed/Blind teaching the blind); or from Nil: (*Learning/continuing education/creative intelligence/posttraumatic growth/epistemology/ontology). These intuitive, exploratory notes, derived from first impressions of an immersed reading,

guided succinct capture of essence of what participants said to support, as a first movement, formation of categories.

Category, Code, and Code Framework

While a category could be a single word, in this study of blind people whose narratives matter as experts and advocates, a category took the form of three or four words, a phrase or sentence. The ideas captured in the category contributed in part to code selection, and code selection further determined code frameworks, structure of node themes and derived codes. Richards and Morse (2013) observed that coding is a linking process. “It leads you from the data to the idea and from the idea to all the data pertaining to that idea” (as cited in Saldana, 2016, p. 9). In qualitative research, a code can range from “a single word to a full paragraph or an entire page of text to a stream of moving images” (Saldana, 2016, p. 292). Saldana (2016) further described a code as symbolically assigning “a summative, salient, essence-capturing, and/or evocative attribute for a portion of language-based or visual data” (p. 4).

Code Frameworks

In this study, affective coding comprising emotion coding, values coding, and versus coding were adopted as frameworks. One other framework in narrative coding was used. These guiding frameworks provided for more precise selection of node themes and the development of codes from more than 500 categories.

Table 5

Code Frameworks

Code	Description of Code
Emotion	Marks the emotions remembered, spoken, acted out and experienced by participants, or identified by the researcher in the participant’s behavior, speech, nonverbals
Value	Values seek to capture participants world views on a matter; values represent importance given to oneself, another person, thing, or idea

Code	Description of Code
Versus	Versus usually identified in dichotomous or dual terms highlighting what individuals, groups, social systems, and organizations say as opposed to what they do
Narrative	Narrative highlights psychological wellbeing, beliefs, emotional experiences, and processes of identification formation. Development identification formation is at the heart of self-esteem and self-concept development (Saldana, 2016, pp. 291-298).

Initially, that is following those intuitive codes, 537 categories were developed from the 240 pages from eight participants. These would be further reduced to 26 node themes and 291 codes using the code frameworks as parameters for selection. In the context of the code frameworks, the category, participant, code framework and research question relevance were placed in here as seen below. Code frameworks were determined by the researcher, who interpreted sayings in the codes to be either of emotion, values, versus tendencies and of narrativity, this latter marking a change or development in perspective and of understanding of select factors and conditions. Inclusion of the researcher's determination of the frames and whether they should be emotion or values for instance, were influenced by, and produced what Smith et al. (2009) described as a form of bracketing that was more enlivened (as cited in Oxley, 2016), practically cohering the perspectives of researcher and participant.

Table 6

Code Frameworks and Participants

Category	Participant	Framework	Research Question Relevance
Imagination, Emotions and Thought	Eris	Emotion	Active Imagination
Imagination, Hearing and Interpretations	Liz	Narrative	Active Imagination/Factors/Conditions

Imagination, Intuition and Positive Thoughts	Tanj	Narrative	Imagination Experiences/Factors and Conditions
----------------------------------------------	------	-----------	------------------------------------------------

In the case of Eris' 'Imagination, Emotions and Thought', which was coded from the entire set of interviews and in the framework of emotion, the text reads.

Sometimes it, it, it, it creates a nice thought. Sometimes if I'm in a serious mood, then the emotion that I have is that of seriousness. It makes, make me be very solemn, but if I'm in a happy mood, my imagination lets me think of happy songs or these things that I've done that I found in my past or exciting that I- I used to do. But I think I'm, uh, I'm glad that I did. (Int 1)

A researcher is asked to listen for the emotion in Eris' voice and text. Other sub-codes jump out, such as "the emotion that I have," "my imagination lets me think," and "that I found in my past."

Liz, the mobility teacher had taken her students to an intersection. In this narrative coded framework, she searched herself, beyond her own interests, for what her students might be thinking.

They might be thinking of this corner and they might be thinking, um, you know, there's- there are gonna be four cars at this intersection. And in their imagination, they're thinking about, you know, does this car sound like it's a big car or a little car? You know what I'm saying? Like, they may not be able to see the cars, but I don't know what they're thinking in their head. Like, how are-- What kind of cars are they picturing? Are they picturing little cars? Are they picturing big cars? Um, you know, I have them think about like almost perceiving what people around them are thinking, right? (Int 1)

With the application of the code framework, the researcher could now go to the transcripts where the categories had been inscribed and draw out the code. In the case of Tanj, the category is 'Imagination, Intuition and Positive Thoughts,' the code framework is already narrative (lifting self-concept and awareness, though it sounds like values), and the possible theme placement is 'Imagination Experiences and Factors and Conditions.' Factors and conditions were identified because Tanj's positive relations with her perceived universe serves as attitude to be emulated by both the sighted and sightless. She indicated presence of an open, clear Ajna chakra or third eye. The active code from the blind participant read:

I mean, nature's incredible with how precise and how-how there's a reason for everything. So, if you start from there, and you put out the intent ... 'I want a better opportunity, I want a better opportunity. I know it's going to happen. It's only a matter of time. And I'm going to push as much as I can to take every opportunity that presents itself to me'. (Int 1)

This code within the values framework taps into a bit of intuition and positive thinking with implications for wellbeing in winning. Pedagogy cannot be left out: it is a practical exercise for the blind whose autonomy and power of visualization is engaged here. Evidently, active imaginations are at work in this philosophy-of-life prescription from an adult learner who is blind. The factors and conditions that promote and hinder segment is fulfilled given that the adult learner is encouraged and encourages others, to practice a way of actively engaging imaginations, changing her and his behavior and attempting to attract conditions conducive to self-esteem, charting an enhanced self-concept and indeed, of improving one's condition in the world of work and income

generation. These code frameworks as examples indicated how the 537 categories could be further trimmed and placed into 26 node themes and 291 codes guiding the research and researcher to more precise responses to the three research questions.

Analysis

Citing Bernard (2011), Saldana (2016) adopted the definition of analysis as “the search for patterns in data and for ideas that help explain why those patterns are there in the first place” (pp. 9-10). Saldana (2016) described patterns as “repetitive, regular, or consistent occurrences of action/data that appear more than twice. At a basic level, pattern concerns the relation between unity and multiplicity” (p. 5). Following on strategies provided by NVivo for development of node themes to facilitate analysis, 26 node themes emerged containing 291 codes. This was done by focusing the 291 codes on the research questions and selecting what was pointing directly to or suggesting a possible relation. Additionally, those 26 node themes and their codes were deemed pertinent to the three research questions, the purpose of the study and the statement of the problem among other segments in this process.

Relevance to Statement of the Problem

Given the role of the eight participants as makers of knowledge through experience, even brief insights they could provide to the problem statement of blindness as a resource became relevant.

We have to make sure we balance the fact that again, we do bring a different perspective to the table. So, a lot of it is using more imagination. That really strays away from the concrete that most people, kind of, build on because they are, kind of, trapped in that visual environment. (Nil: Int 1)

Nil used the material known as “concrete” to represent the static inflexibility on the part of those linear ones who do not grasp beyond visual. At another node theme the blind male executive would value the resource, stating, “It definitely forces you to adopt a different perspective and look at things through a different paradigm and bring a different skillset to the table” (Nil: Int 1). The Israeli scholar Gilli Hammer contended that blindness “evokes a rich attentive use of the senses that enriches the use of both blindness and sight” (2019, p. 128). Liz said,

I don't know if that makes sense to you or not. But for me, losing the rest of my eyesight really just helped me really fall into place with everything, like all the skills that I had learned, all the techniques that I have, all the abilities to problem-solve. (Int 1)

Liz immersed herself into her resourceful inner self. It was an act of active imagination. Without knowing it, Deb praised that liminal experience. She said of blindness, “It’s a precious commodity, it is, um, I feel that I'm doubly blessed. I've been able to see and now I can't. I've had it from both sides. It depends on how an individual looks at it” (Int 1). This teacher of the blind, at the age of 63, described herself as “doubly blessed.”

The 50-year-old musician and male participant in this study realized his fast-paced living was causing him to miss a lot. “It slowed me down. It made me to realize, you know, you always see people say, ‘You need to stop and smell the roses. You need to stop and, and, and enjoy the sunset’” (Eris: Int 1). In this code, note the blind participant’s choice of language when he stated you always “see people say.” What people say is seen in this case, suggesting a relation between seeing, saying and knowing. These five codes barely touch the surface of blindness as a resource. As the body of codes are presented in response to the research questions, the blindness as a resource phenomenon will become increasingly visible to knowing.

Study's Purposes in Codes

Spirit and Seeing

One of the purposes of the study was to determine the possible relations of the experiences of blindness and a spiritual sensibility. One of the 26 node themes was titled “Spiritual sensibility enhances wellbeing.” There, Deb said she saw “through the Spirit of God.”

SH: Tell me something that you see. Give me a sense. Is it a picture? Is it an image?

What is it?

Deb: It's a smile sometime. Sometimes it's a smile. Sometimes it's a water flowing.

Sometimes it's Jesus walking on the water coming toward me. Sometimes it's just ... a flower bed or children laughing and playing or my parents, someone pushing me in a swinger or, um, I got a dozen books that I'm-I'm looking for to read or pleasant show that I want to watch and so those things that go into my mind.

SH: What does that tell you about blindness?

Deb: Hmm? Hadn't thought about that. There's a different way to see than phis, than physically. (Int 1)

This is an encounter. This expert group of blind adult learners were producing answers to the research questions, in Deb's case, the second one. Liz, in this values code, described the relationship between herself and another ontological being or reality as a process.

Like, I am totally okay with being blind now, you know? And, um, that's okay. That peace can only come from really surrendering to the process and saying, ‘Hey, you know what? I'm losing my vision, but I'm trusting that everything is gonna be okay at the end. It may not be pretty and it's gonna hurt and it's gonna be frustrating, but at the end of the

day, I am trusting that I am in someone else's hands and that they're gonna- they're gonna have me'. (Int 1)

Like the present continuous “surrendering”, “trusting” is pivotal here denoting a dependence and immersion that are not repressive. Tanj had an animal guide and he died.

So, when he died, it was like somebody was-was stabbing me in the chest and it was hard to breathe, it was, the grief was so bad. So, I used to sing to him. You know, when he went to sleep, I used to sing him ‘You Are My Sunshine,’ you know the song ... So I told him because I've, I understand that if you plan and if you create a language, a spiritual language with your loved ones when they're still with you, when they, when they're gone or when they pass on that language will come back and you'll recognize it if you've developed it. It's like any other language. So, I-I developed that with him. I didn't know if it would work, but here's a- here's a story for you that brought me peace. When he was gone, I was commuting home from work and I was on the Red Line in Boston, we stopped at Park Street it-it's a stop ... UMass Boston. So, we stopped there, the door is open. A lot of the times, musicians are there playing guitar, singing. The door opened, this warm breeze blew in and this old lady was playing a guitar and she was singing ‘You Are My Sunshine.’ And most of the time, these songs are contemporary, it's whatever's on the radio or whatever's popular that, that week or whatever people play, covers of that. You never hear that song, ever. And she was singing it and the, the warm wind was blowing in, the doors stay open for a much longer time than they should. Usually, these doors are open for 30 seconds. People get on the train, they close and you move on. The doors were open way longer than they should be. Nobody noticed and no one said anything or seemed weirded out. And then as the notes of the song were fading away, the

doors closed and we moved on and I felt like goosebumps and like a-a pure sense of peace and love, you know, like- he was reaching out to me to let me know that he was- he was okay and well. And after that, the grief got so much easier to deal with. (Int 1)

The sub-codes point to other possibilities in that “stabbing me in the chest” represents a physical phenomenon and stress symptom; “I told him” (told is usually used to refer to a statement said to a person, but here she gives her animal spirit and guide a personality); “the doors stayed open for a much longer time” (she did not see them, but was using her sense of touch, hearing and intuition to know); “goosebumps and like a pure sense of peace and love” touched her deepest emotions spiriting her amygdala, all, an embodied experience that only she knew. Throughout these three extracts a transcendental function entered the narrative. In Tanj’s case the grief “got so much easier to deal with.” These are tantamount to psychological and spiritual experiences.

Sighted Can Learn

Another purpose of the study was to determine what the sighted could learn from the blind. “If the person is walking with a cane, do not run up to us and grab our cane. Do not, because we don’t know what, what are you- what-what are you doing?” (Abri: Int 1). The Houston resident who traveled a lot by paratransit, described this act as “disrespectful.” According to Kate,

We go through the same feelings and views and perspectives, you know, of having dreams and wanting a life and to, you know, to be a part of something, you know, just because we do things differently or use tools to help us accomplish a task doesn’t mean we can’t do the same thing as they do, and that we’re more similar than they realize. (Int 1)

It was amazing to hear a human being say about humans “we’re more similar than they realize.” These two messages to the sighted, represented and distributed across the 26 node themes, were to be clustered under the factors and conditions that hinder or promote segment in Research Question 3.

Epistemological, Ontological Contributions

Tanj (like the eight participants in this study) became less fearful, fear itself being one of the enemies to knowing. Under the node theme “Acceptance is key,” the voice actor noted,

You know, a lot of it is to where I'm, I've embraced it much better. I'm not as afraid.

There's always going to be some worry or some scare, but I have more courage to take the risk or the challenge. Um, yeah. You know, I'm confident and understand that I can ask for-for help and not feel like I can't complete something. (Int 1)

These are significant epistemological and ontological actions: the departure by the blind from fear and adoption of collaboration practices.

According to Nil, “For the most part, you know, I-I frame my life, so that the fundamentals of it, I can do very independently without any disruption” (Int 1). The idea of “framing” his “life” represented a critical expression of autonomy, knowledge construction and self-concept enhancement. This is representative of the group of eight. Hammer (2019) wrote of framing “blindness as a possible choice of critical consciousness” (p. 164).

In what follows, the framework for formulating how the three research questions were answered using the node themes, the code titles, the codes under the node titles, and the process of querying utilizing NVivo software will be outlined.

Node Themes and Researcher Synopsis

Lincoln and Guba (1985) had recommended that a researcher uses “classification reasoning” and those “tacit and intuitive senses” (as cited in Saldana, 2016, p. 11) to decide which data look, and feel alike. This tacitness was used in identifying already embodied and emergent patterns.

For example, in the table below, the 26 node themes are presented, and already, the general description of the codes suggest an affinity to the research question and their issues.

Table 7

Node Theme and Interpretation Synopsis

Node theme	Code to Theme Interpretation
Encountering blindness is difficult	(Memory, shock, trauma, depression, relatives, autonomy, extrinsic motivation, access to support, active imagination, imagination experiences)
Diagnoses confused and strained emotions	(Dichotomy between medical model and actual blind experiences, language difference, the body as object, the body as belonging to someone, the body without organs, use of imagination in overcoming, imagination experiences, factors and conditions)
Depression accompanied sight loss	(Self-esteem, self-concept challenged, shame, anger, fear, self-hate, disassociation, separation from zone of active imagination as source of knowledge, imagination experience)
Caretakers and family central to wellbeing	(Wellbeing not as absence of disease, but as meaningful cognitive activity, autonomy, working with relatives in bonds of relatedness in communication, access to support centers, promoting care, being alert to those who would hinder)
Acceptance is key	(Letting go, stages of trauma, support systems, finding strength within and among loved-ones, willingness to pass on lessons from imagination experiences to others, diminishing fear, spiritual

Node theme	Code to Theme Interpretation
	experiences, restoring a healthier amygdala, factors and conditions)
Autonomy and will work together	(Finding that inner fire and will, finding competence, drawing on imagination, discovering different ways of learning to self-liberate using one's active imaginations in meditation, dance, design, social relations, music, planning, the value of memory to imagination, factors and conditions)
Blindness is more than a measure	(Disturbs, annoys, is a nuisance, another world with its own frames to work within, fear, joy, an opportunity with possibilities)
Blindness perceived as a resource	(Opens up new imagination dimensions in the lives of adults, engages their active imaginations, produces new ways of thinking, unfolds fresh emotions and challenges in technology use, factors and conditions)
Memory saves the blind person	(Works in and with imagination, all imaginative activities are supported and advanced by memory. Evident is the integrated nature of brain functioning, neural pathways, picture formation, visualization, imagination experiences, factors and conditions that promote)
We become aware of other senses	(This is assumed, but persons who are visually impaired put it in perspective exploring sense of hearing, touch, taste, and smell that sighted people take for granted, inclusion of imagination and active imaginations, Gilligan and Eddy factors and conditions)
A mind's eye is real	(Participants use it and manipulate it, and it feeds on memory, emotion and imagination)
Visualization should be taught	(In this study visualization has come to mean picturing, the uses of imagination, alertness to imagination experiences and value in memory. Every participant thinks it is a beautiful exercise that improves learning, factors and conditions)

Node theme	Code to Theme Interpretation
Intuition is beneficial to all	(That alertness to impressions that the blind must practice, they recommended to sighted, as it impacts positively their active imagination, wellbeing and ways of knowing and seeing, factors and conditions)
Color holds meaning for the blind	(Feelings, emotions, colors are integral to active imagination, suggesting activity within the psyche, creativity, behaviors finding meanings in other cultures that can inform those taking color for granted. Memory of color among the blind is significant in memory)
The blind know in their dreams	(A matter of great interest to neuroscience. There's even a difference between dreams of those who were born blind and those who have memory of seeing. Meaningful imagination experiences emerge here)
Sighted have much to learn from sightless	(Patience, respect. They are human beings. Factors and conditions that hinder and promote find reference here)
Technology supports the blind	(May well be their place for thriving because the technology has begun to take their imaginations into consideration. Their use of sound has revolutionized manufacturing and they too, tap into their active imaginations to create, and participate in their communities and organizations, factors and conditions)
Faith and confidence	(Relatedness, extension of the self outside the self, implications for healing and overcoming, implications for phylogenesis, imagination, behaviors to be encouraged, and development of an ontology, factors and conditions)
Spiritual sensibility enhances wellbeing	(Active imagination as immersion, meditation, memory, feelings, emotions, family, wellbeing as expression of transcendent function, as zone of pure consciousness, as unification of Self, imagination experience, factors and conditions)
The will must be set in motion	(Intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, sense of autonomy, competence, active imaginations,

Node theme	Code to Theme Interpretation
	meaningful cognition, a will to wellness, factors and conditions)
Trauma runs through experiences with blindness	(Important to note how participants overcame the trauma of sight loss. Value in the use of active imaginations becomes pertinent. Given definitions of imagination used in this study, there are many. Factors and conditions)
Active imaginations in use in every dimension of life	(As long as a human being is alive her/his entire panoply of activity constitutes expressions of imagination. It is of the body, mind and its thoughts, the ego and the collective unconscious, factors and conditions)
Imagination experiences	(What is visual, of the imagination, what is seen or visualized and pictured, what is memorized, manipulated, encountered, reflections from the superficial to the psyche, its symbols, their meanings and relevance to the modern)
Imagination	(People can dream of a better life, discover new ways of doing seeing, set their imaginations in motion, control its flow, remember colors and spatial arrangements, songs, whole texts, have a relationship with their God, note that there is no one way to imagination. Imagination is in and for everyone, imagination needs return to the heart of education)
There are always factors and conditions that hinder or promote	(The blind themselves recommend to members of their communities and the suggestions run from an internal relation to a thriving community of persons desirous of learning and of a solid education. From their canes to perceptions of them, hindrances and matters to be promoted remain ever-present)
Hindrances	(Impatience, non-inclusion of their experiences, their own unwillingness to admit that they need assistance, lack of appreciation for their work and in fact, long commutes)

This qualitative and tacit treatment (itself, an act of interpretation and listening to the text), when carefully observed and interpreted further shows clearly that there is imagination in every action. Thus, while the four node themes in “Active imagination in use in every dimension of life,” “Imagination experiences,” “Imagination” and “There are always factors and conditions that hinder or promote” (See Appendix E) will serve as the core from which answers to the research questions will be drawn, answers were to be found too at practically every node theme and from every code.

Active Imaginations and Value in their Use

The node theme “Active imagination in use in every dimension of life” was comprised of 30 code titles. Their collection of codes would contribute directly or indirectly to framing answers to the research question: what value do adult learners with visual impairment say they place on using their active imaginations.

Among the 30 code titles, the 13 titles below for example, indicate that active imagination(s): “Engenders desire to learn” (Eris); “Facilitates transcending negatives” (Kate); “Enhances reflection on vision loss” (Kate); “Puts images together carefully” (Liz); “Works excellently with touch” (Liz); “Provides space for philosophizing about life” (Liz); “Useful in the understanding of scalar dimensions” (Nil); “Embraces a playful, effortless environment” (Tanj); “Facilitates movement in dance and exercise” (Abri); “Produces problem solutions” (Tanj); “Encourages facing challenges” (Tsaf); “Works well with determination” (Kate); and “Works at the subliminal level” (Nil). The other 17 code titles are relevant also; the 13 mentioned above provide an overview of the dimensions of active imaginations adult learners with visual impairments require to answer Research Question 1 appealing to memory,

visualizing and picturing, and the use of other senses and intuition. Issues pertinent to philosophy and ways of living in the midst of blindness were likely to be implicit.

For example, Kate's code, "Facilitates transcending negatives," suggested that active imaginations (indicating a use of multiple senses among others) were dynamic in shifting negatives about learning.

Most of the negativity was more internally, 'I can't do this, my life's over, I can't do anything the same way.' But as I learned the different school, tools and things that I, the ways to do it non-visually, a lot of it changed, you know. It's like, 'I can do this. I can do this and I can do that and I can do anything I want'. (Int 1)

The acknowledgement "but as I learned" indicates active imagination at work dynamically gradually moving from learning stage to learning stage until there was a feeling of self-awareness.

Eris discovered a novel ability fired by imagination and implemented through his active imaginations -- an exercise of his entire being whether physical, psychological, emotional, or spiritual. Under the code title, "Engenders desire to learn," he stated, I've learned that ... I know it sounds cliché, but nothing ventured, nothing gained I've been learning Spanish. I've learned- I'm learning braille. Now, I'm about to learn the saxophone. And-and this is still with me still doing my, my job that I do, and I'm just learning to continue to enjoy life. (Int 1)

The left and right sides of Eris' brain could not be conceived as separate and non-communicative. This multi-talented competence had to be promoted as a factor enhanced by use of the participant's active imagination. Tanj transcended herself as voice actor to become another.

It's, it's fun to play characters that you're not because you feel like you, you can get your energy out in a way I guess and it's fulfilling, especially if you, uh, believably brought the character to life and you were able to deliver the writer's intention properly, then you feel like you did your job well. And, and it's it's a nice feeling, especially collaborating with other people who are also creative and bringing a collaborative piece of art to-to life altogether. (Int 1)

“Fun to play characters you’re not,” is an expression of relatedness and active imagination. “Get your energy out,” spoke to autonomy, intuition, and will, bringing to mind Assagioli’s formula that one could achieve the desired results with “the least possible expenditure of energy” (1973, p. 15). “Fulfilling” connotes an expression of wellbeing, and “believably brought the character to life,” and the fact that the act was all “nice,” represented a hedonic moment. It was another letting go, only this time into her playful self, itself an expression of immersion in imagination.

Evidently, active imaginations could be sourced in all 26 node themes (given their ever-present nature), and in the 30 specific code titles under the code theme “Active imagination in use in every dimension of human life.” Furthermore, active imaginations expressions were sourced in node themes such as: “Caretakers and family central to wellbeing,” “Acceptance is key,” “Autonomy and will work together,” “Blindness perceived as a resource,” “Visualization should be taught,” and “Intuition is beneficial to all.” One of the codes under “Visualization should be taught,” read:

Well memory helped me to be very successful in all of my math classes as a student. Um, and you know what? This is, this ties into your previous question because when I would do any type of math work, I would always close my eyes and visualize how to work it out

in my head. And I would tell them how to write it out. Um, but seeing prior and... going to public uh, schools, I was able to identify with math in my head. I couldn't visualize it.

(Tsaf: Int 1)

Tsaf had a memory and twinned that with imagination. In fact, visualization is a “use of imagination and memory” and “visualizing negative experiences or memories triggers all the negative emotional reactions that we had with the original experience” (Doidge, 2016, p. 215). In Tsaf’s case, she transcended the negative emotion.

Memory and imagination are integral to visualization, which in this study is tantamount to picturing and picturing is image-making. Active imagination has therefore emerged as both primary and primordial in the learning and lived experiences of the adult learner when the challenge is memorizing, visualizing, spatial understanding, interpreting intuition, thinking beyond prescribed representations of the blind and blindness, philosophizing and learning among other lived experiences. Therefore, in response to Research Question 1 in Chapter Four, codes pertaining to participants active imaginations and memory; active imaginations, visualization and picturing; active imaginations and the use of other senses and intuition; and implicitly, active imaginations and philosophizing will be presented.

Querying Research Question 1

A text-search will be conducted for the words imagination, memory, visualizing and picturing, and use of other senses among a select set of codes holding narratives on the three. Also, a Word Tree will be constituted highlighting words or phrases appearing 10 words before the word imagination, memory, visualizing and picturing and use of other senses in a sentence, and 10 words after. The purpose was to interpret how

imagination, memory, visualizing and picturing, and use of other senses as spoken indicated their effect or were affected by what followed their use. The find was likely to say much about the participant's active imagination or imagination activity.

Imagination Experiences

Imagination experiences as a specific node theme contained nine code titles. The codes were titled: “Black dots flashing” (Interactive - Kate); “Shapes appear when she’s tired” (Kate); “Encountered the non-judgemental atmosphere” (Kate); “Experiencing open spaces” (Liz); “These colors disrupt vision” (Nil); “Encounters representations of objects” (Nil); “Description helps consolidate experience” (Nil); “Healing and cure” (Interactive - Deb); and “Feelings when others learn” (Nil). These code titles were physical, relational, spatial, sense-derived, touching matters of wellbeing and mutual learning. Imagination experiences encounters are to be found among these code titles and derived codes.

As is evident in this study however, imagination experiences were described across its field of interviews. For example, under the node theme “Color holds meaning for the blind,” Abri expressed a subtle imagination experience making color remembrances and choices when dressing.

When I'm dressing like, um, I'm really not a, a, a light-colored dresser because ... with me being visually impaired, you can bump against anything, especially where you have light colors and it show up, so I'm more, I tend to lean on the dark colors and in my mind, I picture green goes with some pair of jeans, and some black sneakers. I picture all of that in my mind. If I'm cleaning up in my house, I know how my fur, furniture is laid out in my imagination. (Int 1)

The imagination of knowing is a positive experience in Abri's mind, that is, her thoughts, images, colors, feelings, emotions and will to act, dance or cook.

Under the node theme "Spiritual sensibility enhances wellbeing," Tsaf for instance, reflected on her encounter with the blindness experience and sounded self-actualizing.

Since I became visually impaired, I, I, it opened me up to realize that anything is possible and that anything could happen. I don't see life as, you know, in such a way where nothing's possible or certain things cannot, like I'm exempt from things. Um, and that, um, you know, that we live life Like anyone else, you know, and that we can, um, enjoy things, just like anyone else. (Int 1)

This represents a psychological shift; an ontological if not values stance emerging as a result of a particular imagination experience where her very self-esteem and concept of self were "opened" up and tested.

In addition to their specific placements under the code title "Imagination experiences" above, experiences could therefore be traced in the following code titles: "Depression accompanies sight loss," "Trauma runs through experiences with blindness," "Encountering blindness is difficult," "Diagnoses confused and strained emotions," "Acceptance is key," "Blindness is more than a measure," "Blindness perceived as a resource," "We become aware of other senses," "A mind's eye is real," "Color holds meaning for the blind," "The blind know in their dreams," "Faith and confidence," and "Spiritual sensibility enhances wellbeing."

Codes will be drawn from these too in the development of answers to Research Question 2: what are the various imagination experiences adult learners with visual impairments report they encounter.

Imagination

Under the node theme “Imagination,” 28 code titles were developed. By themselves, the code titles identify imagination as the most natural faculty existing in active imaginations, imagination experiences, and one at the heart of every human experience. Invariably, there would be factors and conditions that hindered and promoted the use of imagination spread across the 26 node themes. The 28 code titles and their numbers under node theme “Imagination” tell a story in themselves. They each tell what imagination does and imply what it does not, pointing already to the answer to Research Question 3: what do adult learners with visual impairments believe are the factors and conditions that promote and hinder the use of their imagination and active imaginations.

They pointed to possibilities (and suggested meanings in their flow) that imagination:

- 24.1 Makes for dreaming up a better life (Abri);
- 24.2 Imagination is engaged when learning to do the dish (Abri);
- 24.3 Used for imagining what other people look like (Interactive - Abri);
- 24.4 For seeing scenes depicted in a book (Abri);
- 24.5 Is meaningful in relatedness and moving on (Interactive - Deb);
- 24.6 Useful in planning (Deb);
- 24.7 Amazing in remembering colors (Deb);
- 24.8 Guide dog and cane spur imagination (Interactive - Deb);
- 24.9 Song or remembered scripture emerging through imagination (Deb);
- 24.10 Imagination, God and psychology can dance (Interactive - Deb);
- 24.11 Makes immersion in music easy (Eris);
- 24.12 Music, thoughts, emotion, and imagination interrelate (Interactive - Eris);

- 24.13 Emotion creates and is integral to imagination (Eris);
- 24.14 Imagination lets one in to meet memory and emotion (Interactive - Eris);
- 24.15 Sometimes imagination is turned on (Eris);
- 24.16 Imagination serves as a positive rush (Eris);
- 24.17 Helps with orientation (Interactive - Kate);
- 24.18 No right or wrong way to imagine (Liz);
- 24.19 I may not be able to see, but I can imagine (Liz);
- 24.20 Early reading catalyzes imagination (Liz);
- 24.21 Living would be drab without it (Liz);
- 24.22 Learning and intrinsic motivation prompted by imagination (Tanj);
- 24.23 The imagination of seeing is real (Tsaf);
- 24.24 Imagination and God (Interactive - Tsaf);
- 24.25 Creativity is activated (Liz);
- 24.26 Hearing and interpretation enhanced (Liz);
- 24.27 Imagining beyond the eyes (Liz); and
- 24.28 Play needs imagination (Nil).

Two significant codes will be selected for each participant marking their lived experiences with imagination and its use. 16 codes will therefore be selected, pointing already to the factors and conditions that promote or hinder the use of the imagination and active imaginations of adult learners with visual impairments. Additionally, from the 28 node titles above, and those spread among the 26 node themes identified in Table 7 titled “Node Theme and Interpretation Synopsis,” factors and conditions which hinder and promote imagination and active imaginations among adult learners who are blind or visually impaired were tacitly selected

for providing responses to Research Question 3. They will not be queried since they are conspicuous, and in and of themselves speak to hindrances, and the factors and conditions that promote the livelihoods of blind people.

Interview 2 and the Listening Guide

In the second interview, Liz exchanged most with this researcher, interacting for 114 minutes 58 seconds. That was followed by Tanj at 110 mins 48 secs, Deb at 47 min 47 secs, Nil at 47 mins 08 secs, Tsaf at 45 mins 49 secs, Kate at 45 mins 35 secs, Eris at 43 mins 18 secs, and Abri at 35 mins 15 secs.

The fact that Liz and Tanj shared most from their lived experiences, active imaginations and imaginations with the researcher, can be attributed to their very active interface and engagement with people and technology respectively.

Liz served as an orientation and mobility teacher who took her students to the streets, malls, art museums and hospitals frequently. What Liz said (after having read the transcript and listened to the audio), is meaningful to further understanding issues touching memory, visualization, the use of other senses and intuition, and philosophizing about life. Reflections on her imagination experiences were highly prized and one can only imagine her reflections on the factors and conditions that hinder and promote the use of imagination and active imaginations. Of significance, however, would be her take on healing and cure and the extent to which her narrative highlighted critical concepts in the posttraumatic and wellbeing literature. Similar observations were present in Tanj's contribution particularly when her experiences on technology and its use were brought to light. Additionally, Tanj's philosophy of life indicated and highlighted the fact that the sighted can and do learn from the sightless.

Both Deb and Nil conversed for 47 minutes and more. Deb is a teacher with a Master's degree in psychology with an emphasis on rehabilitation counseling. Nil holds a Master's in public administration with an emphasis in program evaluation and policy analysis with a profound interest in 3 dimensional technologies and innovation capacity of the blind. They both draw on their active imaginations and encounter experiences in and of the imagination with overall implications for psychological wellbeing constituted by autonomy, relatedness and competence. To extend these psychological wellbeing positions into the psyche, a field of fantasy or the collective unconscious is not only to encounter intuition serving the intellect, but to become privy to a participatory universe. It is this looking into the text itself that depicts the critical work of Gilligan and Eddy. They search for contrapuntal points that contradict as much as produce from the opposites.

Eris, Kate, Tsaf and Abri were essences in their simplicities and complexities simultaneously. In an answer to the difference between healing and cure, Tsaf would note, "healing for me is like acceptance" (Int 2).

Having considered the afterthoughts of the expert group, the text and its research took invariably to theorizing, in part, in lieu of discussions in Chapter Five, but more precisely in the effort at merging participants narratives with existing literature on the matter, literature preceding Chapter Three and found in Chapter Two. Thus, participants take from Interview 2 will serve to support and even scaffold matters arising in this methodological approach and present a glimpse into the sophisticated epistemology and ontology of the blind.

Limitations in this Methodology

This methodology does not search out in any way the relation or bond between participants and their guide dogs. That mode of relation and communication between a

blind person and an animal guide may well be an expression of the participant's active imaginations, and one that is so rich in the context of biophilia that it requires another study.

This study did not detail eye diseases in the context of biology or ophthalmology, nor the effect of pharmaceuticals on intraocular pressure or retinal ganglion cell reconstitution. The immediate impact of image-making as a form of meditation on the retina would be a welcome study.

No significant quantitative measuring instrument was used in this methodology. Empowerment of participants was what mattered and their direct, qualitative statements were to be understood, interpreted and appreciated for their experiential value. The literature arising in the literature review gave authenticity to their experiences. The whole discourse regarding whether experiences are valid will continue to be fanned.

However, there is room for empirical assessments on the subject of imagination as Asma (2022) suggested, with implications for mixed methods. The issue becomes complex when the context is active imagination which dips into regions of the unconscious and the ever-emerging field of imaginology in education and its call for a form of mythopoetic framing of text.

This dissertation does not emphasize issues of blind people on the basis of race, creed, color, religion, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, national origin, citizenship, marital status, age, genetic information, and /or political affiliation. Those categories were provided by the National Federation of the Blind to indicate the diversity in its membership. Rather, this work focused on the phenomenon of blindness as the defining homogeneous factor.

This study did not give attention to the language patterns of participants. Throughout the interviews it was noticed that participants tended to repeat themselves, uttering pronouns,

conjunctions and definite articles in the form of a stutter. So, frequently participants were heard saying I, I, I or it, it, it or but, but, or phys, physical etc. This is an issue of interest to neurolinguists.

Conclusion

From summary treatments of the works of four well-known phenomenologists, this chapter granted rights to eight blind participants to be rightful beings in the world, persons embodying experiential intelligence, those who were ever-becoming, and they who carried consciousness in themselves. Some 530 categories were scaffolded within which codes were strung only to be made more precise and reduced to 291 by way of a code framework that tacitly captured their essences. When they were placed into node themes and reduced to 26, they became interrelated and patterned, some closer than others. These patterns were to be queried and that finding used to support analysis and interpretation of results. Importantly, the codes could not be reduced being interconnected as they were in the human experience.

Individual codes found reference, meaning and purpose in the larger body of codes and the larger body of codes found meaning in the field of shared phenomena. Even when the codes would be selected for answering to the guiding research questions, they found a sort of bio-semantic relation within the node themes and their codes across the 16 interviews.

By way of Interview 2, they would be made, symbolically at least, leaders in telling their experiences. The philosophical issue as to whether experiences are of meaning beyond the rational, objective and measurable, is to be further queried in the field of adult learning.

Codes of the expert group on the blindness experience will be used in Chapter Four to form the foundation for the results since only that group could provide the answers to questions pertaining to active imaginations, imagination experiences and the factors and conditions that hindered or promoted the use of imagination and active imaginations. Also, in this study, active imaginations fed from the inner pool of the active imagination suggesting that the transcendent function, that is, the unity of conscious and unconscious mediated by ego consciousness, may have given way to one ocean of pure consciousness accessible to all.

CHAPTER FOUR: Findings

“What is behind our eyes is now more important than what is in front of them.

This is a game changer”

- Gary Zukav, *Universal Human*, 2021

In this chapter, the answers to three guiding research questions and their prompts will be drawn from participants’ reported experiences as captured primarily in Interview 1. In Interview 2, they responded to four issues, one of which they would have selected, and two of which were the same for all eight; establishing the vibrant code producers as having achieved meaningful states of acceptance and inevitable wellbeing. The three guiding research questions were:

- What value do adult learners with visual impairment say they place on using their active imaginations?
- What are the various imagination experiences adult learners with visual impairments report they encounter?
- What do adult learners with visual impairments believe are the factors and conditions that promote and hinder the use of their imagination and active imaginations?

Imagination Defined

But what really did imagination (that which is being activated) even suggest to them in microcosm? Asma (2022) had stated that imagination is what imagination does. Was it about what they used it for? What did imagination mean to them as leaders in the production of knowledge concerning experiences of the blind as they navigated their world?

Abri was unequivocal about the resource she had. “I dreamed myself becoming a better me ... like being more independent. Like my independence is just, that’s all I have. And, that’s

how I use my, my imagination” (Int 1). “That’s all I have,” is an emotion code of axiological value, granting personality-shaping value to imagination.

Imagination was almost indispensable in Deb’s work. “I’m the disability coordinator for my conference. So, when I’m in meetings, I use my imagination a lot and I use it a lot when my husband and I plan family gatherings or something” (Int 1). Imagination, as integral and active as it is to her everyday life, grants her the ability to look ahead. Eris could turn his imagination on.

Sometimes, I can be sitting down and if I just have a quiet moment, then my imagination starts to run on its own. Now there’s times where I need to break away from maybe a hard day at work. I say you know what, let me turn on my imagination and just imagine if I am somewhere different doing this assignment. (Int 1)

Eris’ imagination can teleport him to another locality where he finds relaxation though he had not physically moved. What happened behind his eyes when his moments were “quiet” is still largely an undiscovered matter.

Says Kate, “So imaginations, I think it kind of intertwines on some different levels, because it can also help you orientate, you know, ‘here’s where you have to go’” (Int 1). This is critical for the blind who must count steps that go either up or down in already structured homes, streets in communities, and systems of transportation. Liz took to defining the term.

Imagination. It’s individual. Like it’s, there is no right or wrong way to imagine something because it’s, it’s your thoughts. It’s, it’s where you’re putting the pieces of the information you’re, you’re getting together. But again, like there’s no right or wrong way to imagine something. The more imaginative you are, the more you can feel like you’re involved in the world around you. (Int 1)

The blind teacher said imagination keeps her in tune with the world; she touches, hears, smells, tastes, intuit, emotes, finds relations, practices through teaching, dreams and philosophizes in that world. This is active.

Nil found imagination acting at a specifically important level. “I have a con, I made the conscious decision of the image, I guess on some, you know, subliminal level. Because it is me, it’s not something that organically just pops up, and it’s based on previous lived experiences” (Int 1). When Jeffrey Miller spoke about a shift taking place “organically” in the context of Jung’s transcendent function, he meant that the transformation it ushered in was “a natural process producing change in the normal course of psychic events” (2004, p. 14). Nil’s imagination was founded on previous experiences and he seemed able to determine its course.

Tanj found imagination active in brainstorming and problem-solving. “Even work-wise, it allowed me to come up with different strategies to problem solve Having a vivid imagination helps you anticipate a lot more outcomes” (Int 1). “Vivid” here is synonymous to graphic, clear, lively, animated, stirring, striking, and glowing. An active imagination produces multiple outcomes relating to the matter being surveyed.

Tsaf did not mention imagination, but given the cases above, one can infer her saying below, that imagination flowed through her experiences, albeit covertly. “I’m very good with decorating. Um, most things that I’ve done being visually impaired, I’ve done with my own creativity and my own imagination of seeing” (Int 1). It is intriguing: having seen before and now having to imagine seeing. This is an imaginative experience. In fact, both creative intelligence and imagination are expressions of active imagination in Jung’s world.

Liz summed up her colleagues’ experiences succinctly. “And if it weren’t for imagination, I think that living life as a blind person would really be very drab” (Int 1). It is so

critical finding that blind people, who do not see outside, find imagination valuable and useful to their thriving and flourishing.

Guiding Research Question 1

Data Collection Instruments

Interview 1: An interview using open-ended and structured questions. In this instance, there were six prompts which were not necessarily adopted in the order they appear. Prompt 6 was responded to by two participants who did not care to read from their books.

Question/Prompts

How does your use of active imagination enrich your life?

Potential deepening probes include:

1. When you realized that you could not see clearly around you, what did you do to move on?
2. How much has your life been enriched by the things you've learned to do?
3. When you realized there was more to you than visual impairment or blindness how did you feel?
4. What did you do to preserve that knowledge and awareness?
5. Would you describe blindness as a disability or a resource?
6. The poem, song, letter or story you presented, what does it mean to you and your visual condition (for those who present such works)?

Prompts served as guidelines but were not necessarily used in the order in which they appeared on the interview schedule. Their use depended on the flow of the conversation and that conversation was the participants' to determine and indeed to interpret. Prompts sought to uncover those coded dimensions: expressions of feelings, emotions, cognitive experiences, and

transition periods and to probe these even further. There were differences in the prepared form and the applied dialogic form, though semantically, they shared the same meaning-space. And that would be the case for all three guiding research questions.

The Prepared and Applied Question

The open-ended question above, “How does your use of active imagination enrich your life?” did not serve as a lead-on, in effect, trying to bias the response. In the case of Nil, he answered,

It helps me interact with people who I may have if I was able to actually see them at a predisposition to not like them or feel, feel uncomfortable interacting with them because I didn’t like something visually about them, it, it, it, it removes that as a barrier. (Int 1)

Nil’s interpretation of the question brought forth an unusual intelligence, one that transformed a possible negative into positive use.

Theme Emergence

With particular reference to Guiding Research Question 1, three themes began to emerge in Chapter Three from the time the code frameworks were applied to the 537 codes. Adult learners were suggesting relations between imagination (active in principle); remembering (memory); active imaginations, visualizing and picturing; and active imaginations and the use of other senses. Additionally, and bordering on these were references to intuition, learning, and philosophizing about life and relations with the universe/environment. Therefore, in what follows, this study will first produce specific codes to the matter relating to active imaginations and memory, one of the three to be discussed in Research Question 1.

Active Imaginations and Memory

Data Collection Instruments

Interviews from which categories emerged and node themes and codes were drawn.

Data Collected

Among the 26 node themes, there was one titled “Memory saves the blind person” which contained 15 codes. That which follows was selected as most pertinent out of that 15, though the mere act of speaking in and of itself across all interviews, constituted an act of memory and thus of an active imagination. Codes could also be freely drawn from the 29 under the node title “Active imaginations in use in every dimension of life” to support the analysis.

Data Analysis

Abri stated that her imagination became active when she was “watching a TV show or reading a book or watching a movie” (Int 1). She was asked whether cooking engaged both memory and active imagination.

I think it could be both when you’re dealing in the kitchen. Because you imagine it might ... you’re hopefully hoping, like say it’s your first time, you imagine it is going to taste like this. You never made this recipe before or whatever, but you imagine it’s gonna be like this. But if you are, if you made it numerous times, you already know what goes into it at the, the same time. So, it’s like a little bit of both. (Int 1)

Abri connected imagining with taste and taste with memory. It was possible therefore, that the all-purpose imagination and memory figured as occurring together in her brain and consciousness to give her a tasty appreciation of what she had cooked. Deb produced a code which was titled “The colors she remembers.” It was dialogic.

Deb: The colors that I remember that I liked, I like to bring those colors out. Yeah. Like, like, like burnt orange or rusty rust colors or those things remind me of a different fall flower. I mean, fall leaves, you know, the leaves that fall from the trees in the fall. I like the rustic orange in the rust color. And it's like a beautiful sunset, orange or yellow, something like that.

SH: Did you see those colors in your mind's eye?

Deb: Yes, I do.

SH: You have not told me everything that you see in your mind's eye. There must be a harvest there.

Deb: [laughs]. I don't know, it could be, but those are the colors I remember. And I like, and I love when I could see, at the water at night and see the stars glistening on the water.

SH: That's not with physical eyes.

Deb: Well, no, it's not, but it's what I can remember. (Int 1)

The following should be noted: "I don't know," "I remember," "I like," and "I love," as the text flows deeper into remembering. What Deb imagined and simultaneously remembered, was of value to her wellbeing: it actively brought her cognitive pleasure and added value to her life. Again, a dialogic method drew out Eris' meaning through an accounting metaphor.

SH: How important is memory to the visually impaired?

Eris: To me, it is my strongest asset. Some of our friends when they had to take tests or work, when they, they, they would ask me to help them to study, to develop, how do I memorize so many things? And so, I shared my memory techniques with them, and it has really been beneficial to them. But memory, um, is so important because even with low or no vision, you want to remember that 'hey, I got to walk at least 10 steps before I

make that left turn. If I turn too soon, guess what? I may run into the wall. Or if I walk too far, I may step off the edge or something or bump into something.’ So, memory goes a long way, not just with every day, uh, mobility, but it helps too when you’re, um, having something read to you or you doing an article, book, um, when you’re doing music. Um, when we performed with the band, you know, we-we rehearse, but the keyboard player and the singer, they may have the little cheat sheet notes to the side that he can refer to. I don’t have anything like my memory. The whole song ... we’re going to do for the night in front of everyone is in my head. So once again, hearing and memory.

(Int 1)

Mobility, understanding reading texts by methods other than by sight, and hearing are active imaginations expressions, inextricably related to the function of memory in the blind. When Eris says, “I don’t have anything like my memory,” this is such an active pulse, a valued asset. The micro-moments figuring in these processes of communication in the blind musician could provide important measures (when thinking about a musician’s mood changes for instance) touching concepts such as fluctuations and variability (van Geert, 1998), even heart rhythm coherence representing “an optimal combination of order and variability in the functioning of the heart” (Kaplan & Epstein, 2012, p. 298). Liz suggested including understanding spatial dimensions when considering what value there was to memory in active imaginations.

I don’t know what I would do if I couldn’t remember where I put things ... so I’m a little bit disorganized, right? So, remembering the placement of things is really important. Again, even just taking a step back and talking about travel, you know, when you’re trying to learn a new building, you’re memorizing things. Like I walk in through the door, the lobby’s gonna be on my left, the elevators are gonna be on my right. Well, you

know, for me, like I see it, I store it in my brain, but I use it again, because the next time I walk into that building and I hear the elevator, my brain is gonna say, 'Oh yeah, that's right. The elevators on the right and the lobby is to the left,' or whatever. (Int 1)

Liz suggested possible relations between remembering, knowing and imagination, placing value on memory to know that building's characteristics whenever she returned to it next time. Through her "I" scaffolds, her experiences reflected an active imagination in processes of memorizing. "I don't know," "I would do," "I couldn't remember," "I put things," "I'm a little bit disorganized," "I walk in," "I see," "I store," "I use it," "I walk into," and finally the all-important, "I hear." These "I" scaffolds as they are referred to in this study, carry a meaningful intelligence in their flow. The interconnection between "I see" and "I store," is so neurologically real. Listening to and for the "I" reveals and "highlights an associative logic, rather than linear, rational, causal thought processes" (Gilligan & Eddy, 2017, p. 79). To Liz, memory entailed learning and imagination, and imagination pollinated learning. Liz further drew on her experiences as teacher of the blind.

My memory is, is such an important tool. Like for everything. I can't even ex, explain

Some of the people that have a hard time with some of the blindness skills are people that have a hard time remembering or memorizing some of the things that, that they need to do. (Int 1)

"I can't even explain," reveals the depth of the claim. Nil used selecting clothing to explain the memory/imagination intertwining.

When I buy them, I try to be mindful. I have to admit, back in the day, I used to take a little bit more risk in my fashion choices, [laughs] but I have moved more to a conservative kind of value in my attire, uh, mostly because of my job and my, I guess,

predisposition. But I like purchasing clothes that have a unique texture, um, and then I associate that with the clothing. (Int 1)

The unique texture derived from his touch which he associated with a fabric he liked and knew. To know was to remember too and both knowing and remembering embodied the spirit of imagination. Tanj recalled a friend whom she was assisting overcome the trauma of sight. His vision was much better than hers before he lost sight, she claimed.

But my point to say is that his visual memory is so good from before that he's able to remember what people's faces look like and their facial expressions to a point as well as he used to be able to watch TV and read large print, like 16-point font. So that gives you an idea of what his vision used to be like. So, his visual memory and concept development is a lot more robust than mine because my visual acuity was never that good. So, I didn't have a point of reference to start from to have these ideas, which is why when I imagine things in my mind, they're not as fleshed out as his might be. (Int 1)

Her friend's "visual memory and concept development" from that earlier past was "more robust" than hers. His memory found reference in an active imagination too, placing value on facial expressions. Tsaf added a twist to the source of her seeing and imagination. "And, and because I've seen before may make a difference in how I imagined, but I see what I, I call like my mind's eye" (Int 1). "I've seen before," is the memory sentence. As for the "mind's eye," Tsaf described it as a made-up eye. Emotion and values are framed deep in this text. "It's an eye in my mind that helps me to visualize, you know, as a woman, what I may look like" (Int 1). This code from Tsaf was taken from the node theme "A mind's eye is real." Participants addressed a specific matter such as memory but spoke too generally across codes to a relative matter. This is

characteristic of the study. The eight blind persons stated in these texts that active imagination is vital to the consolidation of their memory, knowing and learning.

Querying Active Imagination and Memory Codes

Out of 56 codes pertaining to active imagination, memory, visualizing and picturing and the use of the senses, a text-search was conducted for the word imagination. Imagination here is the base-function of active imagination. The text-search was not done among the 291 codes. The numbers show a more frequent use of the word by the orientation and mobility teacher.

Table 8

Imagination Text Search in Codes

Name	In Folder	References	Coverage
Abri	Files	8	0.13%
Deb	Files	0	0.00%
Eris	Files	6	0.09%
Kate	Files	8	0.09%
Liz	Files	25	0.27%
Nil	Files	5	0.04%
Tanj	Files	13	0.12%
Tsaf	Files	5	0.08%

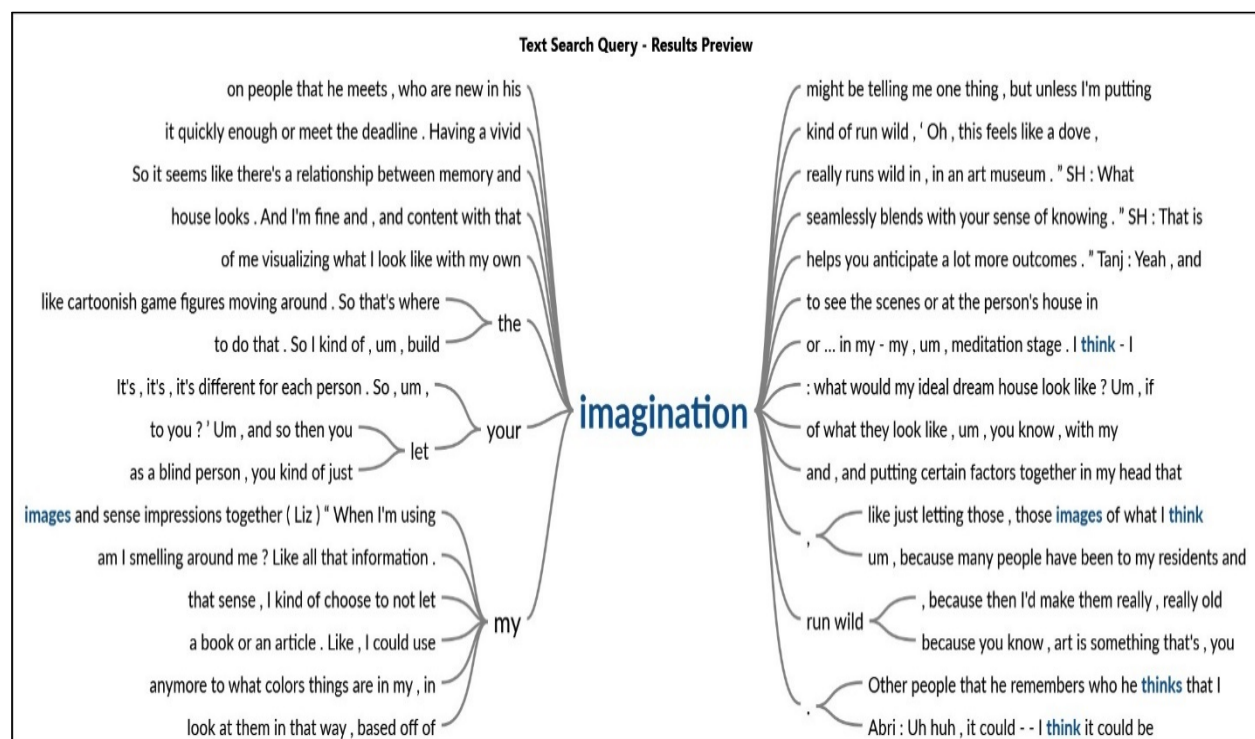
Note. Files represent interviews.

That Liz used the word imagination 25 times and Tanj 13 is not surprising given their occupation. Liz is frequently on the road teaching navigating spaces, intersections, and large buildings such as malls. Tanj is enthusiastic about voice acting, and the uses of technology for the blind and they both suggest that without an active imagination (which they exhibit), they would not be able to remember, visualize or picture. Kate used the word 8 times within the 56 codes which represent in part, her navigation of spaces through frequent mobility with her guide dog.

NVivo produced a Word Tree that traced the word imagination in any sentence within the 56 codes. The words and phrases were either the 10 spoken before the word imagination or those spoken after it. This indicated possibilities for the word sense, that is, the degree to which the words or phrases spoke to imagination and the extent to which imagination was further elucidated by the words and phrases.

Figure 1

Imagination Phrases in Word Tree



Examples of phrases that came before imagination and point to a mutual effect, include: “me visualizing what I look like with my own.” The word which follows these from Tsaf is “imagination,” which is integral to both visualization and memory. When Tanj spoke about “cartoonish game figures moving around,” that was followed by “so that’s where the imagination seamlessly blends.” The adverb “seamlessly” indicates the uniting of imagination and its correlates – the verb used is “blends.”

Liz spoke about putting images and sense impressions together using her imagination, “letting those, those images of what I think would make sense to me, be put together.” There is a uniting function in imagination. As for those words and phrases coming after the word “imagination,” they speak activity for themselves: “kind of run wild” (Liz), “seamlessly blends with your sense of knowing” (Tanj), and Tsaf saying that “many people” have been to her house, and though she herself has not actually seen it, she’s “fine and, and content with that imagination.” Generally, throughout these participants’ sayings, imagination embodies memory, visualization and the use of the senses and the mind’s eye. The above in their simplicity and consistency with the broader text, represent imagination’s effect or imagination being affected. It is active.

Memory has been meaningfully juxtaposed with active imaginations throughout this study. What follows is a synonym word search on memory in the 56 codes and the synonyms included remember, store, and memories. This table below provides a count of the times the word “memory” emerged in the narratives of the eight participants. Though small, it is meaningful given the profession, memory and imagination activities of the expert participant.

Table 9

Memory Text Search in Codes

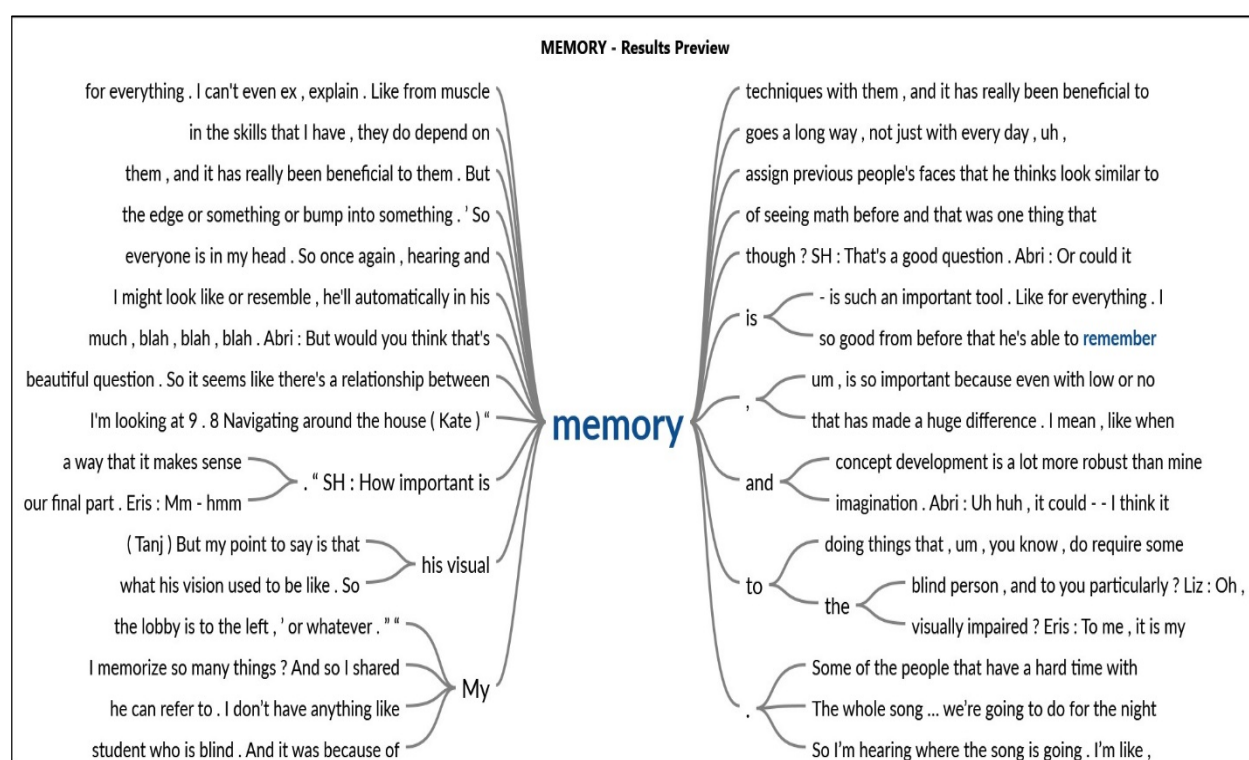
Name	In Folder	References	Coverage
Abri	Files	2	0.03%
Deb	Files	3	0.06%
Eris	Files	7	0.09%
Kate	Files	1	0.01%
Liz	Files	11	0.12%
Nil	Files	3	0.04%
Tanj	Files	5	0.04%
Tsaf	Files	7	0.09%

Note. Files represent interviews

Eris at 7, Liz at 11, Tanj at 5 and Tsaf at 7, pointed to the function of memory and its importance (though small) in the activities of a musician, a mobility teacher, a voice actor and a college counselor/ADA sensitivity trainer. Similarly, a Word Tree was created for the word memory.

Figure 2

Memory Phrases in Word Tree



When Liz said, “like for everything,” she was referring to her memory. It went down to her very anatomy in “muscle memory.” And it was Eris’ “memory techniques” which were “really . . . beneficial to them.”

When Liz referenced “the skills that I have, they do depend on,” the word following that was “memory.” It was Eris’ “strongest asset” as a blind person. It goes “a long way, not just with

everyday mobility.” These phrases emerged after the word “memory” in that mediator’s narrative. Tsaf had spoken about her “memory of seeing math before,” and that visual allowed her to “work it out.” Abri, most decisive as a blind woman, twinned it with “imagination.” Active imagination was inherent in and permeated these activities.

1. Declarative Statement on the Findings Pertaining to Active Imaginations and Memory

Given that memory is indispensable to their daily activity and mobility, and their emergent memories are accompanied by imagination, adult learners with visual impairments in this study report that active imaginations play the invaluable role of generating both their memory and imagination, giving color, emotion and meaning and thus, a sense of wellbeing to their lived experiences.

Active Imaginations, Visualizing and Picturing

Data Collection Instruments

Interview 1: Interview from which categories emerged and from which node themes and codes were drawn.

Data Collected

Among the 26 node themes there was one titled “Visualization should be taught” which contained eight codes. That which follows and was used in the analysis was selected as most pertinent out of that eight, but visualizing and picturing could be sourced either directly or indirectly from other node themes, or from the node theme “Active imaginations in use in every dimension of life” in support of the analysis.

Data Analysis

Tsaf was particularly central in informing the inquiry and developing the answer to the possible value of active imagination to visualizing and picturing. She had earlier on identified her melanin-filled mind's eye as central to that process of visualizing.

I stand in front of the mirror sometimes as if I could see when I'm trying to figure out something about my hair or my face. I visualize what I may even look like or what my daughter may look like now, being that she's older. And even now that I'm older compared to almost 13 years ago, I'm like, 'what do I look like now?' And sometimes I stand in front of the mirror and as if I could see myself clearly, but I, I do that to make me feel good because it is a visual in that moment of me visualizing what I look like with my own imagination and, and putting certain factors together in my head that helps me come to that conclusion. So, I think that visual, visual, visualization is something that occurs all the time being blind. (Int 1)

Visualization, like imagination, happens all the time. Tsaf visualized what she may look like with her own imagination. This, coming from a blind woman or any blind person, is deep and moving. To cite Gilligan and Eddy (2017), the voice embodied "tensions with parts of itself" (p. 79).

Tsaf integrated creative imagination in design (an expression of active imagination) with mobility, the senses and indeed, visualizing. The meditative factor in active imagination is implied.

With how I've been able to arrange things in my home has been all because of me visualizing in my head, how can I do X, Y, and Z? And because of it, I've been able to accomplish those things, just with me visualizing it. So, it's, um, something that can be

done. It's something, I mean, even with mobility, moving around, when you visualize in your head, it helps you to be able to identify what you're looking at. I-I move around the mall independently and go to different stores and I visualize based off of smell, and, um, hearing, I can tell if I'm getting closer to a specific store because of the sound and the smell. I know what certain stores smell like. I know if I'm getting closer to the elevator because of the waterfall, just various things. And I visualize a lot of this in my head. And, and actually it's like a guide, like to, to, to visualize, help guide my steps and my direction on where to go and what to do with mobility, with many different things. I can really elaborate on that. (Int 1)

To "visualize based off of smell," is an observation of quality, particularly when the sense organ and images are activated in and by imagination. Tsaf remembered and visualized.

I'm proud to say that I did make an 'A' in every last one of my math classes -- one of the hardest things that you could possibly take as a student who is blind. And it was because of my memory of seeing math before and that was one thing that I would close my eyes to visualize and work out in my head. I, I, I would close my eyes and work it out and people could not believe it like, 'How is that she's blind and she could work it out?' And I, I definitely have to say that if, if I had been born blind, I don't know how I would have to have a different system, but because I was able to see and to identify with some of the things, it was familiar with me. (Int 1)

It seemed that the familiar was easier to imagine, memorize and visualize. Tanj shared two moments concerning imagination and becoming the character imagined. This exercise began in her childhood and with reading, in itself, an important lesson when considering learning and learning methods.

This is the thing that kind of, that really interested me about your study is, you know. I remember when I started to learn how to read, you know, and before I went blind and reading books, and, you know, as I'm reading the book, making my own little characters in my head, right, that go with the book and imagining these characters. And-and I did that before I went blind. It was just part of reading. Right? You kind of develop these characters and your imagination kind of just starts going and, and doing that. And now that I'm older and I'm listening to an audiobook, I imagine these characters the way I wanna imagine them. (Int 1)

Imagine and visualize were twinned in Tsaf's childhood remembrance. Now, she can imagine characters how she wants given her historic sub and unconscious storage. Tanj introduced the sense of hearing which stimulated and created what she referred to as images.

For example ... watching The Crown right now on Netflix ... amazing show, beautiful acting, costumes -- I've been told that they're wonderful and authentic. But the audio description; not only does the voice actress sound very perfect in her role and her emotion, everything is spot on, but the writing is so vivid and beautiful. And what that does when I'm sitting there and listening to it, is it creates all of these images in my mind of what's going on, what the costumes might look like, how big the castle might be. (Int 1)

The "writing" which is read and heard, creates "images in her mind," which is already pervaded by images and thoughts, familiar and unfamiliar, controlled and randomly arising. Nil stated boldly that he visualized in his mind's eye.

When I'm working on stuff, um, writing or whatever on my computer, I still visualize in my mind's eye, a computer, a telephone you know. I have a mental image of this microphone in front of me and even though I can't see it, I still kind of see it. (Int 1)

"I have a mental image" suggested that the microphone was seen before, and this active image and memory informed his picturing or visualizing. A glimpse of liminality emerged in the saying "and even though I can't see it, I still kind of see it." A bit later, Nil would locate his competence at concept formation in that mind's eye. "But what I can see, again, back to the earlier conversation, in my mind's eye is, is, is not that, it, it's whatever I conceptualize" (Int 1). Nils mind's eye was a conceptual space or field with its combination of visuals, pictures and invariably, an active imagination shaping visualizing. Data constructing Nil's reference to the mind's eye was drawn from the node theme "A mind's eye is real." Liz would use the verb picture to provide the meaning in what she wanted to say.

Like when you walk out of the door as a blind person, I don't picture my world in black and white. I don't picture just this bright light that I'm walking into just because that's what I can see. Like, I know that when I walk out of my house, I can picture the garden and, you know, the, the rose bushes in front of my house. Like just because I can't see them doesn't mean that I'm gonna imagine something that's, you know, totally off-center to what reality is. (Int 1)

Here, imagine and picturing are used interchangeably suggesting that visualizing which is equal to picturing may well be equal to imagining. It is possible to hypothesize even at this point, that an adult learner who is visually impaired and practices visualizing is more likely to report using active imagination than one who does not consciously visualize or picture. Within the code title "Memory and picturing," Kate stated,

It's nice to be able to have and be able to put a picture in my head when I'm working like in a woodshop or doing different things, to help me understand what I'm looking at or what I'm planning for or how to navigate. (Int 1)

Within an active imagination workspace it is "nice" for a blind person to have, even create, or form a picture in her "head" to help her understand, plan and navigate. The cognitive and spatial are evident in these three activities. Kate played a flute.

And then if you shift things over to like, in the music department, you know, trying to do a certain scale, or do something, visualizing what I used to read, you know, from memory of what that scale looks like, or the directions in the past of the fingers set up to create that note can make a huge difference. It, you know, it kind of pulls in that memory and visualization together. (Int 2)

It pulls in memory and visualization "together," both having been infused by an active phenomenon or energy akin to an active imagination. Eris, whose main instrument on stage is the bass, plays piano too and is learning the saxophone. He spoke about visuals in his mind's eye, then went on to equate his imagination with his meditation.

So, I kind of build the imagination: what would my ideal dream house look like? If I go on vacation and we are flying, what would it look like me sitting in first-class sipping on champagne? So, I kind of had those visuals in my mind's eye. (Int 1)

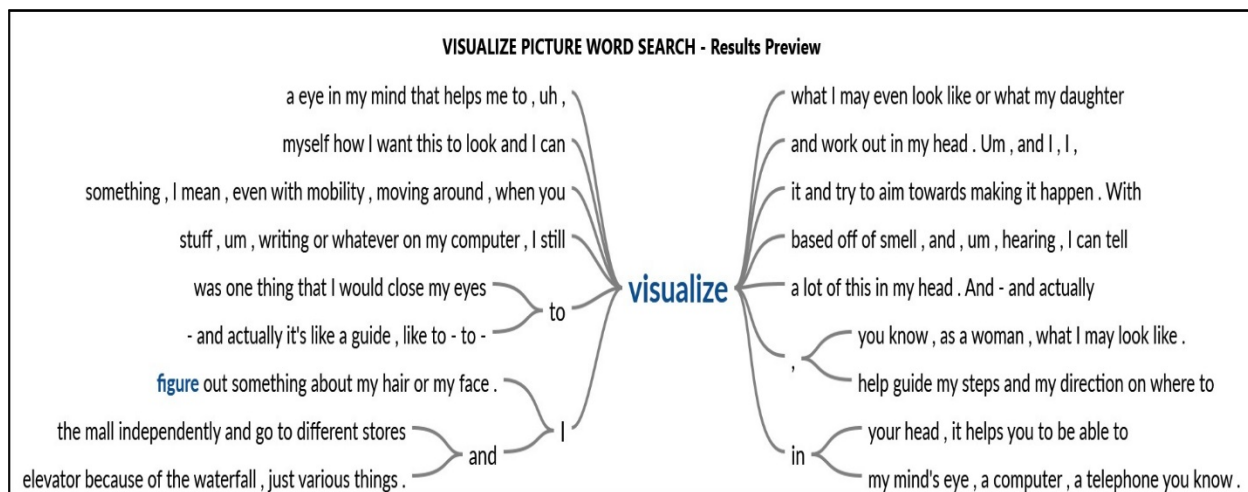
Importantly, his "visuals" were in his Ajna chakra, his command center, so to speak. In the mind's eye, they could enter the world of dreams in the sleep state. The participants presented here represented the views of the eight on the value placed on the use of active imaginations in visualizing and picturing, and based on their narratives, active imagination forms part of, and positively enhances visualizing and picturing.

Querying Active Imagination, Visualizing and Picturing

A Word Tree was created using the words visualize and picture in NVivo. Those in a sentence spoken before or after visualizing and picturing and drawn from the 56 codes were concept phrases spoken by blind persons whose imaginations were actively engaged in stepping, touching, hearing, visualizing, memorizing, reading braille, and relating to others.

Figure 3

Visualize Phrases in Word Tree



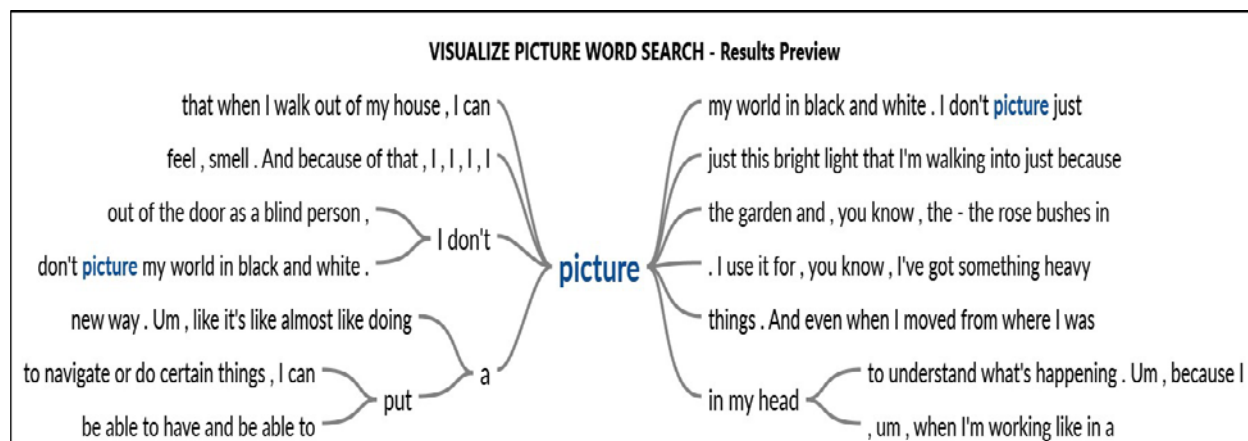
Among words and phrases coming before visualize included, “an eye in my mind that helps me,” “it’s a made-up eye,” “even with mobility,” and “I would close my eyes” to (make things happen). Visualize was the active principle opening the mind’s eye or Ajna chakra. It was a faculty of imagination and imagination is because imagination is active.

Phrases and words emerging from speech and coming after visualize were graphic. Abri stated that she visualized what she “may even look like,” or “what” her “daughter may look like.” Visualizing entails emotion. Tsaf visualized and worked out “in her head,” trying to make what was visualized happen. Nil visualized his computer and telephone in his “mind’s eye.” The

activity is grand between the observer, the observed and the process of observation. Nil has been in control of his mind's eye throughout this study.

Figure 4

Picture Phrases in Word Tree



Combining her imagination, feel and smell, Tsaf stated that she was able to “picture.” To get a sense of her new home, she needed to formulate “a good visual.” Liz could not “picture” her “world in black and white,” while Kate needed to “have and be able to put a picture in (her) head, when (she’s) working like in a woodshop or doing different things, to help (her) understand what (she’s) looking at.” This is active: she needed to “have,” and if not “put” a picture to “help ... her understand,” what she’s looking at. Is she seeing in the context of “looking,” or is she seeing with her mind’s eye? These utterances are thick in content, each word as loaded as the inexplicable feelings they mask.

In phrases appearing after, the colorful nature of what Liz needs to picture cannot be overlooked. They are “the garden and ... the - the rose bushes,” images or pictures that were familiar to her. There is too, a tenderness and emotion in the selection. Evidently, memory, visualizing and picturing and imagination are inextricably intertwined, possibly ever-active in the

senses. In commenting on memory, note where the word picturing equates memory in Kate's world.

Sometimes I go back and forth on certain things on the basic day-to-day levels. It's really helpful because I can navigate my house without any vision loss ... have those memories and the pictures, if I need to find something. (Int 1)

It's a process of ceaseless communication between her imagination, visualizing, memory and willingness to search.

2. Declarative Statement on Findings Pertaining to Active Imaginations, Visualizing and Picturing

Active imagination is image-making and this quality inherent in the psyche, grants adult learners with visual impairments the opportunity to participate in the production of visual images and pictures as part of their lived experience. This ability to use their memories, visualize and picture gives them a feeling of autonomy, profound independence, and invariably of self-worth.

Active Imaginations and the Use of Other Senses

Data Collection Instruments

Interview 1: Interview from which categories emerged and from which node themes and codes were drawn.

Data Collected

Among the 26 node themes there was one titled "We become aware of other senses" under which were 10 codes. The codes presented below represented use of other senses and were inadvertently representations of active imagination. Again, codes could be freely drawn from other node themes such as "Intuition is beneficial to all," and the 30 under the node title "Active imaginations in use in every dimension of life" in support of the analysis.

Data Analysis

In this study, the node theme “We become aware of other senses” was constituted by 10 code titles each bearing its code. They are:

Table 10

Senses Codes

Code Number	Code Title
10.1	Senses and navigating environments (Interactive - Abri)
10.2	Trusting the senses: don't want to infer something that's not there (Deb)
10.3	Hearing and patience (Eris)
10.4	Hearing (Kate)
10.5	Wonderful senses (Liz)
10.6	Being blind, being deaf (Nil)
10.7	Appreciating other senses (Tanj)
10.8	Common senses (Tsaf)
10.9	Having lost three senses (Tsaf)
10.10	Knowing and seeing by touch (Tsaf)

The conceptual phrase “ways of seeing” inherent in the title of this study is herein interpellated along with the common sense located in the definition of intuition, that is, the ability to understand something immediately without the need for conscious reasoning. Abri did it well: telling people's skin tone by their voice. “It's just weird. I, I always, I always wondered that myself, but I've never looked into it” (Int 1). She wondered how she did it. Abri explored her senses consciously, meaning, she knew her senses, apart from sight, naturally held intelligence and were affected in and by an active imagination. She could “wave her hand in front of the stove;” test temperatures of water with her fingers; be disgusted by the “texture” of raw, ground beef; describe her sense of smell as “phenomenal;” and laud the sensitivity of her ability to taste. Abri placed tremendous value on the effective use of her senses in navigating her environment for instance.

Let's say if I go check the mailbox and especially at night So, if I go check the mailbox, I know if I go too far to the left and I'm smelling, that means I went too close to the dumpster. Now, if I go to the right, but like kinda diagonal, I'm going to the mailbox/laundry mat. 'Cause I could smell like, you know, the laundry detergent and fabric softeners and stuff like that. (Int 1)

An active imagination worked in tandem with the sense of smell to produce information for decision-making and self-protection. Both Nil and Tsaf had similar experiences with their sense of smell while in mobility in their community's meso-space. The active imagination in collaboration with memory interpreted smell in both cases. Says Nil,

I mean, I, I love the fact that I smell that Starbucks And, you know, I smile like, oh, not because I, I like the coffee, but it's such a profound distinct signature that I know that, okay, I'm getting close enough to get ready to make this right turn. Now I'm going to head to the front of the station. (Int 1)

The sense of smell facilitated his navigation. "One day," said Tsaf, My boyfriend and I, we were on the bus and we were headed a certain direction and, I said, 'I think that we might be near Burger King ... um, cause I know the-the flame-broiled smell.' And then, I asked the driver were we near Burger King, and she said, 'Yeah.' we just both laughed [chuckles]. (Int 1)

While Deb described her hearing as "definitely important," touch gave her a value-laden interpretation, itself a process of interaction and thus of active imagination.

I used to say years ago [laughs] when I didn't know how a person looked, I said, well, I can braille you, you know, how you run your fingers on the braille, I sync the braille and

I can feel your face, feel your face. And that was jokingly. But my sense of touch is very good. (Int 1)

Visual people are seldom found saying this or exploring any depth or sense in their sense of touch per se. And Deb had tapped into her intuition but called it by another name. “I can’t say, well intuition, but I always say he’s given me discernment of spirits” (Int 1). This is a function of a mind’s eye visualizing and imagining naturally, yet the concept discern connotes an immersion, itself, a function of active imagination. Learning is an outcome of active imagination and Kate had learned.

I’ve definitely increased my, you know, sense of hearing. I lean towards that quite a bit. That’s the next one, besides the feel and the touch of trying to understand things. And then the sense of smell ... I use that a lot for like when I’m baking cookies or things like that. So each one I use depending on what, what my goal or my task is for needing to accomplish something. (Int 1)

Kate consciously attached a sense activity to a particular goal; touch for this, taste for that, smell for this, and hearing for that. Once she learned by hearing her liberation came.

Seeing, realizing I can, I can use the cane to go up and down the steps -- it’s like, I can do this. I can do anything. I can cross the street. Then I can go from point A to point B with, all by myself. (Int 1)

She heard the cane as it touched places in her environment and they each gave her something to interpret. Kate used “seeing” and quickly changed it to “realizing,” as she shifted autonomously and cognitively depicting an active imagination. Her “I” scaffolds were energetic: “I can,” “I can,” “I can do this” “I can do anything,” “I can cross,” and “I can go.” What an achievement in an active, warm space; warm because it is in motion and imagination because it

is an expression of psychic energy. Eris, the blind musician, argued that the sense of hearing may well be culture behavior.

It feeds back into being patient as well. Because it means we see So, it's best for us to take time to listen to what's being said, and sometimes it's good to listen to what's not being said as well. (Int 1)

Eris, like most human beings, has a sense of hearing, and because of his activity in music, his intense imagination transcended mere sensation, possibly harnessing tones in intuition. Imagination gave volatility to the senses. Tanj sounded ecstatic about the coming together of her senses and the fact that the whole activity pushed her imagination and was pushed by her active imagination.

I felt like my other senses were compensating for the loss of sight in many different ways. And that made me want to pay attention as many of us who are blind to audio, to touch like you're saying, to smell, taste, all of that. And that also pushed me more into the field of audio producing and, um, enjoying art. (Int 1)

The other senses were and are resources. Art was to be enjoyed, being at the heart of perception and creative imagination, essentially active imagination. Tsaf's active imagination extended into her fingers, reading the text, i.e., the item she was buying. "If I'm getting assistance in the store, I don't allow anyone to just put stuff in the basket. I have to touch it to confirm, that's my way of verifying what they're getting" (Int 1). Touch is too, a relational sense, requiring an interpretation of the imagination that remembers.

Liz had the all-encompassing word on use of the other senses and visualizing, picturing and active imagination, again, maybe because she worked on the ground and practiced reflection, did not forget, used her intuition, visualized, and pictured structured spaces during mobility.

And like when I'm working with students, especially, those who are new to blindness, we sit and we have a whole conversation about what are our other senses, you know, our physical senses other than our eyesight. So, you know, they'll name like touch, taste, sound, and whatnot. But then, I also take it a step beyond that and I'm like, 'Okay, so what are some other senses that aren't physical, and may not even be conventional that we don't think about.' Right? (Int 1)

Among the other senses identified by Liz were a sense of humor, common sense and time sense.

If you're crossing the street and the street is a small street, and you've been crossing and walking and walking and walking, and you haven't made it to the other side, well, maybe it's time to say, 'Hey, I've been walking for a really long time. My sense of timing is telling me it shouldn't take me this long to cross this little street. Maybe I missed the corner.' Right? (Int 1)

As Liz reached into her wealth of field experiences, even when imagination remained intangible, the dialogue released historic separations between researcher and researched. Their imaginations entered a single, active and common place. Liz said,

Our vision is just one tool in our toolbox, and there are so many other things and resources that we can use. And when we learn how to use them, you know, we can really diminish vision loss to an inconvenience. (Int 1)

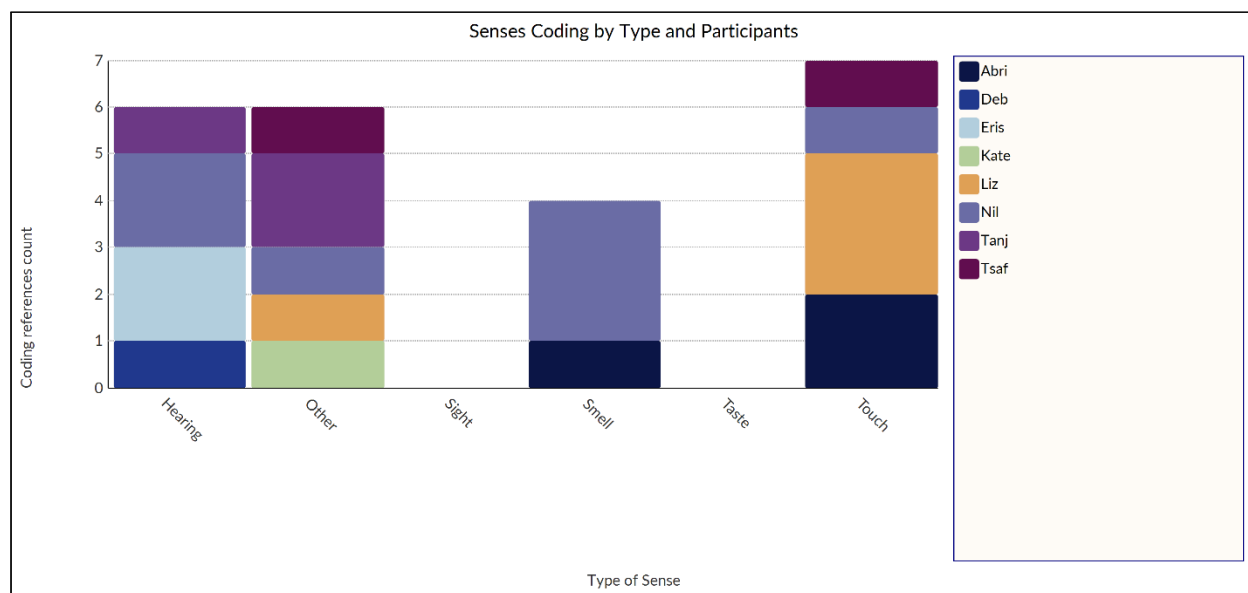
Active imagination transforms sense impressions into meaningful factors and intuitions that could be appreciated wholly because they bring a sense of self-awareness, understanding, cognitive activity and ultimate psychological wellbeing.

Querying Active Imaginations and the Use of Other Senses and Intuition

The figure below shows number of coding references by types of senses and participants.

Figure 5

Senses Codes by Type and Participants



There were 6 total hearing references out of 23 total senses codes related to active imagination. Nil and Eris had the most at two each, Tanj and Deb had one each. This did not seem sufficient to produce any meaningful and representative answer to the possible relationship between active imaginations and the use of other senses. A search through the entire interview schedule provided important insights. Deb, for instance, described her hearing as “definitely important,” and her sense of touch as “very good.” Since losing sight, Kate had “increased” her sense of hearing, “besides the feel and the touch of trying to understand things.” When Liz’ students have some vision left, they were blindfolded, causing them to depend on “those other senses.” The mobility instructor noted that “There’s a lot of problem-solving, critical thinking that’s involved, when you can’t use your eyes.” Liz added that it was her job to teach them “how

to use their brain.” The word brain is critical here in relation to the senses, imagination and memory. Finally, Nil would rather be blind than deaf. Describing vision as “the most primary of the five senses,” he perceived deafness as “such a lonely” place. “If I was not able to have conversations and communicate with people, I think that will be more, more depressing to me than if I could, than the, the fact that I can’t see.” The mere production of thought represents acts of active imagination. Indubitably, a blind participant’s active imaginations stimulate the senses naturally as part of the function of an anatomical and physiological community.

3. Declarative Statement on Findings Pertaining to Active Imaginations and the Use of Other Senses

Before losing sight, visually impaired adult learners consciously focused on their sight as the principal sense and medium to the world. Given sight loss, they now consciously and unconsciously use all other senses to their advantage, including balance, time, and common senses. These engagements are made possible through their active imaginations working in combination with their intuition, memory, visualizing and picturing competency skills.

Explanation for Guiding Research Question 1

Guiding Research Question 1 asked, what value do adult learners with visual impairment say they place on using their active imaginations? Adult learners with visual impairments know they have active imaginations, each of their imaginations permeating their everyday lives. Participating in this study brought their imagination to consciousness in that they became aware of its living in their very bodies and minds. Active imaginations and its value to the blind is therefore well-placed as a research question given that it admits and appreciates that which is at the surface and that which surfaces and is represented by way of memory, in visualizing and in the interpretation that emerges through touch among other senses. Between the connection and

the object touched blossomed and intelligence that they became overtly aware of. Additionally, active imaginations as a collective entity is worth exploration given its meditation quality and the coherence that is both embodied, and emerges when the practice of meditation or mindfulness is done collectively. Active imagination as meditation and reflection or immersion is an ancient and present activity available to modern cultures even to those who are privy to an interior gaze because of blindness. This is a further matter for the collective engagement of the blind globally.

Guiding Research Question 2

Data Collection Instruments

Interview 1: An interview using open-ended and structured questions. Again, the six prompts were not used in the order they appear here but were subject to the dialogic process though they were adopted to guide that process.

Question/Prompts

You are a visually impaired adult learner. You do not see outside but have a relation with images arising behind your eyes. What do these images behind your eyes tell you about the meaning of your life purpose as a visually impaired or blind person?

Potential deepening probes include:

1. Describe the images you experience behind or in front of your eyes when you close them.
2. Where do you think they're coming from?
3. Would you describe them as images you remember or are they images you've never seen before?
4. How do you feel on encountering those images?
5. What do they tell you about imagination?
6. Would you describe them as active? Why?

The Prepared and Applied Question

Prompt Question 1 asked the participant, “Describe the images you experience behind or in front of your eyes when you close them.” The applied question was, “Isn’t there a delight in actually seeing what’s around you. I mean, what joy does seeing inside your head behind your eyes, what joy does that bring?” Blind participant Deb responded, “Well, it brings a lot of comfort because I ask a lot of questions of what’s around me” (Int 1). Though differently phrased, the answer could be described as commendable.

Data Collected

The open-ended question and its prompts anticipated physical encounters behind the eyes or mind’s eye. One node theme in the 26 was titled “Imagination experiences,” and was constituted by nine codes. Given the closeness of imagination experiences to active imaginations and imagination node themes, it was very likely that these would influence findings in the imagination experiences codes.

Theme Emergence

Because the anticipated experiences were physical, the emergence of feelings, emotions, relatedness factors, issuances of faith and spirit expressions from participants’ stories/experiences, pushed the notion of experience to now accommodate other dimensions beyond the physical appearance behind the eyes that seemed mere features pertaining to the eye condition. So, data was collected from the node themes: “Encountering blindness is difficult;” “Diagnoses confused and strained emotions;” “Depression accompanies sight loss;” “Caretakers and family central to wellbeing;” “A mind’s eye is real;” “Acceptance is key;” “Faith and confidence;” and “Spiritual sensibility enhances wellbeing.”

Data Analysis

Imagination experiences are lived experiences and in fact, lived experiences always entail imagination and the perturbations entailed in active imagination. The clear finding was that imagination experiences transcended mere appearances of colors in front of or behind the eyes if this latter was ever identified by participants. Essentially, physical experiences in and of the eyes were not always understood and when they were queried, most blind participants attributed their appearances to the eye disorder.

Physical Eyes Imagination Experiences. What did participants experience when they closed their eyes in the mode of an active imagination or meditation? Kate said she saw “black and white and bouncing around even when my eyes are open, it’s almost like what they call that, that white noise on the TV, where you got a whole bunch of black spots and white spots” (Int 1). Kate attributed appearances of these spots to feeling tired or the effect of being out in the sun making her eyes sensitive and tender. What would have happened when she chose to close her eyes and relax beyond the weight of tiredness?

Abri experienced “little colorful dots,” which she thought “annoying,” while Eris had stated initially, “I guess I don’t pay too much anymore to what colors things are in my, in my imagination or ... in my-my, um, meditation stage” (Int 1). In Interview 2 however, Eris literally scanned up and down the colors of the chakras as they lit in response to his beat or genre choices. When Nil’s eyes were either closed or open, he encountered what he called sunspots.

That’s the results from retinitis pigmentosa, so it’s, it’s like bright orange, red, yellow flashing images that, you know, disrupt your vision. I’m not totally blind, it’s not dark. It’s just a whole lot of disruptive stuff that prohibits me from actually seeing what is actually there. (Int 1)

The colors prevent, even prohibit, but what when Nil's perceived yellow color was suggesting, you are empowered or like Eris, "be a little cautious, take your time, chill for a moment, listen to what I'm about to say" (Int 2). Deb attributed her color schemes to damage of her optic nerve.

I can see, look now and tell you they're lavender, purple, gray, green, yellow. These are the colors I'm constantly seeing. They're flowing in different directions. Today, they're flowing slanted, vertical, horizontal. Um, someday they're going in circles. So, through the colors, I had to actually ask people, what color is this? Um, it's like someone that's in the fog, you know, and the, the more you come out of the fog, the more you see, but then, I can't come out of the fog because the colors are there due to the damage of the optic nerve. So, the closer I get to you, I'm seeing more of your image, but I'm not because it's not clear due to the colors. (Int 1)

Deb used the word "see" or derivatives of it, five times in this observation of her color imagination experiences. Her "I" scaffolds are even more revealing. "I can see," "I'm constantly seeing," "I had to actually ask," "I can't come out," "I get to you," "I'm seeing more," and "I am not." This in essence, sounds or reads like a versus code with its vibrant dialectic tension of opposites, shifting from positive to negative. Gilligan and Eddy (2017) identify that moment as one when "we may be tapping into unconscious processes" (p. 79).

Generally, participants did not extend the experiences beyond the physical dimension, settling for explanations provided by a medical profession. Yet, the imagination technology necessary for beginning a shift to another interpretation of their condition was at work and unidentified in their lived experiences -- a possible function of culture.

Depression and Trauma Imagination Experiences. Kate was told she was losing her sight. “I was shocked. I was surprised and confused, you know. My first word response was ‘What the’ um. It just came out of the blue” (Int 1). “I just remember being so, so sad,” Liz muttered. When she reflected further, she remembered “having a lot of anger and bitterness and frustration and-and all these things and a lot of that came from feeling incompetent” (Int 1). The word “incompetent” is significant here, suggesting her brokenness and thoughts of a profound inability and crumbling confidence.

What participants encountered shook them to the core. Tsaf never thought she would experience the imagination of wanting to end her life. “I was very depressed. And I, I told my dad (I remember it like it was yesterday), ... I was crying and I just said, ‘I wanted to kill myself.’ I didn’t know what to do” (Int 1). Nil captured what would be the next step for Abri and the other six participants.

So, in the beginning it was difficult. Right? Well, primarily because I did not have the alternative skills of doing things differently. So, once I learned braille, that relieved me of the burden and the trauma about not being able to read print. Once I learned how to travel independently with the white cane, it got me more comfortable with respect to, I’m not losing all of my independence. (Int 1)

There was a “burden and the trauma” about not being able to read print. Sight loss is a massive loss particularly for avid readers. In Interview 2, Kate was haunted by that fear of not being able to “see the pages,” and “read the text.”

Abri did not forget. “I was kinda mad at the world, mad at the parents, whoever” (Int 1). But training at Atlanta’s Center for the Visually Impaired changed that. “I just became my own

woman, become more, became more independent. And this is what led me here today” (Int 1). Additional imagination experiences are spread across segments in this study.

Caretaker Imagination Experiences. Tsaf’s caretakers were “there to support,” while Eris’ grandfather asked him to “stay positive.” Deb’s relatives “looked out for her” and among them she found “a strong support system.” From her childhood Tanj had never felt singled out even though traces of sight loss had begun to affect her where she grew up in Serbia. “First of all, I was lucky when I was a kid in the sense that my parents never treated me differently ... from the other kids” (Tanj: Int 1). That social support strengthened her during her adolescent years into young adulthood and the struggle with losing sight. Kate’s family found her an agency.

It was a lot with the support that I had. It really, really helped. My family was really supportive, but I also got connected to the Alaska Center for the Blind and they said, ‘Here’s, you know.’ They told their stories and they listened to me and, you know, gave suggestions and ideas. (Int 1)

Like Kate, Nil moved away from the over-caring environment which he was in, to a place where he was allowed to blossom. Tsaf still keeps the teddy bear received from her aunt.

It was like a card holder ... the teddy bear actually holds the card. And I still have it today and it brings back memories looking back on those days when all of those things really mattered and, and made such a difference for me. (Int 1)

The relatedness experience, itself a psychological shift and thus, an imagination experience, enhanced healing and wellbeing among all eight participants. What they encountered was another caring profession rooted in a long-lived phylogenesis with its biological roots, feelings, emotions, intuitions, sensations and boundlessness.

Faith Imagination Experiences. Abri thought her faith ensured “mental stability” and nurtured “patience,” while Eris drew strength “to stay focused,” from his faith. For Liz, her faith could not be traced to material things (Int 1). Kate recognized elements of faith when she began learning to live in spite of blindness. “A lot of that came through once I started learning and getting that steady encouragement and understanding that, you know, if I can do this, I can do anything” (Int 1). Deb believed she was “put here for a reason.”

I’m chosen to do a specific job for Him. And I’m just learning in the last few years mine is to ... work with disabled individuals, to advocate for them, to do the best that I can for them ... especially a special need child in public or private schools. Yes. (Int 1)

The “yes” at the end of her statement was full of remembrances of joyful experiences. Nil looked into himself in an act of introspection or immersion.

I grew up Southern Baptist and have a very strong faith tradition that has helped me go through the transition of being able to, to deal with my blindness. But I, I’ve run into blind people with a variety of different belief systems when it comes to that level. I personally, you know, relied heavily on that, that introspection. (Int 1)

His practice of introspection was a more silent immersion so characteristic of active imagination as meditation. The presence of faith at work was evident in the codes and lives of most participants. They encountered an other, apart from themselves, whether by way of prayer as in the case of Deb, by way of introspection in the case of Nil, or in Tanj’s world, influenced by her childhood caretakers and internalized, or experienced as a result of blindness.

Spiritual Imagination Experiences. Tanj held a profound if not existential explanation for her spiritual sensibility. She was scared of death.

I wanted to, to create a sense of comfort for myself, at least, of what's to come after and what kind of evidence do we have to show that we do exist after death and that we don't expire entirely, that our souls don't just go into a void and we'll never know anything again. Knowing this gave me a lot of comfort. It-it made me ... believe in the supernatural. (Int 1)

The extent to which such reasoning capacity was due to reflections on blindness or were emanations from her natural self remains a matter of research interest. Findings on research concerning near death experiences and out of body experiences and seeing in the congenital blind for instance were substantially captured by American psychologist Kenneth Rings and Sharon Cooper in the book titled *mindsight*.

"I see through the spirit of God," Deb assured all, adding "I know He's used my brokenness, my blindness, and my frailties to bring hope and encouragement to others" (Int 1). This is fearless. The learning experiences could not be understated. "There's a new level each time. So, I can't say that I've learned this lesson completely. I'm continually learning it more and more" (Deb: Int 1). It is a phenomenological matter, ever-becoming and open to interpretation. Abri was of the view that if it were "not for above," she "probably wouldn't be here" (Int 1). Above mattered, so did within.

One time at a busy intersection in Anchorage, Kate was irritated by, and became upset with someone who wanted to pray for her.

And I said the first time, when they first asked, 'Yeah, go ahead. I don't care if you pray, that's your choice.' But then she said she was going to pray for my eyes. And I was like, 'Don't bother.' I said, 'There's nothing wrong with them.' (Int 1)

In the early stages of depression, Liz said she was going to avoid God. “That’s what I would tell people God and I have a good understanding right now, I leave Him alone and He leaves me alone” (Int 1). But she made peace with her sight loss. “Now fast forward to the person that I am today, and I realize that my spirituality and the things that bring me peace do not come from what I have or don’t have, including my vision. Right?” (Int 1). That was a moment of transition within a spiritual experience.

These are blind people looking into themselves to see, find and make meaning. It was incumbent on them to find that oneness intrinsically, to tap that external support, in one sense, structuring embodiment. And here, as a departure from the theme of imagination experiences and as a way of remembering who is determining the course of these experiences, it is necessary before dealing with the experiences in acceptance, to find out how participants saw themselves at the beginning of the blindness experience.

Assessment of Their Blindness. Abri’s narrative was unequivocal. “Uh, to me it is just disability ... My eyes just don’t work” (Int 1).

After a series of surgical approaches involving placing a shunt in her brain, down to her neck and stomach, Deb was told her optic nerve was damaged severely. “You know, everyone else’s nerve is pink and mine is white and it’s damaged” (Int 1).

Liz’s mother was proactive. “She would say ‘you need to find something to do. Go volunteer somewhere.’ And I was like, ‘Well, what can I do, mom? Like, I’m blind’” (Int 1).

Eris seemed to have a capacity for speedy acceptance of changes taking place in his eyes. “I don’t feel that it was a hard transition for me. And even now, I could still see like lights and shadows” (Int 1). “Even now” is emotive suggesting the goodness that sight was.

Kate's vision had fallen dramatically. "I went from not even being close to being legally blind to, by the end of the year, I had two feet of visual recognition" (Int 1). The depth perception was the first thing she really "lost and noticed" (Int 1).

A glimpse into Nil's everyday life experiences said a bit about his seeing ability. His household items were the objects touched.

My appliances have marks on them that allow me to wash and dry my clothes, use my microwave, use my oven; touching the textures of my clothes to tell the difference of what I'm wearing as opposed to not being able to look at them. (Int 1)

Tanj came to terms with the reality after surgery. "I had the surgery. I waited, ... a couple of days with the eye patch on, took it off slowly ... then started looking around and focusing on things and realized that everything was a lot blurrier" (Int 1). Surgery was supposed to alleviate the condition and bring improvements.

Tsaf, the Floridian who worked providing Americans with Disabilities Act sensitivity training, identified herself as having light perception. "So, I can see shadows in good lighting and I can distinguish maybe between black and white or something that's dark and light. I shouldn't say black and white. That's really about much as I can see" (Int 1). Her case was instructive in other ways.

I was told from one doctor that I had macular degeneration, that I had the wet form. But then I went to a different doctor and I was told that I had retinal detachment, that I would have been too young for macular degeneration. (Int 1)

Tsaf chuckled over the medical inconsistencies, stating that she settled for retinal detachment because it made "more sense" to her (Int 1). The eight participants in this study considered themselves blind. They would become strong over time.

Acceptance Imagination Experiences. Abri commented on getting to “that stage of acceptance, which is hard,” while Eris did not think “it was a hard transition,” slipping into acceptance. Liz grew to the stage when she became “blind and beautiful” in look and intelligence, adding that once she questioned it and hated it.

And now that I’m older and I have students that’ll say, ‘Why me? You know, why do I have to go blind?’ My question to them is, ‘Well, why not you?’ You know. Why, what makes us so special that we can choose what difficulties or challenges arise in our life? Nobody has that privilege. (Int 1)

Tanj’s anger passed into sadness and she was acutely depressed. “And then eventually, it turned into acceptance” (Int 1). Her sight loss was progressive. Kate went through a process of emotional transformation that all would encounter.

Well, I went from anger and confusion and denial to the grieving and... from there, it was more of the acceptance. It was because in the beginning, I couldn’t talk about the vision loss without having tears come down my face and sadness and not understanding, to now ... I have no problem and see it more as something that needed to happen, or, you know, it’s part of life. You know, this is my journey. (Int 1)

The overcoming or reaching a point that could only be characterized as transcendental or maybe a oneness consciousness, depicted experiences of all participants. Says Nil, “Blind people are really, kind of, a subset of society. And I think that we have our share of deep thinkers and I think we have our share of superficial people” (Int 1). Tsaf commented on the transcendental feeling inherent in acceptance.

I felt incredible, awesome. I mean, there’s so many other adjectives to describe once you come to that feeling of acceptance and it’s a beautiful feeling. And, and, and, and once

you do come to those turns, you're able to live life more freely. And, you know, no one can, can try to tell me what I'm unable to do because I can't see. I've built my confidence to feel much more differently about myself regardless of what the world may think about visual impairment. (Int 1)

Tsaf had come to terms with herself through a multiplicity of methods including the Kubler Ross theory of the five stages of grief: denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance. Tsaf had gone past denial and anger.

I realized that it's not because I was a bad person, or that I've done anything wrong, it's just a part of life that I had to come to accept, that this is just the part of life, that God allowed for me to live and perhaps my purpose is for me to be visually impaired, and perhaps to be able to help others. And so that's how I, I came to the, that conclusion of, of what God wanted for me and my faith and how it ties into all of my other senses in my mind's eye and how I just let God lead my path. (Int 1)

Tsaf located her other senses in her mind's eye, integrating her faith into their collective functioning. Participants encountered phenomena they had not seen, felt, or imagined before and the impact was transformational. Transformational learning is effective epistemically, guiding the adult learner to use "a prior interpretation to construe a new or revised interpretation of the meaning of one's experience as a guide to future action" (Mezirow, 2000, p.6). One hears in these experiences, emergence of memory, picture and visual, active imagination in ferment in the senses, and the vast range of adult learning experiences drawn on throughout the human development growth stages in body, mind, soul and spirit.

4. Declarative Statement on Findings Pertaining to Imagination Experiences Adult Learners with Visual Impairments Reported They Encounter

The findings state clearly that imagination experiences were not restricted to any physical phenomenon, but comprised the psychological, cognitive, emotional, spiritual and profound moments of transcendence. Acceptance entailed transcendence with implications for psychological wellbeing and its dimensions. The relatedness factor in wellbeing was particularly prominent in these experiences wherein blind persons could not imagine how important their caretakers could have been to their salvaging. Moreover, the findings indicate that wellbeing and acceptance touched the whole life of a person, though in this case, the biophilic was not used sufficiently broadly to expand thoughts of relatedness to include animals, plants, the ecosystem and the vast cosmos.

Explanation for Guiding Research Question 2

Guiding Research Question 2 asked: what are the various imagination experiences adult learners with visual impairments report they encounter? They are the ones doing the encounter with a researcher who shares in the phenomenon observing and participating simultaneously on the outside and inside both within the group and within the Self. It is an amazing imagination experience consistent with the idea of lived experience itself conceptualized as a givenness of internal consciousness by Husserl as cited by van Manen (2007). Guiding Research Question 2 is meaningful and significant because it attracted reported experiences from multiple levels: the physical, relational, emotional, belief orientational, spiritual, and through a journey to acceptance. This latter draws on all that comes before it to consolidate itself. It is an experience which might have the tools for its existence already hidden in the psyche awaiting awakening, embodiment and emergence. The unity of conscious and unconscious by way of the transcendent

function may well represent the experience of acceptance -- an embrace of boundlessness and bliss. Still, the human being and body intervene at times to remind the one who lost sight that seeing was once their dominant sense. Wellbeing and the distinction drawn between healing and cure answers to this: the blind say they can live without their eyes. It is an experience of conceptual abundance, one only partially identified by the dominant visual culture and its entertainment industry.

Guiding Research Question 3

Data Collection Instruments

Interview 1: An interview using open-ended and structured questions. Again, the six prompts were not used in the order they appear here but were subject to the dialogic process though they were adopted to guide that process.

Question/Prompts

How did you make that shift from seeing to not seeing, from a loss to what seems to be a learning and wellbeing resource?

Potential deepening probes include:

1. What does visual impairment mean to you and your life's purpose now?
2. Why do you think you became blind?
3. Looking back on it all, how were you impacted emotionally when you lost sight?
4. Do you perceive another blind person as thinking about not seeing or seeing in the same way as you do?
5. What can the sighted learn from you?
6. How would you describe your present state of mind?

The Prepared and Applied

The prepared question was “What does visual impairment mean to you and your life’s purpose now?” Abri was asked, “has blindness affected your life’s purpose?” She answered, “probably in the beginning, but now, no” (Int 1). Though the question was prepared formally, when brought into the dialogic process it always took on a different tone that did not necessarily change the meaning behind the original intention.

Data Collected

Across the 26 node themes were spread factors and conditions which hindered or promoted the use of imagination and active imaginations. This was clearly determined before this in Chapter Three in Table 7.

Theme Emergence

Across the 26 node themes were clear indications of individual responsibility, calls for self-confidence and advocacy, relatedness in the extension of mutual support one to another, the need for understanding technology, employer cooperation, searching for training and making the best use of it, passing on what one has learned to others, finding a community of successful blind people and generally, coming to terms with blindness and the processes to acceptance.

Data Analysis

In this study, factors are equal to a behavior, and an influence that helps produce a result or outcome. Conditions are equal to a circumstance, environment or contextual element that has an effect or impact.

The verbs promote and hinder connote behaviors and conditions likely to create positive or negative outcomes. This research therefore looked for those behaviors and conditions that

promoted or hindered psychological wellbeing: autonomy, relatedness and competence. Also emergent were material/physical and ecological conditions.

Examples of factors and conditions that hinder or promote were drawn from the codes of participants who actually experienced the phenomenon of blindness. At the end of each factor or condition was placed the abbreviation df1/2:Deb meaning derived from Interview 1 or 2 and coded for example, from Deb's narratives.

Factors that Hinder

Table 11

Factors that Hinder

Factor	Code and Explanation
Impulsive blind people.	"My imagination might be telling me one thing, but unless I'm putting together all the other things I'm gathering from my environment, I'm always gonna just have my own idea and my own-own perception. And I feel like that could be a problem for us as blind people" (df1:Liz).
Impatient blind people.	Impatience too by members of the public and employers when dealing with the blind (df1:Eris).
Reluctance and fear.	Reluctance on the part of blind people to participate, and fearful of accepting assistance in tools, technology and other resources from their community rehabilitation centers and agencies. "I was afraid of being blind. I was afraid of anything that had to do with blindness" (df1:Liz).
Non-acceptance.	"I never really took the time to acknowledge it, which I think also led to me having such a difficult time" (df1:Liz).
Disrespectful members of the public.	"But one thing I-I don't like is when people try to play these like, these little games, like, you know, 'Guess who I am,' you know, that type of thing" (df1:Tsaf).
People's stuck perception.	"Sometimes people just can't get past the fact that we can't see, so they limit themselves in being able to

Factor	Code and Explanation
	get to know us and being able to have such a valuable resource in people who are blind” (df1:Liz).
Non-appreciation.	“I feel like I am not respected for what I do at my job. I, I literally don’t. I feel like an afterthought. When I have ideas, they’re not taken seriously and not given merit” (df1:Tanj).
Fear.	“Fear of what people think of me or say about me ... but I’m learning God has not given me the spirit of fear I am the biggest hindrance” (df2:Deb; df2:Kate).
Social repression.	“Other people not giving you the time and the space to put your own ideas together” (df2:Liz).

Factors that Promote

Table 12

Factors that Promote

Factor	Code and Explanation
Relaxation or meditation practices.	“We all have our own process and we need -- almost like a PTSD reaction -- we need to let our bodies accept” (df1:Tanj).
Teaching visualization techniques to the sighted and blind.	“Like I mentioned about being a student, um, and working that out in my head or even cooking and, visualizing to myself how I want this to look and I can visualize it and try to aim towards making it happen” (df1:Tsaf).
Advocate for oneself.	“I had to advocate for myself” (df1:Deb). A student who is blind who advocates for self, gains access to reading materials in formats that are accessible, library services such as scans, JAWS-ready computers, and persons who can assist with using these tools and technologies. These get them working. Abri had suggested that speaking up promotes the rights of persons to be counted and included.

Factor	Code and Explanation
Blind people should know the laws that protect them.	“I tell them, I say, ‘Don’t, stray away from the blindness because the laws, of course, are put in place to protect you’” (df1:Nil). Knowing the laws when seeking employment strengthens confidence, autonomy, power of relatedness and competence -- clear markers of an imagination in action.
Contribute to the support of a person who is losing sight.	“What do I think I can contribute? Wisdom, encouragement to others who are starting to go through this process or who have hit the roller coaster” (df1:Tanj). Another says, “share with others who may be going through similar situations” (df1:Tsaf).
Learn and teach intuition.	“I think it can be a huge benefit for anybody” (df1:Kate).
Engage the totality of play.	“Play helps with retention. I mean, when you can make it fun and make it playful, well, two things happen. One, I think people learn better and it does help with retention but the other piece is it makes people want to do stuff” (df1:Nil). Play is a perfect enactment of active imagination. It is at the core of imagination studies and learning.
Promote mobility among the blind.	“I think the other thing that really helps me is going out and doing things by myself. And the reason for that is that it gives me that reminder of like, my life isn’t held back by my vision loss” (df1:Liz).
Teach blind people to be gentle with themselves.	“When I do something, you know, silly, I, I give myself permission to laugh at myself” (df1:Nil). This factor relaxes just as active imagination is designed and said to do. Does a sighted class take five minutes to laugh?
Sound belief.	“Knowing who I am in Christ” (df2:Deb).
Engage the medical profession.	“So, I still have them checked out, so as not to have issues” (df1:Eris). This was a decision taken after reflecting on eye treatment protocols offered by the medical profession.
Promote the need for blind people to feel and express their wholeness.	“I think that that’s, that’s the biggest thing that blindness has given me. It’s, it’s given me the

Factor	Code and Explanation
	opportunity to feel like a whole person” (df1:Liz). Not only does this statement represent the mature use of one’s imagination and active imaginations; it sprang out of conversations between an orientation and mobility teacher and her students whom she was counseling that they should be their total selves and cry if they wanted to.

Conditions that Hinder

Conditions are equal to a circumstance, environment or contextual element that has an effect or impact. The conditions presented below were derived from participants’ lived experiences.

Table 13

Conditions that Hinder

Condition	Code and Explanation
Work environments that do not see beyond the blindness.	“Like less than, what, 25% who are blind are employed? That’s terrible. And it goes back to people don’t take the time to see us beyond our eyes” (df1:Liz).
Transportation systems not necessarily dependent.	“It’s a long commute and also transportation can be a challenge when you’re fully reliant on other people driving you and you don’t have a car” (df1:Tanj; df2:Eris).
Opportunity to perform.	<p>“There are many people who are with no vision that are doing great things. But you still have some people who, because of their lack of education or, the ignorance, they are unwilling to give a blind person the opportunity because they’re so fearful or they feel that it may be a liability” (df1:Eris). Below is another hindering condition that spoke for itself when it was delivered.</p> <p>“Unfortunately in many faith traditions, blindness is considered some type of curse” (df1:Nil). Nil had this to say also, “in so many instances, blind individuals who go blind end up in environments of individuals who again are caretakers, and they, they stifle the</p>

Condition	Code and Explanation
Mediocre doctor/patient communication.	blind persons opportunities to really be in charge of their own lives.” Nil called this overcaring. This stifles imagination and active imaginations.
	“I think that, maybe the medical professionals could have done a bit of a better job of telling me what does it mean, you know, when we say your vision’s gonna get worse” (df1:Liz). It is the age-old problem of marginalization and non-inclusion in the medicalizing of the body with organs. A patient’s experiences, active imaginations and imagination should be resourceful to any healer, but healing is not the purpose in that interaction. According to Liz, “Through having an autoimmune disorder, they were very aggressive with a lot of medications to try to suppress my immune system, so that I could keep my eyesight, but, you know, I feel like there was so much focus on keeping my eyesight that, you know, I was getting, I was having other complications with some of the medications.”

Conditions that Promote

Table 14

Conditions that Promote

Condition	Code and Explanation
Environments that tap into the blind person’s imagination and challenge them to find.	“And if I would’ve stayed there, if I would’ve just not sought to, to get out into an environment, I would not be here now” (df1:Nil). The environment Nil would go to was one of “people that reinforced that I could get my life back.” He was being cared within a family that loved him, but he was blind and all of a sudden “everybody wants to fix my plate.” He needed to be in a place where his imagination was being tapped into for honing his own survival and thriving methods.
Finding a network of successful blind people.	At yet another point Nil stated, “But a lot of it is you learn it as you go. And a lot of it is you learn it in informal sharing. So that’s why it’s also important to share or, or, or live to some degree in a network of successful blind people who’ve been there and done

Condition	Code and Explanation
	that because so much of what we know is not in a textbook. It's not in a formal training program and it's like being passed to generation to generation much like you would in a family" (df1:Nil).
Healthy living.	Abri promoted healthy eating and fitness among blind people in her Houston community, where she lives alone. "I am a big advocate of exercise. So, this is just this. I love to exercise. Exercising, eating healthy. This is stuff that I do." (df1:Abri).
Advance helpful technology.	Technology we found, serves others. "What we did is we produced actual three-dimensional image -- I mean, three dimensional objects ... and what happened, and I love that because 3D, 3D printing makes that so effective and cost affordable now. But when we created that, not only did it help assess the blind students and give them a reference too; we noticed that it enhanced the ability for the sighted students to also understand and interpret the information. So, when we're out there and solving problems for us, we can also help solve problems for everybody else" (df1:Nil).
Teach and encourage blind people how to use computers.	"I, I find myself relating more to a computer than other people, and I find computers more comforting because they are so predictable. And also animals." Tanj described blind people as "wise, experienced" (df1:Tanj).
Promote the idea of boundless possibilities.	"We are very determined, um, motivated individuals where we're not allowing blindness to keep us from living our lives. And sighted people sometimes do not realize, that they have what they need to feel the same" (df1:Tsaf).
Allow the blind to use their imagination.	"So, I think that allowing each of us to take the time to put these pictures together in our head, to use our imagination, that is where the growth really comes from. And that's why we can have such diversity within the blind community because we don't all imagine things the same way" (df2:Liz).

5. Declarative Statement on Findings Pertaining to the Factors and Conditions that Promote and Hinder the Use of the Imagination and Active Imaginations of Adult Learners with Visual Impairments

Adult learners on looking back on their experiences with losing sight, can now say that getting on the road to acceptance began with they themselves taking that first step. And in truth, most could not initially, and had to be prompted by a family member, caretaker or friend. They all realized the transformation that training had brought to their lives whether that exposure meant learning braille, learning to use the cane, speaking out their fears and being willing to share acquired skills with those who were just becoming blind. The stigma still persisted in the workplace, but they were encouraged to remain permanent self-advocates, reaching into their faiths and strengths when the annoying days of blindness came along. The fact that the process of change began with them and close caretakers, then within them and their training, says much about embodiment, emergence and self-actualization.

Explanation of Guiding Research Question 3

Guiding Research Question 3 asked, what do adult learners with visual impairments believe are the factors and conditions that promote and hinder the use of their imagination and active imaginations? The research question empowered the eight adult learners, giving them the opportunity to speak about their individual experiences, challenges and successes, and to highlight their navigation in a system that could be far from understanding. Importantly, all participants began with themselves and thought whatever prevented them began with them. The meso, exo and macro systems into which they were entering were not always understood; they needed to know there were laws to protect their rights; they were no lesser than anyone else; and they had the capacity if not the consciousness, of making successes out of their lives. So, the

guiding research question allowed for the flow of answers that looked at the individual, emotional, relational, interpersonal, social and systemic/environmental challenges experienced by the eight.

Interview 2, Interpretation and Wellbeing

In Interview 2, Liz, the mobility teacher from Sacramento, California who teaches people who are going blind how to travel independently without their eyesight, interacted most with the researcher for 114 minutes 58 seconds. Tanj, that blindness technology innovator who revealed that she has a vivid imagination and has had one since childhood, came in second at 110 mins 48 secs. Deb, the teacher, psychologist, stepmother of five and the youngest of eight children followed at 47 min 47 secs. Nil, who wanted to do banking when he could see, turned to law when he went blind because he was passionate about advocacy, exchanged for 47 mins 08 secs. Tsaf's biggest support when she began losing sight at 26 was her father. She, who admitted that sight loss really toyed with her confidence, who in 2023 was writing a Master's degree in public administration, conversed for 45 mins 49 secs. Kate was told by a medic that she would not graduate high-school, yet in 2023 she was continuing to write a Master's degree in social work. Kate would reflect on the subject of blindness for 45 mins 35 secs. Eris, a mediator, conflict resolution specialist, musician and disability advocate mused for 43 mins 18 secs. Abri, whose father is from Nigeria and mother from Georgia, USA, who through dance and nutrition teaches the blind how to stay healthy and fit, shared with the researcher for 35 mins 15 secs.

Four main matters were selected for conversation in Interview 2 with the participants expected to answer a minimum of three. They were: a) a matter which the participant thought he or she needed to explain, describe further or make additions to after having read and listened to the transcript; b) a further question which the researcher needed to ask after having listened to

the audio and read the transcript; c) a question to the participant on healing and cure and their possible distinction; and d) a question on the individual's wellbeing, and relationship with or impression of their current environment. Again, all codes featured below were drawn from Interview 2.

Given the theorizing possibilities offered by Gilligan and Eddy (2017) that voices speaking on the margins of society can be and usually are silenced; that when people speak with an "I" voice they should be listened to; and that persons should be approached not as subjects but as experts within their experiences; narratives of the eight participants were used in sketching "the degree to which they experience a sense of wellness" (p. 1). But the idea of wellbeing would transcend the notion of hedonia as happiness to embrace eudaimonia. Eudaimonia represented the stage through which all participants in this study passed on their way to acceptance, flourishing and thriving. Thus, when Deci and Ryan (2008) wrote about six characteristics of psychological wellbeing, the desire was to determine whether they reflected the imagination experiences route that participants in this study followed. They were self-acceptance, personal growth, relatedness, autonomy, relationships, environmental mastery and purpose in life (Ry, 1989, as cited in Deci & Ryan, 2008, p. 4). Evidently, the order of this study's eight participants seemed more like autonomy, relatedness, personal growth, self-awareness, self-acceptance, environmental mastery and purpose in life. It is in this general context and that of Gilligan and Eddy (2017) that traces will be drawn from participants' second interviews emphasizing their philosophical reflections, and their roles as makers of epistemology and framers of ontologies.

Expert Participant Abri

So much did Abri enjoy the culinary that she posed the question to the researcher. She could not wait for her favorite subject to be activated in conversation.

You know, you remember I told you I was gonna do that, um, stuffed jalapeno casserole? It turned out really great. I was really proud of myself that I did that, but I didn't have it for breakfast. My plate mom made, chicken quesadillas, and I had a half of one for breakfast this time. Usually, I don't eat breakfast but I had to get up super, super early. So, I ate, um, that and drunk some water, and haven't ate anything yet.

Her other passion was not to be forgotten. In fact, those were the moments she enjoyed best in the first interview. "Telling you about my exercise plans ... I'm like, 'listen to me.' And, cooking, I like that part also. Explaining to you about how my family is one of my big-biggest supporters and motivators," she found that brought her joy too. A profound sense of relatedness, self-esteem, and autonomy flowed beneath these simple reports concerned with imagination and active imaginations vibrant in dance and culinary practices. In fact, dance is one of active imagination's oldest if not ancient practices.

Abri, with an inherent sense of laughter, spoke freely and without care. She touched on dreams, dreaming and visualizing, dreaming and color, technology support while cooking, listening, and patience. But just how did she find the world around her?

It's vibrant when, I guess it's vibrant when I'm happy 'because you know when you say you really don't care about, you know like the world at the moment, but when you're happy, you're, you're content, it's, it's vibrant. There's energy, there's energy, there's excitement. You have sounds. You might hear people's music. You may wanna snap a finger, tap your foot, do a little thing. When you're eating, you know, some people hum when they eat. It is vibrant.

This is social imagination: the ability to sit in one's apartment and visualize these actions. They must've been observed or are just then being imagined. Memory came into play.

Abri was asked by the researcher whether she found out anything about mobility and the mind's eye based on the first interview. "Oh, no. I have thought about it. I was like ... I don't know. We gonna skip that one ... we don't- I don't have no clue. I don't, I don't wanna stress my brain out about that."

Abri had stated in the first interview, that she wanted to become "a better me." She explained in the second. "Like, I wanna say becoming a better me is like I was, I, I see myself traveling maybe to different continents." Abri said, "I see myself." That see meant imagined, visualized, and that would always be active even in its stillness. "I think, I think, I dreamed about going to London, and Paris and Jamaica. I dreamed about this." The desire and imagination were so intense that they penetrated the dream state within and without the sleep state. Invariably, there was transcendence. "So, in order to get to those places, I have to one, have the confidence which blindness and going to the center for the visually impaired gave me ... plus the confidence to, to become a better me."

Abri was not as fluent as Liz, Kate, Tanj or Deb, but she embodied a simple practical wisdom which dance and its rigor could've produced for her. "Healing is, to me, finally accepting your, I guess, disability or you know, just accepting what has happened. And you're moving on with a positive attitude. You're not letting your disability or whatever, hold you back or hinder you." Abri was asked if she needed to be cured to be healed.

No. You don't need to be cured. Curing is like to me now, like killing cancer. That's being like healed or something, but I just think you're, you're mentally cured or over. I don't wanna say you're- you made it over the hill of being depressed and not caring for yourself and you have moved on and you're a better person. And you're able to do more instead of just sitting around moping and crying all the time. Don't get me wrong, every

now and again, you get the little feeling, you know, every now and again, but for the majority, you're happy, you're whole and you are at peace.

This daughter of an African American mother and Nigerian father held the memory of what her parents, brother and sister looked like before when they were young. "But I wish I knew what I look like now, and plus, I-I wanna know what they look like now." Any researcher who shared in the phenomenon of blindness would have been moved by this narrative.

Expert Participant Deb

Deb was asked if she was a nature-lover -- a natural matter touching relations with her environment and ecosystem.

Yes, I am. I like to hear the birds sing and the sun beat down on my face and imagine beautiful colors of the flowers: the purple, the blue, the yellows and the roses and everything, and the violets and lilies and things of that nature, yes.

Deb's yes at the end of her sentences was so fruitful. She was asked about any emotions that accompanied that like.

It's a pleasant emotion. It's a pleasant smile too, and since the sense of smell, the smell of the beautiful flowers, I can still do that, even though I cannot see them, I can smell them, I can touch them. I still have the feeling, the s-sensation in my hands and everything.

The senses remember and are influenced by an active imagination and imagination itself. Deb was intensely reflective and meditative. She had matured to the point where she appreciated the resources inherent in a reflection on the blindness experiences.

I can appreciate sight now. I can appreciate things that I may not have appreciated before. I take that back. I mean, not have appreciated it, but I took for granted like going to the ocean, looking at the water or the white sand. And even some of the flowers, I didn't

think they were pretty. I would now, in retrospect? I look back. They were pretty, but to me at that time, they were not, you know. And looking at some people kind of turned me off and now, hey, maybe they didn't turn me off. [chuckles] Sometimes not what the actual I see, it's what's in the heart.

There must be an experience called sacred imagination within which an active imagination plumbs the very depth of consciousness, that is, wholeness and the unity of opposites. Images there, are here and at all places and times ever-present.

I imagine that He's walking with me and talking with me. And some time, I strongly sense his presence in the room with me. At first, I didn't know. There was a fear because I didn't know what I was sensing, feeling. But now I do, and I understand. So yeah, my imagination, and I find myself talking with it, daily.

Who or what did Deb talk "with?" Was it her imagination or the "He" that walked with her and whose presence she felt in that room? It was not visible, though she felt touched. "I definitely walk by faith, not by sight." And then Deb gave life to imagination when she said, "faith, it's active."

Expert Participant Eris

Eris' take on color, emotion and the imagination was reflective of active imagination as the activity in and of the collective unconscious. Except maybe for Deb, Eris was the only participant to overtly attach color to imagination, emotion and active imagination. He remembered too.

When I think of my imagination, when I'm playing the piano, I imagine different sounds as colors. For example, to me, like the F sharp on the keyboard, like I, I can see that as the color red because it just stands out. It's like, 'Hey, here I am, see me.' It, it catches

your attention. Whereas when I play certain chords, if I play, if I'm, I'm playing a song in the major scales, the major chords, there's those it makes, gives more of a happy feeling. It's more upbeat, more positive, but if I'm playing a song that's a little bit more with the lyrics that has a little bit more of a serious or even a sad tone to it, I'm playing on the minor. So, I, I put the emotions. So, I see the, or feel the emotions with the sound, but also the colors. My blues, automatically, I think the color blue when I'm playing my blues. My favorite color is green, so when I think of green, I think it's something that's like kind of smooth like, 'Hey, check this out.' You know. If I want you to dance, if there's, I'm in the dance move, that's kind of my red and my blues kind of going back and forth, so I'm seeing the colors because you think of the excitement of the red ... but then yellow. When I place, when I think of the yellow and/or the orange but yellow is like, 'Hey, be a little cautious, take your time, chill for a moment, listen to what I'm about to say.' Orange means, go ahead and be different, go ahead and party, go ahead and just be, be adventurous. So that's my imagination just when I'm playing the piano.

Green is the color of the heart chakra in Ayurveda. Eris' "I" scaffolds are active across his psyche. "I think," "I'm playing," "I imagine," "I can see," "I am," "I play," "I play," "I'm playing," "I'm playing," "I'm playing," "I put," "I see," "I think," "I'm playing," "I think," "I think," "I want," "I'm seeing," "I place," "I think," "I'm about to," and "I'm playing." "Seeing" in Eris' scaffolds is not with the physical eyes. Eris is not only a musician, he's also a mediator who has mediated some 400 cases. His take on social justice is crucial to the reflection.

Social injustice, when I see it and hear about it on the news, yes, it saddens my heart, that it does. But it gives me even more confidence, I think from our previous conversation, that the kingdom that we pray for, that is going to be the only means to rid us of social

injustice, to bring forth peace and harmony on earth. And as far as from a blind person's viewpoint, I think this has given me, this past year and a half, two years, has really given me the mindset to be proactive in helping other people who are losing their sight, who have lost their sight, but not just those people, but people who deal or are living with those people.

Before Eris spoke from "a blind person's viewpoint," from which viewpoint was he speaking? Eris had come to a wonderful place of wellbeing.

I think I mentioned in our last conversation in our family, we have over 20 people, we have 20 people or so that are blind in our family. And my grandfather and my dad come to uncles, they've always maintained a positive attitude. They always were active and always were doing and try to remain active in life. And their ... they were like, things may slow you down, but it doesn't have to stop you Between that and my faith, knowing that the Bible says ... with things that are impossible with man, they are possible with God.

The correlation between faith and healing has been well-researched and established in the literature.

Expert Participant Kate

Kate was huge on family, though family to her was more than just the nuclear configuration.

To me, family isn't just blood relation, or, you know, adoption and marriage, it's, you know, that, that solid support that you get. Like, you join a group or a team that, like, really appreciates, and accepts you for who you are. You don't have to be a certain way or anything else. You can just be yourself and them accepting and supporting you and

helping you if it's needed, you know, even if it's just for an ear Because a lot of times, when you do have a vision loss, or a trauma or something, you tend to feel like no one's been here, no one understands you because they weren't there, or they're experiencing it differently, even if they were there, but they've never, like, been in your situation, truthfully, and really understand it, and, kind of, understand what emotions and feelings and fears that come up, especially if, like, with my circumstances -- I'm the first one in the family to go blind.

The words and phrases in, "solid support," "really appreciates," "emotions, feelings and fears," can be located indirectly in the narratives of each participant in this study.

Their fears might have been different. Kate's greatest fear as she lost sight, was not being able to read again. "I mentioned before that I was an avid book reader and the hard, one of the hardest things to let go was being able to just pick up a book randomly and start reading."

One of the hindrances to her leap forward into acceptance was what she was taught growing up and it surfaced with her fears. "From my own experience, you were taught to be independent, and do, be able to do everything on your own, [inhales] and to turn around and say, 'I need help,' was a really hard thing." And then there were those who thought of blindness as a disease. "I mean, it irritates me when people want to pray for my eyes. You know, it's like, Why? Why my eyes? Just because I'm blind, doesn't mean I can't do anything I want to do." Any sort of healing needed a willingness to allow, Kate suggested,

On any journey, you're going to have bumps and bruises and I think life is just part of that. And, you know, the fears, the worries, the upset of the vision loss, you know, there are healings. I mean, as long as you're willing to let that healing occur or to happen, to

accept what is, it's gonna help out and help you heal and be who you are or what you want to be, what you want to do.

The philosophy and practice of acceptance and letting go is important here: it could be conceived as an immersion practice into an active imagination experience that liberates.

Expert Participant Liz

“I think historically, blind people have always been viewed as a group of people that need that take, that want, that are in need of help and assistance. And we aren't really viewed as people who can give back.” This is a resource.

Liz spoke further about “one of the principles of the methodology” being used by her training institution. That is the practice of giving back.

So one of the ways that I know that my student is ready to go out into the world is when they are ready to be a contributing member of society, because I no longer look at myself as someone who needs or wants or has to have help, but I'm viewing myself as someone who is whole, who has so many things to offer. And I'm finding my place as a useful member of society, someone who can contribute despite my blindness. And so the term, the blind leading the blind, to me, it just makes me laugh.

This is revolutionary and a paradigmatic shift from the biblical saying that the blind cannot lead the blind. The reference might have been to the blind, meaning the ignorant. The researcher raised a question about whether a person had to see something before to be able to imagine it. This was at the heart of Research Question 1 and Liz' first interview.

So, I guess what I'm trying to say by that is when somebody gives me information, like I think I used this example last time. Like, let's say they're telling me, 'Okay, this shirt is green'. So for me, because I know a lot of people know this, whether they can see green

or not, there are lots of different shades of green, right? So, when they say it's green, I'm going to say, 'Okay, is it like a hunter green, or is it more of like a neon green or like a lime green?' Because I, I need to know what kind of green it is. I can't just say it's green, right? But I know that I can make those references in my head because I've seen them at some point in my life. Like I know what lime green is and neon and hunter green.

Liz searched her imagination actively, almost playfully for an example of something she experienced without a prior image. The example Liz provided for the emergence of images she had never seen before had to do with her visualizing of a new house that she and her sister wanted to buy and the novel challenges entailed in determining how her bed should be, whether that was the best room size etcetera. What was significantly meaningful was the fact that Liz went in search of an example from familiar objects within her broader society and mesosystem, but did not find one that she had never directly experienced in her active imaginations or imagination. From the stillness in her own completion, Liz reflected on her healing.

It's, it has been the ways that I truly know that at the end of the day, I am okay with the person that I am. Oh my God, I'm going to cry. Okay. Because I wasn't, for a really long time, I hated being blind. I hated myself for being blind. I hated being born first because I thought maybe that's why I went blind. You know, I hated everything that had to do with blindness. And, looking back at it now, instead of looking at the person that I've, I've become, I have, when I go to sleep at night, I don't mourn my vision anymore

Blindness is not this big, scary thing. It's something that I know well that I've navigated for a really long time. And that I feel like I, I don't say that I know everything about it, but I have a pretty good idea of how this process goes when blindness is a part of our lives, what it takes for us to be independent, what it takes for us to grow and what it takes

for us to learn. So, yeah, the healing and the person that I am today, and the person that can have this conversation with you is because I made peace with my blindness a long time ago. And, the only way that I was able to do that was by diminishing my blindness to an inconvenience Once I was able to accept my blindness for what it is and take control of the situation and just decide that blindness wasn't gonna hold me back, now I can have this conversation with you and tell you like being blind is not that bad. [laughs]. It's not, and some people might say, 'Liz is crazy'. Well, yeah. You know, I am a little crazy. I think it takes a little bit of thinking outside of the box and being different and non-conventional to be able to, to make it in this world regardless of whether you're sighted or blind.

There was a moment that drew out Liz' deeper emotions towards another and that was to do with being a blind woman and giving birth to a child.

One of my coworkers shared that for her, she was fine with her blindness until she had her son and she realized that she would never be able to see his face or baby pictures. And that made her really sad. And I could see that happening to me. I could, I could picture myself, you know, maybe that would be something that would make me feel sad.

That would be a profound imagination experience from a community leader who was not easily ruffled. I imagine she would only rise to the occasion.

I like to joke around that the first O&M lesson was when Jesus spat into the mud to make the healing to put on the blind man, and then He told the blind man to go wash it off. I always kid and say, that was the first O&M lesson because Jesus was telling a blind man where to go and how to come back. And that, that saying, it makes me laugh because I think it's very ironic that looking back in the past, when we think about a blind per-- or

what a blind person was in the past, it was farfetched to think that a blind person could keep another blind person safe or could teach them skills.

Expert Participant Nil

Nil held a specific strength reflecting on learning skills among blind youth. The researcher's question regarding his take on caretakers drew out his experience and capacity for reflection, particularly when he was forced to shatter his old paradigm about blindness.

So, one of the biggest things was crashing through that, you know, to make me realize that my dreams and ambitions didn't necessarily need to change. I just need to acquire a new skill set and the tools to do it. But in order to do that, my whole attitude around blindness had to change. And I think that's one of the questions that you asked about.

That shift had to be executed by all on the way to acceptance. There was a quality of validity across the board pertaining to value in training for all people who were becoming blind.

I think the key for me -- well, first the barrier for me was, I did not expand beyond that group. So, with that, I did not expand into a group with any other alternative, any other lived experience in your expertise. So, that existing support was still reinforcing all of those negative stereotypes and misconceptions that already existed making them even more real. But it wasn't until I found The National Federation of the Blind, you know, a network of blind people who've been there, done that, got the t-shirt. They recognize that barriers exist, but they also were aware of the tech strategies and the technologies that are necessary to break through those barriers.

Long before Nil went blind, he recognized value in giving to others as an act of radical justice. It represented a sense of balance.

It's, it's that balance right between the egotistic you and the altruistic you, right? Because you know, the whole progression is we all are selfish and really focus on our own individual needs But I mean, to be honest, even as you ascend to being more altruistic, it's still a reinforcement of that egotistic value system, right? Because I would be dishonest if I said that I don't get some personal joy out of being selfless. So, when I dedicate my time that I could be spending doing something, you know, more 'fun' to spending mentoring these young blind kids, man, the joy I get when I see them having epiphany, right? The joy I experience when they accomplish something that they had been trying to do over and over and over again. Yeah, that makes me feel good. That's selfish.

The ego is a source of abundant wisdom too, according to George Vaillant in his work titled *The Wisdom of the Ego*. As for healing, Nil had accepted that as ongoing.

But part of that also had to be internal, right? I had to start believing it and believing in myself. So, it's one thing for them to continue to tell me I could do and be, but until I really internalized it and started believing in myself, it was no good. And then I think that it's progressive. Well, ongoing, I'll say. Not progressive because even when I get to a point where I feel like I am healed, something happens that rips off a scab, you know, or band-aid or whatever that sometimes, maybe I didn't even know was still there.

What does the collective unconscious or subconscious not keep? Even the body, like the psyche has an archive of historic proportions open to the pull of imagination and active imagination expressions and immersions. This production of joy in learning came from a blind man.

Expert Participant Tanj

Tanj's vibrant exchanges touched matters pertaining to positive and negative feedback emanating from her work; sense of purpose; the illness and death of her guide dog; the usefulness of braille; touch and the visual cortex; imagination and the interpretation of the characters she plays as a voice actor; REM sleep and lucid dreaming of which she's a big fan; regression therapy; color in the dream state; and of course, technology.

"When you're blind, you have to rely on others a lot more than maybe you personally want to, or you got to kind of be very, very humble and learn that quickly." Personal growth and autonomy had been in motion in Tanj's lived experiences, and she had engaged core relatedness issues. But how did she feel acting another?

I think it just makes me feel like I have a purpose that you know, I'm doing a good thing. I'm entertaining others and it's, it's a collaborative effort. So, I really do feel like I'm part of a team and that I'm accepted. I think all that anybody really wants is to feel accepted and to feel a sense of purpose in their life. And if you have that, you feel a lot better, mental health-wise.

That was one of the characteristics identified by Deci and Ryan (2008) as indicative of psychological wellbeing.

And what was the question that had her answering, "I could go on and on?" She was asked to talk a bit more about how technology amazed her as a blind person. These were the words, phrases, concepts and tools which she identified as useful to the blind: Uber and Lyft and paratransit systems which the community relies on more than ever; the app Seeing AI, which was created by Microsoft that allowed you to scan a room telling you if there are people there; you can take a picture of someone and it will tell you what facial expression they have generally;

there's handwriting where if someone writes you a card, you can scan it with the app and it will read it to you; it can recognize currencies so you don't have to get that government-issued beeping device anymore; it has text recognition that reads text automatically, or you can scan documents; you can import pictures; we have screen reading software that all of us use to access the computers, and braille displays, where you can read braille -- that's how she does all her bills; there are scanners with optical recognition software that allow you to scan documents and read them where maybe you were just handed a print document; you can save all of your tax information that way, organize yourself really well on a hard drive; there's audio-described media that can be arguably considered a technology; and there's the guide dog who helps navigate, uh, "and I have my cane; phone that talks, streaming software." These were drawn from Tanj's fascinating recall.

So, between all of that and having the Uber and feeling like I have a sense of purpose and voice acting in the mix, you know I do feel like the balance is there for wellbeing, both with feeling supported, having a purpose, and feeling like my work is respected in some way and appreciated. I think that's all any of us really want in the end.

As for healing, Tanj conceived of it as being on multiple levels. She was sufficiently wise to begin with her childhood and those formative years when caretakers' influences could be rather effective.

It's resolving, you know, a lot of things that probably happened from childhood onward that you know, that your brain has learned to react negatively to I guess, even if it's not necessarily something that should be reacted negatively to, but you're just slowly changing the automatic responses that your brain has learned over time.

This is at the heart of Bruce Lipton's epigenetics. According to Tanj, there will always be the need for striking a balance in human life.

And when we find that sense of balance, if we've reflected on ourselves and if we're a work in progress continually -- which we should be because we change as time goes on and we need to understand ourselves to harmonize with others -- I think once we find that balance and that journey of healing, I guess, we can, we can be cognizant of what is improving with our state of mind as time goes on and where, where we regress.

Knowledge is power in the end.

If Carl Jung was to apply a symbol to this narrative, it could surely be indicative of an active imagination on fire. The narrative breathed healing and a profound sense of self-satisfaction.

Expert Participant Tsaf

Tsaf presented important nuggets of knowledge throughout her second interview. She was saying "Vision does not require physical eyesight. It-it is all in your mind of how you see what you envision."

As an ADA sensitivity training instructor, Tsaf hailed the Act. "I'm grateful, especially now 31 years of the ADA, and how it has allowed, not just individuals who are blind, but all disabilities the opportunity to work." Tsaf was forthright when she expressed a preference.

I use a white cane and that's my preference. I don't have anything against service animals or guide dogs. I'm just someone who doesn't want to deal with the maintenance of a guide dog and I think that it's just more convenient for me to have a cane.

Over Tsaf's fascination with the Americans with Disabilities Act (1990), and its transportation imperatives, was her immersion in issues pertaining to the subjects of mobility and imagination. It was the question raised by the researcher after reading her first transcript.

I close my eyes at times and think of places I want to go and places I would like to travel to and I picture what that may be like, in my head. Like places like I've been to Niagara Falls and like the Grand Canyon, and I can't see it, but I have a general idea because of my imagination of what it looks like.

At the time of this second interview, Tsaf was writing her book *I was Once Blind, Now I see*.

I see more now than I was when I was a sighted person. I know that may appear for some people, like, how is that so but some of the things that I've been able to do without sight, I don't know if I would have been able to do it if I was a sighted person.

Then she added, "So that is the twist: being blind and seeing myself as someone who can still see. I, I still see without having eyesight, but I still see. I was blind when I was sighted."

Gilligan and Eddy may call this a sweet contradiction. This is active imagination and imagination at work in her reflection and invariably, her memory. This is personal growth, awareness, environmental mastery and a trajectory of purpose steeped in a faith.

In her take on healing and cure, Tsaf established a critique of the existing medical model and its emphasis on experiment, treatment and control.

I think that when I was able to accept, that's when the healing came about for me to get the training I needed and to get myself together to build my confidence. That was all a part of my healing of me losing my eyesight. So, acceptance helped me to heal, and to cope with not having eyesight and to accept being blind, and I healed in it, and I, and I

was able to move on. Now, as far as a cure, if something becomes available where I feel that it's a guarantee, then I'm fine with some type of surgery or something, but if it's just an experiment, I'm not interested.

"I think," "I was able," "I healed," "I was able," "I'm fine," and "I am not interested," represent a formidable march to wellbeing. Tsaf was not interested in the "experiment." This critique of positivist science's methodology in experiment and control (if one were to think of the evolution of epistemology), came from a blind woman.

List of Declarative Statements Presenting Findings

1. Declarative Statement on Findings Pertaining to Active Imaginations and Memory

Given that memory is indispensable to daily activity and mobility, and their emergent memories are accompanied by imagination, adult learners with visual impairments in this study report that their active imaginations play the invaluable role of generating both memory and imagination, giving color, emotion and meaning and thus, sense of wellbeing to their lived experiences.

2. Declarative Statement on Findings Pertaining to Active Imaginations, Visualizing and Picturing

Active imagination is image-making and this quality inherent in the psyche, grants adult learners with visual impairments the opportunity to participate in the production of visual images and pictures as part of their lived experience. This ability to use their memories, visualize and picture gives them a feeling of autonomy, profound independence, and invariably of self-worth.

3. Declarative Statement on Findings Pertaining to Active Imaginations and the Use of Other Senses

Before losing sight, visually impaired adult learners consciously focused on sight as the principal sense and medium to the world. Given sight loss, they must now consciously and unconsciously use all other senses to their advantage, including balance, time, and common senses, engagements made possible and accessible through their active imaginations working in combination with memory, visualizing and picturing competency skills, and their intuition.

4. Declarative Statement on Findings Pertaining to Imagination Experiences Adult Learners with Visual Impairments Reported They Encounter

The findings state clearly that imagination experiences were not restricted to any physical phenomenon, but comprised the psychological, cognitive, emotional, spiritual and profound moments of transcendence. Acceptance entailed transcendence with implications for psychological wellbeing and its dimensions. The relatedness factor in wellbeing was particularly prominent in these experiences wherein blind persons could not imagine how important their caretakers could have been to their salvaging. Moreover, the findings indicate that wellbeing and acceptance touched the whole life of a person, though in this case, the biophilic was not used sufficiently broadly to expand thoughts of relatedness to include animals, plants, the ecosystem and the vast cosmos.

5. Declarative Statement on Findings Pertaining to the Factors and Conditions that Promote and Hinder the Use of the Imagination and Active Imaginations of Adult Learners with Visual Impairments

Adult learners in looking back on their experiences with losing sight, can now say that getting on the road to acceptance began with they themselves taking that first step. And in truth, most could not initially, and had to be prompted by a family member, caretaker or friend. They all realized the transformation that training had brought to their lives whether

that exposure meant learning braille, learning to use the cane, speaking out their fears and being willing to share acquired skills with those who were just becoming blind. The stigma still persisted in the workplace, but they were encouraged to remain permanent self-advocates, reaching into their faiths and strengths when the annoying days of blindness came along. The fact that the process of change began with them and close caretakers, then within them and their training, says much about embodiment, emergence and self-actualization.

6. Declarative Statements on Findings Emanating from Adult Learners Reflections, Epistemologies and Ontologies

Having received the opportunity to speak about their lived experiences with visual impairments, adult learners produced bodies of knowledge that may well be considered revolutionary: statements such as, when I was sighted, I was blind, emerging from Tsaf's consciousness. The blind who reflected on the phenomenon of blindness in this study, could accumulate among themselves sufficient bodies of thought to constitute building a curriculum focused on blindness studies, or even the sociology of disability.

CHAPTER FIVE: Discussion

“The person that I am today, is largely attributed to the fact that I am blind.”

- Liz, Interviewee/Research Participant, July 8, 2021

“The brain is not blind.”

- Mich Carbon, Personal communication, June 24, 2021

Only a blind person could have shared these blindness experiences so expertly and authentically with me, another blind person. Chapter Four, which in essence, is the last, before this discussion, is now the first to be summarized -- the triangle has been turned upside down. This chapter provides summaries of chapters 4, 3, 2 and 1 in this order. The summaries are followed by reflections on implications of the study and emerging recommendations. The findings and declarations will be referred to the literature basically to find meaning in the broader scholarship and in fact, to identify areas for future research. Invariably, the doctoral experiences will come into focus given the iterative nature of the text and here, I will make a few salient observations on the processes of research, closer to the eight who were presented in this study than my own reflections on the conceptual field that is now in ferment at the back of my eyes. It is however out of that space that a call to action will be made, reminding me of Zukav (2021) writing, “What is behind our eyes is now more important than what is in front of them. This is a game changer” (p. 111).

Summary

Chapter Four: Findings

Three research questions were answered in Chapter Four. In the explanation for Guiding Research Question 1, what value do adult learners with visual impairment say they place on using their active imaginations, a call was made to the all-pervading consciousness, which like

imagination permeated all human faculties. The eight participating in this study, located their active imaginations embedded and active in their memorizing, visualizing and picturing and significantly in the use of their senses other than sight.

An imagination that was active extended too into their experiences with hurt, sadness, anger, depression, trauma and ultimate upliftment, acceptance, flourishing, and wellbeing. Those were the imagination experiences they reported, along with a few flashing dots, in response to Guiding Research Question 2.

Though they reported overcoming, these said active imaginations and imagination could either be hindered or promoted throughout everyday lived experiences. Importantly, blind participants did not underestimate value in the cooperation of employers, nor transformative power in training; if anything, they thought that change from blindness as a loss to blindness as a resource had to begin with them. Indeed, active imagination was realized too in immersion into one's self where a more profound and permanent resource is in motion without ceasing. This infinite geography might have been savage, wild and unapproachable to Sigmund Freud's consciousness, but not to Carl Jung's transcendent function, neither was it inaccessible in the works of psychosynthesis as propounded by Roberto Assagioli.

Throughout this study it was clear therefore, that all participants had reconstituted what living without the benefits of using physical eyes meant, developing novel, if not radical approaches to wellbeing and knowing their world and environment that would otherwise not have been known in the way they did, had they not lost sight. The language of loss itself is likely to be interrogated, depending on who conceives of loss. Though every participant felt the intense meaning in diagnosis, in Interview 2, they demonstrated power in imagination to actively overcome physical and psychological adversity. Future research may wish to correlate this

capacity for overcoming trauma and depression in the blind with their caretakers' support, faith and spiritual wellbeing.

Chapter Three: Methodology

Eight persons experiencing blindness as this is being written, became or were made, leaders in the production of knowledge for this academic activity, representing a symbolic departure from the issue of marginalization and the historic non-validating feature in and of experience. The idiographic or individual lived experiences constituted the heart of Chapter Three and Four.

Two interviews were administered to 8 participants, one of which produced 537 categories, reduced to 26 node themes and 291 codes. These codes were used in answering Guiding Research Question 1, 2 and 3. Along with these idiographic codes, NVivo was used to check for word text frequency and generally, by way of a Word Tree, to identify significant appearances of the words that matter such as imagination, memory, visualizing, picturing, touch, hearing, smell, and taste.

The eight participants were established as expert producers of bodies of knowledge and ideas that informed a code framework and themes used in the structuring of node themes. Themes emerging in Chapter Three were essential for the development and evolution of answers to guiding research questions in Chapter Four.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

The title of this study, "Active Imagination, Wellbeing and Ways of Seeing: A Phenomenological Inquiry into Experiences of Adult Learners with Visual Impairments," provided the concepts guiding the literature review. The concepts, active imagination, wellbeing, ways of seeing, phenomenological inquiry, experiences, adult learners and visual impairments

were each reviewed. The literature pertinent to each of these concepts was pointed to and applied to the research questions.

Before opening up the concepts in the title of the study, the concept imagination was operationalized so to speak. Imagination was considered throughout this project as the generative, active root principle which could be activated, or could be active within the human being without human engagement.

Imagination was active in and permeated the house of fantasy, and fantasy dwelt in psyche. Psyche could be expressed in feelings, emotions, color, sound, creative imagination, dreams and more. Active imagination was found therefore to be creative activity that was deliberate and could be any human activity also given the ever-present nature of imagination. In the Jungian sense, active imagination represented an actual and active immersion into the self in the form of a meditation. It could be playful and if one was to consider meditation by way of Nader's description, blissful. Active imagination holds tremendous benefits for visually impaired and blind people. Jung has shown that its source of energy, the imagination, and psyche and collective unconscious is in everyone, even in our very human biology.

Every one of the eight members in this study recognized value in and of active imagination in the workings of their memory, in visualizing and picturing and in the use of their other senses and intuition. When they experienced depression or had an epiphany, imagination was evident. When they overcame and accepted blindness, the immersion character of active imagination was realized. When they found working environments that allowed them to thrive; when their work was appreciated, their imagination and active imaginations bloomed.

Chapter One: Introduction

It would have been unusual for me to forget my Father and Mother in a sociocultural dimension requiring that I declare the forces and influences that shaped my way of thinking. This is a bit like the factors and conditions that influenced my socialization except that my Mother transmitted glaucoma and rich doses of perennial wisdom and my Father, bundles of fire, philosophy and intellectual imagination.

What impresses me as an adult who has read human development and learning in developmental psychology, development science, adult learning and mental wellbeing, cultural psychology and refreshing bouts of methodology at an American university, is the extent to which my parents' ways of knowing and what they shared with me, fit so freely into my present interests. It must have been a European proclivity: the wounded son emerging as a result of the absent Father, having the tendency to abuse or to aggression. This was not our story. My Father's contribution of an introduction of the meanings of faith, mind, and reasoning, social relations and contracts inside and outside the French language brought me to see glaucoma now with blinded eyes. My Mother had already informed me that I should forget about the gene thing. The trouble and issue were not the cure. It is the understanding of a phenomenon in a disorder that landed behind the visible eyes. It is a matter of tremendous interest in light of India's contribution to understanding the body's chakras, providing alternative ways of knowing and seeing. Faith is now and probably always was an active principle not unfamiliar to imagination.

European philosopher Juergen Habermas, himself a critical thinker in the field of communication was identified by Mezirow (2000) as having made exceptional contributions to development of adult learning theory particularly with regard to methods of communication and the significance of meaning-making and truth. Habermas' range of philosophical thought is

legendary. Kögler (2020) remarks that Habermas returned to faith “in order to limit science and make freedom possible” (p. 44). Why did faith as subject catch the attention of Kant, Hegel, William James, Pearce, and of course Habermas? Rainer Winter's 2020 article on the contemporary relevance of Habermas needed to mention Jean-Paul Sartre, Michel Foucault, the Kantian tradition, the post-metaphysical thinking, Marx, Adorno and Marcuse -- these being a few of the relevant players in philosophy who influenced him or were influenced by him. Why would Habermas, following his 90th birthday, publish “a systematic and meticulous study of the relationship between faith and knowledge spanning over 1700 pages?” (Winter, 2020, p. 6). Why was Habermas so obsessed with what he termed communicative reason? The questions are raised because they indicate that the philosophical issues presented by a Father to an adolescent Son regarding faith were at the heart of European philosophy of which he was a part; considering his French philosophy training and its break from religion.

The requirement that I speak out what I thought the definition of mind could be was wholesome exercise for an adolescent; the setting flows into my consciousness even now as I remember, visualize and imagine. The intricacies entailed in social relations and thus relatedness were shown to me in the village and I would later learn the interconnection between that entity called the village and the globe from our general conversations and the reading of Michel-Rolph Trouillot whom my Father worked within anthropology. It was normal and customary for me as practice to think outside a box or within a rhizomatic configuration where every point of entrance was legitimate.

It was therefore not unusual when floaters in front of the eyes were queried and other forms of explanation sought for their presence. The idea of epigenetics as propounded by Bruce Lipton and the overwhelming importance he gave to the membrane of the cell did not seem

difficult for me to understand, neither could I stop at his idea that information stored in the subconscious within the first seven years of life would be affecting the adult's behavior. Erik Erikson had suggested that. So, as I searched into glaucoma, the disorder which brought me to blindness, there was another matter over beyond my gene and body and biology. I did not think of Nick Fox and the body without or with organs yet. I had not yet read Rosemary Garland-Thomson on reclaiming the body as site of struggle, neither did I understand the politics of the pharmaceutical industry or the division of labor that medical practice had negotiated over the human body parts.

Ken Carey's idea of a conceptual field having arrived or erupted behind the eyes, did not only catch my imagination; it seemed most timely given contemporary post-industrial society, the state of the world's economy, climate change, the rise of indigenous and aboriginal thinking and the proliferation of meditation and mindfulness practices, health and nutrition choices, access to information through the far-flung Internet and the inevitable interconnectivities that were being formed between human beings and their ecosystems, the interbeings emerging as Thich Nhat Hanh, the Vietnamese Buddhist would call them.

Thus it is that the statement of the problem that blindness held an imagination and active imagination resource largely unrecognized by a medical profession, did not throw out the practice of ophthalmology; if anything, it seemed an opportune time to invite those who practiced mainstream medicine to a world of metaphors, participation, image-making, visualization and picturing and senses that saw as well as, if not beyond eyes. It seemed an opportune occasion to invite consideration of a relationship between faith, the spiritual, wellbeing and the eyes. It was necessary to hear how those who experienced blindness told the story of their hazardous journey through sight loss; and when they had overcome, to find out

what the sighted could learn if anything from the experiences. Then, there was the matter of how they told it, and whether it was told to a sighted or sightless person. Finally, there was the open invitation to travel within, itself perceived as a scary place.

When Welwood (1977) suggested that the Western world needed to look closely into the findings of the East regarding the relation between a personal consciousness and a collective one he had struck a matter permanently fluctuating in Western philosophy: the idea of dualism. Welwood was saying throw down the walls. It was a solution that Jung had identified. Over beyond Freud's separation, Jung had, through active imagination learned to descend into the unconscious. He knew intuitively that the personal and the collective unconscious did not have to be separated and in one unbounded fashion-design, they were really not. Jung would set in motion the notion of the transcendent function, and yes, the word transcendent was in there. A third energy form was possible. The psyche with its fantasy, imagination and dangerous forces was accessible to all. It was the human gift over beyond Europe's hesitation. Then of course, Nader came along and said it did not have to be violent, though he knew that depression and trauma were aggressive on human emotions. Still, there were moments of transcendence and glimpses of bliss and states of rest that were neurologically healthy. The brain with its 86 billion neurons, that organ from which the eye emerged could be healed and possibly cured again. And given the nature of imagination to be on its own cosmic fuel, that brain with its ancient senses may well be on the way to self-healing of its constituent interconnectivities.

Discussion

Implications of Findings

The findings as indicated at the end of Chapter Four, are physical, psychological, emotional, relational, interpersonal, and organizational impacting macro, exo and mesosystems

in which adult learners experience sight loss and overcoming challenges. It is a global phenomenon too: blindness, the inability to see is everywhere in the eyes, even active behind the eyes. What this study implies is that there will come a time when active imagination and imagination will be returned consciously and fully to learning and education, whether institutional, adult and public. When imagination returns and rises as a matter of interest in global education, it is important/critical that those who are blind and have grown to image, imagine or visualize as part of their survival skills and competences; it is critical that they organize themselves to share in that developmental abundance. The imperatives as presented below suggest that possible structures already exist. It is just a matter of realigning networks and interconnectivities and shifting from a purely linear, experimental and control mindset to engage and embrace the rising inevitabilities inherent in imagination and the active imaginations of the world's blind.

And the number of people implicated is impressive. The numbers attached to the names of these country regions for instance, represent people who are either directly or indirectly affected by some quality of visual impairment or blindness. Consider European Blind Union - European Disability Forum (30 million), India Vision Institute (100 million), Orbis International in China (8.2 million), Fighting Blindness Canada (500,000), Caribbean Council for the Blind (approximately 1 million), The African Union of the Blind (over 20 million), Blind Citizens Australia (3,000 members and 7 affiliate organizations), and The Latin American Union of the Blind (3.2 million). World Blindness Union claims to represent the world's 253 million blind. It feels simplistic writing this: but these are 253 million blind and 2.2 billion affected by some form of visual impairment. A Caribbean child came along asking what was happening behind these eyes other than disease, retinal ganglion degeneration, atrophy of the optic nerve and more? Why

is there a third or mind's eye that produces melatonin known to human biology and medical practice? It is known to the Eastern medical traditions stretching thousands of years and was integral to the lives of Egyptian peoples as they constructed their pyramids. Billions across the world are reaching within to find themselves and the effect is coherence, a unity consciousness. Blind people are well-placed to join in this quantum leap.

Recommendations

Recommendations made here and the calls to action are consistent with my experience as one who worked in the field of communication media before sight loss, and more recently, as a recent graduate of Lesley University's School of Education with a special interest in human development and learning. These broad calls and those more specific to education institutions are reflective too of my earlier days as a teacher. Finally, I carry the experiences associated with glaucoma in my body, speedily becoming a body without organs in all its complexities and beauty. Consequently, my entire being and the eight women and men with whom I worked in this study, have implicitly made us leaders in grand and meaningful ways: global, vulnerable, knowledgeable and wiser.

Table 15

Recommendations

Imperatives	Explanation
Global Imperative	Given the findings and discovery that the human active imagination and imagination enhance wellbeing in the blind; given the meaningful effect of image-making on the state of wellbeing of the blind; and given the knowledge available regarding the eye, its structure, the mind's eye and its significance among global cultures, it is being urgently recommended that World Sight Day celebrated annually on October 14 be used to celebrate the active imaginations of the world's 2.2 billion blind and visually impaired people. This should be organized in collaboration with well-known meditation organizations in the US and around the world; the National Federation of the Blind, American Foundation for the Blind,

Imperatives	Explanation
	<p>Christian Record Services, Hadley School for the Blind, American Council of the Blind, the National Eye Institute, state rehabilitation agencies, city, town, county and community organizations involved in supporting the blind; all institutions organized around and about the retina, macular, glaucoma and the optic nerve, diabetic retinopathy and more. World Blind Union and The UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities and their agencies would serve as coordinators across platforms.</p> <p>This researcher will initiate communication with the National Federation of the Blind, Hadley, American Foundation for the Blind, Christian Record Services and United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities personnel on this matter. Of importance will be communication with Lions Club International and International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness who were leaders in the launching of World Sight Day in October 2000.</p>
Regional Imperative	<p>The Caribbean Council for the Blind has stated that since 1967 they have facilitated: Eye health services to more than one million persons across the Caribbean, helped more than a 1,000 children with blindness or visual impairment gain access to formal education and provided close to 10,000 adults who are blind, with training in adjustment to blindness techniques https://www.eyecarecaribbean.com/site/ecc/about-ccb-eye-care-caribbean/</p> <p>These are commendable, and the recipients of close to one million people could benefit further from a one day's exercise that locates the eye within the body again in conscious and meditative ways, in the fashion of an active imagination immersion. There is also the West Indies Cricket Council for the Blind. Visualization is prominent sports practice. The matter should be coordinated within parameters of the global imperative strategy as stated above. Also, the Caribbean is usually linked with Latin America and this has greater implications for effect. The idea is to let people know and spread in diverse ways, that they are more than just doctors' clients, pharmaceuticals, surgical interventions, and access to training with canes and braille.</p>
National Imperative	<p>Education of blind persons in the United States is key. And we speak here about (i) a media blitz spearheaded by the US Department of Justice in collaboration with institutions similar to the National Federation of the Blind and American Foundation for the Blind and all their US chapters within cities, towns and</p>

Imperatives	Explanation
	<p>rural areas advising persons about the need for eye care as a first movement; (ii) tailor a message that states ‘you are more than your eyes’; and (iii) expansion of the ‘you are more than your eyes’ campaign within city and town chapters of eye-care movements through select schools, town hall meetings, church movements, sporting agencies, women’s and men’s clubs.</p>
Education and Awareness Imperatives	<p>In collaboration with disability rehabilitation institutions existent in each state, blind people who are always told by a caretaker, family member or friend of the existence of such institutions, should be made aware of their rights under law, their rights to accommodation and employment. When plans are being detailed in policy handbooks, counselors should be informed by way of workshops, webinars, zoom-links, phone-links and conferences about these further education needs of their members/clients.</p> <p>The key is setting in motion ideas of value in learning, awareness, interconnectivity and relatedness. These must include letting blind people know ways of (a) navigating the system; (b) recognizing where to find organizations; (c) practicing self-advocacy; (d) joining organized groups; and (e) finding support systems. The National Federation of the Blind, the American Foundation for the Blind, American Council of the Blind have agencies and offices in every state of the US. Within each state are cities, towns, counties, communities and even adult living communities. The ‘you are more than your eyes’ campaign should begin with these and move down, move horizontally and move from below as consciousness deepens.</p>
Systems in Education Imperative	<p>Formally introduce visualization as daily practice among the young; develop methodologies and exercises that target imagination and an active imagination, i.e., one that is deliberately set in motion; engage museums and make them more important to systems of education because of their history of touch and their skills at arranging visits for those who are blind. Visualization as a regular exercise should be introduced within the morning curriculum; not working with objects, plastics, cloth, card, wood and paper per se, but working “in my head” as Tsaf would call it. It is an exercise suited for both sighted and blind students. Sighted students should grow to truly appreciate all their senses through innovative touch, taste, smell and hearing exercises.</p>
The Poor Blind Imperative	<p>This person may be living a life of misery, unable to kill her or himself because of that integrity at the base of their</p>

Imperatives	Explanation
	consciousness. A call has to go out regarding the poor blind. Nil had already warned that blind people have “low expectations and attitudes ... within themselves, and the societal attitudes and misconceptions.” A lot of education had to go into “dealing with the social misconceptions, the stereotypes especially with blindness.” Nil called for “a lot of public awareness and education.”
The Braille Imperative	The continued teaching of braille to the young blind is absolutely necessary. Tanj noted that “braille gives me independence.”
Imagination Imperative	The call for imagination to be restored to education has been increasing -- education institutions of the arts and humanities kind are beginning their training sessions with mindfulness meditations. Steven Asma, when writing about Imaginology, that is, imagination studies, engages concepts and terms such as creations, processes, creativity, most exciting way of learning, and healing a terminal divide. Additionally, the blind should be introduced to the concept of neuroplasticity, that is, the brain’s ability to heal itself. In basic ways, help them understand value in light, sound, vibration, electricity, and motion (Doidge, 2016).
Vision Statements Imperatives	When organizations develop vision statements, would they invite the blind? Tsaf says, “Well, vision does not require physical eyesight.”
Medical Schools Imperative	Given that the retina is considered a fully-integrated part of the central nervous system, and that medical schools have been reluctant to teach optic nerve regeneration, a call goes out to these institutions to consider epigenetics as much as the effect that image-making and imagination/visualization exercises could have on the operation of the central nervous system and human physiology by extension. Additionally, India's chakra system is considered one of the most developed representations of central nervous system operations in the field of medicine. Eastern practices have been united in the works of the West's better thinkers in Freud, Jung, Goethe and Schopenhauer. The past is also the present in consciousness.

Connecting Findings and Literature Reviewed

The factors and conditions that hinder or promote the use of imagination or active imaginations are widespread across the global space. So-called developing and Third World

countries tend to be at the greatest disadvantage economically and medically, and though they as collectivist societies may find support in their historic relatedness traditions, their profound sense of autonomy may be thwarted. Moreover, most countries follow medical practices developed in the so-called developed world suppressing their own indigenous practices and knowledge.

Suffice it to say that ideas regarding the adoption of active imaginations practices are more likely to emerge from the richer economies of the world where innovations tend to blossom more freely, receive financial support, access to publication, and requisite technology for dissemination and evaluation. It is therefore to the developed North that we must turn to begin this activity. This is not to suggest that the remainder of global humanity does not harness an imaginary, nor the capacity for producing images. In fact, given the nature of imagination, the blind population of people living in parts of the world other than North America and Europe may well be closer to an appreciation of how imagination and visualization work from that dynamism in the collective unconscious. We may also hypothesize that all peoples over the world keep memories, visualize and use their other senses, even more so than those whose culture is dominated by the visual. Still, it is within this visual culture that studies emerge exploring factors and issues touching memory, visualizing, touch, depression, trauma, faith, acceptance and access to employment when blind, given the nature of legislation protecting the rights of the disabled. This study attempted to capture their rights to tell and to give meaning to their experiences. Though the literature reviewed touching their narrative is meaningful, there were times when participants spoke about a matter that did not find reference in the literature. But an indirect relation could be found mainly because of the interconnectivity running through this work and its far-flung implications. In what follows below, a declarative statement pertaining to findings will first be identified and the principle connecting literature follow in 1.1, 2.1, 3.1 etcetera.

Active Imaginations and Memory

1. Given that memory is indispensable to daily activity and mobility, and their emergent memories are accompanied by imagination, adult learners with visual impairments in this study report that their active imaginations play the invaluable role of generating both memory and imagination, giving color, emotion and meaning and thus, a sense of wellbeing to their lived experiences.

- 1.1. Adult learners globally who lose sight as adults remember what their world looked like before, and every memory is an act of active imagination and in fact, emerges with imagination. In “The Future of Memory: Remembering, Imagining, and the Brain,” Schacter et al. (2012) wrote about “comparable levels of activity” being observed “during both remembering and imagining in regions including medial temporal and frontal lobes, posterior cingulate and retrosplenial cortex, and lateral parietal and temporal areas” (p. 679). This is a global phenomenon among all peoples. According to Schacter et al. (2012), these studies suggested that “a common ‘core’ network that includes the above-mentioned regions ... underlies both remembering and imagining” (2012, p. 679). The precuneus is a medial parietal cortical region. Science Direct reports that this region is “implicated in the sense of self and agency, autobiographical memory, spatial function, and navigation” (2015, para. 2). Sense of self is constructed too with memory and autobiographical memory stirring imagination, its emotions and feelings, color and even sound. These experiences are so necessary for the wellbeing of the blind. Gaesser (2013) in a piece titled “Constructing Memory, Imagination, and Empathy: A Cognitive Neuroscience Perspective,” remarked after much deliberation, “Broadly consistent with the theories on imagination and memory (Ingvar, 1979; Tulving, 1985; Schacter & Addis,

2007), memory appears to support – or at least to enrich – imagination” (p. 4). Asma (2022) believed this wholeheartedly, so did Sousa (2016) and Peitrini et al. (2009).

Whether memory and imagination arise simultaneously remains a matter of research interest.

Active Imaginations, Visualizing and Picturing

2. Active imagination is image-making and this quality inherent in the psyche, grants adult learners with visual impairments the opportunity to participate in the production of visual images and pictures as part of their lived experience. This ability to use their memories, visualize and picture gives them a feeling of autonomy, profound independence, and invariably of self-worth, this latter so essential to the wellbeing and ways of seeing and knowing of the blind.

2.1. Jung had described active imagination as “the most important auxiliary for the production of those contents of the unconscious which lie, as it were, immediately below the threshold of consciousness” (Miller, 2004, p. 14). This content is now peacefully accessible (Miller, 2004; Nader, 2021; Welwood, 1977). Jung (1969) had stated that the products of imagination were “in essence” visual (p. 518). The fact that they are accessible should make them identifiable, but visuals from the regions of the unconscious were seldom reported. Importantly, what emerged from participants in this study were visuals they remembered, or the ability to picture or visualize a function or matter of interest stored in memory and elicited through imagination. To what extent is that content actively (that is, permanently) connected to the content of the unconscious? Suffice it to say: there is a startling formula emerging among visuals, memory and imagination and each seems to produce the other.

Visualizing and picturing are powerful tools for strengthening sense of self-esteem and concept, so needed among blind people. In this study, Charlotte Reznick, a child educational psychologist, found visualization exercises helpful to parents who needed to teach their sporting children how to overcome limited confidence; how to perceive the outcome of a race for example; and how to imbibe perceived attributes of a loved animal to feel its strength and power of overcoming. These are all formulations supported by the once inaccessible collective unconscious and its fantasy, once described by Miller (2004) as the psyche's clearest expression. It was an expression full of feeling, thinking, intuition and sensation (Miller, 2004, p. 43), so ever-present, but invisible in its visibility. Intervention is possible only that persons do not practice immersion into the body within. Miller (2004) has suggested that meditation, artwork, music, yoga, poetry, reading, dance, theater, play, creative writing, and tai chi (p. 140), are not only significant points of entrance into the world of imagination and active imagination; they culture visuals and facilitate visualizing and picturing.

I add to these the original definition of psychology and the mind/body bridge constituted by way of an active imagination. Edwards et al. (2006) remind us that in its original meaning psychology was/is "concerned with the breath, energy, consciousness, soul or spirit of life that leaves a person at death and continues in some other form" (p. 135). It is, they contended, a form of psychology "still practiced internationally (with) its roots in African communal spirituality and spiritual community" (p. 135). One almost hears a touch of Heidegger's preoccupation with death, but here not as an end, but a continuity, an ever-becoming. Apparently, what one wants to become can be visualized.

The memory and visuals of the outer world can be combined with the energy that visuals produce emanating from the house of imagination with its panoply of colors which Jung (1970) described as feeling-values too. Feelings themselves are far older than our species and even our cerebral cortices, note Damasio and Carvalho (2013). If we were to trust Nader's observation pertaining to unity consciousness, Miller's presentation of Jung's transcendent function, Vaillant imbuing the ego with wisdom, and Welwood's call for a unity of conscious and unconscious, we are privy to that resourceful conceptual field in 21st century thought that Carey contends, has landed behind or emerged from the eyes. The implications for visualizing and picturing are far-reaching in this second decade of the 21st century. What when the global blind discover that when their physical eyes were shut because of blindness, their mind's eyes were opened, the brain's pineal gland activated? Song writer Johnny Nash once sang that there are more questions than answers.

Active Imaginations and the Use of Other Senses

3. Before losing sight, adult learners with visual impairments consciously focused on sight as the principal sense and medium to the world. Given sight loss, they must now consciously and unconsciously use all other senses to their advantage, including balance, time, and common senses, engagements made possible and accessible through their active imaginations working in combination with memory, visualizing and picturing competency skills, and their intuition.

- 3.1. Linda Smith who was keen on emergence and embodiment theory, regarded balance as one of the modalities that bound human beings to the physical world. That modality of balance functioned along with vision, audition, touch, and smell (2005, p. 290). Balance

carried a social component too: in select African societies, social competence, practical and technical skills, were/are taken as markers of intelligence (Kagitcibasi, 2012, p. 7), balancing the anatomical and physiological with intelligent action. Then of course, balance could be acquired through exercise, even resulting in enhanced hearing techniques.

Significant literature was not gathered on the sense of hearing since this was treated as a project requiring a separate study. However, participants referenced the sense of hearing as working in tandem with their mobility, uses of their canes and guide dogs, and in regard to more mundane cases such as identifying where a coin fell and landed. Silence, verbal and non-verbal communication represent significant points of entrance to the hearing discourse. Much was not reviewed concerning sense of smell and taste, though participants engaged these in times of cooking as was the cases with Abri and Kate, or in the cases of Nil and Tsaf in times of mobility. In both instances, imagination and active imaginations facilitated interpretation being that phenomenon between the activity and the actor.

Liz's call for balance is authentic given the natural function of the brain's cerebellum providing as it does for balance, the coordination of groups of muscles to produce precise movements and in the process addressing aspects of motor learning, language and cognition (Knierim, 2019). This observation by an orientation and mobility teacher is critical knowing that the blind person tends to lose focus in a visual world of fog or darkness, and this can throw one off balance when walking.

Touch figured prominently in participants discourses. That relational sense, praised by Schopenhauer (2012) preoccupied Classen (2020) in her *Book of Touch*, and

together with Pink (2010) and Howes (2021), Classen (2020) and Hammer (2013) called for a sensory anthropology, so amazing were discoveries in the use of the senses other than sight. Moreover (and this so crucial to methodology debates globally), their sensory anthropology influenced by encounters with the blind in Hammer's and Classen's cases, represented interrogation of a dominant rationalist and objectivist science even in anthropology. It was not the methodology suited to the blind who touched to see.

The fact that the touching of braille dots registered in the visual cortex, says more about the visual cortex than about braille. Once Nil learned braille, that relieved him of what he described as a "burden and the trauma about not being able to read print" (Int 1). Did the dopamine-affected visual cortical regions trigger the pituitary and/or pineal glands? Pietrini et al. (2009) argue that because of their "associations," meaning their interconnectivities, their communication capacity, these regions process touch information excellently. Touch is relational and crosses regions/borders. They touch doorknobs, clothing, household items, supermarket goods, others bodies, hands, paper, wood, cloth, glass, water hot and cold. Classen (2020) contended that touch "supplemented" sight (p. 276). Not only do we touch, we are touched by the wind and cosmos, far-flung and infinite in its caressing of our faces and hair. Blind people found resources in senses other than sight and given imagination's tendency to follow effort at immersion, we engaged.

Imagination Experiences Encountered

4. The findings state clearly that imagination experiences were not restricted to any physical phenomenon, but comprised the psychological, cognitive, emotional, spiritual and profound moments of transcendence. Acceptance entailed transcendence with implications for

psychological wellbeing and its dimensions. The relatedness factor in wellbeing was particularly prominent in these experiences wherein blind persons could not imagine how important their caretakers could have been to their salvaging. Moreover, the findings indicate that wellbeing and acceptance touched the whole life of a person, though in this case, the biophilic was not used sufficiently broadly to expand thoughts of relatedness to include animals, plants, the ecosystem and the vast cosmos.

4.1. A dominant medical culture influences the very interpretation that clients or patients make of their conditions. Foucault (1976) spoke of power knowledge and the body; Fox (2011) imagined a body with organs under the weight of such a model; and Williams (1999) saw the body as the foundational basis from which meaning, imagination and reason sprang. Additionally and in the context of justice, the body for Williams (1999) was the site of resistance and struggle (p. 798). Participants gave medical explanations for their physical experiences. Their feelings of depression and trauma were for their caretakers and families to salvage.

Depression and trauma were recorded as imagination experiences in this study because they were experiences of sadness, anger, vexation, incompetence, low self-esteem, and low self-worth. The experiences debilitated those suffering sight loss to the extent where suicide was conceived. Tedeschi and Calhoun (2004) identified challenges to fundamental beliefs and assumptions, using words such as “trauma, crisis, highly stressful events, and other similar terms interchangeably” (p. 1). They described situations reflective of those experiences of the blind, writing of “significant challenges to the adaptive resources of the individual;” and “significant challenges to individuals’ ways of understanding the world and their place in it” (p. 1). Triplett et al. (2012) in

discussing post-trauma and the growth which can accompany it, conceived of that growth as emanating from a “cognitive effort,” one that redefined beliefs and defined the “assumptive world” (p. 1). Participants’ faiths were challenged, deepening their spirituality. The eight participating in this study all had faiths and faith foundations and whether this contributes to more holistic healing is no longer in doubt in the literature (Summerskill & Horton, 2015). References were made to “growth on domains such as personal strength, relationships with others, appreciation of life, spirituality, and new possibilities” (Tedeschi & Calhoun, 1996, as cited in Triplett et al., 2012).

The humanist theories of Rogers cannot be dismissed especially the states of self-actualization suggested by Abraham Maslow which can be easily applied to participants who came to that stage of acceptance. This is the unity of opposites, a silent, peaceful, luminous and alert space and place in one’s thinking (Nader, 2021). The relatedness literature of Richard Ryan and Edward Deci percolated like a refreshing stream throughout this study.

Factors and Conditions Promoting or Hindering Use of Imagination and Active Imaginations

5. Adult learners in looking back on their experiences with losing sight, can now say that getting on the road to acceptance began with they themselves taking that first step. And in truth, most could not initially, and had to be prompted by a family member, caretaker or friend. They all realized the transformation that training had brought to their lives whether that exposure meant learning braille, learning to use the cane, speaking out their fears and being willing to share acquired skills with those who were just becoming blind. The stigma still persisted in the workplace, but they were encouraged to remain permanent self-

advocates, reaching into their faiths and strengths when the annoying days of blindness came along. The fact that the process of change began with them and close caretakers, then within them and their training, says much about embodiment, emergence and self-actualization.

5.1. The literature pertaining to autonomy, relatedness and competence figures so appropriately here. From the works of Deci and Ryan (2008), Ryan and Deci (2000) to Vansteenkiste et al. (2020), one finds meaning and an active imagination in the individual blind adult learner; substance in the care and love given by those who related and cared; and skills expressed by those emerging from depression and trauma to realize beginnings of a self-actualized being. The processes entailed brain-based awareness, epistemic skill, faith, strength, fearlessness, a team who cared, and a willingness to learn new ways of doing and accessing the world.

Declarative Statements on Findings Emanating from Adult Learners Reflections, Epistemologies and Ontologies

6. Having received the opportunity to speak about their lived experiences with visual impairments, adult learners produced bodies of knowledge that may well be considered revolutionary: statements such as, when I was sighted, I was blind, emerging from Tsaf's consciousness. The blind who reflected on the phenomenon of blindness in this study, could accumulate among themselves sufficient bodies of thought to constitute building a curriculum focused on blindness studies, or even the sociology of disability.

6.1. That would not be anathema to the works of Malcolm Knowles in andragogy which hails experience of the adult learner; nor the humanist work of Rogers who would believe that the blind participants in this study had feelings to share as much as cognitive reflections, their imagination, active imaginations, and subjectivities. A human being was a being of

value, having 206 bones, between 600 and 800 muscles, and 100,000 miles of blood vessels. That person had a mind, thoughts, consciousness and unconsciousness with its fantasy, imagination, symbols, archetypes and more that were as old as the Earth.

Innovative, scientific societies need to look again at the experiences of their majorities.

Most truths will not be measured. I listen to depth in utterances of these participants and wonder whether those experiences of blindness are not designed to inform evolving societies. Says Abri,

Healing is, to me, is finally accepting your, I guess, disability or you know, just accepting what has happened. And you're moving on with a positive attitude.

You're not letting your disability or whatever, hold you back or hinder you. (Int 2)

She entered a state of calm where the transcendent function unfolds.

Deb was asked what was it about seeing that she missed. "Driving and not asking for an assistance" (Int 2). Independence.

Eris was asked what he thought faith to be.

Faith is defined as a strength in knowing that the things that are to come will happen, having reassurance, knowing that the things that we hope for, even though we're, they're not seen, we know they are evident, they will be happening.

(Int 2)

When one successfully practices this, it is a powerful way of life.

And then there was Kate's take on tolerance.

Being different in being yourself, when you've experienced blindness or having a disability, you're more willing to accept someone who is different. I do think that

those that are sighted to a certain degree tend to be a little more narrow-minded.

(Int 2)

Liz enjoyed being in her community. Here's her take on the pandemic.

The pandemic has, it really put me in a weird place because, part of what I really value as a person is my independence. And I really value being able to get out of my house and go to the store if I want to or go to the mall or go visit a friend.

Those have always been aspects of my life that have always been important to me because I couldn't do them for a really long time especially when I started to go blind, like feeling so isolated and dependent. And it's like I can't, couldn't do things. And now that I can, I love it. It's a very big, important part of my life.

And when the pandemic started, having to go from being someone who was at work every day and out with my students all the time and walking to different businesses and different locations to doing it from home, that was really hard.

And I had a very hard time trying to, uh, get the same joy out of life the same way that I did, without being able to go out. And that was really hard. [chuckles] So, now that things are opening back up, I feel like I'm very hopeful for just being able to be out and a part of this community a little bit more. (Int 2)

Nil's Mom was widowed. She could not bear to see her son idle and just took it to herself to motivate him, just as all the caretakers in this study did with their children, nieces, nephews, daughters, sons who were going blind.

I did spend some time just laying out on the sofa. I was thinking about just giving up, you know, whatever. And I remember she just came by one day and she stopped. She looked down at me. She says, 'Well, you need to get up and do

something.' And she walked away and, she's right. And that's the way she's always raised us, you know. It's not a choice to just sit. It's not a choice to just be sad or, uh, you know. You-you need to get up and do something. And, you know, even if you don't have a destination in mind, at least that momentum and that movement can get you to a place where you can have some life experiences that may help you shape a destination. And my response to that, well, what-what was I doing before? Let's at least start doing that. (Int 2)

The sense of autonomy was profound.

It was always amazing listening to Tanj's philosophy. It must have been the fact that she came from a Serbian culture which found fire in this American space where so much opportunity greeted her changing eyesight. It was a struggle then, but she holds important messages.

I think it's the experience of being human that brings us to where we are in life, and when we find that sense of balance, if we've reflected on ourselves and if we're a work in progress continually -- which we should be because we change as time goes on and we need to understand ourselves to har, harmonize with others I think. Once we find that balance and that journey of healing, I guess, we can- we can be cognizant of what is-is improving with our state of mind as time goes on and where, where we regress. Knowledge is power in the end. (Int 2)

Tsaf had contributed significantly to the discourse on visualizing and picturing. The ADA sensitivity trainer was asked whether there were pictures that could emerge in the mind.

Yes. Especially, you know, when you're listening to someone, sometimes I have pictures of what I think people may look like but I know it's not true because it's just only what I've seen in my own mind but that's my way of seeing. And so when I identify with someone, based off what they sound like, I come up with the picture and in my mind, when I hear their voice, that's the image that comes up in my head.

SH: What does the image look like?

Tsaf: It looks like the person who I- in my mind, it looks like- it looks like that person. And that's how I identify with that person as this is what they look like.

And they may not look like that but in my mind, that's what they look like. (Int 2)

Their simple descriptives of the experiences of blindness reveal an underlying resource, an assurance that a thought, word, phrase, sentence, paragraph, color, sound, and image will flow out of it. Was it produced by their memory as they know it, or was their memory fed by an imagination they took for granted? What remains amazing is that they dwell in a consciousness space living off the beauty and benefits of acceptance. The experiment will find us communicating in the wisdom traditions, not standing in line waiting for surgical interventions.

Future Research and Call to Action

Future Research

Considering the substantial narratives on the lived experiences of adult learners with visual impairments; their understandings of their active imaginations and imaginations; the reported effect and affect of imagination and active imaginations on their wellbeing as they traversed the courses of blindness; and finally, how they came to see and know their world, it is

evident that matters for further research could be drawn from every word, phrase, paragraph and sentence. Below, I share a few of those which emanate from this work and could be of research interest to others and to me, in the near to medium future.

- Learning through hearing. How does the blind person remember?
- How blind people speak. Do they stutter or repeat parts of words or whole words? Do they repeat nouns, pronouns, verbs or adjectives more frequently in a sentence? Is there a neurological explanation for this activity in the brain of someone who is blind?
- Do imagination and memory arise simultaneously when anyone (sighted or sightless) speaks?
- Father/Son relationships. The psychological and spiritual impact of a Father's intervention into the life of an adolescent Son when the two parents are not married.
- To what extent does American culture encourage immersion into the Self? How taboo is a journey within in America?
- The comparative effect of visualization as daily practice on a class of adolescents who are both blind and sighted.
- Communication, the cane, guide dog and street crossings. Do animals really communicate? What are the many distinctive sounds of the cane competing with other environmental codes? How are they interpreted?
- Experiences and objectivity. To what extent is experiential telling relevant to modern scholarship and methodology?
- Applying grounded theory to the current study or another, allowing blind participants to construct theory and contribute to theorizing blindness and acceptance for instance.

- Future research may wish to correlate the capacity for overcoming trauma and depression in the blind with their caretaker's support, faith and spiritual wellbeing among different communities or cultures.

A Call

Whatever the time within which any research is done regarding this dissertation, its written thoughts (which is what I call them now), will continue to resonate until those who speak them or reflect on them have taken them and gone within to become familiar with them. This researcher is blind and was asked to hold his thinking on the matter of active imagination, wellbeing and ways of seeing. The research project was not about me, I was reminded. I am therefore delighted and well-pleased with the performance of the crew of eight who paradoxically, represented me. Did they disappoint? Well, they might have mingled their logical thinking and control culture practices with letting go and allowing. They could have permitted uncertainty or the unknown to enter their ways of seeing and knowing. The mind's eye is not theirs to control, well not at all times. But did they reflect wonderfully on the blindness experience? Suffice it to say: America needs to hear the stories of the articulate blind. The objects are no longer flying in, they are here among us, but we are blind to the unknown. The eight reached into the best of their Selves to tell the stories of their Selves shifting. I gather this is the mythopoetic that the imaginary invests from its house of abundance.

Fortunately, throughout, the unconscious was at their service and continued to feed into their conscious deliberations even while they as children of this enfolding universe memorized and visualized their best and most prescient. Their imagination and its fantasy loved them even while they did not know.

Given the collapse of duality in modern scholarship and in the universe in general, given the fact that Jung who figured primarily here and Nader who corroborated and formulated all into one; given the rising tide of interconnectivities, oneness and wellbeing practices and an apparent return of the past; it seems only natural that the value of love in learning should be taught.

The manner in which bodies of knowledge interrelate should stir us all to seek connections, relations, and similarities within differences. The fundamental underlying structure may well be silence after all. This return to stillness as the space from which learning should begin will soon be made global, if not universal.

Finally, Lesley's PhD in Educational Studies with a specialization in Human Development and Learning, would do well with a bit of Economics, possibly, Economics of Education. Throw in a touch of Political Theory or Linguistics.

My own experience at Lesley was wonderful. I leave this experience loving learning. At 67, I am not considered a young man though the Earth and universe may smile at my naivete. I surely hope that anyone who comes to Lesley's PhD Educational Studies with a disability will receive the care, attention and critical appraisal that I received. I am encouraged to keep on learning. Within the next year, I shall be writing in my own way, a full-length book on my experiences as a blind person doing a PhD at an American institution such as Lesley. The university should be in no doubt about my love and appreciation.

One of the presidents of a leading institution established to represent the blind told me that this work's deliberations should be the kind of conversations that we in the blind community should all be having. I am hoping that when introduced to these few, he and others will admit the ideas and begin the process of moving them across platforms into a global field of consciousness.

Move speedily to find a way to let the blind men, women and children of the world know what is within them as strength and resource.

As for us, we continue to be disappointed by the medical profession with its panoply of pharmaceuticals and invitations to surgery and experimentation. Fortunately, we reach fearlessly into ourselves, still dependent and subject to abuse, but getting stronger as the seconds go by. We have come to know that the universe is a participatory place and no one determines the shape of objects arising from the unconscious and unbounded ocean. We have been invited to this place to be keepers of its beauty. We have come to know that competition is not practiced here; that there are turbulent days; that there is darkness and fog; that there is beauty and complexity; that not much stays long enough to be controlled and measured; that the universe lives in us as well as we in it; and inclusion matters only this time if we are not included in our societies we find company within the ever-present laws moving active imagination and the universe.

Limitations of Study

- Participants stated that following sight loss they became increasingly aware of the other four known senses of hearing, smell, taste and touch. This study did not attempt to measure those increases, though participants spoke about their observations of changes in their hearing techniques; for instance, in following the sound of a coin when it fell to determine where it landed. Though codes were presented representing the value found in the discovered uses of their other senses, the study did not identify transformations in the auditory cortex for example, or how touch figured in the visual cortex. This is another curious search pointing to brain integration and the extent to which one neurological organ supported another. That in-depth treatment, particularly one into hearing, is worth

its own study. In fact, this entire research project is being conducted by a researcher who learns by hearing: it is a project requiring its own space and time.

- The role of the guide dog was not explored in any meaningful way. This too requires a separate study with specific regard to communication between human and animal. Much attention was not focused on uses of the cane and what it says to all who use it.
- More time needs to be set aside for discussing the value of braille, not just as a reading and writing program, but to understand how touch leads to seeing and knowing. Where the touch of fingers register in the brain and visual cortex is of importance too. Then of course, human beings are known to touch, but not really considered as being touched in relation to their environments -- one may say touched by hearing, smell and taste. Those were not explored.
- This study did not detail eye disorders, and simply identified disorders of the retina. Retinal degeneration and disorders of the central nervous system is a matter not dealt with in this study, but one worth following.
- Methodologically, the study did not move significantly outside language and meaning in the context of psychology and philosophy, though adopting the relational research practices of Gilligan and Eddy. A mixed method by way of grounded theory, allowing these expert participants to construct theory, could be engaged in future or other research trials.
- Except for the text search and Word Tree features of the software NVivo, no significant quantitative measure was used in this study, though there are several points of interest open to measurements, correlations and longitudinal studies.

- No clear explanation was provided for participants' speech patterns, that is, in their repetitions of definite articles, verbs, pronouns and conjunctions in select sentences. It is a matter of linguistic and neurological interest.
- No significant emphasis was placed on race, religion, color, class, gender and orientation in this study. Blindness was the phenomenon of interest.

Conclusion

This study emerged from a sociocultural milieu, highlighting the distinct impact a Father's philosophy could have, in a timely manner, on the thinking and way of life of his adolescent Son. While in the dominant European psychoanalytic literature on the subject such a relationship was deemed to have serious negative implications for the Son's behavior (Marcuse, 1987), for us as Caribbeans, the phenomenal Father/Son re-encounter proved positive and fruitful. Consequently, matters of faith, religion, mind, will, intuition, spirit, reasoning, human and social relations, physical, sensory and psychological disorders and wellbeing, the body and its ecology, its micro and macro structures were ways of knowing to me. Duality figured, but mindfulness, consciousness, unity, boundlessness, the infinite, word, sound and power mattered. My Mother surely would have preferred these choices.

It was inevitable: the text enveloped me. I embodied it and it embodied me and emerged sometimes deliberately, oftentimes iteratively. The struggle to remain out of the text as the researcher, did not require effort on my part. There is no part of this text that does not carry my imprint on it, even when I took to describing or evaluating another's sayings. The discourse could be dipped in hermeneutics as practice of interpretation with its historic rules, that would still not separate the research from the researcher when the phenomenon being researched is

shared. If anything, the researcher's keen ability to comment on participants codes should be encouraged for its competence and profound sense of relatedness.

The study found a resource (feminine maybe) in the imagination and active imaginations of the blind. They themselves codified it. In fact, the research project identified resources in the blind experience that were to be explored. What emerged were wellbeing strategies, ways of knowing and understanding if not interpreting the world in spite of blindness.

Three research questions were designed to guide the research project. They sought the value that adult learners found in the uses of their active imaginations; imagination experiences encountered; and the factors and conditions likely to promote or hinder the uses of those active imaginations and imagination. Importantly, the title of the study provided concepts for the literature review. That strategy using active imagination, wellbeing, ways of seeing, phenomenological inquiry, experiences, adults and visual impairments, supported methodological techniques. The two interviews used herein were therefore guided by both the guiding research questions and the literature review formulated from the title of the study.

The interviews produced more than 500 categories that were placed into code frameworks by the blind researcher, relegating and clustering like and unlike groups, culminating into 26 node themes, holding 291 codes. These codes reflected participants' views as they sought to answer the guiding research questions formed from the study's title and those other questions designed to draw out unclear answers.

There were two interviews in this study. The first was open-ended and structured and responded to the very interstices within the guiding research questions. The second needed to have the participants reflect on contents of the first and answer to an issue which they felt they needed to explore a bit more; answer to a question posed by the researcher based on his reading

of the first interview; answer to a question concerning their relation with the environment in which they live; and finally, they were asked to draw a distinction between healing and cure. Not all were answered, but at least three were referred to along with other matters that the participant found relevant. Interview 2 was designed to draw out their mastery, that self-actualized being who had overcome the depression, trauma and self-hatred that blindness had contributed to.

Participants found in collaboration with the researcher that their active imaginations permeated their everyday lived experiences. Moreover, active imagination spurred and gave life, color, emotion and energy to their memory, visualizing and picturing activities and in the use of their other senses. They identified those factors and conditions that were likely to promote or hinder the uses of their amazing imagination and active imaginations. There was a discourse pertaining to intuition implicit in those narratives, so too were a few philosophical issues extending mind, life and the friendliness of the universe.

Evidently, imagination and its active form have permeated human lived experiences from the very existence of that experience in the psyche to its speaking, its telling, interpretation and recording. Adult learners' active imaginations are at work in their lives both when they deliberately turn to activate it, and when they immerse themselves in it in the mode of a meditation. There is too, active imagination which is the form of immersion or meditation practiced by Carl Jung; and there is imagination as resource accessible to all now through the works of Jung and in this study by way of the meditations of Tony Nader. Nader (2021) contended like John Welwood that the vast unbounded ocean of consciousness is now open. Welwood (1977) stated that in the East, the separation between conscious and unconscious does not exist. If anything, they communicate. George Vaillant had already stated that the ego (supposedly between the two), is wise and not as problematic as was thought initially. The unity

consciousness that Nader propounded is the way for blind consciousness which must now familiarize itself with the inside or within, open to all. In fact, the mind's eye in the blind may well be open permanently, given that the two physical ones are blinded. These are exciting times for searching and encouraging searching into the mind's eye and experiences transcending the visual sense and the senses in general. Kaplan et al. (2014) found that transcendence occurred during image-making exercises. Not only did the accompanying level of relaxation realized or experienced bring on stable heart rate conditions, persons who practiced became aware of that inner silence. At the base of that silence is a breath identifiable in everyone. Edwards et al. (2006) had made the astonishing revelation that originally, psychology was concerned with consciousness, soul and spirit. Imagination and active imagination know these places well.

It is worth noting that in dealing with the factors and conditions that promote and hinder participants' uses of their imagination and active imaginations, in the context of factors, the eight all knew that the change had to begin with them. This is an autonomy statement, attracting as it rose, its friends in relatedness and competence.

Even when they were not immediately motivated, the affect characteristics of their caretakers and learning groups could not be underestimated. The affected eight were encouraged to move along a path to acceptance, in itself, an expression of wellbeing and self-actualization. In essence and being, they transcended their disorders. The factors and conditions, recommendations and imperatives in this study run therefore from the individual responsibility, to the role of a caring organization and the need for global responsibility in showing those who are blind or visually impaired how to live with and ceaselessly transcend the phenomenon of blindness.

Will global organizations therefore be willing to adopt a ‘you are more than your eyes’ slogan/brand, roping the world’s 2.2 billion visually impaired into practices transcending pharmaceuticals, drawing on their inner energies? Then again, do they have to be convinced that behind the eyes are places of concept formation given the proximity of the pineal gland, Ajna chakra or mind’s eye? What is it that is treasured in that gland and chakra that we as the blind must harness as easily as we place drops topographically on our eyes. We must, says Browder (1989) come to terms with the spiritual and psychological qualities in and of melanin. The mind’s eye or Ajna chakra lives and breathes melanin. According to Herring (2009), imagining, visualizing, and fantasizing are all functions of Ajna chakra.

Clearly, this study spoke to ways of seeing and knowing the world. Even blindness produces a way of seeing and framing the world and lived experiences in it. And framing, says Hammer (2013) could be conceptualized as one of the possible ways of critical thinking. Critical thinking on the part of the blind summons social justice, the rights to one’s body, legal representation and employment. What constitutes beauty and good looks will forever be contested.

Two other matters emerged inviting further consideration. The concept of the Eyecology was mentioned in this study, but not developed in any significant way. The idea holds great promise for those who wish to develop a geography of the eye in historical time, with the eye at the center of an ever-expanding set of concentric circles, far-flung and infinite like consciousness.

So too, the Quintuplet hermeneutic did not go beyond mentioning of the five steps, though the idea ran implicitly throughout this study’s methodology. This has to be developed,

particularly the given state of knowledge of the experience before it is even revealed to the one in whom it manifests its Self.

Appendix A: Courtesy Rules of Blindness

I am a blind person. Please say hello and get to know me! I want people to feel comfortable around me. Here are some simple tips.

- Cane – My cane (or guide dog) is my independent travel aid. If you think I might need help, please just ask me.
- Ordinary – Blind people are ordinary. It feels awkward if you think I am amazing when I accomplish ordinary tasks like walking or tying my shoes. I also like ordinary things and have ordinary hobbies. It is okay to be amazed if I do something really exceptional.
- Understand – I may not recognize your voice if I don't know you well. Please say, "Hi, it is Sue."
- Remember – I may have some sight but use nonvisual techniques and tools like a cane because it works best for me. Sometimes people think I am "faking" because I see a little, but I am just picking techniques that are most efficient and safe in light of my vision.
- Talk – Please talk to me rather than a companion, and there is no need to speak up so just use your normal speaking voice and talk with me like you would with other people.
- Experience – I probably have years of experience using nonvisual techniques to live my life. Feel free to ask me how I do something, or how best you can assist me, if help is needed.
- See – It's ok to still use words such as see and look. I will talk with you like everyone else, although I may not be able to make direct eye contact.

- Yield – In all 50 states, the law requires drivers to yield the right of way when they see my extended white cane or guide dog. Only the blind may legally carry white canes. I listen to traffic patterns to know when to cross streets and to keep a straight line when moving around.

Retrieved from <https://www.nfb.org/programs-services/meet-blind-month/courtesy-rules-blindness>

Appendix B: Consent Form

Dear ...

You are being invited to participate in a research project. It concerns a subject that you may well be familiar with. The project is titled, “Active Imagination, Wellbeing and Ways of Seeing: A Phenomenological Inquiry into Experiences of Adult Learners with Visual Impairments.”

Basically, you will be asked to share your experiences as a visually impaired adult learner; experiences which arise when you actively engage your imagination. As an adult learner you have this opportunity and ability to bring your experience to the study.

Your active imaginations emerge when you do things in your environment; when you walk, dance, paint, run, cook, navigate spaces, use social media, use your voice in creative ways among other activities. It is hoped too that you can share your emotional experiences (how you feel) when you use your imagination to create things or maybe, just know your environment. We would really like to understand the value you find in imagination and active imagination and how well they serve you as an adult with a visual impairment.

This study is being submitted to Lesley University’s Graduate School of Education in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

Your participation will entail:

- Being involved in two interviews concerning your visual experiences as an adult learner with a visual impairment and how your active imaginations and imagination help you better understand and live gainfully in your world.
- The interview will be conducted using Zoom meeting and a Zoom Link will be sent to you one day before the scheduled meeting. When the meeting begins, video will be turned off for both the researcher and participant. However, the audio recording is used to produce a transcript. When the transcript and audio have been prepared for Interview 1, you will be sent the copies to check whether what you said in that first Interview appears correctly in the transcript. You will be expected to respond in one week’s time, so that we could have the second interview the week after your reading and possible suggestions. Having read Interview 1 you will be better prepared for Interview 2. You will also be able to read the issues arising in Interview 1 which you wish to further explore or deepen in Interview 2. You may even make suggestions for inclusion in Interview 2.
- Bringing stories, poems, and letters of interest if any, to the sessions. This however, is purely voluntary and you are only encouraged to do so if you believe that these will help strengthen your story.
- While I do not perceive any risk of stress or harm to your person, the narrating of visual impairment experiences may elicit emotions of some value. Whenever I perceive that an intense emotional response has been elicited I will offer to stop the interview. On the

other hand, this is a wonderful opportunity for you to speak about experiences you might have thought of for a long time but never thought them to be of value.

- Being prepared to sit still in meditation on occasions. (This voluntary activity will entail a two- or three-minute silence before the conversation begins)
- Being prepared to stay on both interviews for 60 minutes each.

Please note that a general outline of the conversation and questions to be asked will be sent to you in an email prior to the interviews. At the end of that first interview, we will decide on your date for participation in the second interview. At the end of that first interview you will be asked to provide answers to questions pertaining to your age, gender, race, level of education, and whether you are single/married/divorced. This information will help the researcher distinguish one person from another given that we (including me) are all adult learners with visual impairments.

In this regard, you should know that I will be assisted by a technology assistant. With the help of accessible and secure transcription software, the audio interview which you did, will be transcribed into text by a transcription service organization. The technology assistant will assist in uploading both audio recordings to the transcription's services with access only to the pseudonym used to identify you.

In addition:

- You are free to choose not to participate in the research and to discontinue your participation in the research at any time without facing negative consequences.
- Identifying details will be kept confidential by the researcher. Data collected will be protected; your identity will not be revealed by the researcher.
- Data will be submitted anonymously to the committee responsible for reading the chapters of this dissertation and subsequently to Lesley University's Graduate School of Education. Only the researcher will have access to the data collected.
- Any and all of your questions will be answered at any time and you are free to consult with anyone (i.e., friend, family) about your decision to participate in the research and/or to discontinue your participation.
- Participation in this research poses no risk to you.
- If any problem in connection to the research arises, you can contact the researcher Steinberg Henry at 770-558-2176 or steinbergdhenry@gmail.com or faculty Dr. Gail Simpson Cahill at gcahill@lesley.edu.
- The researcher will present the outcomes of this study in the dissertation as stated above.

I am 18 years of age or older. My consent to participate has been given of my own free will and that I understand all that is stated above. I will receive a copy of this consent form.

Participant's Signature	enter participant signature here.
Date (participant)	Enter date participant signed here.
Researcher's Signature	Enter Researcher's Signature here.
Date (researcher)	Enter date researcher signed here.

There is a Standing Committee for Human Subjects in Research at Lesley University to which complaints or problems concerning any research project may, and should, be reported if they arise. Contact the Committee Chairpersons at irb@lesley.edu.

Appendix C: Interviews

This study will use two interviews in its data-gathering process. Interview 1 adopts three open-ended questions and five to seven semi-structured probes designed to deepen matters arising in the broad conversation. Interview 1 will be as follows:

Question 1:

How does your use of active imagination enrich your life

Potential deepening probes include:

1. When you realized that you could not see clearly around you, what did you do to move on?
2. How much has your life been enriched by the things you've learned to do
3. When you realize there was more to you than visual impairment or blindness how did you feel
4. What did you do to preserve that knowledge and awareness?
5. Would you describe blindness as a disability or a resource?
6. The poem, song, letter or story you presented, what does it mean to you and your visual condition (for those who present such works)?

Question 2

You are a visually impaired adult learner. You do not see outside but have a relation with images arising behind your eyes. What do these images behind your eyes tell you about the meaning of your life purpose as a visually impaired or blind person

Potential deepening probes include:

1. Describe the images you experience behind or in front of your eyes when you close them.
2. Where do you think they're coming from?
3. Would you describe them as images you remember or are they images you've never seen before?
4. How do you feel on encountering those images?
5. What do they tell you about imagination?
6. Would you describe them as active? Why?

Question 3

How did you make that shift from seeing to not seeing, from a loss to what seems to be a learning and wellbeing resource

Potential deepening probes include:

1. What does visual impairment mean to you and your life's purpose now?
2. Why do you think you became blind?
3. Looking back on it all, how were you impacted emotionally when you lost sight?
4. Do you perceive another blind person as thinking about not seeing or seeing in the same way as you do?
5. What can the sighted learn from you?
6. How would you describe your present state of mind?

At the end of Interview 1 a few demographics will be collected. These demographics include: age, gender, race, levels of education, eye condition, and data pertaining to whether the participant is single/married/divorced. This information helps distinguishing you one from another given that we are all visually impaired.

Interview 2 will be designed after Interview 1 has been conducted. Interview 2 will be open-ended and constructed to deepen or probe issues arising in Interview 1. When the transcript has been prepared for Interview 1 you will be sent a copy which you will check to determine whether what you said was correctly captured. This will give you the opportunity too to find points you wish to explore further and suggestions you may wish to make. The same will be done following conversion into text of Interview 2, though there is not likely to be an Interview Three. Also, you will be sent audio files of both interviews.

There is a Standing Committee for Human Subjects in Research at Lesley University to which complaints or problems concerning any research project may, and should, be reported if they arise. Contact the Committee Chairpersons at irb@lesley.edu.

Appendix D: Letter Requesting Participation

Dear ...

I am a graduate student in the Educational Studies department of Lesley University where I specialize in Human Development and Learning. This year in order to fulfil requirements of a PhD program, I am conducting a study on active imagination and wellbeing among adult learners who are visually impaired. I am myself visually impaired.

I am aware that your institution provides services for the blind or visually impaired and I am asking for your support in identifying one or two persons in your institution who could participate in my study. It could be that you know persons who received services from your institution who might be excellent participants in this study.

The persons to be selected must be adults between the ages of 20 and 75 who lost their sight during those adult years. They will be asked to participate in two one-hour interviews concerning their experiences in the use of their imagination and active imaginations in the interest of their wellbeing.

Active imaginations emerge when we do things in our environment; when we walk, dance, paint, run, cook, navigate spaces, use social media, use our voices in creative ways among other activities. And, even while these activities are being carried out, emotions arise which we hope participants can talk about.

I would be delighted if you would identify one or two persons from your institution, or someone who has experienced the services of your institution; persons whom you believe could serve well in this study. Of course, this will be a purely voluntary activity.

As soon as you have identified those persons and noted their willingness to participate, and sent me their contact numbers or email addresses, I will call and/or write to them and later

send them an email outlining the study; a consent form which they will sign if in agreement with the terms of the study; and the interview questions for the first Interview designed to be used in this study.

If you have any questions regarding this study, please contact steinberghenry@gmail.com. My faculty supervisor is Dr. Gail Simpson Cahill of the Graduate School of Education who can be contacted at gcahill@lesley.edu.

There is a Standing Committee for Human Subjects in Research at Lesley University to which complaints or problems concerning any research project may, and should, be reported if they arise. Contact the Committee Chairpersons at irb@lesley.edu.

Thank you for your kind consideration,

Steinberg Henry MA

PhD Candidate, Lesley University, Cambridge, MA.

Appendix E: Node Themes and Codes Referencing Active Imagination, Imagination Experiences, Imagination and Factors and Conditions

- 22.0 Active Imaginations in use in every dimension of life
 - 22.1 Reinforces parent/daughter relatedness (Abri) (relatedness)
 - 22.2 Engenders desire to learn (Eris) (competence)
 - 22.3 Facilitates transcending negatives (Kate) (self-awareness)
 - 22.4 Enhances reflection on vision loss (Kate) (memory, imagination)
 - 22.5 Puts images together carefully (Liz) (active imagination)
 - 22.6 Works excellently with touch (Liz) (all senses enhanced)
 - 22.7 Provides space for philosophizing about life (Liz) (expansive and related)
 - 22.8 Allows them to look beyond mere seeing and eyes (Liz) (imagination beyond seeing with eyes)
 - 22.9 Useful in the understanding of scalar dimensions (Nil) (intelligence in imagination)
 - 22.10 Highly prized when working in supportive environments (Nil) (supports competence)
 - 22.11 Embraces a playful, effortless environment (Tanj) (every activity in life)
 - 22.12 Produces problem solutions (Tanj) (pushes thinking)
 - 22.13 Supports self-application (Tanj) (builds confidence)
 - 22.14 Supports conversations with the universe (Tanj) (communicates)
 - 22.15 Enhances sense of knowing (Tanj) (self-awareness)
 - 22.16 Makes understanding of computers better (Tanj) (machine learning easier)
 - 22.17 Encourages facing challenges (Tsaf) (fearlessness)
 - 22.18 Indicates possibilities (Tsaf) (innovate on support)
 - 22.19 Works well with determination (Kate) (at the core)

- 22.20 Manages imagination (Liz) (they're integrated)
- 22.21 Grants reasoning power (Liz) (at the heart of learning)
- 22.22 Works at the subliminal level (Nil) (pure consciousness)
- 22.23 Provides prompts and tips for interaction (Nil) (facilitates dialogue)
- 22.24 New sense discoveries are made (Nil) (discovery learning)
- 22.25 Respond to senses (Nil) (inherent to all)
- 22.26 It's a ceaseless engagement (Nil) (throughout everyday life)
- 22.27 It depends on one's history (Nil) (human development, memory)
- 22.28 Knowledge and experience applied to stressful events (Tanj) (generates knowledge)
- 22.29 Facilitates movement in dance and exercise (Abri) (creative intelligence)

23.0 Imagination experiences

- 23.1 Black dots flashing (Interactive - Kate) (auto-appearances)
- 23.2 Shapes appear when she's tired (Kate) (body relaxed)
- 23.3 Encountered the non-judgemental atmosphere (Kate) (self-esteem free to express)
- 23.4 Experiencing open spaces (Liz) (spatial awareness, memory)
- 23.5 These colors disrupt vision (Nil) (experience as disruptive)
- 23.6 Encounters representations of objects (Nil) (not the real? Imaginary)
- 23.7 Description helps consolidate experience (Nil) (integrated awareness)
- 23.8 Healing and Cure (Interactive - Deb)
- 23.9 Feelings when others learn (Interactive - Nil) (promote)

24.0 Imagination

- 24.1 Makes for dreaming up a better life (Abri) (active imagination)
- 24.2 Trying to learn how to do the dish (Abri) (involves competence)

- 24.3 Other ways of seeing (Interactive - Abri) (infinite pure consciousness)
- 24.4 For seeing scenes depicted in a book (memory structured in imagination and vice versa)
- 24.5 Meaningful in relatedness and moving on (Interactive - Deb) (consciousness)
- 24.6 Useful in planning (Deb) (imagination structured)
- 24.7 In remembering colors (Deb) (intrinsic active imagination)
- 24.8 Guide dog and cane spur imagination (Interactive - Deb) (communication)
- 24.9 Song or scripture coming through imagination (Deb) (communication between intelligences)
- 24.10 Imagination, God and psychology (Interactive - Deb) (coherence, integrated)
- 24.11 Immersion in music (Eris) (active imagination expressing)
- 24.12 Music, thoughts, emotion, and imagination (Interactive - Eris) (emotion, thought)
- 24.13 Emotion creates (Eris) (integral to imagination)
- 24.14 Imagination lets me in to meet memory and emotion (Interactive - Eris) (memory, imagination)
- 24.15 Sometimes imagination is turned on (Eris) (or is it always there?)
- 24.16 Imagination, a positive rush (Eris) (it is in feeling too)
- 24.17 Helps with orientation(Interactive – (Kate) (provides knowledge cues)
- 24.18 No right or wrong way to imagine (Liz) (promote)
- 24.19 I may not be able to see, but I can imagine (Liz) (slogan, promote)
- 24.20 Early reading catalyzes imagination (Liz) (language, thought, imagination)
- 24.21 Living would be drab without it (Liz) (promote, few know that)
- 24.22 Learning and intrinsic motivation (Tanj) (imagination inherent)

- 24.23 Imagination of seeing (Tsaf) (epistemology, ontology)
- 24.24 Imagination and God (Interactive - Tsaf) (consciousness and active imagination)
- 24.25 Creativity activated (Liz) (imagination experiences)
- 24.26 Hearing and interpretation (Liz)
- 24.27 Beyond the eyes (Liz) (imagination experiences)
- 24.28 Play in imagination (Nil) (promote)

25.0 There are always factors and conditions that hinder or promote

- 25.1 Promoting introspection as expression of active imaginations (Nil) (behavior)
- 25.2 Promoting fitness and healthy eating (Abri) (behavior)
- 25.3 Promoting patience (Abri) (behavior)
- 25.4 Promote Popular education (Eris) (conditions)
- 25.5 Promote inclusion (Interactive - Tanj) (conditions)
- 25.6 They don't know how to include us (Tanj) (conditions, behavior)
- 25.7 Promote giving to those just blind (Tanj) (conditions, behavior)
- 25.8 Promote visualization in learning (Tsaf) (conditions)
- 25.9 Promoting memory exercises (Liz) (behavior, conditions)
- 25.10 Patience further promoted (Abri) (message to sighted)
- 25.11 Self Advocacy (Deb) (autonomy, conditions)
- 25.12 Positive environment (Nil) (promote)
- 25.13 Value in every consciousness (Tanj) (promote)

26.0 Hindrances

- 26.1 Impatience hinders (Abri) (behavior)
- 26.2 Non-inclusion of patient's experiences (Liz) (conditions)

- 26.3 Not admitting it (Liz) (behavior)
- 26.4 Long commute (Tanj) (conditions)
- 26.5 Lack of appreciation (Tanj) (conditions, behavior)
- 26.6 We're just like everyone (Liz) (conditions)
- 26.7 Just get past that perception (Liz) (behavior, conditions of knowing)
- 26.8 We are so underutilized (Liz) (conditions, behavior, consciousness)

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