FEELING GRATEFUL:
A PARSE RESEARCH METHOD STUDY

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR
THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

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ABSTRACT

Feeling grateful is fundamental to being human. Feeling grateful is a lived universal experience that is significant to health and quality of life. Therefore, the human-becoming school of thought (Parse, 1981, 1998, 2007, 2010) was an appropriate choice of theoretical perspective to underpin this study. The purposes of this research study were to: discover and explicate the structure of the lived experience of feeling grateful as a universally lived phenomenon, contribute to the advancement of nursing knowledge through a scientifically rigorous process enhancing the theory of humanbecoming (Parse, 2007), and add to the body of knowledge about the phenomenon of feeling grateful. The humanbecoming (Parse, 2007) school of thought was the theoretical perspective foundational to this study. The Parse research method, underpinned by the ontology of humanbecoming (Parse, 2007), was used to answer the research question What is the structure of the lived experience of feeling grateful? The participants were 10 individuals in the community. The Parse research method processes of dialogical engagement, extraction-synthesis, and heuristic interpretation, were used to discover the structure: Feeling grateful is potent elation amid tribulation arising with the assuredness-unassuredness of benevolent alliances. New knowledge was discovered that advanced the humanbecoming theory (Parse, 2007), enhanced the understanding of the experience of feeling grateful, showed new possibilities for research, and provided implications for the teaching-learning process and nursing practice.
I certify that

a) Except where due acknowledgement has been made, the work is that of the author alone;

b) The work has not been submitted previously, in whole or in part, to qualify for any other academic award;

c) The content of the thesis is the result of the work that has been carried out since the official commencement date of the approved research program;

d) Any editorial work, paid or unpaid, carried out by a third party is acknowledged; and,

e) Ethics procedures and guidelines have been followed.

Judith D. Hart

July, 2010
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In particular, my sincere thanks to each of the participants who honoured nursing by so eloquently speaking about their lived experience of feeling grateful. Without your participation this work would not have unfolded.
DEDICATION

To my beloved parents:

You taught me to love

And engendered feeling grateful.

Charles and John:

Seeing you live your illimitable potential is pure joy.
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCING THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter the researcher sets the stage for the exploration of the phenomenon, feeling grateful, as a universal lived experience of health and quality of life. The study of feeling grateful was guided by the humanbecoming school of thought (Parse, 1981, 1987, 1992, 1998, 2001, 2005, 2007, 2010). A conceptual definition of feeling grateful is offered, followed by the purposes of the study, the research question, and the significance of feeling grateful for nursing.

1.2 THE PHENOMENON OF CONCERN: FEELING GRATEFUL

What a Wonderful World

I see trees of green, red roses too,
I see them bloom for me and you,
And I think to myself,
What a wonderful world.

I see skies of blue and clouds of white,
The bright blessed day, the dark sacred night,
And I think to myself,
What a wonderful world.

The colors of the rainbow, so pretty in the sky
Are also on the faces of people goin’ by,
I see friends shakin’ hands, sayin’, “How do you do!”
They’re really sayin’, “I love you.”

I hear babies cry, I watch them grow.
They’ll learn much more than I’ll ever know.
And I think to myself,
What a wonderful world.

As the researcher pondered the way in which to launch the writing of this section, the voices of Louis Armstrong (1901-1971) and Israel Komakawiw'ole (1959-1997) permeated the stillness of the room focusing the cacophony of swirling thought. From the researcher’s perspective the lyrics of this song refer to gratitude, feeling grateful for life’s simple gifts perceived or experienced in everyday life. The lyrics paint a picture of the human embracing day-to-day lived richness, holding the remembered with loving appreciation. Feeling grateful arises with witnessing gifts that contribute to health and quality of life.

The connection with feeling grateful, health, and quality of life is also found in children’s literature. In a children’s book about stories from Greek mythology entitled Book of Greek Myths, in a rare and they lived happily ever after story, a major character Melampus, became well-known for the kindness he showed to animals (d’Aulaire & d’Aulaire, 1962). One day while walking down a roadway, Melampus discovered a dead mother snake and several baby snakes. Rather than discarding the remains of the mother snake, Melampus gave the snake a befitting funeral. The motherless baby snakes now became his charge, and he raised them with tenderness and care. The baby snakes showed their gratitude to Melampus by licking his ears so clean that he could understand the language of all animals. With this gift of understanding all languages, he was able to perform astounding feats. One day he was summoned by the King to help cure his ailing,
sickly son. After helping the boy regain his vigour, Melampus became legendary throughout Greece and highly sought after for his skills as a healer, particularly by the King of Tiryns. These skills of healing, as well as his clever negotiating skills eventually earned him, and also his brother, one-third each of the kingdom, and the hand of a princess in marriage. Gratitude was shown by the King not only by the payment of land, but by offering the hand of his daughters, the princesses, in marriage “And they all lived happily thereafter” (d’Aulaire & d’Aulaire, 1962, p. 131). This Greek myth highlights gratitude with health and quality of life.

Legends also reveal stories of gratitude lived through dance.

Figure 1. Reprinted with permission of the Minneapolis Institute of Arts; Title: Ejiri; Artist: Hiroshige Ando Utagawa, Kunisada Utagawa, Kyu_shiro_Maruya; Date: August 1854; Japan; Color woodblock print; Gift of Louis W. Hill Jr.

The print depicts one story, which according to Japanese legend, was about a beautiful feathered robe found hanging from the branches of a pine tree by a fisherman (Utagawa, Utagawa, & Maruya, 1854). A celestial maiden appeared to the fisherman and beseeched him to return the robe to her as she could not fly to the heavens without the robe. The maiden’s tears motivated the fisherman to return the robe. As the legend is enacted on
stage, the performance ends with the maiden’s grateful dance before the fisherman. The painting, with Mount Fugi in the lower half of the image, shows the instance when the maiden flew toward the heavens over the sandy shores of Miho-no-matsubara, no doubt grateful to have her robe.

The connection between feeling grateful and health appears in paintings of the masters. Celebrated artists such as Francisco Jose de Goya, court painter to both Charles III and Charles IV of Spain, expressed Goya’s gratitude to the physician whom he credited with nursing him back to health.

**Figure 2.** Reprinted with permission of the Minneapolis Institute of Arts; Title: Self-Portrait with Dr. Arrieta; Artist: Francisco Jose de Goya; Date: 1820; Spain; Oil on canvas; The Ethel Morrison Van Derlip Fund.

This painting by Goya is an expression of gratitude for delivering him from the shackles of death. Here, while clutching to life, a dying Goya is supported by the doctor’s body and one hand, while with the other hand he raises a glass to Goya’s lips. The words at the bottom of the painting read in translation “Goya gives thanks to his friend Arrieta for
the expert care with which he saved his life from an acute and dangerous illness which he suffered at the close of the year 1819 when he was seventy-three years old. He painted it in 1820” (Goya, 1820). The presentation of the canvas is reminiscent of a Pietà, a type of Spanish religious influence still popular in Spain, signifying the meaning of the event to Goya. This warm and intimate portrayal of his lived experience is unusual among his works. The subject, style, and portrayal all symbolize the depth of Goya’s grateful feelings. The painting is Goya’s visual demonstration of the importance to him of health and quality of life.

Many cultures enact gift-giving as symbols of gratitude as a way of living health and quality of life. Early in the 19th century, items such as beads, cloth, and ribbons were bartered in trade among the Eastern Woodlands people of the United States of America.

![Figure 3](image-url) Reprinted with permission of the Minneapolis Institute of Arts; Title: Cape; Medium: Cotton, silk, glass beads; Date: early 19th century; Great Lakes/Woodlands region; The Christina N. and Swan J. Turnblad Memorial Fund.

In gratitude for legal assistance, this intricately beaded coat collar was presented by a Seneca family to a Euro-American lawyer from western New York (Minneapolis Institute of Arts, 2010). The researcher imagines the importance of the legal assistance for the family, represented in Figure 3 by the intricate, hand-detailed, and laborious art form that
was given as a gift. Peoples and cultures throughout the world express feelings of
gratefulness with the customary giving of gifts.

Ancient texts provide insights about gratitude. In the Jewish tradition, the fourth
son of Jacob and the father of the tribe of Judah comes from the Hebrew word for
gratitude (American-Israeli Cooperative Enterprise, 2010a). Leah, after giving birth to
Judah said “Now I will praise God” (Genesis 30:35). In the Written Laws in the Torah,
references are made to different types of offerings of gratitude (American-Israeli
Cooperative Enterprise, 2010a). The Oral Law (written as the Mishna and Talmud)
provides a legal record of interpretation for how the Written Laws are to be lived
(American-Israeli Cooperative Enterprise, 2010b). One type of offering, a peace offering
or zebach sh’lamim, is an offering of thanks or gratitude to God for His bounties and
mercies. Other peace offerings included free will offerings, or offerings made upon the
fulfillment of a vow (American-Israeli Cooperative Enterprise, 2010c). The offerings
represent a measure of the person’s gratitude, an expression of feeling grateful for aspects
of life that have important meaning to the person and this meaning gives quality to the
life, which makes the person’s life worth living.

The Qur’an, for Muslims, is the key religious text of Islam. Within the Qur’an
many instances of gratitude are recorded indicating feelings of gratefulness as a
commonly lived experience.

In the Christian tradition, in the Book of Psalms (Holy Bible, 1971), the psalmist
writes of gratitude as a human lived experience. Gratitude was publicly expressed in
processions, with glad shouts and songs of thanksgiving (Psalm 42:4), on entering the
temple with thanksgiving and praise, while being thankful (Psalms 95:2; 100:4), and by
singing melodies of gratitude (Psalm 147:7). In another expression of gratitude is a story
told in Psalm 92 that highlights the importance of a person expressing gratitude in day-to-
day life, specifically during the morning and evening hours. Rituals such as these
become a way of living health as becoming. According to the psalmist the act of saying
grace before, during, or after a meal, asking a blessing or giving thanks, is an expression
of gratitude. Singularly or with the company of others, the ritual of saying grace and
acknowledging blessings through gratitude is meaningful and contributes to health and
quality of life. This shows the universal nature of feeling grateful in the world’s wisdom
literature. In other biblical stories gratitude is recorded in different ways. Differing from
the gospel according to Saint Mark (1:40-45), the gospel according to Saint Luke (17:11-
19) describes the gratitude of the Samaritan, the only one of the ten lepers who came to
Jesus to thank him for cleansing him of his affliction. His gratitude was an expression of
the meaning that this act held for his health and quality of life. To be healed from this
disfiguring and limiting disease was important to his health and shifted his quality of life.
He showed the importance that this event held for him by expressing his gratitude to the
man whom he attributed the miracle.

In many traditions, the singing of songs in religious services contributes to
showing gratitude. Through song, humans express meanings that are important to them.
In the Christian tradition hymns are a part of religious ritual. A young woman, wife, and
mother of three, who died at 44 years of age, left to her heirs a book containing hymns
with music. The book was purchased when she was 22 years-old and was treasured by her in her adult life. One of the hymns found in this book contains the following verses. The refrain has not been printed here so the words of gratitude that the stanzas convey are prominent for the reader. The stanzas are:

For the beauty of the earth,
For the beauty of the skies,
For the love which from our birth
Over and around us lies,

For the beauty of each hour
Of the day and of the night,
Hill and vale, and tree and flower,
Sun and moon, and stars of light,

For the joy of ear and eye,
For the heart and mind’s delight,
For the mystic harmony
Linking sense to sound and sight,

For the joy of human love,
Brother, sister, parent, child,
Friends on earth, and friends above,
For all gentle thoughts and mild,

For each perfect gift of Thine,
To our race so freely given,
Graces human and divine,
Flowers of earth, and buds of heaven,
(Pierpoint, 1835-1917)

As with the lyrics of the popular contemporary song *What a Wonderful World* at the beginning of this section (Thiele & Weiss, 1967), this vintage hymn speaks to grace, from the French *gratus* or gratitude, as a universal experience important to human health and quality of life. The author who wrote this metrical composition is acknowledging with gratitude those aspects of life that have value for him. The researcher could preface each stanza with *I feel grateful*. Each stanza illuminates gratitude and love for illimitable
human experiences, in-the-moment while living life. The author wrote of feeling grateful for life, beauty, wonderment, mystery, the senses, love, and grace— all important to health and quality of life. In the last stanza the author acknowledged a Divine connection. The music for this composition was initially abridged from a Chorale by Conrad Kacher 1886-1872, and later by music by Edward Arthur, copyright 1927 found in a hymnary titled The Hymnary (1930). The music is upbeat, befitting a song of gratitude for aspects of life that contribute to health and quality of the life as lived.

This section illuminated through art forms, ancient texts, and vintage and modern song, that feeling grateful is a universally lived human experience of health and quality of life. The phenomenon of feeling grateful, then, is appropriate for study with a qualitative method within the simultaneity paradigm and the humanbecoming school of thought (Parse, 1998, 2007, 2010). The phenomenon of feeling grateful and the significance to nursing is discussed in the next section.

1.3 THE PHENOMENON OF FEELING GRATEFUL: CONCEPTUAL DEFINITION

Defining the phenomenon of interest is the common method of specifying the researcher’s focus for study. In the scientific literature definitions are structured and reported in many different ways appropriate to the research method utilized by the researcher. Reductionist methods of concept development appropriate for qualitative or quantitative research underpinned by the totality paradigm are not appropriate for research with universal lived phenomena congruent with the simultaneity paradigm (Parse, 1997b). This researcher is most interested in exploring human universal lived
experiences for which research methods in the simultaneity paradigm are appropriate. Universal lived phenomena within the simultaneity paradigm, that is – phenomena that are indivisible, unpredictable, everchanging (Parse, 2007) are best studied when the researcher is free to examine the phenomenon under study with the rational-intuitive processes that are present with all reflective thought (Parse, 2006a). Concept inventing was cocreated to assist researchers who are interested in studying research phenomena congruent with the simultaneity paradigm, and specifically with the humanbecoming school of thought (Parse, 1997a, 1997b, 2001, 2005, 2007, 2010).

A conceptual definition of feeling grateful emerged through the process of concept inventing (Parse, 1997a). Concept inventing is a multidimensional all-at-once process of analyzing-synthesizing, bringing to life novel unitary concepts (Parse, 1997a, p. 63). These multidimensional processes free the researcher to creat[e] original concepts for investigation beyond what is already known (Parse, 2006a, p. 289). These nonlinear processes reveal the meaning of the phenomenon to the researcher. The process involves searching for understanding of the phenomenon through contemplation with lived experiences, nursing practice in multiple settings, and with the arts, literature, media, and other art forms while asking What does this phenomenon mean to me? (Parse, 2006a, p. 289). Through rational-intuitive processes, ideas are discovered and recorded reflecting the values and beliefs of the researcher (Parse, 2006a). An original definition is created, congruent with the language of the chosen theory from the simultaneity paradigm (Parse, 2006a). The definition, the scholar’s personal meaning of the concept,
is written at the abstract level and contains more than two essences that specify the direction for a literature search and art form explorations (Parse, 2006a, p. 289).

For this researcher, three essences surfaced all-at-once from the process of concept inventing. They are: buoyant appreciation, acknowledging the cherished, and communion-aloneness. These essences were synthesized to create a unique definition of feeling grateful. For this researcher, feeling grateful is buoyant appreciation with acknowledging the cherished in communion-aloneness. This definition is consistent with the simultaneity paradigm and the humanbecoming school of thought (Parse, 1981, 1998, 2006b, 2007, 2010). At the theoretical level, feeling grateful is powering the valuing of connecting-separating. This study contributed details of what it is like for persons to feel grateful, explicated further the humanbecoming school of thought, and fortified the body of nursing knowledge crucial to the discipline of nursing. In the next section the essences buoyant appreciation, acknowledging the cherished, and communion-aloneness are explicated as each essence relates to the phenomenon feeling grateful.

1.3.1 Buoyant Appreciation

The first essence of feeling grateful is buoyant appreciation. According to the Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary, the term buoyant is defined as cheerful, gay, capable of floating (buoyant, 2010) and appreciation is defined as sensitive awareness; an expression of admiration, approval, or gratitude; to value, prize, treasure or cherish (appreciation, 2010). To the researcher, buoyant evokes a lightness, a floaty, uplifting weightiness. Appreciation is defined as understanding of the nature and quality of
something; intelligent enjoyment (appreciation, 2010). To the researcher, appreciation is a loving cheerfulness, a tender feeling with movement that is anchored, dynamic, knowing in-the-moment, and strong. It is a swimming lightness with explicit-tacit knowing. The heart smiles.

The notion of buoyant appreciation conveys to the researcher a feeling that has the characteristics of light and free-flowing movement with deep tendrils of meaning in coming to know the regard attached to receiving gifts. Gifts arise with achievement of hopes and dreams. Humanbecoming is moving beyond with intended hopes and dreams while pushing-resisting in creating new ways of viewing the familiar-unfamiliar ( Parse, 1998, p. 46). The buoyant cadence of coming to know and appreciate gifts is Feeling uplifted, the surge of energy, and an expression of ah! ah! ...related to transcending with a new view ( Parse, 1993, p. 42). Buoyant appreciation is the feeling that comes with profound uplifting regard for a gift. It is shown with esteem and is an affirmation of the gift and the giver. It is the ongoing constructing of reality through assigning significance to experiences ( Parse, 1998, p. 35). Buoyant appreciation is a feature of feeling grateful and is connected with acknowledging the cherished.

1.3.2 Acknowledging the Cherished

The second essence of the concept feeling grateful is acknowledging the cherished. According to the Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary, the term acknowledging is defined as to take notice of; to recognize as genuine or valid (acknowledging, 2010). For the researcher, acknowledging is to regard and hold in a
respectful manner that which is presented. Cherished is defined as *to harbour in the mind deeply and resolutely; to hold dear* (cherished, 2010). Cherished, for the researcher, is someone or something that is prized and held close with love, while having significant meaning. Acknowledging the cherished is constructing personal reality that has unique meaning with the, *seamless symphony of becoming* (Parse, 1998, p. 35). It is an incarnation of meaning regarding feeling grateful for something. Meanings are cocreated illimitably (Parse, 2007) with what is known and not known all-at-once, while imaging past, present, and future experiences. Meanings are cocreated as new experiences are lived illimitably (Parse, 2007), human with universe. New meanings unfold and are lived in new, different ways. Acknowledging the cherished is recognizing what is significant (Parse, 1998). It is an all-at-once confirmation of the valued and prized in the moment.

Feeling grateful is therefore realized by acknowledging the all-at-once remembering-prospecting (Parse, 2007) of cherished images, cocreating illimitably a new humanuniverse reality with new ways of being with the world. As an essence of feeling grateful, acknowledging the cherished is connected with communion-aloneness.

1.3.3 Communion-Aloneness

The third essence of feeling grateful is communion-aloneness. Communion is defined according to the Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary as an *act or instance of sharing; an intimate fellowship or rapport* (communion, 2010). To the researcher, communion connotes a coming together, whether it be of others, ideas, projects, or values. It connotes a sense of the weaving movement of coming together. Aloneness is
defined as *separated from others, isolated; exclusive of anyone or anything else* (aloneness, 2010), a solitary humanuniverse (Parse, 2007) experience apart from others. Communion-aloneness is a paradox, an apparent opposite, a humanuniverse (Parse, 2007) all-at-once rhythmical process of coming together with moving apart. The coming together – moving apart is the attending-distancing (Parse, 2007) of connecting-separating as *patterns of relating arise with inherent freedom in the impenetrable mystery of being human* (Parse, 2007, p. 309). *Communion is being involved with the activity at hand while all-at-once not being involved, and being involved in a way with other activities* (Parse, 1998, p. 45). For the researcher, communion-aloneness is attending-distancing (Parse, 2007), the all-at-once cadent flux of being involved with and apart from persons, ideas, comforts, and projects that arise with the warp and woof of living each day. Communion-aloneness is a rhythm that is lived every day and is a feature of feeling grateful.

### 1.3.4 Summary

The essences *buoyant appreciation, acknowledging the cherished,* and *communion-aloneness* were elaborated as each essence relates to the phenomenon *feeling grateful.* The essences *buoyant appreciation, acknowledging the cherished,* and *communion-aloneness* were conceptualized as a unique definition for *feeling grateful.* The conceptual definition offered by the researcher includes the three essences and is stated as: *feeling grateful is buoyant appreciation with acknowledging the cherished in communion-aloneness.* In the next section the purposes of the study are identified.

### 1.4 PURPOSES OF THE STUDY
The purposes of this research study were:

1. to discover and explicate the structure of the lived experience of feeling grateful as a universally lived phenomenon.

2. to contribute to the advancement of nursing knowledge through a scientifically rigorous process by enhancing the theory of humanbecoming (Parse, 2007).

3. to add to the body of knowledge about the phenomenon of feeling grateful.

1.5 THE RESEARCH QUESTION

The research question of this study was: What is the structure of the lived experience of feeling grateful?

1.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF EXPLORING THE PHENOMENON OF FEELING GRATEFUL FOR NURSING

The phenomenon of feeling grateful is a universal lived experience. This study has significance in the following areas:

- Conceptualizing feeling grateful as buoyant appreciation with acknowledging the cherished in communion-aloneness posits the phenomenon as a universal lived experience in the light of humanbecoming and is thus worthy of investigation.
• An exploration of the phenomenon *feeling grateful* has the potential to illuminate new insights about the human’s everyday world, expanding understanding of feeling grateful as it is related to health and quality of life.


• The findings of this Parse research method study (1981, 1998, 1999a, 1999b, 2001, 2005) of *feeling grateful* enhanced knowledge in distinct ways. New knowledge generated from this study: a) explicated unique ways of becoming related to feeling grateful, b) enhanced understanding of ways of connecting with persons in practice, and c) revealed phenomena for further research.
1.7 SUMMARY

In this section the frame of reference for the exploration of the universal lived experience of health, *feeling grateful*, was presented. With the concept inventing of the phenomenon *feeling grateful*, three essences were identified: *buoyant appreciation, acknowledging the cherished, and communion-aloneness*. Buoyant appreciation, acknowledging the cherished, and communion-aloneness illuminated the lived experience of *feeling grateful*. These essences were synthesized to create a unique definition of feeling grateful. From the perspective of the humanbecoming school of thought (Parse, 1981, 1998, 2001, 2005, 2007, 2010), *feeling grateful is buoyant appreciation with acknowledging the cherished in communion-aloneness*. When feeling grateful, humans move with uplifting satisfaction to bear witness explicitly-tacitly, revealing-concealing cherished values while coming together and moving apart with others. This study illuminated details of what it is like for persons to feel grateful, explicated further the humanbecoming school of thought (Parse, 1981, 1998, 2001, 2005, 2007, 2010), and fortified the body of nursing knowledge crucial to the discipline of nursing.

1.8 STRUCTURE OF THE THESIS

The thesis consists of eight chapters. Chapter Two is comprised of an exploration of the philosophical underpinnings of Parse’s humanbecoming school of thought (Parse, 1981, 1998, 2007, 2010). Chapter Three includes a critical examination of general philosophy, psychology, theology, and nursing literature in relation to the phenomenon of feeling grateful. Chapter Four sets forth the research methodology. Chapter Five includes the presentation of the findings. Chapter Six is devoted to a critical analysis of
CHAPTER TWO
THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 INTRODUCTION


2.2 THE HUMANBECOMING SCHOOL OF THOUGHT

2.2.1 Contributions from the Human Sciences

The humanbecoming school of thought (Parse, 1981, 1998, 2001, 2005, 2007, 2010) is rooted in the human sciences, initially explicated by Dilthey (1894/1977, 1883/1989). Dilthey (1894/1977, 1883/1989) was the first philosopher to distinguish a line of discourse that viewed human science as different from natural science where understanding constitutes the goal of human studies in the way that explanation defines the natural sciences (1894/1977, p. 7). Dilthey’s (1894/1977) interest was the exploration of the meaning of humanly lived experiences, viewed as an individual whole (p. 131). Life was viewed as a whole. This was a departure form the natural science perspective of viewing the whole as a sum of its parts (Parse, 1987). For Dilthey (1894/1977, 1883/1989), the nexus of psychic life, reflective – pre-reflective consciousness, was experienced in-the-moment by the person and was understood through the interrelationship of the self in the world.

The ontology and epistemology of the human sciences values human expression, understanding, and lived experience. This was elaborated by Dilthey, when he said: The secret of the person invites, for its own sake, ever newer and deeper investigations by the understanding; and in such understanding the realm of individuals, which embraces man [sic] and his [sic] creations, becomes accessible (Dilthey, 1894/1977, p. 131). For Dilthey, all description was filled with interpretation, furthering understanding of human experience, which became one of the central pillars of his philosophical perspective.
Dilthey (1894/1977, 1883/1989) introduced the proposition that lived experiences are articulated as factual expressions.

*All evidential certainty of logical thought is finally an evidential certainty of reflexive awareness itself: ultimately logical thought derives the ground of its feeling of conviction from experience. And the categories of which it makes use within the human sciences express real facts, given in human-cultural life* (Dilthey, 1883/1989, p. 496).

Dilthey valued human experience, but not in terms of causal mechanisms. His perspective was to appreciate lived experiences as *ultimate givens* (Dilthey, 1883/1989, p. 8), an unprejudiced perspective of empirical inquiry. This descriptive analytical view avoids causal explanations and metaphysical speculations which derive the given facts of consciousness from transcendent principles (Dilthey, 1883/1989, p. 8). For Dilthey, understanding human consciousness was through human experiences as manifestations of psychic life and the external world. He said:

*I am a being that does not merely represent, but also wills and feels. The real world is what the will possesses in reflective awareness...This reflexive awareness of the will is as much of this real world as of itself. Both self and the real world are therefore given in the totality of psychic life. Each exists in relation to the other, and is equally immediate and true...Acts of representation, will, feeling are contained in every status conscientiae and are, at every instant, the manifestations of psychic life in its interaction with the external world* (Dilthey, 1883/1989, p. 494).

Dilthey’s (1894/1977, 1883/1989) hermeneutic human science approach based on valuing the meaning of the lived experience of human beings, his viewing life as a whole, and appreciating pre-reflective – reflective awareness became foundational to the ontology of

*Human beings are unitary wholes in continuous interrelationship with their dynamic, temporal, historical, cultural worlds, which guide a research and practice focus on the coherent experience of the person’s meanings, relations, values, patterns, and themes.*

*Human experience is pre-eminent and fundamental and reality is the whole complex of what is experienced and elaborated in thinking, feeling and willing. Lived experience is the basic empirical datum, as gleaned from the participant description free of comparison to objective realities or predefined norms.*

*Human beings are intentional, free-willed beings who actively participate in life continuously. Thus, the person’s coparticipation in generating knowledge of lived experience is respected, and no more fundamental reference than what is disclosed by the person is sought.*

*The researcher is inextricably involved with any phenomenon investigated, thus, the researcher seeks knowledge and understanding of lived experience and is cognizant of the other’s lived reality as a unitary whole (Mitchell and Cody, 1992, p. 56).*

Parse (1981, 1998) and Giorgi (1970, 1985) have more recently worked to expand and deepen Dilthey’s (1894/1977, 1883/1989) philosophical thought rooted in the human sciences. However, it was Rogers’ (1970, 1980) work, from another view, that was used by Parse in her synthesis to create humanbecoming (Parse, 2007).
2.2.2 Contributions from the Science of Unitary Human Beings

The science of unitary human beings was a unique perspective specified by Rogers (1970) to explore nursing as a science and an art. The uniqueness of her work marks nursing history as she conceptualized human beings and their environments in a novel way, shifting thinking within the nursing world. This shift in thinking challenged traditional beliefs about humans, environment, health, and nursing (Lutjens, 1995). Rogers articulated that nursing was a science that was characterized as humanistic, not mechanistic (Rogers, 1970, 1980). Rogers used a different language from what was traditionally used in nursing to describe her insights about the art and science of nursing (Malinski, 1994). Rogers departed from the traditional use of mechanistic language used among nurse scholars and engaged the nursing world with a language that described abstract ideas about human beings and their environments. These abstract ideas were specified as postulates and principles (Rogers, 1992). What would emerge would be known as the science of unitary human beings with human beings and their environments as the focus (Rogers, 1970). Specifically, Rogers demonstrated through her work that nursing is the study of unitary, irreducible, indivisible human and environmental fields: people and their world (Rogers, 1990, p. 6). The science of unitary human beings is about people and the environments in which they live stated as assumptions, postulates, and principles (Rogers, 1970, 1980, 1992).

2.2.2.1 Assumptions

Throughout Rogers’ work, the five assumptions she articulated in her 1970 book An Introduction to the Theoretical Basis of Nursing (1970) continued to be the
foundation for the science of unitary human beings (1980). Rogers (1970) assumptions are:

*Man* [sic] is a unified whole possessing his own integrity and manifesting characteristics that are more than and different from the sum of his [sic] parts (p. 47).

*Man* [sic] and environment are continuously exchanging matter and energy with one another (p. 54).

The life process evolves irreversibly and unidirectionally along the space-time continuum (p. 59).

Pattern and organization identify man [sic] and reflect his [sic] innovative wholeness (p. 65).

*Man* [sic] is characterized by the capacity for abstraction and imagery, language and thought, sensation and emotion (p. 73).

As Malinski (1994) noted, modifications with the assumptions were made when words initially used in the theoretical assumptions no longer conveyed the intended meaning (for example, man [sic] and space-time), and when insights dictated changes from words connoting linear processes to mutual processes (for example, unidirectional, organization, exchanging, and repatterning). Use of the word matter was later viewed as redundant when used with the word energy; *matter is energy manifesting itself in dynamic wave patterns* (Rogers, 1980, p. 331). Also, the use of the word unidirectional (Rogers, 1970), related to life process and change, was retired to articulate Rogers’ vision of openness, creativity, and possibilities of many different directions of change. The words four-dimensionality (Rogers, 1986), multidimensional (Rogers, 1990), and pandimensional (Rogers, 1992) were used to connote non-linear human and environmental domains and demonstrate an evolution in Rogers’ thinking over time. These modifications enhanced
clarity of the theory, and *highlighted the importance of relationship and meaning to both theory development and research* (Malinski, 1994, p. 199). The assumptions lead to the postulates.

### 2.2.2.2 Postulates

From the core assumptions, Rogers conceptualized four postulates which anchored her ideas in nursing science and nursing history. The four postulates are energy field, a universe of open systems, pattern (formerly called pattern and organization), and pandimensionality (previously known as four-dimensionality and multidimensionality) (Rogers, 1970, 1980, 1987, 1990, 1992).

#### 2.2.2.3 Energy Field

Rogers (1992) defined energy field as *the fundamental unit of the living and the non-living. Field is a unifying concept. Energy signifies the dynamic nature of the field. A field is in continuous motion and is infinite* (p. 29) and *transcends its component parts* (Rogers, 1970, p. 46). This abstract concept of energy field was a way of comprehending humans and their environments (Rogers, 1990). The human energy field or unitary human being was defined as: *an irreducible, indivisible, pandimensional energy field identified by pattern and manifesting characteristics that are specific to the whole and which cannot be predicted from knowledge of the parts* (Rogers, 1992, p. 29). The environmental energy field was noted as *an irreducible, pandimensional energy field identified by pattern and integral with the human field* (Rogers, 1992, p. 29). Both energy fields were viewed as unique (Rogers, 1992), irreducible and pandimensional...
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(Rogers, 1986). *A field has meaning only in its entirety. It is indivisible* (Rogers, 1980, p. 330). These human and environmental fields are dynamic entities conveying wholeness and cannot be reduced to the sum of parts.

### 2.2.2.4 Openness

The concept of openness emanates from systems theory, which Rogers referred to as open systems in her 1970 and 1980 work. Openness refers to energy fields within the universe and the unbounded, limitless potential of energy to move forever with the living and nonliving (Rogers, 1970). Open systems were seen as becoming increasingly complex as they change and transcend (Rogers, 1970). She said *change, then, was continuously innovative and creative* (Rogers, 1992, p. 30), exemplifying the openness of the human and environmental energy fields. Lutjens (1995) stated, *people are different today than they were yesterday. Therefore, human beings can never go back* (p. 13).

### 2.2.2.5 Pattern

Rogers (1992) defined pattern as *the distinguishing characteristic of an energy field perceived as a single wave* (p. 29). Pattern showed the creativity and innovation of the human-environment energy field (Rogers, 1980). Pattern was viewed as an integral whole, becoming more diverse (Rogers, 1986). Each pattern was a distinct, unique wave form that continuously changed. Pattern could not be observed, but expressions of pattern could be observed or experienced as time moving slower, faster, or as timelessness (Rogers, 1992).
2.2.2.6 Pandimensionality

The definition for the postulate pandimensionality is a nonlinear domain without spatial or temporal attributes (Rogers, 1986, p5; 1992, p29). Previously called four-dimensionality (Rogers, 1970) and multidimensionality (Rogers, 1990), the definition remained unchanged. Pandimensionality is a way of perceiving reality (Rogers, 1992, p. 31). Pandimensional reality is postulated to characterize all reality in the human-environment energy field (Rogers, 1986, 1992). Pandimensionality is a feature of the evolution of change, human with environment, in mutual process (Rogers, 1980). The assumptions and postulates formed the basis of and led to the development of the principles of homeodynamics.

2.2.2.7 Principles of Homeodynamics

Principles, according to Rogers (1970), are the foundational symbolic statements that describe, explain, and predict generalized phenomena in nursing. Principles are believed to be true, and when specific to nursing guide nursing research and practice. Principles require testing to verify the reality they espouse. The more universal a principle is demonstrated to be, the more useful it becomes in reality (Rogers, 1970).

Rogers’ (1970) principles of homeodynamics expressed proposed generalizations about the life process of the human; it is a way of perceiving human beings. Rogers’ (1970) described four principles of homeodynamics, namely: reciprocity, synchrony, helicy, and resonancy. The initial four principles were later reconfigured into three principles: helicy, resonancy, and complementarity (Rogers, 1980). In 1986 the
principles of homeodynamics were revised to become the principle of resonancy, the principle of helicy, and the principle of integrality (previously titled the principle of complementarity) reflecting greater accuracy and clarity of meaning (Rogers, 1986, p. 6).

2.2.2.8 Principle of Helicy

The principle of helicy is: continuous innovative, unpredictable, increasing diversity of human and environmental field patterns (Rogers, 1990, p. 8). Initially with the development of the theoretical principles, Rogers conceptualized helicy as a spiral of life processes, person with environment, in mutual rhythmical movement which evolves unidirectionally in sequential stages along a curve which has the same general shape all along but which does not lie in a plane (1970, p. 99). Life processes, person with environment, were viewed as goal-directed, increasing in complexity of pattern, possessing rhythmicality, and were unitary in nature (Rogers, 1970). Unitary, rhythmical, purposeful life processes underscored Rogers’ belief that the human was evolving (1970) and the life process is a becoming (p. 55). The curved, spiraling, rhythmical sequential stages of life processes were bound in space-time; where space-time reflected new scientific realities and possibilities with space travel, humans living in space, and paranormal phenomena (Rogers, 1970).

2.2.2.9 Principle of Resonancy

The principle of resonancy is defined as continuous change from lower to higher frequency wave patterns in human and environmental fields (Rogers 1990, p. 8). The
human and environmental fields are in constant simultaneous movement (Rogers, 1990). Rogers (1970) proposed that changes of the environmental field pattern and human field pattern are generated as a rhythmical flow of energy in *waves of grief or joy, loneliness, tenderness, and pain* (Rogers, 1970, p. 101).

### 2.2.2.10 Principle of Integrality

The principle of integrality is; *continuous mutual field and environmental field process* (Rogers, 1990, p. 8). The patterns and wave forms of the human and environmental field are lived at the same time in mutual process, one constantly interacting with the other (Rogers, 1980). Separations or demarcations of the human and environmental fields are inconsistent with this principle. The human and environmental fields are integral to each other.

The principles of homeodynamics in the science of unitary human beings characterize evolutionary change. The characteristics of the principles of helicy, resonancy, and integrality are manifested with the human-environment energy fields (Rogers, 1990).

2.2.3 Contributions from Existential-phenomenological Thought

Contributions to existential-phenomenological thought emanate from the works of Dilthey (1894/1977, 1883/1989) who espoused value for the meaning of lived experiences. This perspective was a departure from the metaphysical existentialist perspective of explaining and searching for causal mechanisms (Dilthey, 1883/1989). It was Heidegger (1953/1996) who focused interest on the study of being (Sein) as a universal (p. 2), obscure, and indefinable concept and being-in-the-world (p. 10) (Da-sein) that was notable in his move away from Husserl’s philosophy of method and how consciousness constitutes experience (Drew, 1999). While Husserl (1970) was considered the founder of phenomenological philosophy (Drew, 1999), it was Heidegger who bridged the two perspectives of existentialism and phenomenology (Pollio, Tracy, and Thompson, 1997). The mergence of existential-phenomenology in the 20th and 21st century has created a major platform for intellectual life for those interested in pursuing the exploration of humanly lived experiences. Both existentialism (Kirkegaard, 1972) and phenomenology (Husserl, 1970) promote rigour in the description of human life as experienced and lived. The practice of existential-phenomenology unearths real-world experiences; it does not explain them. Parse’s humanbecoming (Parse, 2007) school of thought (1981, 1998, 2010) focuses on lived experiences. The humanbecoming (Parse, 2007) school of thought emanates from the existential-phenomenological tenets of human subjectivity and intentionality, and the concepts of situated freedom, coexistence, and coconstitution, which arise from the works of Heidegger (1953/1996), Husserl (1970), Kierkegaard (1972), Merleau-Ponty (1945/1989) and Sartre (1956).
2.2.3.1 Intentionality

Central to existential-phenomenological thought is the tenet intentionality. First postulated by Brentano (1838-1917) as reported by Ricoeur (1981) and explored by Husserl (1857-1938) (1970) intentionality involves mental acts of consciousness of, or about objects, things, events, and others. Intentionality was further explored by Heidegger (1953/1996), who presented the idea that the fundamental nature of being human is that humans are open, knowing, present beings who have potential to reach imagined possibilities (Parse, 1998). Each human is an intentional being (Parse, 1998). Humans cocreate and uniquely choose their becoming (Parse, 1998).

Personal becoming grows out of the human’s historicity and facticity (Parse, 1998, p. 15). Historicity is the cocreation of what was and is through connections with predecessors and contemporaries all-at-once (Parse, 1998). It is the unfolding of persons’ personal stories and their becoming over time (Parse, 1998, p. 97). Facticity is the immediacy of the present, where all prior choices the human has made unfolds with the current situation (Parse, 1998). Implicit in the notion that historicity and facticity shape human choosings are the existential-phenomenological concepts of situated freedom and coexistence (Parse, 1998).

The notion of coexistence inextricably links the human with the world according to philosopher Merleau-Ponty (1945/1989). Human existence is viewed as inseparable from the world in which humans live (Merleau-Ponty, 1945/1989). The human exists and coexists all-at-once; the human is not alone in any dimension of becoming (Parse,
Parse (1998) stated, *to exist, then, is to coexist as the possibility of transcending to be more than one is, at any given moment* (Merleau-Ponty, 1974, pp. 346-365, in Parse, 1998, p. 17). A human’s becoming is inherently connected with transcendence. Transcendence is *moving with* (Parse, 1998, p. 99) the potential of who a human is and can become. Implicit with the concept of coexistence is that of situated freedom.

The human, by virtue of historicity and facticity coconstitutes a unique way of being in the world (Merleau-Ponty, 1945/1989). Each human is situated to freely choose from among options. Situated freedom is the *unencumbered option to choose in each situation* (Parse, 1998, p. 98). Life is lived and the human is enabled and limited by choice. All choice is made reflectively (consciously and purposively) and prereflectively (tacitly and without obvious purpose) all-at-once, in the human-universe mutual process (Parse, 1998). Humans cannot not choose. *One always chooses...even not to choose is in fact to choose not to choose* (p. 619) (Parse, 1998, p. 18). Choosing reveals value priorities and meaning in situation (Parse, 1998). Intentionality with coexistence and situated freedom are connected to the tenet human subjectivity and the concept coconstitution.

### 2.2.3.2 Human Subjectivity

Human subjectivity is intertwined with lived experience. The notion of coconstitution arises with human subjectivity. Human subjectivity is a coconstituted phenomenon. In living life day-to-day, humans cocreate personal meaning in coexistence.
with others, coconstitute personal ways of being, and live chosen ways of being in the world (Parse, 1998). From a Heideggerian perspective it is Dasein - being-in-the-world (Heidegger, 1953/1996).  *The human by nature is no thing but, rather, a unity of being with nonbeing — living what is and what is not-yet all-at-once* (Parse, 1998, p. 15). Humans uniquely engage and experience the world with meaning and imagined possibility, a potential yet-to-be in the now moment. The inherent characteristic of being human is the connectedness of being with nonbeing, human with universe all-at-once (Parse, 1998). It is living the human-universe mutual process in the now moment, while simultaneously living the potential of what the human can be, moment-to-moment in living the *unity of the subject-world changing mutual process* (Parse, 1998, p. 15). Meaning and choice are situationally coconstituted human with universe.

Parse’s synthesis of the ideas of intentionality, human subjectivity, coexistence, situated freedom, and coconstitution from existential-phenomology, with the principles and postulates from Rogers’ science of unitary human beings, gave birth to the humanbecoming (2007) school of thought. These ideas from existential-phenomenological thought and nursing science principles were synthesized to create a new product (See Figure 4 for the humanbecoming ontology).
### Humanbecoming Assumptions, Postulates, Principles, Concepts, and Paradox

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Assumptions</th>
<th>Synthesized Assumptions</th>
<th>Postulates</th>
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<tr>
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<td>Humanbecoming is structuring meaning, freely choosing with situation. Humanbecoming is configuring rhythmical humanuniverse patterns. Humanbecoming is cotranscending illimitably with emerging possibilities. Humanbecoming is humanuniverse cocreating a seamless symphony.</td>
<td>Illimitability is the indivisible unbounded knowing extended to infinity, the all-at-once remembering-prospecting with the emerging now. Paradox is an intricate rhythm expressed as a pattern preference. Freedom is contextually construed liberation. Mystery is the unexplainable, that which cannot be completely known unequivocally.</td>
<td>Structuring meaning is the imaging and valuing of languaging. Configuring rhythmical patterns is the revealing-concealing and enabling-limiting of connecting-separating. Cotrascending with possibles is the powering and originating of transforming.</td>
<td>Imaging: explicit-tacit; reflective-prereflective Valuing: confirming-not confirming Language: speaking-being silent; moving-being still Revealing-concealing: disclosing-not disclosing Enabling-limiting: potentiating-restricting Connecting-separating: attending-distancing Powering: pushing-resisting; affirming-not affirming; being-nonbeing Originating: certainty-uncertainty; conforming-not conforming Transforming: familiar-unfamiliar</td>
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<tr>
<td>The human is open, freely choosing meaning with situation, bearing responsibility for decisions.</td>
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<td>The human is continuously coconstituting patterns.</td>
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<td>The human is transcending illimitably with possibles.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Becoming is human-living-health. Becoming is rhythmically coconstituting humanuniverse. Becoming is the human’s value priority patterns. Becoming is transcending with possibles. Becoming is the human’s emerging.</td>
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2.3 PARSE’S HUMANBECOMING SCHOOL OF THOUGHT

Parse’s humanbecoming (2007, 2010) school of thought is a synthesis of the tenets and concepts from the body of existential-phenomenological thought, explicated in the works of Heidegger (1953/1996), Kierkegaard (1972), Merleau-Ponty (1945/1989), and Sartre (1956), and the principles and postulates of Rogers’ (1970, 1980) science of unitary human beings. The synthesis of these tenets and concepts, principles and postulates were stated in nine philosophical assumptions about human beings and becoming presented in Figure 4 (Parse, 1998, 2010).

2.3.1 Assumptions

The humanbecoming (2007) theory is underpinned by nine assumptions (Parse, 1998). These assumptions are:

- *The human is coexisting while coconstituting rhythmical patterns with the universe.*
- *The human is open, freely choosing meaning in situation, bearing responsibility for decisions.*
- *The human is unitary, continuously coconstituting patterns of relating.*
- *The human is transcending multidimensionally with the possibles.*
- *Becoming is the [indivisible, unpredictable, everchanging] human-living-health.*
- *Becoming is a rhythmically coconstituting human-universe process.*
- *Becoming is the human’s patterns of relating value priorities.*
- *Becoming is an intersubjective process of transcending with the possibles.*
- *Becoming is the [indivisible, unpredictable, everchanging] human’s emerging.* (Parse, 1998, pp. 19-20)
The nine assumptions were further synthesized to three:

- *Human becoming is freely choosing personal meaning in situation in the intersubjective process of living value priorities.*

- *Human becoming is cocreating rhythmical patterns of relating in mutual process with the universe.*

- *Human becoming is cotranscending multidimensionally with emerging possibles.* (Parse, 1998, p. 29)

An update of the assumptions about the human and becoming appeared in detail in Parse 2008. They are:

- *The human with universe is coexisting while coconstituting rhythmical patterns.*

- *The human is open, freely choosing meaning with situation, bearing responsibility for decisions.*

- *The human is continuously coconstituting patterns of relating.*

- *The human is transcending illimitably with possibles.*

- *Becoming is human-living-health.*

- *Becoming is rhythmically constituting humanuniverse.*

- *Becoming is the human’s patterns of relating value priorities.*

- *Becoming is transcending with possibles.*

- *Becoming is the human’s emerging.* (Parse, 2008, p. 370)

These nine assumptions were further synthesized. They are:
Humanbecoming is freely choosing personal meaning with situation, living value priorities.

Humanbecoming is configuring rhythmical patterns of relating with humanuniverse.

Humanbecoming is cotranscending illimitably with emerging possibles (Parse, 2008, p. 370).

In 2010, additional refinements were made to the ontology of the humanbecoming school of thought. The first refinement refers to patterns of relating. Patterns of relating, as conceptualized by Parse, are inherent with the assumptions, synthesized assumptions, postulates, and principles and will be stated as patterns (Parse, 2010). The two assumptions that previously contained patterns of relating are now stated:

- The human is continuously coconstituting patterns.
- Becoming is the human’s value priority patterns (Parse, 2010, p. 258).

The synthesized assumption that contained patterns of relating now is:

- Humanbecoming is configuring rhythmical humanuniverse patterns (Parse, 2010, p. 258).

The second refinement is a fourth synthesized assumption and is:

- Humanbecoming is humanuniverse cocreating a seamless symphony (Parse, 2010, p. 258).
Three major themes that emerged from these assumptions are meaning, rhythmicity, and transcendence (Parse, 1998, 2007, 2008). These themes flow throughout the school of thought and are particularly specified in the principles.

2.3.2 Meaning

Meaning is the significance, the core understanding a human experiences when living health as humanuniverse (Parse, 2007). It is an interpretation of what is conveyed by actions, words, expressions, artforms, and movement. Parse states *meanings are the valued images of the is, was, and will-be languaged in the now with and without words, with and without movement* (Parse, 1998, p. 29). Meaning is a freely chosen, illimitable, and mysterious force as humans live every day and it shifts as new insights are realized and new truths are revealed. Meaning arises with the humanuniverse process and refers to ultimate meaning or purpose in life and the meaning moments of everyday living (Parse, 1998, p. 29). Meanings change moment-to-moment as different light is shed on experiences and imaged values, and new meaning is cocreated, changing the moment or changing the ways of living human-with-universe. Meaning is everchanging and is both personal and shared, both representation and event, and all these without boundaries (Cody, 1994, p. 50). Humans weave meaning illimitability with humanuniverse (Parse, 2007) rhythmically.

2.3.3 Rhythmicity

Rhythmicity is a theme of humanbecoming (Parse, 2007) and is lived as rhythmical patterns. (Parse, 1998, 2010). Rhythmical patterns are unrepeatable, cadent,
and paradoxical, which are revealed and concealed all-at-once. As new experiences arise, patterns of relating shift and change. As humans experience life, new experiences, information, or circumstances change and cocreate unique and unrepeatable ways of relating. The ebb and flow of coming together with-moving apart cocreate opportunities and restrictions characteristic with rhythmical patterns. The patterns are paradoxical in that they are not opposites but, rather, dimensions of the same rhythm lived all-at-once (Parse, 1998, p. 30). Rhythmical patterns are recognized as an inherent humanuniverse (Parse, 2007) processes that arise with transcendence.

2.3.4 Transcendence

Transcendence is powering and moving beyond with the originating of possibilities in life that arise as options from which to choose personal ways of becoming (Parse, 1998, p. 30). Powering is a pushing-resisting process of affirming while not-affirming being with nonbeing (Parse, 1998). Originating is discovering new ways of being with humanuniverse (Parse, 2007) while conforming–not conforming with certainty-uncertainty, as life is lived moment-to-moment (Parse, 1998). The human propels with the new creation of new ventures, as struggling and leaping beyond shift the views of the now, expanding horizons and bringing to light other possibilities (Parse, 1998, p. 30). Transcendence is a humanuniverse (Parse, 2007) process as a new perspective is formed in light of chosen possibilities. Transcendence unfolds as powering shifts with the emerging now cocreating anew. With transcendence comes new understanding, insight, and wisdom that carries onward, shifting possibilities.
Meaning, rhythmicity, and transcendence are the three themes that are central to the principles and underpin the postulates of the humanbecoming (2007) school of thought.

2.3.5 Postulates

In 2007 Parse identified four postulates to further clarify the ontology of humanbecoming (2007). The idea of multidimensionality did not accurately convey the notion of illimitable and irreducible infinity Parse envisioned (Parse, 2007). The postulates are illimitability, paradox, freedom, and mystery presented in Figure 4 (Parse, 2007).

2.3.5.1 Illimitability

*Illimitability is the indivisible unbounded knowing extended to infinity, the all-at-once remembering and prospecting with the emerging now* (Parse, 2010, p. 258). Illimitability connotes the vastness of unknown unfathomable potential of human knowing and understanding that is lived moment-to-moment as indivisible, unpredictable, everchanging humanuniverse (Parse, 2007). Remembering is that which can be reconstructed from actual or imagined projects, ideas, and circumstances. Prospecting is explicitly-tacitly excavating the landscape of memory and ideas. Remembering and prospecting occur all-at-once in seamless moments of unbounded knowing. Unbounded knowing is personal and unique to the individual living the life (Parse, 2008).
2.3.5.2 Paradox

*Paradox is an intricate rhythm expressed as a pattern preference* (Parse, 2007, p. 308). Paradox is viewed, not as an opposite that is to be conquered or surmounted, but as a rhythm that is lived moment-to-moment as indivisible, unpredictable, everchanging humanuniverse (Parse, 2007). The apparent opposites coexist together as unique patterns and are natural rhythms of life (Parse, 1998).

2.3.5.3 Freedom

*Freedom is contextually construed liberation* (Parse, 2007, p. 308). It is the unbounded, unfettered ability to choose pattern preferences. Pattern preferences are cocreated freely without constraint or expectation.

2.3.5.4 Mystery

*Mystery is the unexplainable, that which cannot be completely known unequivocally* (Parse, 2007, p. 308). Human beings are *mysteries to behold* (Parse, 1996b, p. 181). Human beings cannot be known completely and irrefutably, either by self exploration or by others. The human as mystery cannot be thoroughly described in detail as the human is indivisible, unpredictable, everchanging (Parse, 2007).

*Human reality is cocreated illimitably, lived with paradox, constructed with freedom, and filled with impenetrable mystery* (Parse, 2007, p. 310). The three themes, meaning, rhythmicity, and transcendence along with the postulates illimitability, paradox, freedom, and mystery underpin the principles of humanbecoming (2007).
2.3.6 Principles of Humanbecoming

Also in 2007 Parse reshaped statements of the principles and in 2010 aligned the second principle with the assumptions. The statements were slightly changed to clarify meaning without changing the intent of the principles (Parse, 2007, 2010). Each of the principles with corresponding concepts and paradoxes are presented in Figure 4.

2.3.6.1 Principle one

*Structuring meaning is the imaging and valuing of languaging* (Parse, 2007, p. 309). This principle posits the way in which humans assign experiential meaning with humanuniverse (Parse, 2007). Structuring meaning is the significance to the human of living with the moment that emanates from illimitable choice. Choosing from options is the way in which humans signal living treasured beliefs and values with humanuniverse (Parse, 2007). These choices are the meaning of contextual experiences lived everyday and to the ultimate meanings and purposes of life. The concepts that underpin principle one are: imaging, valuing, and languaging.

*Imaging is reflective-prereflective coming to know the explicit-tacit all-at-once* (Parse, 1998, p. 36). Imaging is the explicit-tacit shaping of personal reality, the indivisible presence of potential ideas and events played out in-the-moment as individual reality. Explicit knowing is reflective critical appraisal and logical articulation (Parse, 1998). Tacit knowing is *prereflective–prearticulate and acritical* (Parse, 1998, p. 36). It is that which is known in the depths of being. Imaging is the simultaneous reflective-
prereflexive deliberations that occur explicitly-tacitly as meanings are cocreated with valuing and languaging (Parse, 1998).

Valuing is confirming-not confirming cherished beliefs in light of a personal worldview (Parse, 1998, pp. 37-38). A value is a cherished meaning (Parse, 1998). The paradox of confirming-not confirming is inherent in humans living humanuniverse (Parse, 2007) when choosing from imaged options. Humans choose from cherished options, bearing responsibility and accountability for the choice. Struggle is inherent in confirming-not confirming a cherished belief and unfolds with the human’s illimitable potential as new beliefs are examined, appropriated, or discarded. Valuing is confirming-not confirming a cherished belief (Parse, 1998). Values are priorities chosen as ways of structuring meaning and are lived with imaging and languaging.

Languaging is signifying valued images through speaking-being silent and moving-being still (Parse, 1998, p. 39). Languaging is how meaning is conveyed and received as values are lived. The paradoxes of languaging are speaking-being silent and moving-being still (Parse, 1998). With humanuniverse (Parse, 2007), humans are always conveying meaning. Speaking-being silent is languaging that which is utterable and that which is unutterable when living valued images. Meaning is shown as living patterns with moving-being still. Meaning unfolds with the imaging and valuing of languaging as a context of the tapestry of living was, is, will be all-at-once and is an inherent characteristic of humanuniverse (Parse, 2007). Meaning is coconfigured with rhythmical patterns.
2.3.6.2 Principle two

Configuring rhythmical patterns is the revealing-concealing and enabling-limiting of connecting-separating (Parse, 2010, p. 258) configuring rhythmical patterns (Parse, 1998). Configuring rhythmical patterns is lived explicitly-tacitly as pattern preferences with others and the universe. Rhythmical patterns as pattern preferences are described as three paradoxes: revealing-concealing and enabling-limiting of connecting-separating.

Revealing-concealing is disclosing-not disclosing all-at-once (Parse, 1998, p. 43). Revealing-concealing is a humanuniverse (Parse, 2007) rhythm showing forthrightly who one is in the moment, while protecting that which one does not wish or know to share in-the-moment. It points to the human as mystery, showing the obvious and the hidden all-at-once; those aspects that are known and those that are not yet known explicitly with those that have meaning to be shown and those that have meaning not to be shown, coconstituted as one rhythm. There is always more to a person than what the other experiences in the immediate situation; there is always that which is all-at-once concealed (Parse, 1998, p. 44).

Enabling-limiting is living the opportunities-restrictions present in all choosings all-at-once (Parse, 1998, p. 44). Choosing is constantly lived as a characteristic of being human, as opportunities-restrictions unfold moment-to-moment potentiating-restricting. With choice comes opportunities and limitations, each with accountabilities to the choice
that is lived. In choosing, humans are enabled and restricted, cocreating a rhythmical pattern.

*Connecting-separating is being with and apart from others, ideas, objects, and situations all-at-once* (Parse, 1998, p. 45). Connecting-separating is a continuous cadent process of attending-distancing that permeates all humanuniverse (Parse, 2007) and is a source of human emergence (Parse, 1998). The cadent patterns of communion and aloneness, closeness and separateness, harmony and discord provide humans options as personal choosing. Being with and apart from others, projects, thoughts, and circumstances all-at-once is a feature of humanbecoming (Parse, 2007) and underpins all patterns. Rhythmical patterns are lived all-at-once with revealing-concealing, enabling-limiting while connecting-separating and are inherent characteristics of humanuniverse (Parse, 2007) and health.

### 2.3.6.3 Principle three

*Cotranscending with possibles is the powering and originating of transforming* (Parse, 2007, p. 309). Cotranscending is moving beyond the now moment, with thoughts, projects, hopes, and dreams (Parse, 1998). Cotranscending occurs with the powering and originating of transforming.

*Powering is the pushing-resisting process of affirming-not affirming being in light of nonbeing* (Parse, 1998, p. 47). Powering is a constant cadent rhythm that underpins seeing the familiar and unfamiliar in new light, pushing awareness to novel vistas.
Powering is the intentional process of pushing-resisting, a tension or conflict that moves with possibilities. Inherent with pushing-resisting is risking moving beyond. *The risk refers not only to dying but to being rejected, threatened, or not recognized in a manner consistent with expectations* (Parse, 1998, p. 47). Being is affirmed-not affirmed in the presence of nonbeing. Being can be experienced as meaningful or pleasure while non-being can be experienced as exclusion or disapproval (Baumann, 2009). The tension of powering unfolds with affirming-not affirming the value of being recognized, while all-at-once being disregarded, judged, labeled, or not understood.

*Originating is inventing new ways of conforming-not conforming in the certainty-uncertainty of living* (Parse, 1998, p. 49). With originating, humans conceive novel ways of conforming-not conforming in-the-moment with certainty-uncertainty when navigating day-to-day. Originating is central to cocreating uniqueness with sureness-unsureness as a humanuniverse (Parse, 2007) process. Humans live as indivisible, unpredictable, everchanging wholes, while all-at-once seeking to be like others. *The kind of certainty-uncertainty and conformity-nonconformity, not the degree, is significant in patterns of originating* (Parse, 1998, p. 50). Choices, with anticipated consequences, highlight the ambiguity of conforming-not conforming. The clarity of certainty is lived with the obscurity of uncertainty as a key humanuniverse (Parse, 2007) process of originating.

*Transforming is shifting the view of the familiar-unfamiliar; the changing of change in coconstituting anew in a deliberate way* (Parse, 1998, p. 99). Transforming is a deliberate way of choosing to live humanuniverse (Parse, 2007). It is a shifting of
views and the perspective of looking at something in a new way. Inherent in shifting the view of the familiar-unfamiliar is intent and choice. The human, with purpose, chooses to appreciate diverse perspectives. In transforming the familiar and the unfamiliar integrate with new ways of being, cocreating novel humanuniverse rhythms (Parse, 2007). This is the changing of change. This is transforming, deliberately choosing a new view and, in so doing, a new way of becoming (Parse, 1998, p. 53). Transforming is indivisible, unpredictable, everchanging humanuniverse (Parse, 2007).

Moving with possibilities is the powering and originating of transforming inherent characteristics of humanuniverse (Parse, 2007). Together, the three principles coconstitute the theory of humanbecoming (Parse, 2007).

2.4 RESEARCHER’S CONCEPTUALIZATION OF FEELING GRATENFUL

As previously documented in Chapter One of this thesis, feeling grateful is buoyant appreciation with acknowledging the cherished in communion-aloneness. Its three essences are: buoyant appreciation, acknowledging the cherished, and communion-aloneness. Linked together, these three essences form an indivisible, unpredictable, everchanging definition of feeling grateful consistent with the humanbecoming school of thought (Parse, 1998, 2007, 2010).

2.4.1 Buoyant Appreciation

The first essence of feeling grateful is buoyant appreciation. Buoyant appreciation is posited by this researcher as a floating, uplifting weightlessness with
loving cheeriness that is dynamic, knowing, and strong. Buoyant appreciation is the feeling that comes with profound uplifting regard for a gift that is felt when feeling grateful. It is shown with esteem and is an affirmation of the gift and the giver. Gifts arise with achievement of hopes and dreams. At the theoretical level, buoyant appreciation is conceptualized as powering.

Powering is the pushing-resisting process of affirming-not affirming being in light of nonbeing (Parse, 1998, p. 47). Buoyant appreciation is pushing-resisting when humans are affirmed in a particular way. Affirming being is traditionally acknowledged in many cultures with the giving of gifts. As some humans are affirmed, others are not. The paradox of affirming-not affirming being in light of nonbeing engenders tension. Tensions arise and possibilities emerge cocreating alternatives from which to choose when feeling grateful. Hopes and dreams emerge, pushing-resisting as the human strives to move onward with what is not-yet. Buoyant appreciation affirms being in light of nonbeing. Humans are honoured with gifts of special recognition as noted in honorariums, special occasions, symbols of appreciation, unsolicited awards, and on formal occasions as the culture dictates. Buoyant appreciation conceptualized as powering reflects the pushing-resisting inherent with risk when celebrating another. The one who is honoured is placed in the foreground and the one who honours is placed in the background. Likewise at once, the one who honours is placed in the foreground and the one who is honoured is placed in the background. Onlookers and participants may not share the intent of the sentiments cocreating tension and conflict. Conflict presents opportunities for reflection and opportunities to choose an alternative way of being,
moving from what one is to what one is not yet. The pushing-resisting patterns are present in all human engagements. Hopes and dreams emerge, pushing-resisting as the human strives to move onward with what is not-yet. When feeling grateful, humans experience the tension of buoyant appreciation as the paradoxical rhythms of affirming-not affirming, being in light of nonbeing, while pushing-resisting. Buoyant appreciation is a feature of feeling grateful and is connected with acknowledging the cherished.

2.4.2 Acknowledging the Cherished

The second essence of feeling grateful is acknowledging the cherished. Acknowledging the cherished is posited by this researcher as holding close with love, respect, and regard for something that is prized and has significant meaning when feeling grateful. At the theoretical level, acknowledging the cherished is conceptualized as valuing.

Valuing is the paradoxical rhythm of confirming-not confirming cherished beliefs in light of a personal worldview (Parse, 1998, pp. 37-38). Acknowledging the cherished is constructing personal reality with lived values. When humans feel grateful they acknowledge what is cherished thus confirming what is most valued. That which is less valued in the moment is not confirmed. Not confirming what is valued is also confirming the value the human holds in the moment. Values arise when humans image that which is most meaningful enabling-limiting in the moment when feeling grateful. Confirming cherished images is enabling-limiting when circumstances support the celebration of particular values and is limiting-enabling when specific values are not upheld providing
opportunities-restrictions. Opportunities-restrictions offer challenges for choice when determining a different direction. Choices offer opportunities in one direction, and simultaneously restrict options in another. Appropriating a new value is struggling with a decision to confirm a cherished belief while not confirming others; it is choosing one while all-at-once giving up others (Parse, 1998, p. 39). Acknowledging the cherished is a way to embrace a valued choice with unfolding moments in the process of becoming. This is feeling grateful.

2.4.3 Communion-Aloneness

The third essence of feeling grateful is communion-aloneness. Communion-aloneness is posited by this researcher as attending-distancing when feeling grateful (Parse, 2007), the all-at-once cadent flux of being involved with and apart from others, projects, ideas, and comforts arising with the warp and woof of living each day. At the theoretical level, communion-aloneness is connecting-separating.

Connecting-separating is being with and apart from others, ideas, objects, and situations all-at-once (Parse, 1998, 2009, p. 45). Connecting-separating is a humanuniverse (Parse, 2007) rhythm of simultaneously coming together while moving apart and is a source of human emergence (Parse, 1998) when feeling grateful. As the human becomes close with some phenomena, a distance emerges with others all-at-once. Communion-aloneness is a coming together while distancing all-at-once. Humans feel grateful whether alone or with others. Moreover, when feeling grateful humans connect with the phenomenon or others that engender the feeling while simultaneously are not
involved with other phenomena or others that do not engender the feeling. *Communion is being involved with the activity at hand while all-at-once not being involved, and being involved in a way with other activities* (Parse, 1998, p. 45). Communion-aloneness is a cadent rhythm that is lived every day and is a feature of feeling grateful.

2.5 THE PHENOMENON OF FEELING GRATEFUL THROUGH THE HUMANBECOMING LENS

Feeling grateful through the humanbecoming (2007) lens is: *Buoyant appreciation with acknowledging the cherished in communion-aloneness*. At the theoretical level of conceptualization, feeling grateful is: *Powering the valuing of connecting-separating*.

2.6 SUMMARY

This chapter has provided a description of the genesis of the humanbecoming (Parse, 2007) school of thought with the contributions from the human sciences, the science of unitary human beings, and existential phenomenological thought that formed the development of humanbecoming (Parse, 2007). The philosophical pillars of the humanbecoming (Parse, 2007) school of thought were presented as the assumptions, themes, postulates, and principles of humanbecoming (Parse, 2007, 2010). The chapter concludes by presenting this researcher’s conceptual definition of feeling grateful within the humanbecoming school of thought (Parse, 1981, 1998, 2001, 2005, 2007, 2010). The next chapter provides a review of the literature in relation to the phenomenon under study, that of feeling grateful.
CHAPTER THREE
REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides a review of what is known about the phenomenon of feeling grateful as presented in the literature. Pertinent literature is offered in two sections: general theoretical literature and research literature. The chapter concludes with a summary of the existing knowledge of the phenomenon.

The presentation of the review of literature concerning the phenomenon feeling grateful emerged from an extensive computerized search. The sites that were accessed included: the Cumulative Index to Nursing and Allied Health Literature (CINAHL), Dissertation Abstracts International (DAI), Medline (LMED), Psychological Abstracts (PSYCHINFO), Australasian Digital Theses Program (ADT), OVIDSP, EMBASE, Religious and Theological Abstracts, Social Sciences Abstracts, Scholars Portal, and Art Abstracts. Selected refereed journals were also searched for key words and authors. Reference lists were reviewed and cited references were examined.

The key words and phrases used in this search of the phenomenon feeling grateful were chosen after an extensive review of dictionary definitions. The key words and phrases resulting from the search were: grateful, gratitude, and feeling grateful.
3.2 THEORTICAL LITERATURE ON GRATITUDE

3.2.1 Historical Context

The exploration of ideas surrounding the phenomenon feeling grateful begins from a historical context, where the researcher presents a brief sketch of the salient ideas from the early thinking about the phenomenon of feeling grateful. Epicurus (341 BC-271 BC), Seneca (3 BC-65 AD), Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274), Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679), Samuel Pufendorf (1632-1694), and Adam Smith (1723-1790) are some of the early noteworthy philosophical thinkers who posed initial discussions about the challenges of understanding gratitude. First the derivation of grateful and gratitude are explored.

The usage of words in cultures are derived from ancient languages and convey significant meanings. Words like grateful and gratitude, which are culturally determined over time, originated from Latin for English speaking cultures. Culture creates context and meaning. Each culture and language formulates their own words and meanings.

According to Visser (2008) the English word gratitude is derived from the Latin word gratia; gratia comes from the Indo-European tradition and Sanskrit gurīth and gurath, meaning praise (p. 168). The Latin language made a distinction between praise and gratitude, using two different words laus (praise) and gratia (gratitude), marking a divergence with usage (Visser, 2008). Gratitude then became a concept and a feeling
initially unique to the Latin language, but eventually becoming incorporated into other European languages.

[In] Latin (gratia) remained something one did (agere), had (habere), brought and gave (ferre). There was no verb; gratitude was (and remains in English) a noun that can become an adjective or an adverb, but never a verb. It was our Germanic roots that supplied English with the verb to thank (Visser, 2008, pp. 168-169).

Gratitude was something that was expressed in action rather than felt. According to Visser’s (2008) research, the first occasion recorded where gratitude was spoken reflecting something that was felt was in 20 BC in Virgil’s Acenid, where the Latin gratiiis (with thanks), birthed gratis (for free). From these origins arose the distinction between saying thank you and returning a favour, i.e something done gratis is returned with a thank-you. This separated religious ritual from societal rules of behaviour.

Other ancient philosophers, including Epicurus, have left specific teachings on the topic of gratitude, which includes reference to: the gods, friendship and friends, nature, those who guide the disciple in the path of wisdom, the gift of the present day, and past blessings (DeWitt, 1937). Accordingly, gratitude was thought to be essential to a happy life, preservation of youthfulness, and a healing balm in times of misfortune (DeWitt, 1937).

In Western culture and thought, Seneca has been cited as the first philosopher who shared his concerns about gratitude. In his 1935 treatise entitled On Beliefs
(Harpham, 2004) Seneca raises several issues that would create a path of philosophical thought for other generations of philosophers to follow. First, he identified that gratitude is understood in the context of benefits, specifically within a relationship between a person giving a benefit and a person receiving that benefit. He argued that to understand gratitude, it was first important to appreciate the intention with which the giver, gives and the receiver, receives. *A benefit consists, not in what is done or given, but in the intention of the giver or doer* (Seneca, 1935, p. 23). Second, societal bonds of gratitude unite givers and benefactors when benefits are provided, regardless of social class or distinction. Seneca states …*let us make our benefits, not investments, but gifts*… (Seneca, 1935, p. 7). Third, gratitude surfaces when a gift is freely given to another because of a desire to assist in some way, not because of any expectation of reciprocity nor obligatory belief. *A gift is not a benefit if the best part of it is lacking—the fact that it was given as a mark of esteem…impose[ing] no obligation* (Seneca, 1935, p. 49). Finally, he argued that bestowing benefits and conveying gratitude are activities to be desired in living life, contributing to the quality of the life as lived.

Although not linked to a larger theory of moral judgment, Seneca’s writing provides initial thinking about the phenomenon of feeling grateful. This line of thought was taken up in the Middle Ages by Thomas Aquinas. Aquinas, in writing *Summa Theologica*, liberally quoted Seneca. Like Seneca, Aquinas underscored the importance of intent in the connection between the giver and the receiver of a benefit. Aquinas’ references to gratitude, couched in a Christian perspective, were conceptualized as a sentiment of felt emotion in relation to a specific situation or action (Harpham, 2004).
For Aquinas, gratitude was couched as a debt with a requisite scale of obligations: *humankind to God, child to father, servant to master, and recipient to benefactor* (Harpham, 2004, p. 25).

Thomas Hobbes considered gratitude important in his work entitled *Leviathan*, as he proposed gratitude to be the fourth law of nature following the laws of seeking peace, contracting for peace, and justice (Hobbes, 1651/1991). The fourth law of nature stated: *That a man [sic] which receiveth Benefit from another of mere Grace, Endeavour that he which givith it, have no reasonable cause to repent him of his good will.* (Hobbes, 1651/1991, p. 105). Hobbes understood that gratitude was necessary in society as a manner of leveraging human good.

Unlike Seneca, who viewed gratitude as a form of debt, and Aquinas, who saw gratitude as a debt to be reconciled, Hobbes proffered gratitude as a societal necessity to *assure us that self-interested people will be willing to act in disinterested ways for the benefit of others and for society in general* (Harpham, 2004, p. 27). In other words, people do things for others when they do not directly receive any benefit from their actions. Pufendorf, a 16th century philosopher, responding to Hobbes viewpoint, reinforced Seneca’s stance that gratitude was based on a relationship between the giver and receiver of benefits (Pufendorf, 1991; Harpham, 2004). Pufendorf (1991) noted that living a life that included providing charitable measures and gifts to others promoted good living in society, especially when gratitude was the response to charitable giving. For Pufendorf, there should be no confusion between debts of gratitude and debts of
exchange. *The more apt a benefit is to attach a man’s [sic] heart to the giver, the keener is the obligation for the recipient to return the favour* (Pufendorf, 1991, p. 66). Further, no harm should be experienced for either the giver’s or the receiver’s gratitude.

*The caution to be observed here is that our generosity should not actually do harm to those whom we think we are helping and to others; that our kindness should not exceed our capacity; that we should take into account each man’s [sic] dignity and should give above all to those who are deserving; and that we should give where our help is needed with due regard for the degree of personal relationship* (Pufendorf, 1991, p. 65).

According to Pufendorf, to understand gratitude, one must understand the context and therefore the extent of gift giving. Other authors understood gratitude in the context of relationships related to quality of life.

In *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* Adam Smith (1759/2000) suggests that gratitude was integral with making the world a better place in which to live. Specifically, gratitude binds people together by acknowledging and rewarding a person for the perceived good things that they had done (Smith, 1759/2000). Smith recognized that self-interest could subvert feelings of gratefulness in individuals. He also posits that one could overestimate or underestimate the gratitude owed to another. Beneficiaries were viewed as more inclined to feel and express gratitude toward the benefactor. Smith identified sympathy as a central emotion that unearthed gratitude. He identified three perspectives about sympathy that help explicate moral judgments and shed light on gratitude. First, there was a judgment about the action and motive of another as right or
wrong, along with an element of sympathy that permeated the judgment. Smith (1759/2000) stated:

_to approve of the passions of another, therefore, as suitable to their objects, is the same thing as to observe that we entirely sympathize with them; and not to approve of them as such is the same thing as to observe that we do not entirely sympathize with them_ (p. 16).

In this way, sympathy was viewed as the innate capacity to imagine the actual situation, as if immersed in it, and to feel the _passions, affections, and emotions that arise from this situation_ (Harpham, 2004, p. 29). The second perspective about sympathy that helped to explicate moral judgments and gratitude was the element of mutual sympathy. Mutual sympathy was the connection of two individuals who felt the passions, affections, and emotions of the other. The third perspective was that of _impartial spectator_ who made a judgment based on the correctness of the passions, affections, and emotions of the other. Harpham (2004) stated, _failing to place oneself in the position of an impartial spectator can cause one to both overestimate and underestimate the gratitude that may be owed to another individual_ (p. 32). Through experience, individuals began to identify the passions, affections, and emotions of themselves as if observed by the impartial spectator. In this way, feelings were modified and corrected to reflect societal norms (Harpham, 2004). Expanding on Smith’s contribution to understanding gratitude, Harpham (2004) a) understood where gratitude fit in society, which helped to bring about relationships; b) provided a different perspective of gratitude, which moved away from theological assertions; c) understood that relationships with others could deepen and sustain gratitude.
in the world; and d) identified that self-interest was one of the forces that could taint and threaten personal feelings of gratefulness.

In the writing of recent philosophers, including therapist Melanie Klein (1957), gratitude emerged for humans in infancy when the mother was the primary object for the infant. *One major derivative of the capacity for love is the feeling of gratitude* (Klein, 1957, p. 17). Klein (1957) presented the argument that persons who experienced gratitude were protected in some way from experiencing greed and envy. Gratitude was seen to mediate envy and anxiety, and was an essential ingredient in the capacity of a person to build relationships with others (Klein, 1957). Gratitude *underlies also the appreciation of goodness in others and oneself* (Klein, 1957, p. 17). During therapy, people who had the capacity to experience gratitude, Klein (1957) reported, positioned themselves to consolidate gains and benefit from the analysis. Benefits of therapy, related to experiencing gratitude, were also reported in other cultures.

Other types of therapy were also utilized in cultures and societies, including Japan. In more recent psychological literature, the practice of a type of therapy in Japan called Naikan focused on gratitude through a process of self-reflection (Reynolds, 1983). Naikan comes from the words *nai* meaning (inner) and *kan* meaning (observation) (Reynolds, 1983. p. 1). The processes of looking within oneself occurred at temple retreats that involved a week of intensive self-reflection. Sequestered isolation was interspersed with visits from the therapist. This form of self-reflection focused on how much the person had received from others, how little the person had returned, and how
much trouble and worry was caused (Reynolds, 1983). The person focused their meditation on three questions: *What did I receive? What did I give? What trouble did I cause?* (Reynolds, 1983, p. 48). The contemplations of these three questions produced:

>a healthy, realistic, penetrating guilt which prods to purposeful action, self-sacrifice, and the soothing awareness that despite one’s own limitations others have continued to provide love and support. At the end point of the existential journey through Naikan’s corridors is a gratitude that must express itself in service (Reynolds, 1983, p. 1).

Naikan therapy is concerned about changing perspective while looking at oneself and others in a new way (Reynolds, 1983). It involves *a rebirth into a new kind of life with cleansed attitudes of apology, gratitude, and humility* (Reynolds, 1983, p. 40).

### 3.2.2. Summary

The theoretical evolution of gratitude and gratefulness was found to be steeped in the essential constituents of a happy life. As Seneca (1935) presented, gratitude was viewed as a response to a perceived benefit or gift, given with intention and esteem without obligation of reciprocation. Aquinas introduced the emotional component between giver and receiver of the benefit, which was viewed as a debt to be reciprocated (Harpham, 2004). Hobbes (1651/1991) understood that gratitude was a societal necessity, as did Pufendorf (1991), who noted that giving should not cause harm and may be acknowledged with debts of gratitude and debts of exchange. Finally, Smith (1759/2000) focused on the moral sentiments that unearthed gratitude, binding people together with emotions such as sympathy.
The next section presents a review of research literature concerning the phenomenon under study. The sequence of the review is as follows: Psychological literature, studies in the literature of children and adolescents, religious research literature, and finally what is known from the research in clinical practice.

### 3.3. Research Literature

A review of the literature found no studies that explicates the phenomenon of feeling grateful explicitly, however, references in other disciplines, including philosophy, theology, the human sciences, the humanities, and nursing indirectly shed light on the phenomenon of feeling grateful. These resources helped the researcher to come to know the phenomenon of feeling grateful in a multi-textured context.

Strides have been made in recent decades with understanding the psychological, biological, and social bases of human emotions (Emmons, 2004). The concept of gratitude has generated much interest in recent years with a plethora of self-help books extolling the virtues of gratitude, and journaling one’s experiences (Breathnach, 1996). In recent times there has been an increase in research being undertaken in relation to the interrelationship among gratitude, well-being, and quality of life.

### 3.3.1 Psychology Research Literature

Several definitions of gratitude have emerged from the psychological literature. Gratitude has been defined as *the positive experience of thankfulness for being the recipient of personal benefits* (Kashdan, Uswatte, & Julian, 2006, p. 177), *an emotion*
experienced as a result of being the recipient of a benefit (Froh, Sefick, & Emmons, 2008, p. 219); a relational virtue involving strong feelings toward others (Emmons & Crumpler, 2000); noticing with acknowledgment a benefit received (Adler & Fagley, 2005); a positive emotional reaction to the receipt of a benefit that is perceived to have resulted from the good intentions of another (Tsang, 2006a, p. 139); a moral affect (McCullough, Kilpatrick, Emmons, & Larson, 2001); a virtue (Emmons & Crumpler, 2000; Fitzgerald, 1998); an emotion, the core of which is pleasant feelings about the benefit received (Emmons, 2004, p. 5); a human strength enhancing personal and relational well-being (Emmons & Crumpler, 2000); and a sense of thankfulness and joy in response to receiving a gift, whether the gift be tangible benefit from a specific other or a moment of peaceful bliss evoked by natural beauty (Peterson & Seligman, 2004, p. 554); and being aware of and thankful for the good things that happen; taking time to express thanks (Peterson & Park, 2004, p. 438). Gratitude has also been viewed as a form of respect, the acknowledgment of original gifts in ourselves and others that cannot be deserved (van Kaam, 1972, p. 150). Finally, Fitzgerald (1998) offered a perspective of gratitude encompassing three characteristics that summarize the other definitions: Gratitude is (1) a warm sense of appreciation for somebody or something, (2) a sense of goodwill toward that individual or thing, and (3) a disposition to act which flows from appreciation and goodwill (p. 120).

Gratitude has also been described as a virtue, a quality of integrity, which contributes to quality of life (Emmons & Crumpler, 2000). Gratitude has been identified as one of the most common emotions that religions seek to provoke and sustain believers
(Emmons & Crumpler, 2000, p. 59). Schimmel (2004) viewed gratitude as a moral obligation or something that is owed to another in the form of a debt, imposing behavioural and financial obligations. Tesser, Gatewood, and Driver (1968) posited that the receiver of the intention of the benefactor, the cost to the benefactor, and the value of the benefit were functions of felt gratitude and that gratitude was highly correlated to indebtedness. In other studies, gratitude and indebtedness were identified as distinct but related components (Watkins, Scheer, Ovnick, & Kolts, 2006; Tsang, 2006b; 2007) or thought to serve an informal function (Tsang, 2006a). Jackson, Lewandowski, Fleury, & Chin (2001) found happiness and gratefulness were distinct affects. Gratitude was also viewed as being distinct from obligation, indebtedness, and happiness, being preceded by the perception of benefitting from another’s generosity (McCullough, Kimeldorf, & Cohen, 2008). In another study, subjects felt attracted to the person who helped (Bar-Tal, Bar-Zohar, Greenberg, & Hermon, 1977).

From a psychology perspective, gratitude was identified as a positive emotion that was lived when there was a perception of the receipt of a favor or benefit (Tsang, 2007). Gratitude was an interpersonal emotion, felt toward others but not toward oneself (Emmons & Crumpler, 2000; Peterson & Seligman, 2004), and specifically toward a benefactor (McCullough & Tsang, 2004). Steindl-Rast (2004) described gratitude as a celebration characterized by undeserved kindness and an overwhelming increase of intensity (p. 283) of emotional and intellectual appreciation. Gratitude was thought of as an interpersonal construct (Gordon, Mushur-Eizenman, Holub, & Dalrymple, 2004) and a grateful disposition (McCullough, Emmons, & Tsang, 2002). Psychological research
suggests that there is a growing relationship between gratitude and the thriving of a life fully lived (Peterson & Seligman, 2004; Tsang, 2006a, 2006b).

Experiencing gratitude has been found to increase positive emotion (Emmons & Crumpler, 2000; Emmons & McCullough, 2003); be a source of human strength (Emmons & Crumpler, 2000); enhance physical well-being (Bono & McCullough, 2006 Emmons & McCullough, 2003), enhance psychological well-being (Kashdan, Uswatte, & Julian, 2006; McCullough, Emmons, & Tsang, 2002; Park, Peterson, & Seligman, 2004; Seligman, Steen, Park, & Peterson, 2005; Watkins, 2004; Wood, Joseph, & Linley, 2007a, 2007b; Wood, Joseph, & Maltby, 2009), including life satisfaction, where gratitude was among the most robust predictors (Peterson, Ruch, Beermann, Park, & Seligman, 2007); and, global and day-to-day well-being (Kashdan, Julian, Merritt, & Uswatte, 2006). Counting one’s blessings was found to lead to an enhancement of physical and psychological functioning (Emmons & McCullough, 2003, p. 378). A strong association was found between positive emotional content in autobiographies written as young adults and longevity six decades later (Danner, Snowdon, & Friesen, 2001). Gratefulness, in this study, was identified as one of the positive emotions thought to contribute to a longer life. Neto (2007) found that gratitude was a predictor of the ability (moral emotion) to forgive.

So, perhaps the place to look for gratitude is in the emotions, and it is a matter of moral-emotional virtue. A virtuous person above all feels gratitude to his beneficiary. He [sic] perceives it not as a bargain he [sic] must keep or a moral command to be obeyed, but as sensitivity to what another person has wished for him [sic] (Smilansky, 2002, p. 40).
Whereas the authors previously discussed present gratitude as being an enduring disposition, Fredrickson (2004) embraced gratitude as a temporary emotional state that impacted on individual growth and development. She noted in her broaden-and-build theory that gratitude was a positive emotion, appearing in-the-moment to broaden thought-action repertoires while building long lasting individual resources (Fredrickson, 2001, 2004). For her, gratitude broadens by prompting people to stretch themselves creatively to repay kindnesses and builds by developing skills to demonstrate appreciation and love, thus becoming enduring skills that build and strengthen friendships, civil societies, spirituality, and other social bonds (Emmons & Shelton, 2002; Fredrickson, 2004; Harpham, 2004; Komter, 2004). Although gratitude motivates people to express their appreciation, people may build up their more general skills for loving through the process of thinking broadly about how to repay kindness (Fredrickson, 2004, p. 152). According to Solomon (2004), gratitude was a philosophical emotion, a way of seeing the bigger picture. For him, it was seeing part(s) of a larger context of ongoing relationships. Feeling grateful opened the world to new possibilities.

Gratitude has been described as the glue that cements relationships and brings people together. Gratitude was found to promote relationship formation, feelings of integration into a larger group, and maintenance of relationships over time (Algoe, Haidt, & Gable, 2008). Gratitude promotes savoring (Peterson, Ruch, Beermann, Park, & Seligman, 2007, p. 154), a factor for increasing helping (Bartlet & DeSteno, 2006), and more likely to occur when favours exceed expectations (Bar-Tal, Bar-Zohar, Greenberg, & Hermon, 1977).
Gratitude has been described as private and public, personal and communal, extending beyond social convention while providing personal life meaning, and while embracing life itself as a gift (Emmons & Shelton, 2002). While gratitude is frequently communicated with words, in a study by Hertenstein, Keltner, App, Bulleit, & Jaskolka (2006) which explored nonverbal communication, participants were found to be able to readily communicate the prosocial emotions of gratitude, love, and sympathy with touch (Hertenstein, Keltner, App, Bulleit, & Jaskolka, 2006).

Gratitude has also been discussed in light of three moral functions: a) a moral barometer – a person has benefited from moral action (the actions of another) enhancing well-being; b) a moral motive – promotes the person to act prosocially or reciprocate toward the benefactor or others, into the future; and a moral reinforcer – motivating benefactors to act morally in the future, reinforcing moral behaviour (McCullough, Kilpatrick, Emmons, & Larson, 2001). All three moral functions contributed to generating pleasant and productive social relationships. In this study guilt and shame were present when individuals had not met moral obligations or moral standards. Gratitude emerged when individuals were the beneficiaries of prosocial behaviour (McCullough, et. al., 2001). This research was a forerunner to the development of research instruments to measure gratitude.

The psychological literature has revealed three instruments that have been developed and tested purporting to measure dispositional gratitude. One is the Gratitude Questionnaire (GQ-6), which has demonstrated good psychometric properties
(McCullough, Emmons, & Tsang, 2002; Watkins, 2004) and the Gratitude, Resentment, and Appreciation Test (GRAT) (Watkins, Woodward, Stone, & Kolts, 2003), showed favourable psychometric properties (Diener, Emmoms, Larsen, & Griffin, 1985; Watkins, 2004), and the GRAT short form (Diessner & Lewis, 2007). The GQ-6, a six-item self-report measure of the grateful disposition was positively associated with well-being, prosocial behaviours/traits, positive affect and religiousness/spirituality. The GRAT, a self-report measure conceptualized dispositional gratitude as: (a) acknowledgment of the importance of experiencing and expressing gratitude, (b) appreciation for the contributions of others, (c) appreciation for simple pleasures, and (d) lack of resentment to benefits received (i.e. feeling a sense of abundance, not deprivation). The more grateful a person was purported to be, the more satisfaction they reported with their lives (Watkins, 2004).

The philosophical and research literature the researcher has focused on thus far has been intimately connected with human-to-human connections and relationships. However, there are reported experiences with mammals, other than humans, which offer us a moment to pause and consider other possibilities. In the theoretical and research literature, Bonnie and de Waal (2004) hint that animals may be capable of expressions of gratitude. These researchers relate an anecdote that was shared with them by author Luba in 1928. In this story, a pair of captive chimpanzees were mistakenly locked outside of their shelter during a driving rain storm. The chimpanzees were observed to be cold, shivering, rain drenched, and dejected outside the door of the shelter. When the professor chanced to pass by, he opened the door for them. Instead of running directly into the
warm, dry, protected enclosure, the chimpanzees stopped momentarily to throw their arms around the professor. The image that is portrayed by this story was convincing to the authors, as chimpanzees reportedly do not normally hug their caretakers for no reason (Bonnie and de Waal, 2004, p. 215). In considering animals that are the closest species to humans, If the pleasure is experienced in a personal manner, aimed specifically at the individual who delivers it, are we not getting closer to gratitude? (Bonnie & de Waal 2004, p. 215).

In another story of an extraordinary reaction of gratitude, de Waal shared another lived experience with primates showing an extraordinary reaction of gratitude (Bonnie & de Waal, 2004). de Waal worked with an adult female chimpanzee, teaching her how to feed an infant chimpanzee through the bars of the animal’s cage until a level of expertise and comfort was established. When the time came for the adoptive mother to fully care for the infant, de Waal reported the adoptive mother intently stared into the infant’s face and then approached the author and the caretaker, kissing each, and stared back and forth between the infant and the caretaker, as if asking permission to make a physical connection with the infant. When encouragement was given by the author and the caretaker, the adult female chimpanzee approached the infant and with time became the best caring and protective mother. While there was no special relationship established with the author prior to the adoption, for more than two decades following the adoption whenever de Waal visited the zoo, the chimpanzee would always identify de Waal in the crowd and showered [her] with the greatest possible affection...and as a long-lost family member (Bonnie & de Waal 2004, p. 215). de Waal interpreted this primate response as
everal gratitude, as the most prized value, for a chimpanzee, is an offspring (Bonnie & de Waal 2004, p. 216). These exquisite offerings by Bonnie and de Waal present a glimpse of potential similarity with a mammal with whom we share similar DNA genome. The example may illustrate that a recall of kindness can unfold with gratitude.

3.3.1.1 Summary

The psychological research provided insights into the experience of gratitude as a positive emotion, a virtue, a moral affect, a human strength, and a warm sense of appreciation, joy, kindness, and love. The research underscored the human-to-human connection that cements relationships and informs us about nonhuman primates. Participants who experienced more gratitude were more satisfied with their lives, contributing to their well-being and quality of life. The next section will explore the research on gratitude experienced by children and adolescents.

3.3.2 Gratitude in Childhood and Adolescence

Interest in exploring gratitude with young children and adolescents in psychology arose in the literature as early as 1938. In a qualitative study of 1059 school children Baumgarten-Tramer (1938) found three types of gratefulness: a) verbal gratefulness i.e. *I should show myself grateful, I should always be grateful* (p. 59); b) concrete gratefulness or wanting to reciprocate with an object of personal value; and c) connective gratitude, a desire to make a connection with the benefactor, *I would help him in case of need* (Baumgarten-Tramer, 1938, p. 61). Interestingly, the author stated that material gratitude was most frequent with children of 8 years (51%) and most rare with children 12 and 15
Gratitude in children seemed to be a process that unfolded over several years and did not appear consistently until middle childhood (Emmons & Shelton, 2002). In a study by Doblin-MacNab, and Keiley (2009) grandchildren reported feelings of deep respect and gratitude to their guardian grandparents, with whom they lived, for their efforts in raising them. The children were clear in their understanding of the contributions of their grandparents in how their lives had been improved. Their gratitude came from the recognition of living in a stable and secure home with a loving and predictable environment.

In a qualitative cross-sectional descriptive study of 680 children between 3 and 9 years of age, the content analysis of parental reports revealed that gratitude was found to be weakly associated with happiness in children 7 to 9 years, but not younger (Park & Peterson, 2006). Graham (1988) found that children as young as 5 understood that gratitude led to a greater possibility of having a favour returned. As children aged their understanding of emotions, such as gratitude, became more developed (Graham, 1988). Tsang and McCullough (2004) commenting on this study offered that even young children have developed knowledge about events that may elicit gratitude as well as behaviours that reflect intentions of gratitude.

Becker and Smenner (1986) found in one study where children received stickers, girls more than boys, blacks more than whites, and lower income more than middle income children were more likely to say thank you when book stickers were received. Children from lower income families were more excited to receive book stickers than
were children from middle income families and were reported to may have felt more gratitude. Although the research did not measure children’s perceptions of gratitude, it was thought that it was possible in children that saying thank you was indicative of some amount of gratitude (Tsang & McCullough, 2004). Expressing gratitude by the use of thank you has been demonstrated to be advantageous with restaurant servers. Those who wrote thank you on the dining bill increased the tip percentage, while personalizing by adding their name had no effect (Rind & Bordia, 1995). In an experimental study with 221 adolescents, counting blessings was associated with enhanced self-reported gratitude, optimism, life satisfaction, and decreased negative affect (Froh, Sefick, & Emmons, 2008). Most significant was a very robust relationship between gratitude and satisfaction with school experience (Froh, et al. 2008, p. 213). Counting blessings as an intervention lent credence for well-being in this population of adolescents. (Froh, et al. 2008).

3.3.2.1 Summary

The literature involving children and adolescent populations reported here had its origins as early as 1938, however the interest was not sustained as evidenced by the lack of scientific reports. Most interesting were the findings that some children as young as 5 years of age understood the concept of gratitude and that understanding continued to grow and develop more fully until middle childhood. The findings that happiness was associated with gratitude and that counting blessings enhanced optimism, life satisfaction, and satisfaction with the school experience compared favourably with prior research of
adult populations. The next section will present research on gratitude in religious literature.

### 3.3.3 Research on Gratitude in Contemporary Religious Literature

Bade and Cook (2008) conducted a qualitative exploratory study to examine the multiple functions of prayer in the coping process of Christian persons. Concept mapping was used to examine the perceived similarities among elements versus the latent factor structure of factor analysis, which was based on participant rating of elements (Bade & Cook, 2008). Bade and Cook (2008) found that to give thanks (13.3 percent) and praise God for what God has done in my life (11.7 percent) (p. 127) accounted for 25 percent of the top three items perceived as most effective. The most effective prayer functions were expressing gratitude and seeking guidance.

In Ramshaw’s (2008) study of singing at funerals and memorial services, music and text helped to express and evoke emotion, reinforcing feelings of hope and trust, while bringing to light memories. The text and music spoke of hope and comfort, expressing confidence and gratitude for God’s caring presence throughout individual lives (Ramshaw, 2008, p. 215). Bianchi (2005) stated, *Humor can protect us from becoming stuck in resentments, and it thus opens us to living with gratitude* (p. 323). Relating a story about a 90 year old man caring for the needs of his wife stated *I am awash in a sea of gratitude* (Bianchi, 2005, p. 323). The author reflected that even in pain and loss, the ability to give thanks and to be grateful is eminently religious.
Krause (2009) explored religious involvement, gratitude, and change in depressive symptoms over time. In this longitudinal US nationwide survey of older adults, utilizing data from Wave 5 in 2005 and Wave 6 in 2007, Krause (2009) found that chronic financial strain impacted negatively on depressive symptoms of those who were less grateful. However, the depressive symptoms were completely offset for those who were most grateful. A second finding was that older adults who attended church services felt more grateful more often over time than those who did not attend services as frequently. The results indicated that *people who go to church more often tend to have stronger God-mediated control beliefs and people with stronger God-mediated control beliefs, in turn, tend to feel more grateful* (Krause, 2009, p. 168). These findings, while interesting and contribute to the literature, specifically illuminate the void in the literature related to what it is like to feel grateful when living with stressful situations. In addition, the social and community benefits of social support networks were not addressed in relation to the participant’s experience of gratitude.

Lester (2004) argued that children owe their parents obligations of gratitude. Specifically, when it came to religious training, children were seen to generally honour parental direction concerning their participation in religious rituals and in attending religious education as directed by their parents. Lester (2004) acknowledged that there was tension between the State supporting the child to learn about other religions or to exit religious training by choice, and the parental rights to understand and care for the interests of the child. Obligations of gratitude were seen to be balanced against the rights of the child and the state (Lester, 2004). A child’s obligation of gratitude to their parents
was not a strong basis to justify parents preventing their children’s exposure to religious beliefs that were inconsistent with their own beliefs (Lester, 2004). This position was supported by Lombardi (1991) who argued that neither parental nor divine authority was based on gratitude. However, Lester affirmed that the obligation of gratitude that children owe to their parents is limited by the fact that parents also owe obligations of gratitude to their children (2004, p. 296). Concerning gratitude, Simmel (1996) stated that once the person recognized that they had received something good from another, there was an implicit recognition that the gift could not be fully returned. In other words, one can not make up for feeling grateful completely with word, deed, or surpassed value of the apparent benefit. This was so because the first gifting was perceived as free from obligation. The first gift is given in full spontaneity; it has a freedom without any duty, even without the duty of gratitude (Simmel, 1996, p. 47).

In a study by Camenisch (1981) three categories of obligations of gratitude relating to gifting were identified. The first two actions were identified as grateful conduct and grateful use, relating to feeling grateful for the gift. The third element was identified as feeling grateful, which related to the gift giver. Grateful conduct and grateful use were attached to every gift and showed the benefactor that the recipient was grateful. Acceptance of the gift implied felt gratitude.

Research from the religious and spiritual literature has proffered that there is a relationship between gratitude and happiness, suggesting that people who were more grateful tended to be happier in part because they were inclined to want what they had
more of in life, than others (Larsen & McKibban, 2008). While other studies indicated that gratitude was an important aspect in living health (Peterson & Seligman, 2004; McCullough, Emmons, & Tsang, 2002) these studies failed to elicit the expectation of gratitude in relation to overall quality of life. The authors suggested it may be possible that communicating thank you affirmed relationships and functions as a mechanism to endorse the spiritual and social domain. In a qualitative study of persons living with colon cancer, where gratefulness was found to be a subtheme, one 82 year old participant stated I am thankful that I am religious and not worried about the future, I have inner trust and security (Ramfelt, Severinsson, & Lützén, 2002, p. 145). However, in study of persons who received hospice care at the end of life did not confirm that expressing emotions of gratitude related significantly to their quality of life with end of life care (Prince-Paul, 2008).

In the preceding studies relating to spirituality, while gratitude was a component, theme, or subtheme, little insights are drawn as to how the study participants actually described feeling grateful. The themes of hope, comfort, trust, humor and obligation surfaced, while the frequency of church attendance was associated with gratitude.

3.3.3.1 Summary

The findings in the religious research literature identified prayer as the vehicle for communicating gratitude and seeking guidance, whereas song helped to reinforce feelings of hope, trust, and comfort while expressing gratitude for God’s caring presence. Church attendance was found to influence God-mediated control and in turn these
individuals felt more grateful. Obligations of gratitude were owed, child to parent and parent to child, and gifts were seen as symbols of implied felt gratitude. Humor, happiness, trust, security and quality of life were associated to gratitude and living health. The next section will offer what is known about feeling grateful in clinical practice.

3.3.4 Gratitude and Research in Medicine and Nursing

The medical literature is replete with comments and anecdotes stating that individuals were grateful for persons’, events, places, or things, which enriched or added something of value to their lives (Karlsson, Johansson & Lidell, 2005). However, the scientific literature generally, and the nursing literature in particular, lacks research that specifically focuses on the phenomenon of feeling grateful. The medical research findings and gratitude will be presented followed by the nursing research findings and gratitude.

3.3.4.1 Medical research findings and gratitude

Authors have written about the development of measures for gratitude (Adler & Fagley, 2005), perceptions of gratitude that influenced a person’s evaluation of health care received (Jones, 2005; Staniszewska & Henderson, 2005), gratitude for equitable care (Sinding, Barnoff & Grassau, 2004), gratitude for a transplanted organ (Buldugolu, Kulakac, Kececioglu, Alkan, Ylmaz, & Yucetin, 2005), tokens of gratitude (Cheung, 2003), gratitude for early diagnosis of cancer (Miles, Wardle, & Atkin, 2003), and gratitude as a display of emotion (Keltner, 2003). Medical researchers have reported the ability to identify select moral sentiments (emotions) including gratitude, in different
basal foreground and mesolimbic reward regions (ventral tegmental areas, septum, and hypothalmus) via a functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) (Zahn, et al., 2009). These reports are general in nature and do not provide the reader with sufficient detail to explicate gratitude.

The literature reveals that persons who have lived through a traumatic life event expressed their gratitude in different ways. In a report by Ringdal, Plos, and Bergbom, (2008) four themes arose during the trajectory of care following traumatic injury: a surrealistic world, an injured body, care, and gratitude. Gratitude for life included good remembrances of being loved, supported by their families while in ICU, the desire to win life back when on the ward, and accepting that their life had become different after their injury (Ringdal, et al. 2008). Russell and Fosha (2008) considered gratitude, along with love and tenderness toward another as types of healing affects. Orr, Wills, Holmes, Britton, and Orr (2007) explored the experience of living with a kidney transplant. This qualitative study, using thematic analysis, with 26 post transplant recipients identified themes of fear, gratitude, medicalization, and coping. These themes were found to be long lasting effects of transplantation. Participants identified strong feelings of gratitude for their kidney using phrases such as I feel really thankful for the kidney, appreciation of the person who gave me my life back ... and appreciation for the donors, their families and the renal team (Orr, et al. 2007, p. 659). Feelings of gratitude were tempered with feelings of guilt, beholden to the donor, and regret that a person had to die to make the kidney available. You remember that your celebration is someone else’s grief (Orr, et al. 2007, p. 659). Words including brilliant, wonderful, and fab were used to describe
gratitude for the renal team. One limitation of this study that was not discussed included the lack of detailed procedures that were followed for data collection. The method included group discussions, which were audiotaped and later transcribed. Issues of confidentiality and the protection of human subjects were not addressed. Participants living with post open heart surgery reported fragility as the overriding theme and deep gratitude was identified as a category that helped to describe fragility (Karlsson, Johansson, & Lidell, 2005). Joy and relief were included in the gratitude category along with hope, satisfaction, and resolution. In earlier research, McCraty and Childre (2004) demonstrated that positive and negative emotions could be reflected in heart rhythm patterns, however specific positive or negative emotions could not be discerned based on heart patterns alone.

In descriptions of quality of life following severe burns, participants identified new feelings of gratefulness as easing the burden of functional and aesthetic losses (Moi & Gjengedal, 2008). Progress and survival were experienced as gifts, leading to a new satisfaction with ordinary activities.

Phelps, Bennett, and Brain (2008) identified themes that were associated with women’s responses to cancer following referral for genetic risk assessment. Gratitude was one of the most commonly reported emotions, significantly and positively correlated with hope and removal of harm. The women who expressed gratitude believed the people involved had been helpful and that the referral was relevant, aligning with their goals (Phelps, et al. 2008).
Gysels, Shipman, & Higginson (2008) explored patients’ and carers’ expectations regarding their participation in palliative care research studies, gratitude was identified as one theme that motivated individuals to participate. Participants in this study appreciated the opportunity to have someone listen to their story. Following the interview, participants expressed their thanks for the occasion to make sense of their experiences and would have liked an earlier opportunity to express themselves. Some participants conveyed their gratitude for the quality of care that they received and saw as their duty to give back.

Gardner and Lidz (2001) examined whether psychiatric physicians should expect gratitude from patients whom they involuntarily admitted (coercively committed) for care. Most respondents acknowledged their need for hospitalization. Participants who were involuntarily admitted were less likely to change their view of not needing hospitalization post admission interview and post discharge interview. Participants clearly did not change their perception of how they felt about the experience regarding influence, control, choice, and freedom. Those who were coerced continued to be angry, many others were fearful, relieved, and sad. According to the researchers, the absence of gratitude toward the physician may have been overridden by negative feelings i.e. perceived injustice, disrespect, devaluing, dissatisfaction with treatment, or unfairness of the involuntary treatment process (Gardner & Lidz, 2001). While participants’ sentiments about treatment did not change, their belief regarding required hospitalization did change. Gratitude was not expressed, the authors reflected, if the participant believed the physician was just doing a job, earning a living, getting through the day, or advancing
their career. *The most likely reason why patients do not feel gratitude is that their cognitive appreciation of the benefits of treatment is paired with the feeling that they have been injured by the denial of autonomy* (Gardner & Lidz, 2001, p. 129).

Lastly, in a study of elder’s discrete emotions, gratitude was experienced as one of the top three emotions (happiness and contentment were the other two) (Chipperfield, Perry, & Weiner, 2003). Gratitude was experienced significantly more often than hope (Chipperfield, et al. 2003).

### 3.3.4.1 Summary

The exploration of gratitude in the medical literature reveals linkages of gratitude with the people who experienced trauma and traumatic events. Participants had long-lasting experiences of gratitude following the event that was tempered with regret, guilt, happiness, and obligation associated with gratitude. Others reported joy, relief, hope, satisfaction, and resolution as lived experiences associated with gratitude. These reports, while interesting, continue to leave a gap in the scientific literature concerning persons’ lived experience of feeling grateful as an inherent human experience. A presentation of research in nursing on gratitude will be presented next.

### 3.3.4.2 Research in Nursing on Gratitude

The researcher did not find any articles which specifically explored the phenomena of gratitude, gratefulness, or gratitude. However, several articles did uncover gratitude characterized as a theme, subtheme, construct, component, experience, or
category. One study was located that was underpinned by nursing theory. Wayman and Gaydos (2005) found gratitude was an important component of the transcending experience of suffering. Guided by Watson’s theory, the goal of this study was to increase nursing’s ability to facilitate healing (Wayman & Gaydos, 2005, p 269). Utilizing heuristic research to explore the experience of transcendence through suffering the authors interviewed four participants and coded the transcriptions for themes. One of the 11 themes reported was gratitude. Gratitude was characterized as treasures, gifts, and opportunities of suffering, viewed to speed up personal growth. Wayman and Gaydos (2005) appropriately identified limitations of the study to include the homogeneity of participant selection. In this study, the processes of participant selection and scientific rigour were not discussed. The authors appropriately commented that although efforts were made to obtain variation among participants, all were midlife Caucasian persons. This was seen to limit informative variations that may have resulted from cultural and age differentiation. The themes were not discussed in light of Watson’s theory, therefore depriving readers of further development of the theory in light of expanding nursing’s body of knowledge.

Gratitude also emerged as a form of deference of social exchange as a desire to reciprocate perceived support (Beel-Bates, Ingersoll-Dayton, & Nelson, 2007). In an exploratory qualitative methods study of 31 residents, semi-structured interviews and open-ended questions were utilized to explore the social exchanges of the oldest old residing in three assisted living facilities. Those identified as having few resources used deference as a form of social exchange. Four distinct kinds of deference were found:
participation, pleasantness, cooperation, and gratitude, which served as a means to play a part in social exchanges with family and staff. Gratitude was reported as an important way of reciprocating for the support received, whether the support was wanted or not (Beel-Bates, et al. 2007, p. 636). This study did report limitations of the study related to sample size and the fact that deference as a form of exchange was not a primary focus of the study, but emerged spontaneously during the interview process with the residents. The lack of a theoretical framework by the researchers was an obvious limitation of the study and did nothing to expand the knowledge base of nursing science.

In a study of patients who received implantable cardioverter-defibrillators Fridlund, et al. (2000) reported feelings of gratitude that included happiness at being alive and grateful for the help. A qualitative descriptive design was used with a phenomenographic approach of open and semi-structured interviews, which constituted the basis for data gathering. Fifteen patients were included using strategic selection. The phenomenographic approach was detailed in the report. However, the category of feelings of gratitude was sparse, with examples in both the positive pole and negative pole. The positive pole and negative pole as components of the method were not discussed. The researchers neglected to underpin the research with a theoretical framework to guide the research. The authors call into question the lack of generalizability of their findings. This perspective is from the quantitative research perspective (Polit & Hungler, 1991). The authors do underscore that the findings of this study highlight the need for support groups for patients and families as well as further education for personnel in hospital and primary healthcare (Fridlund, et al. 2000, p 44).
In a qualitative descriptive study reported by Robinson (2002) of 12 women who underwent coronary artery bypass surgery, the theme of survival was characterized as gratitude, awe, and wonder. Descriptors such as *lucky, number one...thankful...and gambled and won* reflected this theme (Robinson, 2002, p. 120). In a more robust study of mother-daughter dyad relationships within the care process of dementia, Ward-Griffin, Bol, and Oudshoorn (2006) interviewed 10 community-dwelling women with mild to moderate cognitive impairment. Most women in the study did not actively engage in requesting help for fear of being a burden, however they did recognize their good fortune with having a thoughtful daughter. The women spoke of feeling grateful for receiving their daughter’s care, while also feeling guilty for being a burden, which the authors coined *grateful guilt* (Ward-Griffin, et al. 2006, p. 132). Four themes unfolded from the study: (a) respecting their own independence with providing their own care (doing care), (b) withholding requests for support (undemanding care), (c) determining the extent and type of care under specific conditions, and (d) accepting care whether they needed it or not. The women were grateful for the help of their daughters and did not want to engage in anything that would inhibit their daughter’s participation in their care and lives. The participant quotes were poignant and highlight gratitude juxtaposed with grateful guilt as a lived experience. The study extends knowledge about the perceptions and experiences of older women living with dementia in relation to the social determinants of health. A salient comment of the authors in the discussion raises questions as it simultaneously deepens our understanding about persons who live with a diagnosis of dementia when they said *women with AD [Alzheimer Disease] not only need to be heard, but need to actively contribute to the construction of equitable policies that promote their health and*
This study demonstrates that persons living with dementia can articulate their priorities related to their health and quality of life and can provide their reflections about gratitude. This work supports a gap in the literature for studies about feeling grateful as a phenomenon central to health and quality of life.

In a phenomenological study of 29 persons affected by stroke sequelae, the respondents reported gratitude, hope, and satisfaction within one of the four themes identified and were reflections of worry and happiness with their experiences (Häggström, Axelsson, & Norberg, 1994). The other three themes reported were uncertainty, sadness and mourning, and isolation. The theme of gratitude, hope, and satisfaction was reflected in nearly one-third of the texts. While the authors offer a limited description of the method, a more robust accounting was desired by this researcher. There was no offering of limitations of the study, a large omission by the authors. Indeed, it is this researcher’s observation that the theme of gratitude, hope, and satisfaction could be considered three discrete themes. The discussion and examples were not sufficient to elaborate on how gratitude may have contributed to or described health or quality of life.

Ramfelt, Severinsson, and Lützén (2002) conducted an exploratory study to explore the meaning of illness in persons living with colorectal cancer. Data were obtained at the time of medical diagnosis, three months, and 12 months post diagnosis. Utilizing a constant comparative method of data analysis the authors found the main theme – attempting to find meaning in illness to achieve emotional coherence (Ramfelt,
et al. 2002, pp. 143-144). This theme consisted of two dimensions: unified and dichotomized embodiment. The subthemes of the unified embodiment dimension included gratefulness, confidence in oneself and others, and looking forward to creating a new future. Although the analysis provided detail to interpret the findings, the subtheme of gratefulness lacked detail. Gratitude was also included in the subtheme looking forward to creating a new future, however there was a lack of detail to develop the finding in the discussion (Ramfelt, et al. 2002, p. 145). The authors did not provide sufficient findings related to gratitude at the time of diagnosis, three months, and 12 months after diagnosis to demonstrate any insights gleaned over time. The rationale for this sampling was that the data was drawn from a larger study of 51 patients with colorectal cancer, leaving the rigour of this research in question. The authors did acknowledge the importance of active, careful listening when nurses are in dialogue with patients and the high degree of skill embodied in the nurse-person relationship (Ramfelt, et al. 2002). A comment in the discussion attempted to link the chaos of receiving a diagnosis of cancer to a new perspective of life, as being innate. The authors proposed that further understanding could occur in light of Antonovsky’s salutogenic notion of coherence…or to Parse[’s] originating in the process of transforming (Ramfelt, et al. 2002, p. 148). These perspectives are not comparable, arising from two distinct paradigmatic perspectives: the totality paradigm and the simultaneity paradigm (Parse, 1987).
3.3.4.1 Summary

The nursing research studies presented here identify that gratitude is an important phenomenon that arises in interviews and discussions with participants that helps to elaborate the focus of the phenomenon under study. Only one study was explicitly guided by a nursing framework, Watson’s theory, which uncovered gratitude as a component of suffering (Wayman & Gaydos, 2005). The subsequent studies reviewed identified gratitude as: a descriptor for being alive and receiving help (Fridlund, et al., 2000), survival with open heart surgery (Robinson, 2002), grateful guilt (Ward-Griffin, et al. 2006), a reflection of happiness and worry (Häggström, et al.1994), reciprocating support received, whether wanted or not (Beel-Bates, et al. 2007), and a response to living [being alive] with colorectal cancer (Ramfelt, et al. 2002). To date, no research has been undertaken and reported that explores the phenomenon of feeling grateful as inherent in being human. This identified gap in the nursing scientific literature is the focus of this research.

3.3.4.3 Summary of medical and nursing research and gratitude

Consistent themes emerged from the medical and nursing research literature that point to gratitude as a significant concept to explore. The first theme is of gratitude for being alive and was expressed by persons who underwent coronary artery bypass surgery. In two qualitative descriptive studies Robinson’s (2002) study showed that survival was experienced with wonder, awe, and gratitude, while in Karlsson, Johansson and Lidell’s (2005) study the patient’s feelings post open heart surgery were of joy and relief categorized as gratitude. The second theme of guilt and grateful guilt arose in the
medical and nursing research where persons received transplanted kidneys (Orr, et al. 2007) or lived with dementia attended to by caregiving daughters (Ward-Griffin, et al. 2006). Guilt, with gratitude, was expressed for receiving valued care. The third theme about gratitude was expressed as reciprocation for support received when in palliative care (Gysels, et al. 2008) and by seniors in assisted living situations, whether help was needed or not (Beel-Bates, et al 2007). These studies uncover themes related to gratitude and also underscore that the phenomenon of feeling grateful is an experience of being human.

3.3.5 Humanbecoming Literature

Within the humanbecoming (Parse, 2007) literature, no specific studies have been conducted to explore the lived experience of feeling grateful. However, three studies have been conducted that revealed within the structure (phenomenological description) of the lived experiences investigated, gratitude or grateful was part of the syntactical structure.

The first study by Cody (2000) used the Parse method to study the structure of the lived experience of grieving for persons living with HIV, who have used injection drugs. The structure of the lived experience of grieving was overwhelming anguish that shapes hopes and intentions as a wretched aloneness is punctuated with cherished uplifting engagements, while gratitude inspires courage in the midst of ambiguity (p. 86). The second study by Baumann (1994) was an exploratory descriptive study of children with mothers having no place of their own. The experience of living without a place of their
own was a sense of gratitude for protection, mingling with the discomfort of restriction and exposure, giving rise to fears and reassurances as detachment from cherished others surfaces discordance with familiar patterns, while novel engagements bring pleasure as insights and struggles surface new possibilities as well as disillusionment (pp. 164-165).

In a third study about the meaning of being a senior for 600 participants, Mitchell (1994) used the operations of the van Kaam phenomenological method and found the following structural definition:

Being a senior means engaging the now while rolling with the vicissitudes of life as refined astuteness surfaces a buoyant unburdening. It is though shifting rhythms propel discovery through grateful abiding in wondering awareness as anticipation of new possibilities enlivens connectedness and altruistic commitments affirm self amidst the retrospective pondering of everydayness (p. 74).

The second common element in Mitchell’s (1994) study was grateful abiding in wondering awareness. This element referred to an intense appreciation for the wonder of life, the beauties of nature, and the heartfelt gratitude at just being alive (Mitchell, 1994, p. 73). The participants also spoke about joy, perceived newness of the world and universe, feeling blessed, seeing things for the first time, and appreciating the privileges and benefits that seniors enjoy. These three studies point to gratitude as integral to being human warranting further investigation.

3.3.5.1 Summary

While gratitude surfaced in the structure of the Parse research method study and the descriptive exploratory study, and grateful in the structural definition of the van
Kaam study, no studies have been completed to date exploring the lived experience of feeling grateful.

3.4 SUMMARY OF THE REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This chapter provided a review of the literature on feeling grateful by examining gratitude and gratefulness. The literature was reviewed from the perspective of several philosophers who wrote about gratitude, psychology, children and adolescents, religious studies, medical practice, nursing practice, and nursing research from the humanbecoming (Parse, 2007) perspective. The findings from this rich tapestry of research reveal human experiences that contribute to understanding about gratitude and gratefulness. The literature indicates that gratitude and gratefulness are humanly lived experiences that are characterized as the fundamental underpinnings of a moral, virtuous, positive human being who experiences joy, kindness, love, happiness, humor, trust, security, relief, hope, enhanced life satisfaction, and satisfaction with school experiences. Gratitude and gratefulness were seen to enhance quality of life and living health. The next chapter provides a description of the Parse research method, the research method used for this research study.
CHAPTER FOUR
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, the researcher explicates the path of inquiry for this research study on the lived experience of feeling grateful. The chapter begins with the rationale for the selection of Parse’s research method (1987, 1992, 1995, 1998, 1999a, 1999b, 2001, 2005, 2006b) as the preferred methodology for this research study. This is followed by a description of the conceptual underpinnings of the method. Then, the participant selection and processes of the method, dialogical engagement, extraction-synthesis and heuristic interpretation are discussed. This description is followed by a presentation of the ethical considerations for this study including: ethics approval process, informed consent, confidentiality, anonymity and level of risk. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the processes by which rigour was achieved for this research study.

4.2 RATIONALE FOR SELECTING PARSE’S RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Parse’s (1987, 1990, 1992, 1995, 1998, 1999a, 1999b, 2001, 2005, 2006b) research methodology was chosen as the preferred method of scientific inquiry for this research study. It is the researcher’s belief that congruency must exist between the philosophical beliefs of the researcher, the ontology and the epistemology of the theoretical perspective, the phenomenon of interest, and the research methodology used to answer the research question. This point of view is consistent with Parse’s (1998)
contention that formal inquiry leads to scholarly research and *the discovery of new knowledge with the enhancement of theory* (p. 59).

### 4.2.1 The Phenomenon of Inquiry

This researcher is interested in humans’ lived experiences, specifically phenomena of universal lived experiences, such as *feeling grateful*. Universal lived experiences are those that people live in their everyday lives. These phenomena appear in the everyday world of relating, as people structure their personal reality of what it means to be human. Parse (1998) considers the phenomenon of feeling grateful to be a universal lived experience of health. As such, this phenomenon is an appropriate focus of inquiry for sciencing rooted in the humanbecoming (Parse, 2007) school of thought. Specifically, the Parse research method (1998, 2001, 2005, 2006b) was the appropriate method to answer the research question and to contribute new scientific knowledge to the discipline of nursing.

### 4.2.2 The Researcher’s Philosophical Perspective

The researcher has come to know that to be human is to engage with the world and with others while living espoused values. Humans live values in illimitable ways to construct their everyday world (Parse, 2008). Inherent with living that which is most valued is making personal choices among the plethora of limitations-possibilities that emerge in daily life. It is the meanings that are cocreated with experiences that arise as quality of life. The researcher’s understanding of humanuniverse is consistent with the
principles, postulates, concepts, and assumptions of the humanbecoming school of thought (1998, 2010).

4.3 PARSE’S RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The Parse research method (Parse 1987, 1990, 1992, 1998, 1999a, 1999b, 2001, 2005, 2006b) was chosen to guide this research study of the universal lived experience of feeling grateful. This research method was designed to discover the structure of universal lived experiences (Parse, 2001). The Parse research method is a phenomenological-hermeneutic method inspired and designed to enhance the humanbecoming (Parse, 2007) theory (Parse 1998). This basic research method of the humanbecoming (Parse, 2007) school of thought (Parse 1998, 2010) advances nursing science, deepening, expanding, and explicating the understanding of humanly lived experiences.


1. The methodology is constructed to be in harmony with and evolve from the ontological beliefs of the research tradition.

2. The methodology is an overall design of precise processes that adhere to scientific rigor.
3. *The methodology specifies the order within the processes appropriate for inquiry within the research tradition.*

4. *The methodology is an aesthetic composition with balance in form.*
   (Parse, 1987, p. 173)


1. *Humans are open beings in mutual process with the universe. The construct human becoming [sic] refers to the human-universe-health-process [sic].*

2. *Human becoming [sic] is uniquely lived by individuals and groups. People make reflective-prereflexive choices in connection with others and the universe that incarnate their health.*

3. *Descriptions of lived experiences enhance knowledge of human becoming [sic]. Individuals and groups can describe their own experiences in ways that shed light on the meaning of health.*

4. *Researcher-participant dialogical engagement discovers the meaning of phenomena as humanly lived. The researcher, in true presence with the participant, can elicit authentic information about lived experiences.*

5. *The researcher, through inventing and abiding with logic while adhering to semantic consistency during the extraction-synthesis and heuristic interpretation processes, creates structures of lived experiences and weaves the structure with the theory in ways that enhance the knowledge base of nursing.* (Parse, 1992, p. 41)

1. **The entities for study are universal lived experiences of health and quality of life.** This means that all persons can, in some way, describe the experience. All persons have experiences such as joy, sorrow, suffering, laughing, waiting, and others. Participants are persons who can describe the meaning of the experience under study with words, symbols, metaphors, poetry, photography, drawings, music, or rhythmic movements.

2. **The data-gathering process is a dialogical engagement, which arises as a true presence, researcher with participant.** It is not an interview.

3. **The analysis-synthesis is the extraction-synthesis, which moves the original dialogue gradually to higher levels of abstraction** – from essences in the participants’ language to essences in the researcher’s language, to language art for each participant, to core concepts, and to the structure of the lived experience.

4. **The heuristic interpretation connects the findings to the principles of human becoming [sic].** (Parse, 2001, p. 167)

The researcher’s passion is to glimpse what life is like for others and to learn the meaning life holds for individuals as they describe personal lived experiences. The Parse research method is one methodology that is designed to extract the richness of lived experiences as individual personal descriptions. *Each human’s reality is the meaning of the situation* (Parse, 1992, p. 56). Participants are the source of the information and are viewed as the expert of their health and quality of life. The Parse research method honours each human being’s ability to describe with precision the meaning of personal experiences, without the corroboration of others (Parse 1987, 1990, 1992, 1998, 1999a, 1999b, 2001, 2005).

### 4.4 THE RESEARCH QUESTION GUIDING THE STUDY

The research question was: **What is the structure of the lived experience of feeling grateful?**
4.5 PARTICIPANT SELECTION

As recommended in the Parse (1999a) literature, 10 participants were recruited for this research study.

4.5.1 Criteria for inclusion in the study

Participants for this study were 10 persons who were 18 years of age and older (the legal age of consent in Canada), had experienced feeling grateful, and were willing to speak in English about their experience of feeling grateful. Participants are persons who can describe the meaning of the experience under study through words, symbols, music, metaphors, poetry, photographs, drawings, or movements (Parse, 1998, p. 63). Participants did not share an art form to describe their experience of feeling grateful.

4.5.2 Participant recruitment

Participants were recruited by referral, or through personal contacts with others. Participants who were referred to the researcher were asked by the recruiter if they were willing to speak about their experience of feeling grateful. Those who stated that they were interested in speaking about their experience of feeling grateful were then contacted by the researcher in person.

Participants were also invited to participate directly by the researcher. In social conversation, some prospective participants would indicate their interest in speaking about feeling grateful and the researcher would formally invite them to discuss their possible involvement in the study. With other prospective participants, the researcher
would introduce a brief overview of the study and inquire if the person was interested and able to speak about feeling grateful.

With all participants who were interested in speaking about their lived experience of feeling grateful, a mutually accepted time and place was established to meet. The purpose of the meeting was to share the methodological processes of the study and to engage in an open discussion concerning the phenomenon of interest. (The Plain Language Statement and ethical considerations are discussed in Section 4.6.2). Dialogical engagements with three participants were conducted at their place of work, three in the participant’s residence, and four in quiet convenient locations at a nearby university.

4.6 PROCESSES OF THE PARSE RESEARCH METHOD


4.6.1 Dialogical Engagement

Dialogical engagement is defined by Parse (2001) as *a true presence of the researcher with the participant* (p. 170). True presence is *a free flowing attentiveness* (Parse, 1998, p. 71). Dialogical engagement is contrary to conventional interview processes with predetermined questions to be asked and answers solicited. Dialogical engagement is an open dialogue focused on the phenomenon of interest.
Prior to beginning each dialogical engagement, the researcher centers on the dialogue about to be (Parse, 2001). Centering is an intentional calm focusing of the researcher on the moments before dialogical engagement. This intentional calm focusing is still-time when the researcher gentles down to be available to be with the participant in true presence (Parse, 2005, p. 298).

Dialogue with each participant begins with the researcher asking a question such as Please talk with me about your experience of feeling grateful. Only questions that moved the dialogue were asked during the dialogical engagement, such as Tell me more about your experience of feeling grateful, or Can you say more about your experience of feeling grateful? or Can you please relate that to feeling grateful? or Is there anything more you would like to say about feeling grateful? Dialogical engagement is an attentive and open way of flowing rhythmically with the participant as they describe the phenomenon of interest. The researcher was in true presence with the participants for the entirety of the dialogical engagements, without interrupting. She went with the dialogue of the participant, where the participant chose to take the researcher.

The dialogical engagements ranged in duration from 25-50 minutes. All dialogical engagements were audio-recorded and subsequently transcribed for preparation for the extraction-synthesis process.
4.6.2 Extraction-Synthesis

Extraction-synthesis (Parse, 2005) is the research process of laboriously teasing out the essences of the participants descriptions. The researcher dwells with each audiotape description while fully absorbed, in deep concentration, with the corresponding transcript (Parse, 2005). *Extraction-synthesis is all-at-once dwelling with and inventing...[while] eliciting meanings of the experience, and inventing through abiding with logic, while adhering to semantic consistency* (Parse, 2005, p. 298). The extraction-synthesis process is an intense, seamless rhythmical ebbing and flowing of dwelling with and inventing, adhering to semantic consistency (Parse, 2005).

Parse’s (2005) extraction-synthesis process includes the following:

1. Synthesizing a story that captures the core ideas about the phenomenon of concern from each participant’s dialogue.

2. Extracting-synthesizing essences in the participant’s language from recorded and transcribed descriptions. The essences are succinct expressions of the core ideas about the phenomenon of concern as described by the participants.

3. Synthesizing-extracting essences in the researcher’s language. These essences are expressions of the core ideas conceptualized by the researcher at a higher level of abstraction.

4. Formulating the language-art from each participant’s essences. Language-art is an aesthetic statement conceptualized by the researcher synthesizing the core ideas from the essences in the researcher’s language. The essences arise directly from the participants’ descriptions.

5. Extracting-synthesizing core concepts from the language-art of all participants. Core concepts are ideas, written in phrases, that capture the central meaning of the language-art from all participants.
6. Synthesizing a structure of the lived experience from the core concepts. A structure is a statement conceptualized by the researcher synthesizing the core concepts. The structure as evolved answers the research question. (p. 298)

4.6.3 Heuristic Interpretation

Heuristic interpretation (Parse, 2005) is weaving the structure (the finding of the study) with the principles of human becoming and beyond to enhance knowledge and create ideas for further research (p. 298). The three processes of heuristic interpretation are structural transposition, conceptual integration and artistic expression (Parse, 2005).

Structural transposition and conceptual integration work in harmony to move the discourse of the structure to the discourse of the theory (Parse, 2001, p. 171). Structural transposition moves the structure of the lived experience to a different level of abstraction, and conceptual integration connects the structure (the finding of the study) to the language of science, humanbecoming (Parse, 2001, 2007).

The artistic expression is the choice of an artform by the researcher. It reflects the structure of the lived experience and is a purely personal artistic expression of meaning for the researcher (Parse, 2005). Researchers choose an artform that, for them, incarnates the transfiguring moments arising with the experiences of the research process (Parse, 2005, p. 298).
4.7 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR THIS STUDY

Several ethical considerations were addressed for this research study that included: ethical approval by RMIT University Human Research Ethics Committee, informed consent, anonymity, confidentiality, and level of risk.

4.7.1 Ethics Approval

Ethical approval was obtained from the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT) University Human Research Ethics Committee and the Faculty of Nursing’s Human Research Ethics sub-Committee prior to commencing the study.

4.7.2 Informed Consent

Each potential participant was provided with a detailed verbal overview of the research study in the form of a Statement of the Study (see Appendix A) and a copy of the Statement of the Study (Plain Language Statement) to read, which outlined in detail the proposed research study (see Appendix B). The consent statement specified to participants that the dialogical engagement may take 20 – 60 minutes or longer depending on how long they wished to speak about feeling grateful; that the discussion would be recorded on audiotape and/or audiodisc; that they may stop the discussion or withdraw from the study at any time without prejudice; that they may contact the principle investigator; that the information is confidential; that their name would not be associated with the information and any identifying information would be removed from the transcripts to protect anonymity; and that there were no known risks. Participants were informed that they could withdraw from the study at any time without any
consequences or cost to them, although none of them chose to withdraw. All questions were answered to the satisfaction of the potential participant. Potential participants who agreed to participate in the study were asked to sign two identical copies of the consent form, one for them and one for the researcher (see Appendix C). All participants signed a consent form specifying that they were informed of the purpose of the research. They were given the researcher’s, the faculty adviser’s, and the RMIT University compliance officer’s phone numbers for any concerns or questions about the study.

4.7.3 Anonymity

To protect the identity of the participants, pseudonyms were used in place of participants’ names. The audiotapes / audiodiscs, transcripts, and all other written reports were identified only with the participants’ corresponding pseudonyms. The transcriptions of the dialogical engagements were held in a password-protected computer only accessible to the principle investigator. Transcriptions of the dialogical engagements and the original audio-recordings were restricted to the researcher and to the researcher’s two supervisors. Quotations obtained during the data-gathering process may be used anonymously in related presentations and publications.

4.7.4 Confidentiality

To protect confidentiality, all audiotapes / audiodiscs were locked in a file cabinet in a secure room in the researcher’s residence. The researcher transcribed all audiotapes / audiodiscs. Following completion of this study, all pertinent information pertaining to this study will be kept under lock and key for a period of five years (a requirement of
RMIT University). After five years, the transcripts and audiotape / audiodisc for each participant will be destroyed in accordance with RMIT University policy for destruction of confidential information.

4.7.5 Level of Risk

Once approval was confirmed through the RMIT Human Research Ethics Committee, potential participants were invited to hear about the study. The principal investigator arranged a meeting with each person at a time and in a setting convenient and conducive to private discussion. Participants were informed at that time that there were no known risks associated with the research study. No issues arose during the study.

4.8 RIGOUR OF THE STUDY

The credibility of a research study reflects a rigorous approach (Burns, 1989; Burns & Grove, 2005; Parse, 2001). A rigorous approach reflects strict adherence to methodological protocols and involves critical appraisal of the research processes. Both Burns (Burns, 1989; Burns & Grove, 2005) and Parse (2001) set forth standards by which qualitative research studies are critiqued. By adhering to such standards, both rigor and credibility of the research are ensured. In addition, methodological scholars expert in Parse research methodology ensured adherence to the standards.
4.8.1 Standards of Rigour

Burns (1989) presented five standards by which qualitative research is critiqued, which include: descriptive vividness, methodological congruence, analytic preciseness, theoretical connectedness, and heuristic relevance. Parse (2001) presented specific dimensions, with criteria, for critical appraisal of qualitative research that includes conceptual, ethical, methodological, and interpretative. Each dimension includes specific criteria for appraisal that examines the substance and clarity of research reports. These standards and criteria, from this researcher’s perspective, provide a thorough evaluation method for determining rigour and credibility in qualitative research.

4.8.1.1 Conceptual dimensions of the study

Conceptual dimensions of the study are the ontological and epistemological linkages to the study. These linkages underpin the discipline-specific frame of reference, describing the phenomenon under study, leading to the research question (Parse, 2001). This study met the conceptual standards in that feeling grateful as a universal lived experience is significant to quality of life and health. Observing Parse’s criteria for rigour, a definition of feeling grateful was created by the researcher. The definition reflected the assumptions, postulates, principles, concepts, and paradoxes of the humanbecoming (Parse, 2007) school of thought (Parse, 1981, 1998, 2010). The research question was clearly formed as an interrogative statement.
4.8.1.2 Descriptive vividness

In accordance with Burns and Grove (Burns, 1989; Burns & Grove, 2005) standard of descriptive vividness, the descriptions of the phenomenon by participants were clearly and concisely presented. Accuracy was insured by audio-recording each participant’s dialogical engagement and painstakingly transcribing each audio-recording, complying with the standard for preserving accuracy. The researcher listened to the audio-recordings while simultaneously reading the transcripts several times during the processes of writing the participants’ stories and extracting the essences. Participants were not asked to bring an artform to illuminate the phenomenon.

4.8.1.3 Methodological congruence

Evaluation of methodological congruence requires that the researcher has knowledge of the meta-theory and the particular methodological approach which was used by the researcher (Burns, 1989, p. 48). Criteria set forth for researchers to appraise methodological congruence of qualitative research (Burns, 1989; Burns & Grove, 2005; Parse, 2001) includes consistency between metatheory (Burns, 1989) and substance and clarity appropriate to the data gathering and the extraction-synthesis processes (Parse, 2001). The researcher must possess an understanding of the research theoretical perspective to articulate congruence ontologically, epistemologically, and methodologically. Consistent with Parse’s (2001) methodological criteria, Burns and Grove (Burns, 1989; Burns & Grove, 2005) identify four dimensions of methodological excellence: rigour in documentation, procedural rigor, ethical rigour, and auditability.
4.8.1.3.1 Rigour in documentation

Burns’ and Grove’s (Burns, 1989; Burns & Grove, 2005) rigor in documentation is consistent with Parse’s (2001) methodological criteria for clarity. Both criteria require clear articulation and documentation of the research process. The researcher initially documented the ontological, epistemological, and methodological links of the humanbecoming (Parse, 2007) theory when describing feeling grateful as the phenomenon of concern. Each element of the research process is clearly documented. The elements in this study included: the purpose and significance of the study, a review of nursing and extant literature, the research question, ethical implications, the dialogical engagement, extraction-synthesis, and heuristic interpretation processes, presentation and discussion of the findings, and a conclusion with implications, and suggestions for further research and practice. All elements contribute to rigorous sciencing.

4.8.1.3.2 Procedural rigour

Procedural rigor (Burns, 1989; Burns & Grove, 2005) referred to the rigor the researcher uses in applying the selected procedures for the study (Burns & Grove, 2005). This is similar to Parse’s (2001) methodological dimension of substance and clarity of the dialogical engagement, extraction-synthesis and heuristic interpretation processes including conceptual shifts in levels of abstraction. To provide careful adherence to the Parse research method two experts in the method were consulted, Dr. Parse, nurse theorist and author of the humanbecoming (Parse, 2007) school of thought and the Parse research method, and a Parse scholar. Procedural rigour was met in this study by following with precision the processes for dialogical engagements and extraction-
4.8.1.3.3 Ethical Rigour

Ethical rigour requires the researcher to carefully reflect, plan, and discuss the ethical implications related to the study (Burns, 1989). Ethical rigour for Burns and Grove (Burns 1989; Burns & Grove, 2005) includes conduct of the study, the rights of the participants, and the consent form. Parse (2001) was more explicit with ethical considerations and provided additional criteria for critical appraisal of qualitative research to include: protection of the participants’ rights, scientific merit of the study, significance to nursing, the study’s contribution to the body of nursing scientific knowledge, and accuracy and authenticity of the ways the data were handled. These criteria are explicit (Parse, 2001) and were followed by the researcher. Ethical standards outlined in this report were honoured throughout the study and in the plans for presentation and publication.

There was discussion of ethical criteria in the previous section (see Section 4.7). Criteria included: ethics approval, informed consent, anonymity, confidentiality, and level of risk.

4.8.1.3.4 Auditability

Burns and Grove (Burns, 1989; Burns & Grove, 2005) referred to auditibility as a rigorous decision trail developed by the researcher, showing the transformation of
participant descriptions across the levels of abstraction, to the language of science. The researcher carefully followed all Parse research method processes in the conduct of the study. In addition, auditability was ensured by Parse research method experts, including Dr. Parse and a Parse scholar.

4.8.1.4 Analytical preciseness

The researcher demonstrated analytic preciseness when transformations were made and documented in the decision-making process (Burns, 1989). Burns’ (1989) standard of analytic preciseness and Parse’s (2001) methodological criteria are consistent relative to the substance and clarity of dialogical engagement, extraction-synthesis, and heuristic interpretation. The researcher carefully documented the decision-making process and transformations of participants’ descriptions across levels of abstraction to the language of humanbecoming. (Parse, 2007). Further, these processes were guided and monitored by the originator of the humanbecoming (Parse, 2007) school of thought and author of the Parse research method.

4.8.1.5 Theoretical connectedness

Theoretical connectedness requires that the researcher be clear and logical in expressing the theoretical schema developed for the study, reflecting the descriptions, and in being compatible with nursing’s knowledge base (Burns, 1989). This is consistent with Parse’s (2001) ontological-epistemological-methodological link. This link was set forth in the heuristic interpretation process, which is the integration of the findings of the study with the humanbecoming (Parse, 2007) theory.
4.8.1.6 Heuristic Relevance

To meet the final standard of rigour and credibility of qualitative research, the results of a study must have heuristic relevance to the reader to be of value (Burns, 1989, p. 51). Heuristic relevance includes a) recognizability by the reader of the phenomenon of study, b) significance to the existing body of theoretical knowledge, and c) applicability to nursing practice situations and future research activities (Burns, 1989). This standard is consistent with Parse’s interpretative criteria. According to Parse (2001), the interpretative criterion is addressed as: a) the reader must recognize the findings as valuable contributions to the literature; b) the implications drawn from the findings must be reflected logically with semantic consistency and accuracy in the presentation of phenomenon and interpretation of the data; the participant’s descriptions must support the interpretative statements; d) there must be ease with following the interpretative decisions, e) there must be clear comprehensive discussions of the findings, building understanding and knowledge, and f) interpretations must generate new ideas for research and theory development. The researcher met and documented the aforementioned standards and interpretative criterion.

The critique of rigour and credibility of qualitative research resides with scholars who are knowledgeable about the researcher’s work, steeped in the knowledge of standards of excellence, and are skilled with the art of criticizing and disseminating the critique (Parse, 2001). This research report was critiqued by experts, which included Dr. Parse, originator of the Parse research method and a Parse scholar.
4.9 SUMMARY

In this chapter, the researcher explicated the path of inquiry for this research study on the lived experience of feeling grateful. The rationale for the selection of Parse’s research method (1987, 1990, 1992, 1995, 1998, 1999a, 1999b, 2001, 2005) as the preferred methodology for this research study was presented. This was followed by a description of the conceptual underpinnings of the method. Then, a description of the participant selection process, dialogical engagement, extraction-synthesis, and heuristic interpretation were discussed. This was followed by a presentation of the ethical considerations for this study including: ethics approval process, informed consent, confidentiality, anonymity, and level of risk. The chapter concluded with a discussion of the processes by which standards of rigour and credibility (Burns, 1989; Burns & Grove, 2005) and criteria for critical appraisal (Parse, 2001) for qualitative research were achieved for this study.
CHAPTER FIVE
PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter the author presents the findings of the research study exploring the human lived experience of feeling grateful. Parse’s (1981, 1987, 1998, 2001) humanbecoming (2007) theory and research method led the researcher to answer the research question: What is the structure of the lived experience of feeling grateful? Three men and seven women living in the community agreed to speak with the researcher about their lived experience of feeling grateful.

The processes of the Parse (1998, 2005) research method are dialogical engagement, extraction-synthesis, and heuristic interpretation. The dialogical engagements were transcribed verbatim and the transcriptions were extracted-synthesized to a condensed story for each participant, bringing to light the central ideas brought forth regarding the experience of feeling grateful. The researcher dwelled with each story while listening to the taped dialogical engagement and reading the printed transcription. The essences for each story were extracted-synthesized, first in the language of the participant and then in the language of researcher. The researcher’s essences were conceptualized and stated at a higher level of abstraction. The researcher’s language was then stated in the form of language-art. The language-art is an aesthetic conceptualization and synthesis by the researcher of the core ideas of the essences for
each participant. The language-art statement conveys the central meaning of feeling grateful for each participant. The stories, essences, and language-art are presented first.

The core concepts are introduced next. The core concepts of feeling grateful were described by each participant in some way and were extracted from the language-art of all participants. The core concepts were synthesized and written in the language of science. The core concepts written in the language of science formed the structure, answering the research question: What is the structure of the lived experience of feeling grateful? The structure was then woven with the humanbecoming (Parse, 1981, 1998, 2005, 2007) school of thought through the heuristic interpretation process. Heuristic interpretation includes structural transposition, conceptual integration, and artistic expression. Structural transposition moved the structure up another level of abstraction. Conceptual integration provided the bridging of this new structure to the science of humanbecoming (Parse, 1981, 1998, 2005, 2007). The extraction-synthesis and heuristic interpretation processes are presented in tables 1 through 4. The artistic expression was a meaningful medium for the researcher to convey transfiguring moments with the phenomenon (Parse 2005) as the research experience unfolded.
5.2 THE PARTICIPANTS’ STORIES

5.2.1 Thomas’ story

Thomas said that feeling grateful is a constant warm-hearted, complete, euphoric feeling of thankfulness that he enjoys. It is being aware and thoughtful especially when helping others. It is a happy, joyous, fluid feeling, where nice things flow, in doing something for somebody. He said, *You have to have pain and suffering in order to become grateful.* It is a tedious process, taking extra steps in trying situations when there is negativity. Feeling grateful is an easy, peaceful feeling, like having a security blanket. He said that feeling grateful is a good feeling that comes from within, which is never-ending, always changing, and evolving. Feeling grateful is putting a positive spin in everybody’s day. Thomas pondered, *Feeling grateful is being aware of other people’s situations, losses, where they live, the war zone, and that type of thing, and being grateful to know that you have an opportunity not to be in that position.*

5.2.1.1 Essences: Thomas’ language

1. Feeling grateful is a warm-hearted, euphoric, constant, and complete feeling of thankfulness. It is being aware and thoughtful in helping others.

2. Feeling grateful is a tedious process, taking extra steps to put a positive spin on trying situations, even with the negativity of pain and suffering.

5.2.1.2 Essences: Researcher’s language

1. Quiescent blissfulness with discernment arises in benevolence with alliances.

2. Tenacious venturing amid tribulation surfaces with assurance.

5.2.1.3 Thomas’ Language-art

Feeling grateful is quiescent blissfulness with discernment arising in benevolence with alliances, as tenacious venturing amid tribulation surfaces with assurance.
5.2.2 Merry’s story

Merry said that feeling grateful is overt happiness, thanksgiving, and reaffirmation that she is on the right track, doing something purposeful. Feeling grateful is swirling emotions of calm and peaceful inner satisfaction, while sometimes feeling anxious and unworthy. Even in adversity feeling grateful is always there with her, a subtle yet recognizable sense of knowing that things will work out. Merry said that feeling grateful is consuming, ensuring feelings of contentment with simple pleasures, when the situation is not exactly as she wanted it to be. She commented that feeling grateful is an overwhelming joy and sadness, not knowing what the future will bring with family. When she looks for it, feeling grateful is always there. Merry said that feeling grateful is living in the moment, not knowing the right thing to do, realizing this moment may not have been, and wondering how many moments are yet to be. Feeling grateful is a sense of being positive, upbeat, and accepting life changing experience. Merry said that feeling grateful is knowing that life is a gift. She said, life itself is to be grateful for and in gratitude there is hope.

5.2.2.1 Essences: Merry’s language

1. Feeling grateful is overwhelming joy and consuming contentment for life’s simple pleasures, knowing that life is a gift.

2. Feeling grateful is sad, unworthy feelings that come with adversity, realizing this moment may not have been, and wondering how many moments with family are yet to be, knowing things will work out.

5.2.2.2 Essences: Researcher’s language

1. Jubilance with acknowledgment surfaces with delight in the ordinary.

2. Uns sureness-sureness with hardship arises with the heartening expectancy of familial devotion.

5.2.2.3 Merry’s Language-art

Feeling grateful is jubilance with acknowledgment surfacing with delight in the ordinary, as unsureness-sureness with hardship arises with the heartening expectancy of familial devotion.
5.2.3 Gracia’s story

Gracia said that feeling grateful is a joyous, deep reverence that dwells very much inside, which is so moving it brings her to tears. Feeling grateful for Gracia is a deep, profound, enveloping feeling of the joyful thankfulness of receiving a son from an unknown woman, who had the courage to place her son for adoption. Feeling grateful for Gracia is the intimacy of bearing witness to a dying sister and feeling so grateful to share in those moments. Gracia said that feeling grateful has never happened without being with others. Feeling grateful emanates from her and guides her life. For Gracia, feeling grateful is a propelling force that moves her to new places and helps her to endure, even if she does not feel worthy. She said, *There’s times when you look at your check book and think ‘there’s no money there’ and yet I always, immediately think, ‘No, no, that’s not what I need to be thinking about.* Feeling grateful is that permeating good feeling, knowing that during the most important events in her life there is a sense of thank you and that important family members are willingly present to share experiences with her. Feeling grateful is a positive feeling that colors her life and can mute negativity, changing the way she sees things. Gracia feels a strength, a fortitude when feeling grateful. Gracia said that when she is feeling grateful nobody can mess it up.

5.2.3.1 Essences: Gracia’s language

1. Feeling grateful is a propelling force that emanates and guides life, helping to endure, even when not feeling worthy. It is a strength and fortitude that mutes negativity and changes the way things are seen.

2. Feeling grateful is a deep profound thankfulness, a permeating good feeling that envelopes and can bring tears. It is the intimacy of bearing witness to a dying sister.

5.2.3.2 Essences: Researcher’s language

1. Tenacity with the onerous arises with potent vitality in the sureness-unsureness of shifting perspectives.

2. Intense regard with tranquility surfaces in the solemnity of family devotion.

5.2.3.3 Gracia’s Language-art

Feeling grateful is intense regard with tranquility surfacing with the solemnity of familial devotion, as tenacity with the onerous arises with potent vitality in the unsureness-sureness of shifting perspectives.
5.2.4 Naomi’s story

Naomi said that feeling grateful is energizing, serene, and personal. Feeling grateful is a deep feeling that strengthens Naomi to want to keep on living, to keep going, and to be a part of things. For Naomi feeling grateful is relief after struggling, while knowing that someone cares and that she never has to give up hope. Feeling grateful is being there for others and for others to be there for her. A grateful feeling for Naomi is the enjoyment of giving information, watching others learn, and introducing others to key people who may be better contacts. Feeling grateful for her is that feeling of self-worth, being accepted, recognized, and valued; a confirmation of her life. When Naomi is feeling grateful she feels wanted, safe, and appreciated. Feeling grateful is a certainty that she is not alone. Feeling grateful for her is peace of mind and is encouraging. It is feeling lucky and thankful that something good can happen to her out of the blue.

5.2.4.1 Essences: Naomi’s language

1. Feeling grateful is a thankful, energizing feeling of being recognized, accepted, valued, and strengthened with the enjoyment of wanting to keep on living. It is a personal confirmation of life that someone cares.

2. Feeling grateful is a deep, serene relief that after struggling, something safe and good can happen out of the blue. It is never to give up hope.

5.2.4.2 Essences: Researcher’s language

1. Enlivened discernment surfaces with delight in acknowledging alliances.

2. Unburdening quiescence amid tribulation arises with expectant assurance.

5.2.4.3 Naomi’s Language-art

Feeling grateful is enlivened discernment surfacing with delight in acknowledging alliances, as unburdening quiescence amid tribulation arises with expectant assurance.
5.2.5 Carlos’ story

Carlos said that feeling grateful is a profound, happy feeling of fullness, being thankful and thoughtful, not only having a place in the world but having a place in a family. Feeling grateful is a wonderful overwhelming experience to be cherished that is humbling and beneficial. It makes him feel completely whole as a human being to feel grateful, helping him understand and appreciate, and making him focus. He stated, *I know that the only reason I am here is because my parents loved me without even knowing me. They went to a strange, different country and they adopted me and if I am not grateful for that I don’t deserve anything else I get.* Everything he has received since then has been a gift, so he feels optimistic and upbeat. He said feeling grateful is also getting rid of the guilt when taking something for granted. For Carlos, feeling grateful is appreciating where things come from, the satisfaction of owning something for the very first time, and the responsibility of sharing or giving a gift without expecting anything in return. Feeling grateful, he said, portrays him in a better light to people, helping them relate. For him, feeling grateful is keeping in close contact with family and friends. Having lost many family members, feeling grateful for him can also be scary and he stated *just as you have been given something it can be taken away from you, so it’s an exciting, happy, and great feeling, but at the same time it can be a sad and emotional feeling.*

5.2.5.1 Essences: Carlos’ language

1. Feeling grateful is a profound, humbling, and happy feeling of being completely whole as a human being, not only having a place in the world but having a place in a family. It is appreciating, feeling optimistic, and upbeat when in close contact with family.

2. Feeling grateful is scary, and at times sad, knowing that everything is a gift and can be taken away.

5.2.5.2 Essences: Researcher’s language

1. Plenitude with poignant elation amid reserved anticipation arises with benevolent alliances.

2. Unsureness-sureness with the burdensome surfaces with revered endowments.

5.2.5.3 Carlos’ Language-art

Feeling grateful is plenitude with poignant elation amid reserved anticipation arising with benevolent alliances, as unsureness-sureness with the burdensome surfaces with revered endowments.
5.2.6 Joy’s story

Joy said that feeling grateful is a having energy and strength to overcome obstacles and to not be afraid. Feeling grateful, for her, is a sense of accomplishment and satisfaction that she has done something she has earned. For Joy, feeling grateful is happiness that makes her glad and humble for innate abilities. Feeling grateful, she said, is an enlightenment, knowing that she is doing something for her community and family that is specialized. Feeling grateful is being thankful and appreciating meaningful friendships, happy times, and the wonderful opportunities that she has had in life.

5.2.6.1 Essences Joy’s Language
1. Feeling grateful is a happy, glad, thankful enlightenment of knowing and doing something for community that is specialized. It is appreciating meaningful friendships and earning wonderful opportunities in life.

2. Feeling grateful is humbling satisfaction with energy to have the strength to not be afraid to overcome obstacles.

5.2.6.2 Essences: Researcher’s language
1. Jubilant discernment surfaces with assurance in novel contributions with benevolent alliances.

2. Reserved valiance surfaces with dauntless potent resilience amid the onerous.

5.2.6.3 Joy’s Language-art

Feeling grateful is jubilant discernment surfacing with assurance in novel contributions with benevolent alliances, as reserved valiance surfaces with dauntless potent resilience amid the onerous.
5.2.7 Charles’ story

Charles said that feeling grateful is feeling calm and peaceful when the trepidation of a challenge has been overcome or a difficulty has been resolved and things are put right. For him, feeling grateful is a sense of happiness, joy, and thankfulness. When he feels grateful he feels relief and blessed that something good happened that he may not have anticipated, or expected, or even thought was possible. Feeling grateful for Charles is the surprise, hope, and accomplishment that he feels when he takes a chance and things turn out. Charles said that feeling grateful is the good, pleasant feeling of pride and satisfaction when seeing his children make their own way in life. For Charles, feeling grateful is not to see yourself as being overly self-important. You can put yourself in the context of other people as opposed to elevating yourself to a higher stature.

5.2.7.1 Essences: Charles’ language

1. Feeling grateful is a happy, thankful, blessed, and joyful feeling experienced when taking chances with the trepidation of meeting unexpected challenges not thought possible.

2. Feeling grateful is the peace, calm, relief, and hope that comes with pride and satisfaction of accomplishment seeing children grow.

5.2.7.2 Essences: Researcher’s language

1. Revered elation with the unsureness-sureness of risking with tribulation surfaces with wonder.

2. Quiescent unburdening arises with familial endeavouring.

5.2.7.3 Charles’ Language-art

Feeling grateful is revered elation with the unsureness-sureness of risking with tribulation surfacing with wonder, as quiescent unburdening arises with familial endeavouring.
5.2.8 Dale’s story

Dale said that feeling grateful is energizing, personal, and uplifting even if life is a challenge. She said *I don’t care if there are logs, stones, I am fine with that. I can go because I can control where I’m going and I can go over those rocks and those stones, those bumps in the road; they do not bother me.* For her, feeling grateful is joyful and calm, a peaceful feeling when appreciating the moment, or what has gone on during the day, or the gift that is life itself. Dale said that feeling grateful is a good, happy feeling of being thankful that comes and goes. For her, feeling grateful is feeling comfortable, relaxed, and pleased for accomplishments. Feeling grateful for Dale is feeling aware and alive, accepting what is, while knowing she has energy to move and go beyond. She said feeling grateful was almost a glowing feeling when she is with her husband.

5.2.8.1 Essences: Dale’s language

1. Feeling grateful is a calm, comfortable, peaceful feeling that almost glows when accepting bumps in the road, what is, or being with a close other.

2. Feeling grateful is an uplifting, joyful feeling that comes and goes when appreciating the moment or the gift that is life itself. It is feeling thankful and energized to move and go beyond.

5.2.8.2 Essences: Researcher’s language

1. Quiescent tranquility amid hardship arises with benevolent alliances.

2. Unburdening elation with impelling cherished endowments surfaces with assurance in venturing onward.

5.2.8.3 Dale’s Language-art

Feeling grateful is unburdening elation with impelling cherished endowments surfacing with assurance in venturing onward, as quiescent tranquility amid hardship arises with benevolent alliances.
5.2.9 Goldie’s story

Goldie said that feeling grateful is a happy and sometimes overwhelming feeling that fills her up, to be feeling complete in the moment. Feeling grateful is the excitement of possibility that she experiences with her child making her feel good. Feeling grateful for Goldie is feeling inspired and passionate where anything is possible, even anger when she least expects it. Feeling grateful, she said, is smiling even when you want to cry and crying even when you want to smile. Feeling grateful for her is soaring, feeling lifted, and free like she can fly. For Goldie, feeling grateful is the peace, serenity, and contentment she feels when she is still and moving at the same time, aware and present, like breathing. Feeling grateful is the fabulous feeling of getting up every day and desiring to go on, even when there is the fear of the unknown. When she slips into dark places, how she gets back out is feeling grateful.

5.2.9.1 Essences: Goldie’s language

1. Feeling grateful is an overwhelming, happy, fabulous feeling of passion that is like soaring, inspiring the peace, contentment, and serenity of feeling free and complete in the moment. It is being present to the excitement of what is possible with children.

2. Feeling grateful is getting up every day and desiring to go on even when there is anger or fear of slipping into dark places of the unknown.

5.2.9.2 Essences: Researcher’s language

1. Exultant liberation arises with enlivening quiescent prospecting with familial alliances.

2. Steadfast resolve with assurance surfaces with the foreboding.

5.2.9.3 Goldie’s Language-art

Feeling grateful is exultant liberation arising with enlivening quiescent prospecting with familial alliances, as steadfast resolve with assurance surfaces with the foreboding.
5.2.10 Hope’s story

Hope said that feeling grateful is a deep, uniquely personal awareness of being present to the small, beautiful things in life, and to others. She feels very unhappy when she does not feel grateful, or if resentful. She said, *You can be grateful for things that are not necessarily positive; You can be grateful for the less great things in your life too. It doesn’t all have to be fantastic and it’s not always about it continuing to be horrible.* For her, feeling grateful is a choice, a way of living that informs her, as natural as breathing. Feeling grateful is a sensory experience beyond her control that emboldens her to rest, trust, fall in love, be a great mother, and to try everyday to believe in people. Feeling grateful for her is a quiet confidence and energy that she feels to hope, step out, and embrace the unknown as she continues on. Feeling grateful is that familiar, thankful, happy feeling that moves and gives her support. For Hope, feeling grateful is a mysterious gift to herself and others that makes her feel alive and awake. She said that feeling grateful really takes you off the hook of having to find satisfaction everywhere.

5.2.10.1 Essences: Hope’s language

1. Feeling grateful is a happy mysterious gift of energy, feeling alive and awake to embrace the unknown, even when life is horrible.

2. Feeling grateful is a uniquely personal choice with quiet confidence to rest, trust, fall in love, be a great mother, and believe in people. It is being present to small, beautiful things in life and to others.

5.2.10.2 Essences: Researcher’s language

1. Light-hearted exultation arises with expectancy amid distress.

2. Novel discernment with alliances emerges with assuredness.

5.2.10.3 Hope’s Language-art

Feeling grateful is light-hearted exultation arising with expectancy amid distress, as novel discernment with alliances emerges with assuredness.
5.3 LANGUAGE-ART

Thomas Feeling grateful is quiescent blissfulness with discernment arising in benevolence with alliances, as tenacious venturing amid tribulation surfaces with assurance.

Merry Feeling grateful is jubilance with acknowledgment surfacing with delight in the ordinary, as unsureness-sureness with hardship arises with the heartening expectancy of familial devotion.

Gracia Feeling grateful is intense regard with tranquility surfacing with the solemnity of familial devotion, as tenacity with the onerous arises with potent vitality in the unsureness-sureness of shifting perspectives.

Naomi Feeling grateful is enlivened discernment surfacing with delight in acknowledging alliances, as unburdening quiescence amid tribulation arises with expectant assurance.

Carlos Feeling grateful is plenitude with poignant elation amid reserved anticipation arising with benevolent alliances, as unsureness-sureness with the burdensome surfaces with revered endowments.

Joy Feeling grateful is jubilant discernment surfacing with assurance in novel contributions with benevolent alliances, as reserved valiance surfaces with dauntless potent resilience amid the onerous.

Charles Feeling grateful is revered elation with the unsureness-sureness of risking with tribulation surfacing with wonder, as quiescent unburdening arises with familial endeavouring.

Dale Feeling grateful is unburdening elation with impelling cherished endowments surfacing with assurance in venturing onward, as quiescent tranquility amid hardship arises with benevolent alliances.

Goldie Feeling grateful is exultant liberation arising with enlivening quiescent prospecting with familial alliances, as steadfast resolve with assurance surfaces with the foreboding.

Hope Feeling grateful is light-hearted exultation arising with expectancy amid distress, as novel discernment with alliances emerges with assuredness.
5.4 CORE CONCEPTS

Three core concepts emerged with the dialogical engagements and extraction-synthesis processes: *potent elation amid tribulation* (see Table 1); *assuredness-unassuredness* (see Table 2); and *benevolent alliances* (see Table 3).

5.4.1 Table 1: First Core Concept as Evident in Language-Art

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Core Concept:</th>
<th>Potent elation amid tribulation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Structural Transposition:</td>
<td>Buoyant fortitude amid the arduous</td>
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<tr>
<td>Conceptual Integration:</td>
<td>Powering</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Thomas</td>
<td>Quiescent blissfulness…amid tribulation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Merry</td>
<td>Jubilant gratification…with hardship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gracia</td>
<td>Tenacity…with potent vitality…with the onerous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Naomi</td>
<td>Enlivened discernment…amid tribulation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carlos</td>
<td>Poignant elation…with the burdensome</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joy</td>
<td>Dauntless potent resilience…the onerous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charles</td>
<td>Revered elation…with tribulation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dale</td>
<td>Unburdening elation…amid hardship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goldie</td>
<td>Exultant liberation arising with enlivening quiescent prospecting…with the foreboding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hope</td>
<td>Light-hearted exultation…amid distress</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### 5.4.2 Table 2: Second Core Concept as Evident in Language-Art

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Core Concept:</th>
<th>Assuredness-unassuredness</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Structural Transposition:</td>
<td>Certitude-incertitude</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conceptual Integration:</td>
<td>Originating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thomas</td>
<td>Assurance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Merry</td>
<td>Uns sureness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gracia</td>
<td>Uns sureness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Naomi</td>
<td>Expectant assurance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carlos</td>
<td>Uns sureness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joy</td>
<td>Assurance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charles</td>
<td>Uns sureness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dale</td>
<td>Assurance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goldie</td>
<td>Assurance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hope</td>
<td>Assuredness</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### 5.4.3 Table 3: Third Core Concept as Evident in Language-Art

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Core Concept:</th>
<th>Benevolent alliances</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Structural Transposition:</td>
<td>Amicable affiliations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conceptual Integration:</td>
<td>Valuing Connecting-separating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thomas</td>
<td>Benevolence with alliances</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Merry</td>
<td>Familial Devotion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gracia</td>
<td>Solemnity in familial devotion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Naomi</td>
<td>Acknowledging with alliances</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carlos</td>
<td>Benevolent alliances</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joy</td>
<td>Benevolent alliances</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charles</td>
<td>Assuring familial endeavouring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dale</td>
<td>Benevolent alliances</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goldie</td>
<td>Familial alliances</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hope</td>
<td>Novel alliances</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5.5 LANGUAGE-ART OF THE STRUCTURE OF THE LIVED EXPERIENCE OF FEELING GRATEFUL

The structure of the lived experience of feeling grateful is: *Feeling grateful is potent elation amid tribulation arising with the assuredness-unassuredness of benevolent alliances* (see Table 4).

5.6 HEURISTIC INTERPRETATION

The structure of the lived experience of *feeling grateful* was woven with the theory through structural transposition and conceptual integration (Table 4). The structural transposition is *feeling grateful is buoyant fortitude amid the arduous arising with the certitude-incertitude of amicable affiliations*, while *powering the originating of valuing connecting-separating* is the conceptual integration.

5.7 PROGRESSIVE ABSTRACTION

5.7.1 Table 4: Progressive Abstraction of the Core Concepts of Feeling Grateful

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Core Concept</th>
<th>Structural Transposition</th>
<th>Conceptual Integration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Potent elation amid tribulation</td>
<td>Buoyant fortitude amid the arduous arising</td>
<td>Powering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assuredness-unassuredness</td>
<td>Certitude-incertitude</td>
<td>Originating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benevolent alliances</td>
<td>Amicable affiliations</td>
<td>Valuing connecting-separating</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4 (cont’d)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Structure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Feeling grateful is potent elation amid tribulation arising with the assuredness-unassuredness of benevolent alliances.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Structural Transposition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Feeling grateful is buoyant fortitude amid the arduous arising with the certitude-incertitude of amicable affiliations.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conceptual Integration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Feeling grateful is <em>powering the originating of valuing connecting-separating</em>.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Artistic Expression</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The structure of the lived experience of feeling grateful as portrayed by Degas’ L’étoile (La Danseuse sur la Scene) (Figure 5).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The structure of the lived experience of feeling grateful is further illuminated in light of an artform chosen to express the researcher’s transfiguring moments during the study. The artistic expression is of the researcher’s choosing and incarnates the transfiguring moments for the researcher as the structure of the lived experience surfaced through the research process (Parse, 2005, p. 298). A richer understanding of the lived experience of feeling grateful emerged as the researcher dwelled with Edgar Degas’ painting L’étoile (La Danseuse sur la Scene) or The Star (Dancer on Stage) circa 1876-1877 (Figure 5) chosen by the researcher to explicate the structure.
Figure 5. Edgar Degas: L'Etoile ou Danseuse sur Scène (The Star Dancer on Stage); vers/circa 1876-1877 (RF 12 258); Pastel sur monotype; Paris, musée d'Orsay, legs/gift Gustave Caillebotte.
This impressionistic illustration offered the researcher another method to further illuminate new knowledge and advance nursing science. While considering the core concepts, the structure, and the language of science, the researcher unearthed deeper meaning about the phenomenon of feeling grateful.

Degas’ portrait is of a young ballerina who seems to be floating across the stage, while observed from the wings by others. *Potent elation amid tribulation* is the first core concept in the structure of feeling grateful. It is a strong force for celebration amid the tensions of living day-to-day. The paradoxes of powering, pushing-resisting, affirming-not affirming, and being-non being, as strong forces are evident in the drawing. Dwelling with Degas’ portrait of the young ballerina, the researcher was captivated by the pushing-resisting force of the light-spirited movement captured by the artist. It is as if the ballerina is being transported from above stage left to the performance floor. The mixed white pastel strokes above the dancer’s left hand give the illusion of a buoyancy as she propels herself in a pushing-resisting movement, resting momentarily on toe point as if delicately suspended. Potent elation is conveyed with the upraised position of her head and soft smiling facial expression, as she lightly floats across the floor amid the tribulation of the tensions imposed by the intricate and difficult ballet steps. The artist crafted the background in dark hues conveying to the researcher an air of uncertainty, a potential foreboding. There also lies in the background an anticipation of elation tempered with a quiet apprehension of what is not yet known. The paradox being-non being is understood by the researcher as her gracefully positioned outstretched arms and hands affirm to the world *Here I am! Watch as I dance!* illuminating her being. This is in opposition with
non-being where potential possibilities of ridicule, disapproval, or disregard for her contribution to the dance world could limit or nullify opportunities to share her talent.

The description of the research participants also suggested feeling grateful is assuredness-unassuredness. The core concept assuredness-unassuredness is closely connected to certainty-uncertainty. The ballerina is on stage alone, conveying with assuredness her ability to perform the required movements with her unique body positioning, while the lurking possibility of a miss-step suggests uncertainty. The ballerina is originating a unique interpretation of the dance movement with certainty-uncertainty each time she dances. The body positioning of the ballerina conveys an air of confidence, allaying any feelings that she may have in the moment of uncertainty or doubt. Assuredness-unassuredness also arises in the artwork as several dance figures in the background are partially drawn, conveying to the researcher that perhaps they are as yet unready to take center stage alone.

For the participants of this research study, feeling grateful was always with benevolent alliances. The core concept, benevolent alliances was depicted by the impressionist artist as figures recessed in the background were showing their cherished connections with the dancer. Several figures are seen, partially constructed, standing as if behind a curtain on a theatre performance stage. Two of the figures, one man and one woman, stand relaxed as if cherishing the dancer in connecting-separating moments. The artist depicts the figures as concentrating, paying close attention to the performance while
others watch from a distance near the stage. They are connecting-separating one with the
other and with the dancer all-at-once.

Interpreting the art while dwelling with the experience of the research process and
the structure illuminated the meaning of the lived experience of feeling grateful. For this
researcher, the experience of interpreting the artwork in light of the structure of feeling
grateful forged a better understanding of feeling grateful. The process of reflecting on
artwork in this way is life changing, as artwork will forever be interpreted by the
researcher with these new insights. Artwork, viewed with the lens of the structure,
expands understanding illimitably. The experience of being with Degas’ ballerina
sparked insights about the powering of potent elation amid tribulation, the originating of
assuredness-unassuredness, and the valuing connecting-separating of benevolent
alliances. The processes of sciencing that includes interpreting art forms expands the
understanding of the universal lived experience of feeling grateful.

5.8 CONCLUSION

The researcher presented in this chapter the findings of the Parse research method
study on feeling grateful (Parse, 1981, 1998, 2007). In the next chapter the researcher
discusses the findings of this study in relation to the humanbecoming (Parse, 2007)
school of thought, the relevant theoretical and research literature.
CHAPTER SIX
DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

6.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter the researcher presents a discussion of the findings that emerged from the Parse research method study (1998, 2001, 2005) that uncovered the structure of the lived experience of feeling grateful. The structure was revealed as three core concepts emerged from the processes of the Parse research method (1998, 2001, 2005). The three core concepts that surfaced from the language-art of the 10 participants living in the community was: potent elation amid tribulation, assuredness-unassuredness, and benevolent alliances. These three core concepts were joined together to form the structure: Feeling grateful is potent elation amid tribulation arising with the assuredness-unassuredness of benevolent alliances. The structure is the answer to the research question.

The structure of the lived experience of feeling grateful was structurally transposed and conceptually integrated to higher levels of abstraction. When structurally transposed to the next level of abstraction, feeling grateful is buoyant fortitude amid the arduous arising with the certitude-incertitude of amicable affiliations. This structural transposition, when conceptually integrated with the humanbecoming (Parse, 2007) school of thought (Parse, 1981, 1990, 1998, 2005, 2007, 2010) becomes powering the originating of valuing connecting-separating. This is the language of science.
In this chapter each core concept is explicated with excerpts from the participants’
descriptions of what it is like to feel grateful and each is explained in light of the
explored with relevant research and theoretical literature to enhance understanding of
what it is to feel grateful and to contribute to the unique scientific knowledge base of
nursing. Lastly, new nursing knowledge is identified.

6.2 POTENT ELATION AMID TRIBULATION

Potent elation amid tribulation was identified from the language-art of the
participants as the first core concept of the structure of feeling grateful. Although all of
the participants spoke of potent elation amid tribulation, each participant description was
unique. Potent elation amid tribulation was structurally transposed as buoyant fortitude
amid the arduous and conceptually integrated with the theory of humanbecoming (Parse,
illuminates the flux that participants experienced all-at-once, as they lived feeling
grateful, while moving forth with day-to-day personal choosings.

One participant spoke about feeling grateful as potent elation amid tribulation
when she used such expressions as overt happiness, thanksgiving, and reaffirmation
[with being] on the right track [in] doing something purposeful. She said feeling grateful
was the consu[ming], ensuring feelings of contentment [with] simple pleasures. For her,
it was a sense of being positive, upbeat, [and] accepting life changing experiences,
knowing that life is a gift. At the same time, referring to her grandchild, who was living
with uncertain life expectancy, she said that there was a lot of anxiety and grief in trying to take this awful situation and still be grateful that she was there, that she was alive. For another participant, potent elation amid tribulation was shown in his description of feeling grateful as a constant warm-hearted, happy, joyous, euphoric feeling of thankfulness. He said that feeling grateful comes from within. When speaking about helping a homeless woman, he remarked that feeling grateful is a happy, joyous, fluid feeling, where nice things flow, in doing something for somebody. At the same time he said, it is a tedious process, taking extra step[s] in trying situations, when there is negative activity. He said, You have to have pain and suffering in order to become grateful. Another participant, referring to the challenges with preparation to show her art work to the public stated that feeling grateful was energizing, serene, and personal, an experience of relief after struggling. She never has to give up hope. She said feeling grateful gives peace of mind and it encourages me to paint; it keeps me from giving up when things are low.

The words of other participants also illustrate the core concept of potent elation amid tribulation. For example, one participant spoke of his adoption from another country. For him feeling grateful is a profound, happy feeling of fullness, not only having a place in the world, but having a place in a family. Feeling grateful for him is a wonderful overwhelming experience to be cherished and is humbling and beneficial. This makes him feel completely whole as a human being. He said,

It's exciting and it's scary at the same time. It really is. It helps me keep a good balance in my life to know that someone could give me something
and someone could take it away from me. I lost many family members in my life and I've been thankful and appreciative of what they've done for me. So, it's both an exciting and happy and great feeling, but at the same time it can be a sad and emotional feeling.

The core concept, potent elation amid tribulation, was highlighted by one participant who reflected on the wonder of her family life. She said that feeling grateful was,

recognized what you have. It's that strange ability to actually see what you've got. And again, you don't always see what you have. But when you do, you're grateful. You're grateful that you have that moment, that opportunity to see it. So I think it's wrapped up in all these million emotions of thankfulness and serenity and peace and the excitement of possibility and the fear of the unknown.

Another participant added, it gives you the energy to keep going on, whether it's good circumstances or bad circumstances; it's a combination of appreciation that gives you energy, remaining humble, and yet having wonderful opportunities. I am thankful, grateful for the opportunities I've had in life.

The core concept potent elation amid tribulation, captures ideas from the participants’ descriptions of moving onward, fueling desires and opportunities, while sustaining hopes and dreams. For participants it was persisting in moving onward with their lives amid the challenge and turbulence of everyday occurrences. One participant expressed feeling grateful as potent elation amid tribulation when she said,
Every day I would check her neuros and be the total nurse person and every night she would sit in her bed with her ventilator, all her tubes and everything, and she [would] hold my finger all night long as she slept. As that was happening, I was so grateful for those moments, not knowing how many more would come, and not knowing what her future held, and not knowing if it was the right thing to do, but still knowing that God gave us a gift. She has had her ups and downs throughout the course of the last [number of] months, but every day, there she is – a beautiful little smile; just growing; and I am so grateful. There is an overpowering sense of gratitude that, even if she were to die, soon, I would still have known her, and still had all those experiences to be grateful for.

Potent elation amid tribulation was structurally transposed as buoyant fortitude amid the arduous and conceptually integrated with the humanbecoming (Parse, 2007) theory as powering. A discussion of buoyant fortitude amid the arduous with powering illuminates the meaning of powering and explicates with depth and clarity knowledge about the lived experience of feeling grateful.

Powering is a concept of the principle, cotranscending with possibles is the powering and originating of transforming (Parse, 2007, p. 309). Powering is risking while living the unbounded possibilities of the paradoxical rhythms pushing-resisting, affirming-not affirming, and being-nonbeing (Parse, 2007, p. 309). Powering is an undeniable force integral to being human. It is the force of human existence and underpins the courage to be (Parse, 1981, p. 57). Feeling grateful as potent elation amid tribulation can be connected to powering in that the potent elation is a strong force for celebration amid the tensions of living day-to-day. In the participants’ descriptions there was a sense of feeling affirmed by gifts. A grandparent spoke of the gift of a grandchild
with limited life expectancy who keeps growing and smiling and developing in spite of many obstacles, while a mother spoke of living life with optimism when she said,

*What gets me up in the morning is knowing that at the end of the day and at the beginning of the day, is like the glass is half full all the time, even if I’m facing something scary or trying to pursue something new. So, it’s very much kind of a gift.*

The pushing-resisting force of buoyant fortitude amid the arduous is powering; it is risking something that is deemed important in the face of the possibility of nonbeing. As choices are made in feeling grateful, powering is the propelling force that moves humans to soar to new horizons of understanding, reaching beyond prior knowing. Some participants used phrases such as *the support to continue on, it rises in [me], get back up, come through some things, moves me to new places, keeps me from giving up when things are low, and made me stronger.* Each participant’s description is underscored with elements of courage.

The core concept *potent elation amid tribulation* was not explicitly described in the existing literature on gratitude, gratefulness, or *feeling grateful,* however the situations in which gratitude or gratefulness was described did yield consistency with some ideas offered by various researchers (Baumann, 1994; Bianchi, 2005; Cody, 2000; Fridlund, et. al. 2000; Häggström, et al 1994; Karlsson, et al. 2005; Mitchell, 1994; Moi & Gjengedal, 2008; Ramfelt, et al, 2002; Orr, et al. 2007; Phelps, et al. 2008; Ward-Griffin, et al. 2006). For example concepts such as joy, happiness, lucky, and thankful with resentment, pain, grief, traumatic injury, medical diagnosis of cancer, and loss shed
light on potent elation amid tribulation. Ringdal, et al. (2008) identified gratitude as being loved and supported by family while accepting life following traumatic injury whereas Orr, et al. (2007) reported that participants who received a kidney transplant were grateful to the donor who helped to give them their life back while feeling beholden, guilty, and regret that the person had to die to make the kidney available. Respondents in another study expressed that they were grateful for the opportunity to receive an implantable cardioverter-defibrillator (ICD) device and the grief for needing such technology in order to live (Fridlund, et al. 2000). Participants following open heart surgery expressed undulating feelings of joy and relief (Karlsson, et al. 2005) while participants who survived the sequelae of debilitating stroke reported worry for the future and happiness that they were not confined to a long-term care facility (Häggström, et al. 1994). These examples point to potent elation amid tribulation, but are described from particularistic grounding.

Consistent with the humanbecoming (Parse, 2007) school of thought (Parse, 1998, 2001, 2005, 2008), concepts similar to potent elation amid tribulation emerged from Parse research method studies (Parse, 1998, 2001, 2005). Baumann (2000) discovered the concepts uplifting delight and bewildering trepidation in a study on feeling loved. Uplifting delight uncovered feeling loved as joyful renewal and an energizing experience, whereas bewildering trepidation represented danger and trouble as concerns that arose when feeling loved (Baumann, 2000). While the concepts uplifting delight and bewildering trepidation are reminiscent of potent elation amid tribulation, however when structurally transposed were unburdening joy and faltering perturbation, and
conceptually integrated respectively as transforming and enabling-limiting (Baumann, 2000). In this study potent elation amid tribulation when structurally transposed as buoyant fortitude amid the arduous was conceptually integrated as powering, highlighting the vacillating paradoxical tension that exists when feeling grateful. The paradoxical tension found with the concept potent elation amid tribulation is similar to unreserved affirmation amid potential irreverence (Kagan, 2008) in a study of feeling listened to; steadfast chancing with wrangling trepidation (Kostas-Polston, 2007) when persisting while wanting to change; struggling in pursuit of fortification (Daly, 1995) and resolute acquiescence (Pilkington & Kilpatrick, 2008) were found in studies on suffering; and fortitude amid adversity (Doucet, 2008) found in a study of having faith. Unreserved affirmation amid potential irreverence (Kagan, 2008) explicated the tension to affirm-not affirm being-nonbeing all-at-once in feeling listened to as an absolute avowal that occurs despite the ever-present possibility of dismissal (p. 63); struggling in pursuit of fortification (Daly 1995) was found to be a way of describing the being-nonbeing of suffering as humans are with and away from the paralyzing anguish glimpsing other possibilities (p. 261) when wrestling with life situations, whereas resolute acquiescence (Pilkington & Kilpatrick, 2008) affirmed the single-mindedness to get through and to go on living in the face of suffering (p. 234); and fortitude amid adversity (Doucet, 2008) detailed the tenacity to struggle with pushing-resisting of having faith when venturing onward with valiance in the presence of hardship (p. 348).

In a qualitative descriptive-exploratory method study, agonizing trepidation amid calming invigoration was found to be related to the theme, transcendence (Lee, Choi, &
Doucet, 2009) defined as *powering the originating of transforming* (Parse, 1998, p. 3) and is a rhythmical process akin to the pushing-resisting rhythm of affirming-not affirming being with nonbeing of powering. While these concepts illustrate powering, in this study, *potent elation amid tribulation* further explications and sheds new light on the concept. Participants’ descriptions about *potent elation amid tribulation* underscore powering as a paradoxical tension of pushing-resisting forces that all-at-once affirm being as enlivened jubilation in the face of onerous foreboding of non-being. It is important to note that other research findings (Allchin-Petardi, 1999; Bournes, 2002; Kagan, 2008; Morrow, 2006; Smith, S. 2006) have highlighted powering as one of the concepts.

Several participants in this study spoke of the energy that sustained them as they moved with situations. Feeling grateful, as it relates to powering, is connected to feeling affirmed by gifts arising with an uplifting sense that enhances quality of life. Powering is inherent in affirming treasured relationships in light of potential catastrophe of losing persons in death or not reaching an imagined potential. The paradox being-non being is not reserved solely for the idea of the living-dying of humans, but is also aligned with threat, rejection, and the birthings and dyings of ideas, projects, and relationships (Parse, 1998). The pitch and roll of potent elation amid tribulation is evidenced with *feeling grateful* when participants spoke eloquently about their inherent joy, thanksgiving, strength, happiness, and euphoric feelings amid the tragedy and trepidation of everyday experiences, thus explicating powering, *the pushing-resisting process of affirming-not affirming being in light of nonbeing* (Parse, 1998, p. 47). Potent elation amid tribulation
is connected to powering in this way. Potent elation amid tribulation arose with assuredness-unassuredness.

6.3 ASSUREDNESS-UNASSUREDNESS

Assuredness-unassuredness was identified from the language-art of the participants as the second core concept of the structure of feeling grateful. Each of the descriptions of the participants was uniquely different as they spoke of assuredness-unassuredness. Assuredness-unassuredness was structurally transposed as certitude-incertitude and conceptually integrated with the theory of humanbecoming (Parse, 1981, 1998, 2005, 2007) as originating. Assuredness-unassuredness, illuminates the cadent merging of certainty-uncertainty with conforming-not conforming that participants experienced all-at-once, as they lived the ebb and flow of feeling grateful in experiences of daily life. Assuredness-unassuredness emerged with optimism and doubt. One participant said,

"It’s an overwhelming sense of knowing that things work out. There are times when you say ‘Whew, I’m so grateful, I just missed that one,’ but I think it’s more subtle [on a] day-to-day basis. I think we need to look for it. When I look for [feeling grateful] it is always there. It’s not there in huge ways. There’s no lotto to be won, there is no big, huge job offer or anything like that. It’s the subtleties of having a life changing experience. I have a granddaughter with multiple health problems and knowing she made it through the day, or when she smiles at you, or takes your hand, or talks to you; it’s such simple pleasures that you are grateful for; looking for those opportunities to make sure that you understand those experiences and are grateful for them and [to] realize that that is really what life is all about."
Feeling grateful arose as assuredness-unassuredness in participants’ dialogues that also showed conforming-not conforming with personal expectations. One participant spoke of feeling grateful with the certainty-uncertainty of struggle while risking in selecting a university for a career that was not her preferred choice, but was perceived by others as more secure. The university she chose was accessible and accepting of her race. She ultimately lived the certainty of knowing that she made a significant contribution to her community by blending her professional work and her love of art during her work life. She was unsure of the meaning and value her work held for others until she was recognized by the community and her peers as making a contribution to society.

For another participant, the assuredness-unassuredness with feeling grateful was holding fast to a pattern of living. He offered,

*Everything in my life has been given and I also know that if I don’t appreciate it, it can be taken away from me. And, once it’s gone there is no room to appreciate it. I’ve heard people say that they know that they love something when they’ve lost it. Well, I’m not that kind of a human being. I’m not going to appreciate something after it’s gone. I’m going to cherish it and appreciate it now, because once it’s gone it just becomes a “what if.”*

Another participant spoke of feeling grateful as assuredness-unassuredness in not knowing what will happen next, as she reflected on loss and relief with the death of her sister-in-law. She reflected,

*The older generation has passed on now and it is he (her brother) and I together; and my motto is “To Live and let live” not which one of us are going to die first, you know. I have just been through the death of his wife,*
which was, in a way not a grateful situation, but in another way a grateful situation because of the fact that he will not have as much concern and worry. She had various illnesses and [my brother] was always there to take care of her. And when you go through that, as you know, there is always the worry for the close other and that lovingly burdensome responsibility that he had is now eased. So that’s a part of [feeling] grateful also. And so I’m very happy about that.

In feeling grateful, one participant shared his certainty-uncertainty in conforming-not conforming with living a new pattern when he decided to leave his job of many years and join another company. He was unsure of leaving an established company, where he was senior and understood the management of this large, diversified company, to begin anew with another less competitive company. It was with certainty-uncertainty that he left his secure job to begin with a small company where remuneration would be less. He wondered how it would all work out. He offered,

I feel the exact opposite of the way I used to feel. On a Sunday, for instance, [before] I more or less dreaded getting up to go to work. Not because there were [not] plenty of solid people where I used to work, but, just the environment overall was very unpleasant. I [now] have the exact opposite sensation on Sunday, or Monday, or Tuesday morning. I have an eagerness about doing what I do and doing it with the guys I’m working with. It’s just a lot of fun. They’ve got great sense of humour, a great sense of respect of what we’re about [and] why we’re doing what we’re doing. So, I feel calm, a resolution, a peace, or things have been put right.

Another participant showed feeling grateful as assuredness-unassuredness with moments of purposeful reflection, as she unearthed feelings of gratefulness about cherished lived experiences. She pondered,
At my sister’s house I can stand on the coast, look out across the ocean and feel so small, but so much a part of what is here and to be so grateful for being in that moment and in feeling grateful in that moment I am feeling renewed, energized, but calm and peaceful. And feeling grateful comes and goes. There are times I forget to feel grateful; times when I get bogged down in the day-to-day and I forget to take that moment to be conscious, consciously aware of what’s good; consciously and intentionally attending to what is good. And to be grateful I have to be intentional. I have to intentionally attend to what I’m feeling inside and how I’m connected with my world and with others in my world. [Feeling] grateful is being aware, accepting what is, being thankful for what is, being at peace with what is while allowing myself a moment to be quiet, to reflect, and appreciate what is in my life.

Assuredness-unassuredness with feeling grateful is the all-at-once undulating experience of certainty and doubt. Assuredness arises as a strength of purpose, a certainty with clarity of knowing, yet with indecision, uncertainty, and doubt. This assuredness-unassuredness is with ideas, projects, and circumstances as lived day-to-day. One participant acknowledged that in feeling grateful she is certain she is not alone.

In this study, assuredness-unassuredness reflected the idea of being unsure with venturing on with some sureness regarding the challenges of life situations. In their expressions, participants showed doubt even with the certainty of feeling grateful for those experiences that were important to them. There was a certainty of conviction with the all-at-once uncertainty with known and unknown possibilities.

The second core concept assuredness-unassuredness was not described explicitly in the existing totality paradigmatic literature on gratitude or gratefulness, however the situations described by some authors did yield consistency with the tension of living life
in a new way with certainty-uncertainty and conformity-nonconformity with adhering to a strict medical regimen (Orr, et. al., 2007); responding to the receipt of genetic risk information (Phelps, et al. 2007); mortality (Bianchi, 2005); and options following a stroke (Häggström, et al. 1994).

In the humanbecoming literature assuredness-unassuredness is captured in the research on feeling unsure. Morrow (2006) found the core concept discomforting trepidation with assuredness-unassuredness, while Bunkers (2007) found the core concept disquieting apprehensiveness, in studies of feeling unsure. A phenomenological study on waiting uncovered the core concepts vigilant attentiveness surfacing amid ambiguous turbulent lull (Bournes & Mitchell, 2002) as a grueling experience of unsure stillness (p. 62) when participants tortuously followed system waiting room rules with the agony of not seeing their loved one when desired. Similarly, in a study of taking life day-by-day (Welch, 2007), the concept sure-unsure arose with the ambiguity of unfolding moments (p. 271) as the participants were simultaneously living the clarity with the vagueness of knowing-not knowing what to expect. In another study, (Mitchell, Bunkers & Bournes, 2006) assuredness-unassuredness was captured as the core concept buoyant assuredness amid unsureness in a study of feeling confident where feeling confident was an exhilarating feeling experienced with a feeling of unsettling tentativeness of wavering (p. 202). Sure-unsure was structurally transposed as certainty-uncertainty and conceptually integrated with the humanbecoming theory as originating (Welch, 2007). The concept originating was explicated in the works of Allchin-Petardi (1999), Baumann
Assuredness-unassuredness was structurally transposed as certitude-incertitude and conceptually integrated with the humanbecoming theory as originating. A discussion of originating in light of assuredness-unassuredness is important to further the understanding of originating, as well as the knowledge about the experience of feeling grateful.

Originating, like powering, is a concept of the principle, cotranscending with possibles is the powering and originating of transforming (Parse, 2007, p. 309). The paradoxes of originating are conforming-not conforming and certainty-uncertainty. Originating is a way of living certainty-uncertainty with everyday life, conforming and at once not conforming with established traditions. The paradox of living certainty-uncertainty surfaces in the human-universe process as individuals make clear their choices in situation, yet all-at-once, live the ambiguity of the unknown outcomes; the sure-unsure exists all-at-once (Parse, 1998, p. 49). Assuredness-unassuredness, of the core concept feeling grateful, is closely connected with certainty-uncertainty. Feeling grateful for participants in this study was a way of assuredly venturing onward, even with the ambiguity of difficult circumstances. There was a certainty of purpose when feeling grateful, which was tempered with some doubt. Feeling grateful for the participants was also a way of inventing a perspective on something given as a gift. There is a sureness-unsureness with which persons approach a gift. Some participants spoke of the
assuredness of life itself being a gift, while all-at-once the unassuredness of living with the unknowns of limited life expectancy. Originating, then, springs from cotranscending with these paradoxes in day-to-day living (Parse, 1998, p. 50). Assuredness-unassuredness connects with the core concept benevolent alliances regarding feeling grateful.

6.4 BENEVOLENT ALLIANCES

Benevolent alliances was identified from the language-art of the participants as the third core concept of the structure of feeling grateful. All participants discussed their lived experience of feeling grateful with connections to persons with whom they had meaningful relationships. Benevolent alliances was structurally transposed as amicable affiliations and conceptually integrated with the theory of humanbecoming (Parse, 1981, 1998, 2005, 2007, 2010) as valuing connecting-separating. Exploration of the concept benevolent alliances in light of the theoretical construct valuing connecting-separating enhances understanding of the meaning of valuing and connecting-separating, which adds further depth and clarity to knowledge about feeling grateful.

Within the participant descriptions of feeling grateful, benevolent alliances arose as a core concept. The core concept, benevolent alliances, illuminates the significant meaning of interpersonal connections that the participants spoke about as they described feeling grateful. While all participants’ experiences were unique, they all shared what it was like for them to feel grateful when they were with others. Some participants expressed feeling grateful with close family members or friends. Other participants
spoke of relationships that were distant. Some participants spoke of relationships with
persons who had died, or had just been born. The sense of generosity, doing good, and
showing kindness flowed through all participant descriptions about others. One
participant spoke of adopting her children when she said, *You know, other people don’t
miss it, but that baby crying at 2 AM in the morning, every time I thought, ‘I’m a mom!’*
Another participant said that feeling grateful, *makes [me] feel that someone cares.* For
her, feeling wanted and appreciated was always in context of connections with others.

One participant spoke of *benevolent alliances* as she was present and bearing
witness to her dying sister when she said,

*I was just grateful that I was getting this intimacy, so I guess in many ways
[feeling grateful] has meant for me always an experience of intimacy. Feeling grateful has never happened with out community. I’ve never had
that experience of [feeling] grateful without there being others. I hope
that feeling emanates from me. I hope my gratitude and my thankfulness
to be with others, and to be living, is evident.*

Another participant spoke of *benevolent alliances* when he spoke of challenging times
when he was a child, his experiences during war time, and with his interest in helping
others. For him, feeling grateful was in context with others. For one participant, feeling
grateful helps him share with other people, helps him relate to others, portrays him in a
better light to people, and makes him feel good to give something to someone else. He
said,
I [would] rather be the kind of person who shows [feeling grateful]. I tend to show my gratefulness by doing something for somebody else. It shows that I remember the small things, being thankful and being thoughtful. It’s a big thing with me. I take great pride in remembering people’s birthdays, remembering people’s special occasions, and giving them something, because I know that I’m [feeling] grateful to have that friendship in my life and in order to keep that intact I want to do something.

_Benevolent alliance_ with a good friend over the years was very significant to one participant when she said,

_I’ve had a friend through thick and thin for at least 70 years now, and I appreciate our friendship. It’s been meaningful to me through the years; and helpful; sustaining at times; just a wonderful relationship. She married and I didn’t, and it didn’t seem to make any difference. And when we went our separate ways, when we got back together again it was just like we had never been separated. And I’m [feeling] grateful about that. Our friendship just seemed to survive instead of the fact that we had been separated. We certainly had different circumstances. She incorporated her husband into my life. The three of us had a friendship that was just great. I appreciate that so much. She is just a very close other, talking about close being family, I think probably she is. I always wanted a sister to share intimate things with._

Another participant expressed feeling grateful associated with a benevolent alliance with his partner, who was by his side during his cancer treatment. He said,

_I was blessed to become involved with a woman that I had known for a while, but only as a friend. We became much more than friends. It was only two or three months before I was diagnosed with cancer that we started dating. That’s the third part of my plate of grateful events. I attribute my recovery from cancer in large measure to [this woman] for her support because she was with me on every minute of every day along that course of treatment. You know, I love her and I feel partly grateful to her. But there’s a lot more to that relationship than just a matter of gratitude. I don’t carry it as a debt, but sometimes I’ll wake up in the_
morning and just be thankful that she’s in my life. I’ve come through some traumatic things and gotten the best out of it.

Feeling grateful for another participant was highlighted by a story of when she was with her husband attending a presentation. This story of feeling grateful as a feature of benevolent alliances reflects several other participants’ stories who acknowledged others and affirmed the personal significance of feeling grateful. She said,

Feeling grateful is personal. It can be shared with others, but it is inside; it’s within you that you feel grateful for what is. We were part way through the day and [he] just sat down beside me and put his arm around the back of my chair and I could feel his presence and I [thought] “thank you for bringing this man into my life.” He has been a gift in my life and I feel very blessed by that gift. I felt very grateful [for being] willing to take that risk, to marry this man, and to share my life with him. It’s a very comfortable, almost a glowing feeling. I can take myself back to that moment in time and just feel that wonderful presence and knowing that life is good. When I feel grateful, like in that moment, [I] feel a connectedness with others.


Valuing is found in the principle structuring meaning is the imaging and valuing of languaging (Parse, 2007, p. 309). Valuing is confirming-not confirming cherished beliefs in light of a personal worldview (Parse, 1998, pp. 37-38). Valuing is expressed with the choices a human makes in the moment, confirming select value priorities while
not confirming others. Living that which is prized confirms what is valued and not valued in the moment. Connecting-separating is a concept of the principle *configuring rhythmical patterns of relating is the revealing-concealing and enabling-limiting of connecting-separating* (Parse, 2007, p. 309). Connecting-separating is an all-at-once paradoxical cadent rhythm *moving with and away from others* (Parse, 1998, p. 45). With connecting-separating there is an all-at-once attending to and a simultaneous distancing from others, experiences, memories (Parse, 1981, 1998, 2008). As one chooses to move with and attend to persons, situations, ideas, or projects, there is a synchronal distancing from others. Similarly, with each separation there is a connecting with that which is deemed more important to the person in the moment. In this way prized relationships are lived in meaningful ways revealing-concealing while connecting-separating and enabling-limiting with what is confirmed-not confirmed as prized in the moment.

Valuing connecting-separating of *feeling grateful* arises with *benevolent alliances*. The construct *valuing connecting-separating* illuminates the core concept *benevolent alliances* and is pivotal to the lived experience of *feeling grateful*. There is a prizing of uplifting meaning moments that humans live when they are *feeling grateful* that occurs simultaneously while alone and with others. The prizing of meaning is momentarily culled from other meaningful moments, whether grateful or angst filled. Valuing connecting-separating is a way of upholding the veneration of a loving unselfishness as a preferred way of being. It unfolds in moments of communion-aloneness, which shape-shifts meaning when *feeling grateful*. The idea of communion with others may occur in solitude, as the idea of aloneness may occur in communion with
others. Valuing connecting-separating is a way of enabling a preferred uplifting way of being that comingles with angst, validating a preferred way of being when *feeling grateful*. *Feeling grateful* when structurally transposed becomes *amicable affiliations*. It is conceptually integrated as valuing connecting-separating, integral to being human, and can be illustrated in the literature located in the totality paradigm and in the simultaneity paradigm.

The core concept *benevolent alliances* was not explicitly described in the existing literature on gratitude, gratefulness, or *feeling grateful*, but was consistent with ideas brought forward by researchers undertaking medical research underpinned in the totality paradigm (Häggström, et al. 1994; Karlsson, et al. 2005; Orr, et al. 2007; Ramfelt, et al. 2002; and Ringdal, et al. 2008). Research studies in this paradigm allude to *valuing connecting-separating* related to *feeling grateful* with relationships and support from family and significant others when regaining health following colon cancer and while looking forward to creating a new future (Ramfelt, et al. 2002); feeling grateful for professional assistance, satisfaction with progress, while worrying about the future (Häggström, et al. 1994); feeling confident with health care staff pre open heart surgery, relatives’ concerns, gratitude and joy with relief when surgery was over (Karlsson, et al. 2005); and when feeling grateful for receiving a kidney transplant when grandchildren sent a birthday card to *Sydney*’ (the kidney) and imbedded in the recipient’s mind was that someone died that day (Orr, et al. 2007).
Valuing connecting-separating has been identified in the simultaneity paradigm, specifically the humanbecoming literature in studies of feeling loved (Baumann, 2000), feeling unsure (Bunkers, 2007), feeling happy (Hanlon, 2004), feeling unsure (Morrow, 2006), feeling very tired (Huch & Bournes, 2003), feeling listened to (Kagan, 2008), feeling lonely (Karnick, 2008), persisting while wanting to change, (Kostas-Polston, 2007), feeling respected, (Parse, 2006), grieving a loss (Pilkington, 2005), suffering, (Pilkington & Kilpatrick, 2006), doing the right thing, (Smith, S. M., 2006), persisting while wanting to change, (Kostas-Polston, 2007). Pilkington and Kilpatrick (2008) identified benevolent alliances as a core concept to accentuate the value that participants placed on significant connections with other persons, things, and ideas, which for them were a source of “help,” “comfort,” “faith,” “hope,” and “courage,” so that they felt “lucky,” “thankful,” “fortunate,” and “blessed” to have them (p. 234), while Morrow (2006) reported treasured alliances occurred with special, important persons as they confirmed not-confirmed cherished beliefs, and Parse (2001) uncovered benevolent engagements as intimately close and loving relationships, while in later research identified prized alliances (2006) as close family members, friends, or colleagues (p. 55), as feeling respected with prized alliances happened with trusting others, relying on others, and listening to and being validated by others (p. 55). These descriptions are closely aligned to benevolent alliances, which when structurally transposed is amicable affiliations and conceptually integrated as valuing connecting-separating.

Valuing connecting-separating is an all-at-once prizing of cherished others, ideas, objects, and events. Descriptions of feeling grateful by all participants conveyed that
benevolent alliances were about others, ideas, objects, and events. In this research study the participants’ stories are replete with meaning moments, confirming what is valued, while at the same time not confirming that which is not valued. In this research study, the descriptions of feeling grateful that led to the core concept benevolent alliances showed that as participants spoke of feeling grateful, they distanced themselves from what was happening at the moment, as they connected with cherished memories or hopes for possibilities. As participants spoke, attending with recollections that were most important to them in the moment, they distanced from other cherished memories. All participants were living valuing connecting-separating with amicable affiliations.

6.5 NEW KNOWLEDGE

Five findings emerged from this research study as unique, which do not appear on the extant literature on feeling grateful:

1. The structure of the lived experience of feeling grateful is potent elation amid tribulation arising with the assuredness-unassuredness of benevolent alliances emerged as new knowledge not previously reported in the literature.

2. Potent elation amid tribulation as the pushing-resisting of affirming-not affirming being in light of nonbeing emerged as essential to feeling grateful as a strong force for celebration amid the angst and tensions of living day-to-day. This unique conceptualization is new to humanbecoming sciencing and extant literature and may expand the understanding of powering as a potent force of feeling grateful.
3. Assuredness-unassuredness emerged as an essential concept of feeling grateful as a way of assuredly venturing onward, even during the ambiguity of difficult circumstances, when experiencing new ways of conforming-not conforming with the certainty-uncertainty.

4. Benevolent alliances as an all-at-once connecting-separating of love, intimacy, sense of generosity, doing good, while showing kindness emerged as essential to feeling grateful.

5. A new understanding and appreciation of feeling grateful as an experience of health and quality of life has emerged from this study.

6.6 SUMMARY

In this chapter the researcher presented a discussion of the findings that emerged from the Parse research method study (1998, 2001, 2005, 2006b) that discovered the structure of the lived experience of feeling grateful. The structure consisted of three core concepts that emerged from the conduct of the research with the Parse research method (1998, 2001, 2005, 2006b). The three core concepts that surfaced from the language-art of the 10 participants living in the community were: potent elation amid tribulation, assuredness-unassuredness, and benevolent alliances. These three core concepts were joined together to form the structure: Feeling grateful is potent elation amid tribulation arising with the assuredness-unassuredness of benevolent alliances. The structure is the answer to the research question and represents new knowledge on feeling grateful.
CHAPTER SEVEN
THE RESEARCHER’S REFLECTIONS ON THE RESEARCH PROCESS

7.1 INTRODUCTION

This specific research study arose during this researcher’s journey with life and the pursuit of knowledge and further academic education. In the pursuit of formal academic education it was essential for this researcher to follow life interests in the science of nursing and to study universal phenomena concerning the human and health. The research process envisioned must adhere to rigorous inquiry. In keeping with the path of rigorous inquiry, one must provide a transparent description of the journey throughout the research process. This chapter includes for the reader a first person accounting of this researcher’s reflections and insights gleaned from the research experience and the first experience with research guided by the humanbecoming school of thought (Parse, 1981, 1990, 1998, 2001, 2005, 2007, 2010).

This chapter is written in the first person, in keeping with the tradition of diaristic writing. Writing in the first person provides a connection with the complexities that can be communicated in meaningful ways. Here I trace my first journey with research underpinned by the humanbecoming (Parse, 2007) school of thought from the initial ideas for the focus of this study through struggles, turning points, and illuminating moments arising through completion of this thesis. In this chapter I offered personal insights into my lived experience of completing a Parse method research study.
7.2 FINDING A FOCUS FOR THE STUDY

My journey for this thesis commenced shortly after the completion of my Master’s in nursing degree. I had completed a research thesis entitled *Hospital Nurses Views of their Work as a Job or Career: A Pilot Study*. This study was located in the quantitative paradigm. I was fortunate then to be in a research program that stressed the nature of building nursing research, collaborative study, and contributing to nursing knowledge. I was determined to contribute to the enhancement of nursing knowledge as a career goal. During the program of study I learned that it was the human being, the person experiencing health and quality of life, in which I was most intrigued and about which I wanted to learn more. My interest drifted toward primary healthcare. I thought that I would find a focus of interest there. As there were no primary health care doctoral programmes in Canada, I moved to North Carolina, where I had previously lived and where I knew I could pursue my interest in primary healthcare at one renowned university. However, in order to realize my goal I had to be able to have sufficient income to pay for my tuition fees and living expenses. My thinking at the time was if I could obtain state residency, I would qualify for in-state tuition that would be half the cost of out-of-state tuition fees. Finally, after three months of interviews in non-direct patient care roles, I accepted a staff nurse role on a cardiovascular stepdown unit. I envisioned studying nurse practitioner courses at a local university thinking that this experience would provide me with the focused passion I was seeking. Then life intervened and I was recruited back to Canada to launch the first advanced practice nurse role of clinical nurse specialist in the Regional Health Authority 2, Atlantic Health Sciences Corporation, New Brunswick, Canada.
Within three months of returning to Canada I was on a focused path to what I would discover was my passion for my doctoral research work. I proceeded on a journey of living my health and quality of life. I wondered, pondered, read, wrote, reflected, and discussed my thoughts with select others. After having reconnected with best friends in North Carolina, I noticed that I was reconnecting with childhood friends, university friends, and other old friends. I wondered what this was about as I continued making many new friends in this new city and province. I was feeling grateful for the opportunity to reflect and to discover this mystery. I made particular effort to reconnect with diploma nursing school friends who were important to me now living in several parts of Canada. One of those old friends was a well-written author and researcher. Over the years our career paths moved in parallel (until she commenced and completed her nursing doctoral programme). We visited one another infrequently but we were in contact. Then there was a 10-year gap in which there was no direct communication, however, I was aware of her writing. I knew that what was important enough for her to write about was important enough for me to read, so I set about reading her research before I phoned and reconnected with her. As I became reacquainted with her through her work, it spoke to me with a different voice. The voice was one of a particular focus - health and quality of life of the person. This was my passion. I was hooked and needed to learn more about the humanbecoming (Parse, 2007) perspective which underpinned her work.

My personal quest to reconnect with loved others unfolded during my first conversation with my old friend. She shared with me that in November of that year
(1996) the International Consortium of Parse Scholars (ICPS) was meeting in Ontario. I knew instantly that I must go to learn more about the theory, theorist, research studies, and those nurses who also had a passion for the person, their health, and their quality of life.

After attending several ICPS conferences, self-study, and with some mentoring from Parse nurses I knew I required more formal immersive study. I planned to attend the Humanbecoming (Parse, 2007) Institute in Pittsburgh, USA. This provided me with intensive study with the theorist, Dr. Rosemarie Rizzo Parse, focusing on the theory, Parse research methodologies, teaching-learning, leading-following, community, and family, all underpinned by the humanbecoming school of thought (Parse, 1981, 1990, 1998, 2001, 2005, 2007, 2010). I was also exposed to and studied with leading Parse researchers from around the world. I was feeling most grateful for this opportunity to learn, explore, and test my knowledge. By the end of the first day of the theory module at the Institute I was shocked at my lack of clarity with the theory. Studying Parse’s work, I thought, was straightforward. I believed I had a good grasp of the assumptions and principles, concepts and paradoxes. My realization was a shocking and resounding, NO! I recognized that my understanding was superficial and I required further in-depth study. I undertook such study with passion and energy. I continued to learn.

Over successive years, as I struggled to understand aspects of the humanbecoming (Parse, 2007) theory and research methodology it became clear to me what my focus for doctoral studies would be. Studying the universal experience of feeling grateful was my
passion. This passion has sustained me through the various processes associated with the writing of this thesis.

7.3 A PHILOSOPHICAL APPROACH TO INQUIRY

My study with the humanbecoming school of thought (Parse, 1981, 1990, 1998, 2001, 2005, 2007, 2010) coupled with frequent reports by patients, family members, and others about being grateful has provided me with the philosophical approach for my phenomenon of interest. Feeling grateful was a phenomenon that could be studied by implementing a phenomenological approach. In particular, this area of interest was appropriate to further my understanding of the humanbecoming school of thought (Parse, 1981, 1990, 1998, 2001, 2005, 2007, 2010). Deepening my knowledge of the assumptions, postulates, principles, concepts, and paradoxes was very important to me. It was the right approach for the right phenomenon and the right research methodology for the research question: *What is the structure of the lived experience of feeling grateful?*

7.4 A QUEST TO FURTHER UNDERSTANDING

In my quest to understand the humanbecoming school of thought (Parse, 1981, 1990, 1998, 2001, 2005, 2007, 2010), in-depth study, pondering, and questioning was required to understand the principles and postulates of the science of unitary human beings and the tenets and concepts of existential phenomenology. This study helped with my understanding of Parse’s (1998, 2008) assumptions, postulates, principles, concepts and paradoxes. This study of Rogers (1970) work was helpful with understanding the consistencies and differences with the humanbecoming school of thought (Parse, 1981,

7.5 SELECTING PARTICIPANTS FOR THE STUDY

Once I had confirmed the phenomenon of study, I anticipated participant selection would be challenging. I was concerned about the quality of the dialogical engagements and wished that the dialogues would be rich with description. Would the participants be able to speak about feeling grateful? My concern was, happily, unfounded. Each description provided a coherent, articulate, reflective, and rich description of what feeling grateful was like for each individual participant. Participants spoke candidly and personally about their feeling what it was like for them to feel grateful.

Initially, I harboured thoughts that men may not be as articulate as women in identifying their feelings and that perhaps the type of job participants held would be a forerunner of the quality of their description. These initial thoughts proved incorrect as gender and job did not impede the participants’ ability to discuss their unique perspective of the phenomenon feeling grateful in a lucid, reflective, articulate, and coherent manner.
7.6 ENGAGING THE PARTICIPANTS

In preparation for information gathering, several test dialogical engagements were conducted to familiarize myself with the process. This was most helpful. As each dialogical engagement for the study was completed it was transcribed and reviewed by me, and a researcher who is expert with dialogical engagement, to ensure that true presence was maintained (Parse, 1998). Dr. Parse verified each dialogical engagement and confirmed that true presence was maintained. The participants were met at locations of their choosing and the dialogical engagements unfolded. There were never any instances where true presence was not maintained. Being in true presence was a profound and humbling experience for me in bearing witness to the unfolding moments with each participant. Following each dialogical engagement and at various times while listening to the audio recording, transcribing the dialogical engagement, or reading the dialogue with and without the audio recording, these moments provided me with the opportunity to reflect on the process. Meaning was not only conveyed by the participant’s words, but with the cadence of the voice with the spoken word. I noted pauses, silences, and the tone of the participant’s voice with the tone and inflections of my own voice. What was most striking was the importance of the intent of the researcher to be with the person while all-at-once embracing *the art of living human becoming* [sic] (Parse, 1998, p. 68). This means living and *being guided by the theoretical principles while* choosing *rhythmical patterns of relating while searching for personal hopes and dreams* (Parse, 1998, pp. 68-69). I approached each participant with openness, respect, and love. I went with the rhythms of each participant as we cocreated rhythmical patterns. They chose where the dialogue would go as they freely chose personal meaning
in the situation. On the periphery of my thoughts in-the-moment I knew that I was living all of the humanbecoming (Parse, 2007) assumptions, principles and paradoxes all-at-once. Living this experience during each dialogical engagement reinforced the complexity-simplicity of the humanbecoming school of thought (Parse, 1981, 1990, 1998, 2001, 2005, 2007, 2010) and how it accurately and truly represents in words the phenomenological experience of each human. This theoretical perspective is so meaningful to me as a nurse, researcher, and teacher-learner. I see others in a new way. It is very rewarding to be able to honour persons in this way.

7.7 INADVERTENTLY STRAYING FROM THE PARSE RESEARCH METHOD

Learning the Parse research method arrived with humbling opportunities to appreciate the meaning of rigour while following the research method. My first two dialogical engagements progressed quite well. In relating this experience in detail with Dr. Parse, I shared that I had documented on paper the options of encouraging comments that I as the researcher may ask the participant and shared this with the participants. This sharing was not part of the research methodology and these two willing participants were immediately excluded from the inquiry, as indicated by Dr. Parse. This was a sobering experience and drove home the realization of following any research process with precision. This experience informed my understanding of the importance of scientific rigour associated with the research process and the consequences of losing valuable information when rigour is compromised.
7.8 LEARNING TO BE WITH THE EMERGING VOICE OF THE TEXT

The process of analyzing the participant’s dialogical engagements was an all-at-once process of reading and rereading the typed text while simultaneously attentively listening to the participant’s recorded voice. The extraction-synthesis process requires a focused open concentration to hear the story that the participant was sharing. The intonation of the participant’s voice and selection of the participant’s words is key in the process of extracting the participant’s story. This is a time-consuming process and cannot be forced, otherwise the focus becomes the researcher and not the essences of the participant’s voice.

Most challenging was extracting and synthesizing essences from the descriptions to the participant’s language and synthesizing and extracting the essences in the researcher’s language. The process is not an easy transition from one level of abstraction to the next. The abstraction process was fraught with wanting to push the process in the quest to choose the word that accurately reflected the participant’s language and then the researcher’s language while uncovering the structure of [the] lived experience (Parse, 1989, p. 61). It is not merely substituting one word for another. The process requires contemplation and a love of discovering the mystery of the participant voice with the process of abstraction.

7.9 INSIGHTS GLEANED FROM THE RESEARCH JOURNEY

The goal of any nursing research study is to generate new knowledge and contribute to personal wisdom. It is then appropriate to ask: What have I learned from
this research process? The next section will address this question, presenting personal insights gleaned from this research experience.

7.9.1 Being Comfortable with the Uncomfortable

Embarking on any journey requires preparation. Embarking on the research journey with the humanbecoming school of thought (Parse, 1981, 1990, 1998, 2001, 2005, 2007, 2010) required the researcher to have a sound knowledge base of the humanbecoming (Parse, 2007) theory. Preparation can come in the form of personal study. However, in my experience, it was the opportunities to discuss the humanbecoming (Parse, 2007) theory with nurses, Parse scholars, and other novice Parse undergraduate and graduate students that provided (and continues to provide) the most fertile ground for learning. I have had the opportunity and privilege over the past five years to participate in the Humanbecoming (Parse, 2007) Institutes held in Pittsburgh each summer. I have been fortunate to be able to participate in the International Consortium of Parse Scholars Conference and annual meeting, having missed one occasion in the past 14 years. In particular, over the past two years in my present work position, we have had the privilege of having Dr. Parse lead teaching-learning education sessions in research. Sessions also occur in other areas of interest pertinent to humanbecoming (Parse, 2007). These opportunities to learn, experiment, and experience humanbecoming (Parse, 2007) were invaluable to my success with this Parse research study. Embarking down this research road without appropriate preparation, the readiness to pursue further understanding, and willingness to live the methodological dimensions and processes (Parse, 1998) of the humanbecoming (Parse, 2007) theory would not have
led to scientific rigour for this study. Embracing the comfort-discomfort while appreciating the ambiguity yet concreteness was, is, and will be exciting, propelling me onward.

7.9.2 Mapping the Journey

The journey travelled during this research project was filled with, among other things, mystery, paradox, joy, illumination, the unpredictable, freedom, and illimitable possibilities. From the day when writing this thesis was birthed, through the tidal waves of working while writing, to this day, has been filled with wonder, growth, and intellectual enlivening. Presenting to the reader an opportunity to review personal reflections is an opportunity for others to learn from this researcher’s experiences.

The unanticipated surprise of this journey was the enjoyment the experience provided. It is now clear that the rigorous documentation of the research process is key to cocreating methodological congruence (Burns, 1989; Parse, Coyne, & Smith, 1985; Parse, 2005). It is clear that not only must the researcher follow the research process, adhering to protocols and processes, but that living the values of the humanbecoming (Parse, 2007) theory are critical for the researcher to produce a credible, publishable research report. Living the values is a paradoxical experience and a work in progress. New insights are revealed, while emerging ideas struggle with formation as what is known is revealed while that which is yet to be known is concealed. Living the paradoxes of clarity-obscurity, vulnerability-strength of enabling-limiting, speaking-being silent, moving-being still as I experienced ease-unease with understanding the
assumptions, postulates, principles, concepts and paradoxes of the humanbecoming (Parse, 2007) theory.

7.10 SUMMARY

The author of this chapter introduced to the reader the researcher’s personal insights of the research journey with the humanbecoming school of thought (Parse, 1981, 1990, 1998, 2001, 2005, 2007, 2010). The chapter traced the researcher’s personal priority, the pursuit of nursing knowledge and desire to contribute to furthering the scientific base of nursing and the humanbecoming school of thought (Parse, 1981, 1990, 1998, 2001, 2005, 2007, 2010) by exploring a universal phenomenon concerning human health, namely, feeling grateful. It was important that the research study be meaningful and adhere to rigorous inquiry. In keeping with the path of rigorous inquiry, a transparent description of the journey was offered. The chapter presented a first person accounting of this researcher’s reflections and insights gleaned from the research experience. The following chapter will conclude this thesis by presenting a discussion of this research study’s unique findings with implications for further research, practice, and the teaching-learning process.
CHAPTER 8
SUMMARY, INSIGHTS, AND IMPLICATIONS

8.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter includes a discussion of the findings of this humanbecoming (Parse, 2007) research study. The chapter begins with a summary of the unique findings of the study on the lived experience of feeling grateful and contributions to the knowledge base of nursing. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the implications for future research, practice, and the teaching-learning process.

8.2 SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS

As previously mentioned and revisited here, this research study was conducted for three purposes: a) discover and explicate the structure of the universal lived experience of feeling grateful as described by 10 individuals in the community; b) contribute to the advancement of nursing knowledge through a scientific rigorous process by enhancing the theory of humanbecoming; and c) add to the body of knowledge about the phenomenon of feeling grateful. All three purposes have been achieved.

8.2.1 Structure of the Phenomenon of Feeling Grateful

The structure of the lived experience of feeling grateful explicates in this study answers the research question and consists of three core concepts: potent elation amid tribulation, assuredness-unassuredness, and benevolent alliances. These three core concepts were joined together to form the major finding of this study and is stated as: the
structure of the lived experience of feeling grateful is potent elation amid tribulation arising with the assuredness-unassuredness of benevolent alliances. When structurally transposed to the next level of abstraction, feeling grateful is buoyant fortitude amid the arduous arising with the certitude-incertitude of amicable affiliations. This structural transposition, when conceptually integrated with the humanbecoming school of thought (Parse, 1981, 1990, 1998, 2001, 2005, 2007, 2010) becomes powering the originating of valuing connecting-separating. This conceptualization illuminates the phenomenon as a universal experience of living health stated in the language of science. Powering the originating of valuing connecting-separating as a way of living health and quality of life emanated from the participant’s dialogues.

8.3 UNIQUENESS OF THE FINDINGS

This study is the first to investigate the lived experience of feeling grateful as a way of living health and quality of life. The unique findings of this study include the following:

1. The discovered structure of the lived experience of feeling grateful is: potent elation amid tribulation arising with the assuredness-unassuredness of benevolent alliances, which does not appear in the extant research literature, and is therefore a unique conceptualization of the phenomenon.

2. The phenomenon of feeling grateful interpreted in light of the humanbecoming (Parse, 2007) school of thought is a health experience fundamental to quality of life.
3. Feeling grateful as a way of living health provides a new lens through which to view the phenomenon.

4. The findings of this study are consistent with the assumptions, postulates, principles, concepts and paradoxes of the humanbecoming school of thought (Parse, 1981, 1990, 1998, 2001, 2005, 2007, 2010) and therefore expand the theory in general. In particular this study expands understanding of the concepts powering and originating and the construct valuing connecting-separating.

For any discipline, it is understood that theory guides research, research expands theory, and theory informs practice. The purpose of conducting this Parse research method study was to expand nursing theory and to contribute to knowledge generation. This study has illuminated feeling grateful as implicitly integral to health and quality of life, expanding knowledge of both the phenomenon and the humanbecoming school of thought (Parse, 1981, 1990, 1998, 2001, 2005, 2007, 2010). The findings of this research study enhance the science of humanbecoming (Parse, 2007) thus providing a rich foundation of knowledge about feeling grateful. These findings and discussion adds depth and clarity that can assist nurses to understand humanbecoming (Parse, 2007) assumptions, postulates, principles, and concepts and to be better prepared to live the art of humanbecoming (Parse, 1994, 2007). Additional dimensions of knowledge emanate from this study in relation to research, practice, and the teaching-learning process.
8.4 IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE FINDINGS

This section presents the implications for research, practice, and teaching-learning. While some of the implications are obvious and are stated explicitly, additional implications are implicit.

8.4.1 Research

The goal of the Parse method is to enhance understanding of the humanbecoming (Parse, 2007) school of thought by explicating the structure, meanings, and patterns of human experiences (Parse, 1981, 1990, 1998, 2001, 2005, 2007, 2010). This study has contributed to the further development of nursing’s body of knowledge, enhancing understanding about the human experience of feeling grateful with 10 persons in the community. These findings are new and contribute to the growing body of knowledge concerning human experience of health and quality of life, with particular focus on feeling grateful. The first core concept potent elation amid tribulation could be further enhanced by investigating universal lived experiences like feeling joyful, feeling happy, feeling sad, feeling afraid, or suffering. The second core concept assuredness-unassuredness may lead one to investigate the universal lived experiences of feeling sure, feeling unsure, feeling confident, feeling secure, or trusting another. The third core concept benevolent alliances might lead to further investigations on loving another, helping another, understanding another, or feeling alone. Research phenomena such as these have the potential to contribute significantly to the general understanding of feeling grateful and to contribute to knowledge about humanbecoming (Parse, 2007). The findings of this research study also have implications for practice.
8.4.2 Practice

The findings of this study have implications for nurses who practice with people and families wherever they are located. The focus of practice emanates from the principles with honouring the meaning, respecting patterns and choices of hopes and dreams related to feeling grateful. Nurses may have a heightened awareness to listen to patients’ and nurses’ expressions of feeling grateful.

The findings of this Parse research method study (Parse, 1996a, 1996b, 1998, 2001, 2005, 2006) are not intended to be generalizable or to create decision-making models, or to design instruments to quantify phenomena, nor to create outcome-based interventions. Instead, this research discovered the structure of the lived experience of feeling grateful. The generation of this new knowledge is incarnated with knowledge from previous reports by nurses about human experiences and contributes to a general understanding about several of the concepts and paradoxes that embody the school of thought. The knowledge about feeling grateful can be used immediately to inform nurses who are living the humanbecoming (Parse, 2007) perspective in practice. Knowledge gained from this study may assist the nurse who is guided by humanbecoming (Parse, 2007) to be in true presence (Parse, 1996; 1998), nurse with person or group, as indivisible, unpredictable, everchanging (Parse, 2002) mysteries. Nurses may be better able to respect values, bear witness to freedom to choose changing health patterns, and to honour the person’s desires, wishes, and expectations as illimitable, paradoxical expressions of value priorities. Bearing witness in true presence with persons, who choose to share their lived experience of feeling grateful, honours the individual or family
members, as they share the mystery and illimitable possibilities of living their health. This new knowledge can guide nurses to be different with others as they experience health and quality of life. The findings of this study also have implications for the teaching-learning process.

### 8.4.3 The Teaching-Learning Process

The findings of this Parse method research study provide implications for the teaching-learning process. This study illuminates teacher-learner opportunities for discovering new knowledge and ways of being with living health and quality of life. *Teacher and learner coconstitute the educational process through sharing knowledge and planning educationally sound and fulfilling experiences* (Parse, 1998, p. 88). The teacher, sharing with students the assumptions, postulates, principles, concepts, and paradoxes, provides a pathway of knowing that is guided by the individual living the life. The teacher may also contemplate the phenomenon of feeling grateful when with students and may choose to explore the meaning of feeling grateful when in dialogue with students individually or collectively. As students are with person in teaching-learning situations with patients, families, colleagues, or superiors they may choose to engage with them differently.

The findings of this study can become exemplars for bearing witness to the individual’s health and quality of life, honouring freedom of choice and value priorities. Inviting students to reflect upon these new conceptualizations of feeling grateful can cocreate new ways of choosing as each lives personal becoming.
8.5 MOVING ON

This research study is now reaching its concluding moments. The purposes of this study were realized. The structure of the lived experience of feeling grateful was discovered. The findings enhanced the humanbecoming school of thought (Parse, 1981, 1990, 1998, 2001, 2005, 2007, 2010) and expanded the knowledge base of nursing. Suggestions for further research were offered from the findings. The relevance for nursing practice and teaching-learning were discussed.

The concluding moments of this study do not signify an end, but are a signpost to welcome new beginnings. Others who read this text are invited to engage in dialogue and to form new understandings and insights about feeling grateful and related phenomena. It is this researcher’s desire that this research about feeling grateful and related phenomena will excite and propel others to pursue expanding nursing’s knowledge base with studies that focus on universal lived experiences using the theoretical perspective of the humanbecoming school of thought (Parse, 1981, 1998, 2001, 2005, 2007, 2010). Contributing to the understanding of health and quality of life from the person’s perspective is crucial to fortifying respect for human individuality and diversity in the mystery of becoming.
APPENDIX A

STATEMENT OF THE STUDY FOR THE PARTICIPANTS
STATEMENT OF THE STUDY FOR THE PARTICIPANTS

Title of the study: The Phenomenon of Feeling Grateful

Dear Participant,

My name is Judith Hart, a doctoral candidate in the Division of Nursing and Midwifery, School of Life Sciences, Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology University, Melbourne, Australia.

I wish to invite you to be participant in this study about your experiences of feeling grateful. Your participation will involve a discussion between you and me, which will be audio-taped. It is anticipated that the discussion will last between 20-60 minutes depending on what you wish to share. The choice of venue is yours, where you feel most comfortable.

Your identity will remain anonymous and the information shared by you during the discussion will remain confidential. The only persons to have access to your discussion tape and transcript will be yourself, my two supervisors, and myself. On completion of the study your taped discussion will be erased. Your name will not appear either on the discussion transcript or in the final report of the study.

There may be potential for you to experience uncomfortable feelings and thoughts as you share your experiences of feeling grateful. If at any point during the discussion you experience such discomfort you are free to stop the discussion. If at any time you wish to withdraw from the study, your decision will be respected and therefore, all information shared by you will not be included in the findings unless your written permission is given.

If you wish to share any metaphors which describe your experiences, you may do so during the discussion.

If you wish to clarify any issues or seek further information about the study, you can contact me by phone at (506)-632-5568.

Thank you for your interest.

Yours sincerely,

Judith Hart

Any queries or complaints about your participation in this study can be directed to the Secretary, Human Research Ethics Committee, RMIT University, GPO Box 2476V, Melbourne, 3001. The telephone number is (03) 99252251.
APPENDIX B

INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH PROJECT:
PROJECT INFORMATION STATEMENT FOR PARTICIPANTS
Invitation to Participate in a Research Project

Project Information Statement

Project Title:

Feeling Grateful: A Parse Research Method Study

Investigators:
Ms. Judith D. Hart (Nursing and Midwifery; RMIT University PhD by Research Student; harju@reg2.health.nb.ca; Phone: 506.632.5568).

Dr. Anthony Welch (Senior Supervisor, Program Leader, Bachelor of Nursing, Nursing and Midwifery, RMIT University, Anthony.Welch@rmit.edu.au, Phone 9925-7465; Fax 9467-1629)

Dr. Rosemarie Rizzo Parse (Second Supervisor, Professor and Niehoff Chair, Marcella Niehoff School of Nursing, Loyola University Chicago; rparse@luc.edu, Phone: 412.391.8471; Fax: 412.391.8458).

Introduction

Hello,

My name is Judith Hart. I am a Registered Nurse undertaking a Doctor of Philosophy degree in Nursing at Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology University (RMIT) in Melbourne, Australia. This information letter provides details about this research study so that you can decide if you would like to participate.

Invitation

You are invited to volunteer to participate in the research study named above, conducted by RMIT. Before you can decide whether or not to volunteer, you must understand the purpose, how it may affect you, any risks to you, and what is expected of you. This process is called informed consent. This information sheet describes the project in straightforward language, or ‘plain English’. Please read this sheet carefully and be confident that you understand its contents before deciding whether to participate. If you have any questions about the project, please ask one of the investigators.
• Your participation is entirely voluntary;
• You may withdraw from the study at any time without affecting your present or future quality of life;
• If the study is changed in any way which could affect your willingness to stay in the study, you will be told about the changes and may be asked to sign a new informed consent;

Who is involved in this research project? Why is it being conducted?
- The person who is leading this research project is Judith Hart, a Registered Nurse. This nursing research project is to learn more about how persons live their lives day-to-day by what it means to them to feel grateful. This research is important to the discipline of nursing because it will contribute details of what it is like for persons to feel grateful, add information to further explain the human becoming school of thought, and support the body of nursing knowledge so important to the discipline of nursing.
- This nursing research project is part of a programme of study at the RMIT University in Melbourne, Australia. Dr. Anthony Welch, is the Senior Supervisor, and Dr. Rosemarie Rizzo Parse is the Second Supervisor.
- This research project is being conducted as part of the Doctor of Philosophy degree in Nursing.
- This research project has been approved by the RMIT University Human Research Ethics Committee.

Why have you been approached?
- You have been approached and specifically invited to participate in this research project because you have expressed an interest to learn more about the research project, or because you answered the advertisement and expressed an interest in speaking about your experience of feeling grateful, or someone who you know said that you may be interested in speaking with the researcher about feeling grateful.

What is the project about? What are the questions being addressed?
- This research project is about what it is like for persons to feel grateful. Each person who agrees to participate in this study will speak with the researcher, Judith Hart, and tell her what it is like for them when they feel grateful. The research question is “What is the structure (the description) of the lived experience of feeling grateful?”
- Answering this question will provide information that will add details to further explain the human becoming school of thought, which is a nursing theory or set of beliefs nurses hold about human beings.
- This project is about learning more about human beings quality of life when they feel grateful, which will add to the body of nursing knowledge so important to the discipline of nursing.
Approximately 8-10 people will participate in this research project.

If I agree to participate, what will I be required to do?

- Each person who agrees to participate in this study will speak only with the nurse researcher, Judith Hart, and tell her what it is like for them when they are feeling grateful. The discussion with the researcher is called a dialogical engagement. It is a different way of questioning from that of an interview, where a list of several questions is asked. Potential variations of the research question will be asked during the dialogical engagement such as: “Tell me, what it is like for you to feel grateful”, or “What is feeling grateful like for you?”, or “Please describe for me what it is like for you to feel grateful”, or “Talk about what feeling grateful is like for you”.
- These questions are typed on paper for you to refer to, if you wish.
- The length of the dialogical engagement with the researcher will be approximately 20 to 60 minutes, and will be recorded on a digital and/or tape voice recorder. The dialogical engagement will stop when you have said all you wish about feeling grateful.
- After the dialogical engagement has ended, the words spoken on the digital and/or tape recording will be saved on a computer disc (CD) and then typed, so that the researcher can read and process what has been said.
- Dr. Welch is the Senior Supervisor of this study and he is at RMIT in Melbourne, Australia. Dr. Parse is the Second Supervisor and she is in Pittsburgh, USA. The audio recording and typed transcript may be sent to Dr. Welch and Dr. Parse at their request. At their request the audio recording will be sent by courier and the typed transcripts will be sent by email or to their direct fax line.
- At the end of the research project all of the audio recordings, and typed transcripts will be destroyed. Your name will not appear on the audio recording, or transcript. Instead, the audio recording and transcript will be given a number and a false name.

What are the risks or disadvantages associated with participation?

- There are no perceived risks outside your normal day-to-day activities.
- There are no known risks to discussing with the researcher your thoughts on feeling grateful. If you, at any time during the dialogical engagement, feel that you would like to end the discussion or withdraw from the research project, you may do so without explanation or penalty. It is expected that nothing harmful will happen to you by answering the question about feeling grateful.
- If you are excessively concerned about your responses during the dialogical engagement, or if you find participating in the project distressing, you may contact Anne Marie Creamer, RN; MScN, Nurse Practitioner at 506-650-5246 as soon as possible. Anne Marie Creamer is a mental health nurse who will discuss your concerns with you in confidence and suggest appropriate follow-up, if necessary.
- You may also get help through the Community Mental Health services at 658-3737 or after hours emergencies contact 658-3737 (same number).
What are the benefits associated with participation?
- It is highly likely that there is no direct benefit to you as a result of your participation with the researcher, and with this research project. You may feel satisfied that you helped to create new knowledge by participating in this study and talking about feeling grateful.

What will happen to the information I provide?
- The dialogical engagement will be taped on a voice recorder. After the dialogical engagement has ended, the words spoken and recorded will be transferred to a compact disc (CD) so that what you have said can be heard on the researcher’s personal computer. Your words will then be typed by a transcriptionist so that the researcher can read, hear, and process what has been said.
- Your participation with this research project is anonymous and confidential. Anonymous means that you will be known only to the researcher and your name or any identifying information will not be used on the tape or transcript. Confidential means that each dialogical engagement (voice recording and transcript) will be numbered and identified with a pseudonym or false name.
- The data will be seen by the researcher, Judith Hart, and as part of the supervisory team Dr. Anthony Welch and Dr. Rosemarie Rizzo Parse. Dr. Parse and Dr. Welch will have access to hear the recording and read the transcript if they so choose as part of their responsibilities to monitor the progress of this study.
- The transcriptions of the dialogical engagements will be kept safe in a password-protected computer that only the researcher can use, and at the end of the study will be destroyed. The audio recordings and printed transcript of the dialogue will be kept safe in a locked cabinet at the researcher’s locked office, and at the end of the study will be destroyed.
- As required by RMIT, the data will be held and kept secure by RMIT for a period of five years, then destroyed.
- Quotations obtained during the data-gathering may be used anonymously in research reports.
- A photograph will be taken of the symbol you bring, if you so choose, expressing what it is for you feeling grateful.
- Any information that you provide can be disclosed only if (1) it is to protect you or others from harm, (2) a court order is produced, or (3) you provide the researchers with written permission.
- It is a requirement to obtain a signed permission from you, called an informed consent, after you have read the materials and have had all of your questions answered. The consent form must be signed before the researcher can begin the dialogical engagement with you.
What are my rights as a participant?
- The following are your rights as a research participant, which include:
  - The right to withdraw your participation at any time, without penalty or prejudice.
  - The right to have any unprocessed data (data that is not used) withdrawn and destroyed, provided it can be reliably identified, and provided that so doing does not increase the risk for the participant.
  - The right to have any questions answered at any time.

Whom should I contact if I have any questions?
- If you should have any questions at any time please contact Judith Hart at 506.632.5568.

What other issues should I be aware of before deciding whether to participate?
- Do you wish to speak about feeling grateful?
- Do you expect that speaking about feeling grateful will be upsetting to you?

Thank you for taking your time to read this information and for your interest.

Sincerely yours,

____________________              __________________      ___________________
Judith Hart, RN; MN   Anthony Welch RN; PhD  Rosemarie Rizzo Parse, RN; PhD
Registered Nurse;   Registered Nurse   Registered Nurse
Baccalaureate of Nursing Degree;  Doctor of Philosophy;  Doctor of Philosophy;
Master of Nursing Degree;   Senior Supervisor;  Second Supervisor;
PhD Candidate ,   Program Leader,  PhD Candidate ,
RMIT University,  Bachelor of Nursing;  RMIT University
Australia              RMIT University   Australia
Australia

Any complaints about your participation in this project may be directed to the Secretary, Portfolio Human research Ethics Sub Committee, Business Portfolio, RMIT, GPO Box 2476V, Melbourne, 3001. The telephone number is (03) 9925-5598 or email address rdu@rmit.edu.au. Details of the complaints procedure are available from the above address or http://www.rmit.edu.au/council/hrec.
APPENDIX C

CONSENT FORM FOR THE PARTICIPANTS
Prescribed Consent Form For Persons Participating In Research Projects Involving Interviews, Questionnaires or Disclosure of Personal Information

Portfolio: Science, Engineering and Technology
School of Nursing and Midwifery

Name of participant:

Project Title: “Feeling Grateful: A Parse Research Method Study”

Name(s) of investigators:

(1) Judith Hart
Phone: 1-506-632-5568

(2) Dr. Anthony Welch
Phone: 011-613-9925-7465

(3) Dr. Rosemarie Rizzo Parse
Phone: 1-412-391-8471

1. I have received a statement explaining the interview/questionnaire involved in this project.

2. I consent to participate in the above project, the particulars of which - including details of the interviews or questionnaires - have been explained to me.

3. I authorise the investigator or his or her assistant to interview me or administer a questionnaire.

4. I acknowledge that:
   
   (a) Having read Plain Language Statement, I agree to the general purpose, methods and demands of the study.
   
   (b) I have been informed that I am free to withdraw from the project at any time and to withdraw any unprocessed data previously supplied.
   
   (c) If, during the dialogue I become uncomfortable, I have the option to stop the discussion and reschedule.
   
   (d) The project is for the purpose of research and/or teaching. It may not be of direct benefit to me.
   
   (e) The privacy of the personal information I provide will be safeguarded and only disclosed where I have consented to the disclosure or as required by law.
   
   (f) I have been informed that the research data may be sent to Dr. Rosemarie Rizzo Parse and Dr. Anthony Welch.
   
   (g) The security of the research data is assured during and after completion of the study. The data collected during the study may be published, and a report of the project outcomes will be provided to the Nursing Research Journal Nursing Science Quarterly. Quotations about feeling grateful from your dialogue may be used anonymously in reports of the study. Any information that will identify me will not be used.

Participant’s Consent

Participant: ___________________________ Date: ___________________________

(Signature)                                                                

Witness: ___________________________ Date: ___________________________

(Signature)                                                                

Participants should be given a photocopy of this consent form after it has been signed.

Any complaints about your participation in this project may be directed to the Executive Officer, RMIT Human Research Ethics Committee, Research & Innovation, RMIT, GPO Box 2476V, Melbourne, 3001. The telephone number is (03) 9925 2251. Details of the complaints procedure are available from the above address.
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VITA

Judith Hart is originally from N. E. Margaree, Cape Breton, Nova Scotia, Canada. She graduated from St. Rita Hospital School of Nursing. She earned a Bachelor of Nursing degree in 1983 and a Master in Nursing Degree in 1987 from Dalhousie University, Nova Scotia. During her graduate study program, Judith received consecutive Graduate Nursing Fellowships and received the Frances Moss MacDonald Scholarship, Registered Nurses’ Association of Nova Scotia. In 2006 Judith began the Doctorate of Philosophy program in Nursing at Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology University, Melbourne Australia. Judith completed her PhD in Nursing in 2010.