

Book Review: Peggy Thayer, *The Experience of Being Creative as a Spiritual Practice: A Hermeneutic-Phenomenological Study* (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, Inc. 2003).

It was in 1970 that Sunnie Kidd wrote a 10-page paper on Thematic Methodology. It amplified an idea that Pierre Thévenaz introduced 20 years earlier. Sunnie could not find where anyone had taken up this thought as methodology. The idea of the reflexive intrigued her. She amplified this to say that the reflexive is intuitive and the reflective is cognitive. Further saying that intuition is the ground upon which the cognitive is found and at the wider horizon the spiritual is that by which intuition sees but cannot see itself. It was around 1980 that she met Suncrates. We talked with him about the method Sunnie developed and he was the first to immediately know what she was introducing. What followed were many articles on method and a book and many articles on spirituality and a book that have all been published. Except for one thing, the original paper. Two days before Sunnie passed on she was to submit to Superdirector two articles one written by me on Teaching and her Thematic Methodology article. They were published when I realized she put my name on it instead of her name. It is like she passed it on to me. What is amazing is that this is kind of like what Pierre Thévenaz did after he passed. There have since been a lot of dissertations and articles, courses and teachers using this methodology.

Along comes Peggy Thayer who has taken up the thought and placed it a practical setting. Peggy's book is an exemplar of this method. She has amplified the thought without a loss of continuity. Peggy understands the depth of the complexity of the thought that enables her to place it in a practical setting. Her amplification of the methodology works. She uses it, she teaches it, she embodies the creative process. Maybe in some dimension Pierre Thévenaz and Sunnie are smiling.

Let me quote Peggy, "The Experiential Method is one of interplay between the participant's lived experience, the expression of this experience, and an expanding understanding of this experience for both the participant and the researcher." (p.15) This is based on the idea that we think in terms of themes and as soon as we come to a theme we amplify it and express it. Peggy takes this creative process and at the wider expanse understands that the creative process is spiritual. Being the skillful teacher that she is Peggy understands what she sees, feels and thinks and can teach it to others. "This work elucidates not only the experience of being creative as a spiritual practice, but the felt-sense of creative experience and spiritual experience as well."

James W. Kidd, Ph.D.