

## **ABSTRACT**

This research study is a phenomenological and heuristic exploration of the experience of 'feeling missed by the environment' via the 'concept of the self' and with a particular focus on the Gestalt theory of self.

The phenomenological data analysis produced **four main themes** of 'feeling missed by the environment': -

- **during childhood**
- **by shame**
- **by patriarchy**
- **by the disavowed body.**

These four main themes wholistically and organically integrated into an **overarching 'umbrella' fifth major theme - 5.1 (a) the struggle for relationship and 5.1 (b) the struggle for meaning**. This **fifth major theme as the struggle to self** then further integrated by translation into **5.2 - the Gestalt theory of self** as an organic need and actual process of contact and awareness.

The configuration of the **fifth major theme** has potentially considerable significance for the Gestalt theory of self. It was also discovered that there is a need for further research to clarify what we mean by awareness and what awareness actually is in the Gestalt theory of self.

The heuristic methodology discovered a need to rethink the whole concept of the mind and the process of introspection within the Gestalt theory of self, especially in the context of intersubjective theory and recent neuroscientific research. Furthermore heuristic research appears to be the research model which is most congruent wholistically and organically for researching and advancing the Gestalt theory of self. The heuristic research component allowed the researcher to experience a contact and awareness dimension existing 'between' the objective and subjective dimensions of experience, which the researcher did not experience in the attempt to 'bracket' in the phenomenological component of the research.