

# Crossing the Styx: A Transpersonal Exploration of the Death of the Other

## Cruzando el Río Estigia: Una Exploración Transpersonal de la Muerte del Otro

**Dwight Turner\***

University of Brighton  
Brighton, England, UK

### Abstract

**Introduction:** Influenced by post-colonial thinking around difference and diversity, I here present a uniquely transpersonal exploration of difference, and an important definition of spiritual othering. **Objectives:** This research aimed to provide evidence of that being made the other by a majority holds unforeseen unconscious consequences, both psychologically and spiritually. **Methodology:** This phenomenological study used semi-structured interviews to explore 25 participants' unconscious experiences as the other, using meditation, visualizations and drawing. **Results:** Presented as a phenomenological case study, one of the major themes from my research is that spiritual othering leads to the death of the unconscious other within us. **Conclusion:** This research sees spiritual othering as the self-destruction of that which makes us unique, and of that which would aid us in achieving our ultimate spiritual potential.

**Keywords:** transpersonal, creativity, other, difference, creative imagination

### Resumen

**Introducción:** Influenciado por el pensamiento postcolonial sobre la diferencia y la diversidad, presento aquí una exploración transpersonal única sobre la "diferencia", y una importante definición de la otredad espiritual. **Objetivos:** Esta investigación tuvo como objetivo proporcionar evidencia de las consecuencias inconscientes e imprevistas, tanto psicológicamente como espiritualmente, del hecho por el que el otro crea nuestro concepto de yo. **Metodología:** Este estudio fenomenológico utilizó entrevistas semiestructuradas para explorar las experiencias inconscientes de 25 participantes como un otro, usando meditación, visualizaciones y dibujo. **Resultados:** Presentado como un estudio de caso fenomenológico, uno de los principales temas de mi investigación es que la otredad espiritual conduce a la muerte del otro inconsciente, dentro de nosotros. **Conclusión:** esta investigación ve la diferenciación espiritual como la autodestrucción de aquello que nos hace únicos, y de lo que nos ayudaría a alcanzar nuestro máximo potencial espiritual.

**Palabras clave:** transpersonal, creatividad, otro, diferencia, imaginación creativa

Received: October 13, 2017  
Accepted: December 20, 2017

## Introduction

In the present era, the other, in its exclusion via the building of walls or its rejection as an implied drain upon majority society, is an aspect which is seen as both threatening and as something which should be marginalised. Yet within psychotherapy, as von Franz states (1980), this fear is based upon projection, where psychologically a client assigns unwanted aspects of them self to the therapist, and that culturally whole groups can project these aspects of themselves onto other groups. This essay though is not concerned with the projection of these aspects, but considers the impact of said projection upon the other. What is it like to be the other? How is one made into the other by the majority? And what are the unconscious consequences of this form of othering?

As a transpersonal psychotherapist, experienced in using creativity to understand difficult real-world problems, my research therefore looked to understand this experience from within a transpersonal framework. A phenomenological study, this research utilised creative techniques, such as visualisation, meditation and drawing, to explore the unconscious, internalised experience of being the other. Yet, to fully facilitate this, it is important for me to construct a perspective of difference out of the spiritual and the more mainstream post-colonial as I explore the internalised death of the other.

## The Transpersonal and the Other

It is this route towards self-identification that from a psychotherapeutic angle brings into focus transpersonal ideas of the other, and in particular the idea of the infinite. A concept which in the Global North dates back to the time of Aristotle (Edel, 2010) discussions about the nature of the infinite have confused generations of thinkers and even led to varying forms of Christian religious persecution.

The work of St Thomas Aquinas (Tomarchio, 2002) though is of particular importance here at this point. A theologian and philosopher, whilst not straying too far from the religious doctrines of the time, his vision of the infinite allowed for there to be an infinite num-

ber of expressions of the spiritual. This therefore opened the doorway to spiritual intersectionality of God, its presence in a multitude of presentations, no one more or less important than the other.

When we engage with the spiritual other from outside of a central spiritual hegemony we then begin to witness how a relationship with the other and therefore God occurs. Yet these ideas are not purely Western. From the traditions of West Africa there is the important idea that one is not alone, but that one is part of a complex web of others who inform us at all times; from our connection to family, to the tribe, to our the ancestors, to the spirits, and to God beyond (Mazama, 2003). In other important African centric religions, the other is also seen as all the things around oneself; the trees, the animals, the sky and the earth (Hailey, 2008). This recognition is important because as Myers says, 'this deification process seeks to transform the finite, limited conception of human consciousness into an infinite consciousness that is supremely good or divine. In order to accomplish this task, one must begin to know that everything, including self, is the manifestation of one permeating essence' (1985, p. 35). So, already we witness the movement away from the spiritual dyad of the West into this more participatory and relational one exhorting by Ferrer and Heron.

Moving away from an Afro-centric perspective, it is important to offer another spiritual view to highlight both the commonality and the importance of understanding the other. For this, I will be using Nishida's work, from the Buddhist traditions, as a metaphor for what I mean. For example, his statement that 'the true God must possess himself in self-negation' (1989, p. 35), his meaning being taken further when he talks of God being the contradictory union of the absolute and nothingness, where the nothingness is seen as infinite and boundless whilst the absolute is contained and whole. God is therefore a singular union of opposites, the absolute and the infinite/nothingness, yet to understand God is to recognise the dualism within it. Although Nishida's perspective originates out of the Buddhist traditions, this vision is also echoed in Afrocentric spiritual beliefs.

From a more Western perspective there is a problem, as this absolute/infinite conjunctio with God is one that as humans we can only vainly strive for, and therefore rarely achieve. This important understanding then directs us to the conflict hidden within a transpersonal discourse around the other from several angles. When seen through the psychodynamic lens discussed earlier, the narcissistic position of the I then becomes a very human attempt to achieve godhood, whilst simultaneously negating, or projecting, its own flaws and inadequacies onto the other. Here, we clearly acknowledge a very human inability towards a humble inclusiveness which sits at the core of the narcissistic absolute's need to create, exclude and negate the presence of the spiritual other.

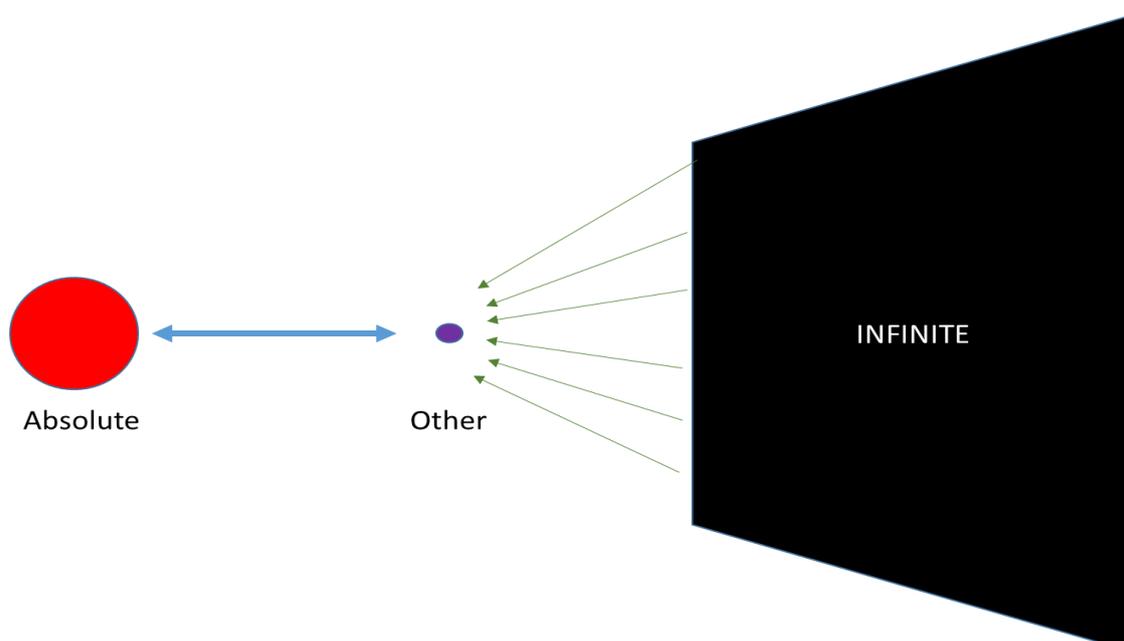
Arguing my point from a post-colonial perspective, the absolute attempts to negate the presence of the externalised infinite by colonising it. The encounter with the infinite is therefore a realisation of the existence of God within the infinite, and a questioning of uniqueness of God within the absolute. For example, this is like the experiences of those of Aristotle's time, where their philosophical and mathematical encounter with the infinite was fraught with anxiety and fear (Edel, 2010). So, if the infinite is unobtainable then spiritual colonisation, together with the attempt to limit and name religious and political differences, are a means of containing the infinite differences that we all

externally experience and that also reside within ourselves. The absolute therefore is constantly striving for godhood through control over just what the other is; naming it, defining its role, resisting its attempts to define itself. Importantly, the absolute here creates then other, with the other being a separate entity to the infinite as explored in Figure 1.

The creation of the other, via a process of spiritual othering, is therefore an attempt by the narcissistic absolute to attain godhood by removing that which is deemed flawed within itself. It creates the other for this purpose, drawing its narrow, stereotypical identity from out of the infinite potentialities that is the infinite, before negating the other's innate humanity and spirituality in order to make it an object for its projections. The narcissistic absolute also uses the other as means of distancing itself from the expansiveness of the infinite, attempting to become god by rejecting God. The other here therefore becomes an additional barrier between the pair.

On a practical level though, the absolute becomes that which in its denial of the infinite believes itself to be always right. In these extremities, the absolute is fanatical, harsh, or stereotypical in its treatment of spiritual others, and in its need to maintain this sense of righteousness will always reduce the other to a position of inferiority, dehumaniza-

**Figure 1:** *Absolute & Infinite*



tion, or part object, like a form of transpersonal apartheid where in the grandiosity of its godhood it feels it can define and control the other, whilst naively distancing itself from the infinite. Spiritual stereotyping here therefore becomes a means of making the other less than the uncountable total of its parts. It limits it, reduces it, placing it under scrutiny as if the other were to be studied under a microscope. Any relationship or feelings for the other are placed to one side, meaning there is no compassion or care for the other unless the absolute gains something from offering this temporarily. Examples of this arise out of the French official policy towards its colonial subjects where the policy of assimilation immediately placed the other at a deficit to the French majority, with the other challenged to fit inside French culture and give up much of its own well-ingrained identity (Mazama, 2003). Although the experience of this type of subjugation has often been explored, the underlying spiritual explication has not, my fear being that there is a deeper spiritual destruction of self that occurs when the other is placed into a position as less than.

Conversely, within a more Afrocentric, or relational, experience of the other, the absolute sees its relationship with the infinite in everything around itself; it is connected to all things as simultaneously it is all things (Grange, 2015). So where indigenous cultures speak of God being in all things, human or otherwise, what they are expressing is their comfort in embracing differences and therefore the infinite (Mark & Lyons, 2010; Paris, Clark, Smith, & Oliver, 1993). So, at its most ideal point there is no other. And whilst it sees the infinite within all things around it, the absolute also sees itself within that infinite, meaning that it chooses a less objectified stance in relation to the other, adopting one which is more subjectified or relational. God therefore becomes that which we all are in our multitude and our difference, at the same time, and for all time. It becomes life and death, tears and laughter, the addict and the Yoga practitioner. This is also of huge importance to the participatory perspective of Ferrer (2000) where he strongly believed that understandings of the transpersonal, or its identity, is something co-created by the gathering of the many different spiritual perspectives and traditions.

## Methodology

Although there have been numerous calls for a more relational approach to understanding the human experience, as Anderson and Braud (1998) do from a transpersonal perspective, this is a call that has more often than not been missed. It is this lack of a relational vision of human experience that Merleau-Ponty (2002) writes about via the human need to make sense of the environment around us by attaching meaning to each and every thing we encounter. For Merleau-Ponty (1962), this approach was ideal for exploring our world around us, and our place within it, with its being used in various research and studies where the aim has been to provide a wider perspective on a human experience. Adopting a phenomenological perspective therefore allowed for a more human and relational understanding of this unconscious experience as the other that we all encounter, whilst also marrying itself to the transpersonal perspective of the infinite discussed in the review of the literature. In adopting a phenomenological approach this research hoped to carve a space alongside the more political and social constructs of difference, where the numerous, self-identified, personal everyday experiences of difference would lead to the recovery of personal responsibility as the other.

Another reason for a phenomenological approach was that if difference is something we all encounter, then to gain a full understanding of the experience would need a methodology that at least tried to embrace these varying human perspectives of that experience. Then a collective composite picture can be built of that phenomena and our relationship to it, which then deepens our collective understanding. It also realises that utilising both the relationship between the psychotherapist and client, an area essential to the work of a transpersonal psychotherapist, and the creative tools common to transpersonal psychotherapy could together work in raising from the unconscious this material for clients and individuals to then work through within psychotherapy. This material can then be used to help us all to understand the unconscious cost of being othered.

## Methods

For this research, I interviewed twenty-five participants using a blend of one-to-one interviewing techniques and creative methods. The interviews were structured to provide creative data via:

1. A short semi-structured interview exploring the participants' experience of difference;
2. A creative exercise:  
A visualisation around one of the participant's aforementioned experiences of difference which they discussed and then drew.

## Participants

To advertise for my participants, notices were therefore sent out via the Centre for Counselling and Psychotherapy Education (CCPE) database of qualified psychotherapists and counsellors, together with leaflets and flyers being left on the CCPE premises. Although the flyers for the research were posted through a psychotherapy centre, only a third of those selected were therapists or had some connection to the world of psychotherapy. The other two thirds of participants were from the public and were either clients attending the centre for their own reasons, or persons who had heard about the research via third parties. What all the participants who contacted myself felt though is that they had an experience of being the other that they wanted to discuss with myself. For ethical reasons, none of my psychotherapy clients were engaged in this work as participants.

## Semi-Structured Interview

The semi-structured interview was designed to allow participants to freely speak about their experience of being different, bringing this into the room where it could be witnessed by myself the researcher without judgement (Braud & Anderson, 1998). This structure was important as it allowed the participant to feel comfortable enough in the space to reflect deeply on their experience, and for a

level of trust to be built between us in order before the creative exercises. Fitting perfectly within the phenomenological paradigm, my relational interview style therefore helped to create this container of trust. The list of the questions used is included as Appendix 1 to this article.

The open-ended questioning here created the level of relationship and connection necessary in order to construct the necessary container for the following creative exercise. This was important because when working with unconscious processes, a large element of trust was needed for the participant to feel comfortable enough to work with me at depth. Sufficient time was therefore necessary for this section.

## Visualisation and drawing exercise

One of the most powerful starting points for understanding internalised experiences is by working with the body. Lowen (2013) strongly felt that the body holds memory, acting like its own unconscious. Merleau-Ponty (1962) also wrote about this, seeing the body as a conduit into the unconscious. It is for this reason that the visualisation work conducted with the participants included some time for them to orientate themselves within their physical self, allowing themselves to feel comfortable in their body, before then accessing the hidden feelings, and therefore the symbols, located there. The instructions for the visualisation exercise is included as Appendix 2 to this article.

The visualisation exercise involved the participant reliving one of their memories of difference and being taken back into that experience, a means similar to the waking dream technique of psychotherapy where imagination is used to recall the unconscious felt experience of the dream (Storr, 1979). The participant was encouraged to reconnect with that episode, and feel the feelings of that time, feelings which would then be presented in symbolic form. After the visualisation, participants completed a drawing that reflected their symbolic experience of being the other, thereby echoing other visual methodological studies (Guillemin, 2004; Literat, 2013). The uniqueness of this exercise though is that it allowed an expression

of the internalised experience of the phenomena with the drawing being the bringing forth of the repressed emotional impact of that said experience, following Cox and Thielgaard's (1986) idea that any symbols presented would be the echoes of the same symbol within the unconscious.

### Data analysis

This research had a phenomenological epistemology, and utilised the varying stages of data analysis as expressed by Moustakas (1994). Firstly, during the *epoché* stage, time was built into my working week to facilitate giving space to this research project. This allowed me to immerse myself in the reading around this topic, and also enabled me to bracket off my own prejudices and preconceived ideas about the research, an essential tenet to working phenomenologically. This therefore further created space for my participants to enter into the research process alongside myself, a space where they would feel comfortable enough to explore their difficult experiences of othering. The next stage, *phenomenological reduction*, involved the reading through of each of the transcripts six times. On each read through, notes were made about just how each participant experienced being the other, from the stage of the semi-structured interview all the way through to their experiences in relation to the drawings themselves. The process of coding began at the end of this stage, where groups of emergent themes were collected together with the sections of the transcripts which underlined them. *Imaginative variation* was the most time intensive stage of the research. Repeatedly, I was challenged with exploring each of the transcripts to delve deeper into their understanding of being different. Their words, together with the drawings and their expression of what these meant for them, were analysed to be understood as thoroughly as possible. What this researcher recognised on completing this stage, was an additional hermeneutic in the connecting of the drawing and their words to the earlier semi-structured section of the interview. As will be explored in the results section of this paper, a type of unconscious synchronicity bound the two in a means not anticipated in the construction of this project. This triple hermeneutic was therefore applied by myself, as my own analysis of the drawings then allowed for a

further understanding to be laid on top, like the drawing together of unconscious dots into a coherent relational pattern. The final stage involved the writing of both textual and structural analysis of my participant's experiences as the other, or the *noema* and *noemesis*, in order to fully reveal the experiences of being different for my 25 participants.

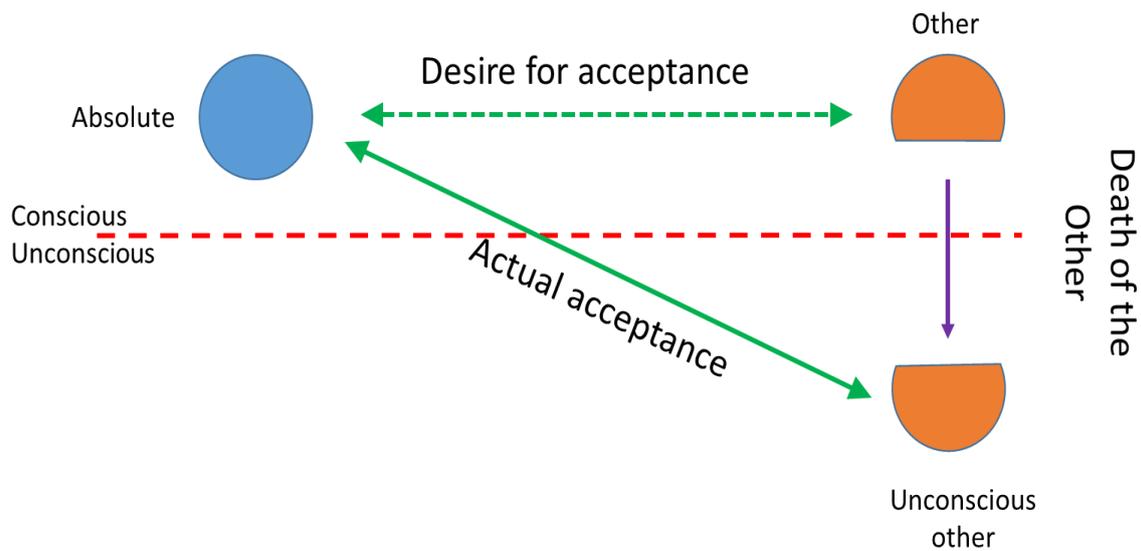
## Results

### Death

Where Sartre states that 'what I constantly aim at across my experiences are the Other's feelings, the Other's ideas, the Other's volitions, the Other's character. This is because the Other is not only the one whom I see but the one who sees me' (1943, p. 228), in terms of this project what he speaks of is the mutual recognition of self and other in each other's gaze. The importance of his words connects with a more transpersonal perspective of say Ubuntu (Hailey, 2008) where the other sees the spiritual in the other as a reflection of its own. Figure 2 explores this idea further. Firstly, it presents, the absolute as only seeing or being drawn to the unconscious potential of the other, missing the actual other across from it. This therefore creates a conflict within the other where that which is seen as unique or special is then envied from within. The narcissistic need to destroy the (Thou) then becomes an internal one for the other. This also means the idea of othering then becomes one where for the other to maintain a presence under the gaze of the absolute, that which is seen as different or unusual, and therefore fascinating, must then be destroyed.

A good initial example emerged from Carl's story. A gay man, he was bullied at school for being 'overly feminine' leading him to find solace in his creativity, eventually building a career as a Graphic Designer. Carl chose to work with a memory from his childhood where he was being disruptive in class, something he did as he was already seen as naughty, and an outsider. As an artist, this was art class, his favourite class of the day. The image was of a woman on the shore of a lake, being collected by death who is holding a scythe. It re-

**Figure 2:** Death of the unconscious other



minded him of an image he once created in art class saying:

*Carl: There is a darkness about the painting. But I think people liked it, they thought it was really good. But I'm just sort of thinking about the nature of the image and the feminine figure going off to some other realm. Yeah, wanting to know more about it actually. To try and get a clearer image of it because I think I've binned it some time ago, obviously*

*DT: so how do you feel having this memory, how do you feel witnessing it? This is the boy who finished his O level and this is one of the pieces he presented, so how do you feel at the moment?*

*Carl: I think that that's where I felt most at home. And um, a mixture of feelings in a way, because I have a very, the next memory that comes up is the last day of school and I'm leaving. And the joy that I remember, it was beautiful weather, I got the bus to go home and there was a girl that was at the 6<sup>th</sup> form college that I was going to next, and she was a punk,*

*and I remember thinking that's where I want to be. So, looking at the painting it reminds me of the sort of feeling that I still have now. I never really progressed, that part of me, that sort of creative side. And the still burning desire that I have now to paint and go back into that, but instead I've decided to go down a more commercial route and do design. So, I'm a little bit angry about that.'*

For Carl, people were drawn to his imagery, and the otherness presented within them, yet they seemed to be less drawn to Carl himself. This set up a conflict for Carl where the battle becomes between himself and his creativity. The othering here then becomes self-created, with the tension and anxiety located between himself and, using ideas posited by Emma Jung (1957) his inner feminine. His words though throughout the rest of this passage then explore how he identifies with both his creativity and his non-conformity to the subject, and speak of how even though others may have liked him for being the other, he did not like this position himself. Carl also explores this in his discussion of his work as a commercial graphic designer, a far departure from the boy who was drawn to being a Goth.

It is important to also notice the struggle Carl went through in his attempts to allow himself to be seen through his artistic gift (together with the cost of this), versus the desire to be more authentic. This was a theme explored in more depth in Carl's drawing, together with an exploration of what happens to the anger the other holds when it has been othered. In Carl's case this led to his trying to destroy that which made him different. This desire to 'kill off' the feminine aspect of himself in his visualisation and his image was not just metaphorical, as Carl unconsciously linked this to another memory, saying:

*'You know, at the time from a young age I got into drawing female figures and I would draw them and draw them and change things about them, but once I'd finished them I'd put them in the bin. I didn't want them to be found out and I didn't show them to anyone. I think it was just a way of me expressing that feminine side of me that I was ashamed of as well. So, I think this was a way of expressing that but cloaking it in a lot of darkness.'*

Tying Carl's words together with the

image presented as Figure 3, what he is talking about is how graphic design encouraged his creativity, but through conforming to a set of business ideals also destroys this same creativity, much like he used to do with his images of the feminine. This could be seen through a Jungian perspective where he is trying to destroy his anima, or his internal feminine (Jung, 1957). It could also be seen as a form of self-othering, where his contra-sexual other then becomes that which he wishes to destroy within himself. Essentially, this is a wonderful example of the other sending that which makes them different into the unconscious in order to comply and fit in with the majority. His creative gift is that which makes him unique, and because of the powerful pressures of the majority this aspect of himself is cast off into the endlessness of the underworld.

This interesting link in Carl's story also shows how deep his experience of being bullied went for him. From his being picked upon at school by his peers for being 'overtly feminine' this experience appears to have become internalised so that in the section above Carl would specifically destroy the images of women he created echoing ideas around the internalised hatred of being other (Davids, 2012). This

**Figure 3:** Carl's woman crossing the Styx



struggle to conform was also apparent in his memories from school, where he wanted to be like the Goth girl on the bus, but couldn't quite manage it at that time. Yet, my own research shows something deeper in its visually powerful transpersonal depiction of the experience of othering, for example through the darkness of the image that emerged from Carl's unconscious experience as the other, with his repressed need to destroy that creative aspect of himself that set him apart. The darkness in the image, with absence of colour, is also striking, as is the archetypal theme to the image, an aspect which only emerged as we discussed it further. This suggests that the experience of othering impacts at a very deep level, an attack on the very soul itself. Another way to view this is by considering the masculine image of Death coming across the river to transport the feminine, his symbolic creativity, into the underworld, or the shadow. Carl did not say if he was only bullied by men, so I am unable to offer direct testimony to this effect, but what I can surmise from this image, and out of his being drawn to the woman on the bus on the last day of term, is that one aspect of himself, his masculine, was attempting to kill that which made him separate and other, in this case his inner feminine.

### Discussion

Exploring the theme of death further, it is worth beginning with both existential and post-colonial visions of how this relates to the other. For example, Kierkegaard's often depressing death laden work speaks of this experience of othering where he says 'thus the self co-here's immediately with the Other, desiring craving, enjoying etc.' (Kierkegaard, 1989, p. 81). What that means here is that for the self to exist it needs the other, and vice versa, echoing ideas put forward from a post-colonial perspective. What is different though is Fanon's (2005) idea that there is a psychological cost to this process of being the other for the subject where the other sacrifices its own identity in order to comply with the mirroring needs of the subject. My participant's image here speaks of the cost for the other in 'co-hereing' with that subject, and the murdering of that within them that makes them separate and therefore different. There is a killing off, or a shutting away into the unconscious, of

difference here for the other, but it never totally dies, it just sits within the unconscious waiting to be known.

From a transpersonal perspective, Death therefore means the murdering of that which makes one different, plunging it into the infinite of not existing. This holds echoes from an existential social constructionist perspective, where Sartre (1943) speaks of the narcissistic drive of humans to do that to the other, but what we see here in these images is the unconscious drive of my participants to do this to themselves. Yet, where does this drive arise from? This drive arises out of the pressures from the majority to conform; for example, for Carl being feminine and creative was not acceptable. In the suppression of his difference there is an avoidance of the tension of the opposites posited in the first theme. The other here hides their otherness to try to fit in but it never totally disappears. For example, from Carl's story where even though he has made efforts to destroy his femininity by tearing up his drawings, his statement that on the last day of term he was drawn to the Gothic woman on the bus actually shows his metaphorical attraction back towards a form of the feminine he saw as different.

### Spiritual Othering and Death

Death by spiritual othering therefore becomes a process of destroying that which makes them different, which makes them unique. It is the distancing of oneself from ones infinite potential as presented in the review of the literature, and making oneself other to comply with the demands of the absolute. As discussed in the review as well, the process of spiritual othering involves an external element, the absolute, represented in Carl's story by the masculine. This is not a literal translation though. It is more representative of the role of the ego and the mind, and in particular the external nature of the absolute in these stories. To expand further, it is the rigid nature of the judgements and opinions of the absolute which create this spiritual othering, judgements based upon fear of the infinite nature of otherness.

## Conclusion

Evolving out of a transpersonal paradigm, this research has shown the self-annihilation involved within a process of being othered. Firstly, it has done so by combining the creative techniques common to transpersonal psychotherapy with a more traditional research methodology to uncover the qualitative experience as the other. Although my findings are extremely important, and highlight insights both the other and the majority need to be aware of, I must also advocate for further research into this rich and culturally timely subject. Secondly, the choice of techniques used within this research also moves away from the purely rational, placing it beyond Aristotelian logic (Cox & Thielgaard, 1986) and opening this research to participants from different cultures, or minority groups. This builds upon my work using sand play to understand the unconscious pull the other has towards the majority, presented in another article on the subject (Turner, Callaghan, & Gordon-Finlayson, 2016). My final point, is a recommendation for this research that more be done to combine transpersonal and creative techniques to the more traditional qualitative research methods as this obviously provides a unique voice for the other, and they are then ultimately heard by the majority. Only then can change occur, only then can the full impact of their experiences be realised and respected.

## References

- Ahmed, S. (2007). A Phenomenology of Whiteness. *Feminist Theory*, 8(2), 149–168.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1464700107078139>
- Ahmed, S. (2007). The Language of Diversity. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 30(2), 235–256.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/01419870601143927>
- Akbar, N. (1984). *Chains and Images of Psychological Slavery*. USA: New Mind.
- Appiah, K. A. (2016). Mistaken Identities: Creed, Country, Color, Culture. *Reith Lectures*.
- Beauvoir, S. de. (2010). *The Second Sex*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.
- Bhabha, H. K. (2004). *Location of Culture*. London: Routledge.
- Braud, W., & Anderson, R. (1998). *Transpersonal Research Methods for the Social Sciences*. USA: Sage Publications Inc.
- Clark, H. (1964). *The Philosophy of Albert Schweitzer*. UK: Methuen and Company Limited.
- Cox, M., & Thielgaard, A. (1986). *Mutative Metaphors in Psychotherapy: The Aeolian Mode* (Tavistock). London.
- Davids, M. F. (2012). Internal Racism: A Psychoanalytic Approach to Race and Difference by. *British Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 28(4), 539–542.
- Edel, A. (2010). *Aristotle's Theory of the Infinite*. USA: Kessinger Publishing.
- Fanon, F. (1959). *A dying colonialism*. London: Penguin Limited.
- Fanon, F. (2005). *Black skin, White mask*. (M. Silverman, Ed.). UK: Manchester University Press.
- Ferrer, J. N. (2000). The perennial philosophy revisited. *Journal of Transpersonal Psychology*, 32(1), 7–30.
- Grange, L. Le. (2015). Ubuntu / Botho as Ecophilosophy and Ecosophy. *Journal of Humanistic Psychology*, 49(3), 301–308.
- Guillemin, M. (2004). Understanding illness: using drawings as a research method. *Qualitative Health Research*, 14, 272–289.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1049732303260445>
- Hailey, J. (2008). *Ubuntu : A Literature Review A Paper Prepared for the Tutu Foundation*.
- Jung, E. (1957). *Anima and Animus*. US: Spring Publications Ltd.
- Kierkegaard, S. (1989). *The Sickness Unto Death*. London: Penguin Classics.
- Kitaro, N. (1989). *Last Writings: Nothingness and the Religious Worldview*. (D. A. Dilworth, Ed.). Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press.
- Literat, I. (2013). “A Pencil for Your Thoughts”: Participatory Drawing as a Visual Research Method with Children and Youth. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 12, 84–98. Retrieved from <http://ejournals.library.ualberta.ca/index.php/IJQM/article/view/11780>
- Lorde, A. (1984). *Sister outsider*. US: Crossing Press Limited.
- Lowen, A. (2013). *The Language of the Body*. USA: The Alexander Lowen Foundation.

- Mark, G. T., & Lyons, A. C. (2010). Maori healers' views on wellbeing: the importance of mind, body, spirit, family and land. *Social Science & Medicine* (1982), 70(11), 1756–64. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2010.02.001>
- Mazama, A. (2003). *The Afrocentric Paradigm*. Eritrea: Africa World Press Inc.
- Merleau-ponty, M. (1962). *The Phenomenology of Perception*. London: Routledge.
- Merleau-ponty, M. (2002). *The World of Perception*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Moustakas, C. (1994). *Phenomenological Research Methods*. California: Sage Publications.
- Myers, L. J. (1985). Transpersonal Psychology: The Role of the Afrocentric Paradigm. *Journal of Black Psychology*, 12(1), 31–42. <https://doi.org/10.1177/009579848501200103>
- Paris, P. J., Clark, P., Smith, D., & Oliver, S. (1993). The spirituality of african peoples. *The Journal of Black Theology*, 2(November), 114–124.
- Sartre, J. (1943). *Being and Nothingness*. UK: Routledge.
- Storr, A. (1979). *The Art of Psychotherapy* (Second). Oxford: Butterworth Heinemann.
- Tomarchio, J. (2002). Aquinas's concept of infinity. *Journal of the History of Philosophy*, 40(2), 163–187.
- Turner, D., Callaghan, J., & Gordon-Finlayson, A. (2016). Being the Other: A Creative exploration of the identity of the Other. *British Journal of Play Therapy*, 12, 22–34.
- Von Franz, M.-L. (1980). *Projection and Re-Collection in Jungian Psychology*. UK: Open Court Publications.

\* **Dwight Turner** is Senior Lecturer within the School of Applied Social Sciences at the University of Brighton, lectures on their PG Dip and MSc courses in Counselling and Psychotherapy, and is a PhD Supervisor at the University of Brighton Doctoral College. In 2017 Dwight completed his PhD through the University of Northampton & the Centre for Counselling and Psychotherapy Education (CCPE). His phenomenological and heuristic study used creative techniques such as visualisations, drawing and sand play work to consider the unconscious transpersonal experience of difference & being the Other. Dwight is also a psychotherapist and supervisor in private practice, and a part-time lecturer at the CCPE.  
E-mail: [dturner300@hotmail.com](mailto:dturner300@hotmail.com)

## Appendices

### Appendix 1: Semi-Structured Interview Questions

I would like to invite you to tell me about what the term ‘different’ means to you specifically?  
Can you give me an example of a time when you were particularly aware of being ‘different’ in some way?

What was this experience like for you?

Do you recall why it was difficult? or Do you recall why you found this experience easy?

Questions to consider if the participant’s experience was either negative or positive:

#### *Negative experience of difference*

- How was this experience negative for you?
- How did this difficult experience make you feel?
- Did this experience remind you of anything from your past?
- How did you cope with this experience?
- Do you feel you learnt anything from the experience?
- Have you ever told anyone else about this experience of being different?
- If you had the choice, would you go through the experience again?

#### *Positive experience of difference*

- How was this experience positive for you?
- What feeling(s) did this experience leave you with?
- What did you learn about yourself from the experience?
- Did you ever talk to anyone else about your experience of being different?
- How do you feel you have benefitted from the experience mentioned?
- If you had the choice, would you go through the experience described again?

### Appendix 2: Experience of Otherness Visualisation

- Using this experience (as the other), I would like to perform a visualisation that will take you back into this memory, allowing you to reconnect with this memory by using your imagination. I would therefore like you to make yourself comfortable, to close your eyes and connect with your breathing.
- As you breath, allow yourself to turn inwards, allowing any thoughts or feelings to emerge, before you let them go.
- As you breathe allow yourself to connect with your heart beat.
- When you are ready, then nod your head for me and we will begin.
- Imagine you are back within that experience (mentioned in Section One). When you are there tell me what you see. What happens to you next?
- How do you feel as you look around you?
- Can you locate this feeling in the body?
- See if you can allow yourself to stay with the feeling and allow yourself to breathe into the area of your body where you experience that feeling.
- Now see if you can allow an image to come up for that area of your body. What is this image?
- What qualities does this image have?
- Does this image have a message for you at all?

- Bringing that image back with you, I would like you to reconnect with your breathing and slowly come back into the room.
- As you breathe, allow yourself to reconnect with your feet on the ground, your legs, your thighs, your body on the chair/floor, your torso, your chest, your arms and shoulders and hands, your neck, your head, all the way up to the top of your head.
- When you are ready come back into the room and open your eyes

(Note: the interviewer would then spend a few minutes asking the participant to stretch and come back into their body in the room, allowing them to ground themselves).

- I would now like to invite you to draw this image.
- Does this image remind you of anything at all?
- Would you like to say anything further about this image?
- Is there anything else you would like to add about the exercise at all?