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Being the Other:

A Transpersonal exploration of the meaning of human difference

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### Acknowledgements

When I left school at 16, I left with barely 3 O Levels, and no real idea as to where I might end up. I therefore would never have imagined that I would be sitting at the cusp of a doctorate so many years later. So, it is with enormous gratitude that I say a few words of thanks to the following people. Firstly, I would like to thank Dr Jane Callaghan, Dr Alasdair Gordon-Finlayson, and Dr Buchanan. Without you all pushing me, moulding me, and reminding me of what it takes to become an academic I would never have come as far as I have, or allowed myself to be as brave as I am now in my writing and approach to otherness. To Dr Nigel Hamilton, (Dr) Angela Gruber and everyone at the Centre for Counselling and Psychotherapy Education (CCPE), for believing in the potential of an immature 30yr old, kicking him up the backside, and forcing him to become all he is now. I will probably never be able to repay all that you have done for me. I therefore hope this doctorate, and all the work that comes next begins to settle some of that debt! Next, I would like to thank those who shall forever be called *The Twenty-Five*. Your stories and your wisdom have taken this research in directions I could never have envisaged at the outset. It is my honour to represent your stories here, and my continued future honour to do the best I can for all Others who feel disadvantaged or marginalised. And finally, this thesis, this whole research undertaking, with all the hard work and effort that has gone into its completion, is dedicated to my wife Tatiza and our lovely daughter Fernanda, both of whom I love very much and for whom I would move the planet. Thank you for your patience, your encouragement and for being there during the tough times and the good ones as well. It's over. And this is for you.

### Abstract

This research recognized that being other was an experience we all endure at varying times. Rooting itself within post-colonial theories, this research sought to expand the understanding of this experience into the worlds of relational psychotherapy and the transpersonal. With a phenomenological epistemology, this research therefore utilized creative techniques such as visualizations, drawing, and sand tray work, to understand the unconscious experience of being other, and what the other is. It also explored the unconscious impact of othering, and why the other is drawn to the subject. This research also undertook a heuristic study recognizing that a connection to our own sense of otherness was a route towards psychological wholeness.

*Keywords:* Other, Transpersonal, Difference, Creativity, Post-Colonial

## Contents

Acknowledgements.....	1
Abstract.....	2
Chapter One: Review of the Literature.....	10
Post-colonialism and the other.....	13
Psychotherapy, post-colonial theory and the other.....	16
Object Relations and the Other.....	16
Buber and the Other.....	20
The Unconscious and the Other.....	24
The Transpersonal and the Other.....	31
Hegemony and the spiritual other.....	32
Relational Spirituality and the other.....	36
Summary of the review of the literature.....	43
Chapter Two: Methodology.....	44
Exploring relational difference.....	45
Methods and methodology.....	47
Phenomenological interviews.....	47
Semi-Structured Interview.....	48
Visualisation and drawing exercise.....	50
Sand tray exercise.....	52

Summary of creative exercises .....	54
Participants.....	55
Data analysis .....	57
Heuristic Research .....	61
Heuristic Self-Interviews .....	65
Summary of the heuristic process .....	67
Ethical Considerations .....	68
Summary of Methodology Chapter .....	72
Chapter Three: Participant and themes overview .....	74
Background to participants and their differences .....	74
Introducing the phenomenological themes .....	77
Summary of the heuristic themes.....	84
Summary.....	86
Chapter Four: Submission of the other .....	87
Silencing of the other .....	90
The other is confused about the rules .....	95
Clichéd other.....	101
Summary.....	105
Chapter Five: Power and the other.....	107
Narcissism of the other .....	110

Other drawn to otherness .....	116
Presence of the other is seen as a threat .....	123
Summary .....	129
Chapter Six: Isolated Otherness .....	130
The Other meets its creativity and potential .....	132
The other encounters loneliness and solitude .....	138
The other is fearful of intimacy .....	143
Summary .....	147
Chapter Seven: Unconscious experience as other .....	149
Tension of the Opposites .....	151
Death .....	161
Separation from potential .....	172
Summary .....	182
Chapter Eight: Symbolic experience as other .....	184
Other fixes its identity in relationship to the Absolute .....	187
Other sees potential in relationship with the Absolute .....	198
The Relational I and the other .....	208
The meeting of opposites .....	210
Other is fearful of the absolute .....	217
Summary .....	225

Chapter Nine: Heuristic Themes.....	228
Descent.....	235
Identifying the Authentic/Inauthentic split .....	239
Other avoids being in the shadow .....	248
Tension of the opposites.....	254
Union of the Opposites .....	258
The authenticity of the Other involves being seen.....	267
Summary .....	273
Chapter Ten: Discussion .....	274
Summary of main claims .....	275
Recommendations for future research and practical applications .....	282
Public .....	283
Books and Papers .....	284
Further Research .....	285
The Transpersonal.....	290
Personal Reflections.....	293
References.....	297

Figure 1: Introducing a Transpersonal perspective of the other .....	12
Figure 2: Buber/Jung conjunctio .....	28
Figure 3: Absolute Nothingness.....	39
Figure 4: Main phenomenological themes.....	78
Figure 5: The Submissive Other .....	88
Figure 6: Power and the other.....	108
Figure 7: Isolated Otherness .....	130
Figure 8: Tension of the Opposites .....	151
Figure 9: Christina's felled tree of life .....	153
Figure 10: Michael's Curly Wurly and Scarab Beetle.....	157
Figure 11: Death of the unconscious other .....	161
Figure 12: Carl's woman crossing the Styx .....	164
Figure 13: Alejandra's disabled Jewish man being thrown out of the window.....	169
Figure 14: Separation from potential .....	172
Figure 15: Gorge outside the gates .....	174
Figure 16: Barbara's pregnancy ball of potential .....	178
Figure 17: Othering the absolute.....	185
Figure 18: Daniel's sand tray .....	188
Figure 19: Rowena's sand tray .....	193
Figure 20: Rowena's reframed sand tray.....	196
Figure 21: Jeff's sand tray - superman and the fish.....	199
Figure 22: Pauline's sand tray - the princess and the wizard .....	203
Figure 23: Barbara's egg and Dwight's dinosaur .....	210

Figure 24: Yvette's tiger and Dwight's elephant.....	214
Figure 25: Paola's Gilgamesh vs Dwight's cowboy .....	218
Figure 26: Rashida's cat vs Dwight's turtle.....	222
Figure 27: Other's interaction with the absolute .....	225
Figure 28: Heuristic themes .....	230
Figure 29: Alchemical stages .....	232
Figure 30: Rottweiler and Batman .....	241
Figure 31: (White) interviewer as a black woman.....	244
Figure 32: Transpersonal other(ing).....	248
Figure 33: Early life mandala as other .....	249
Figure 34: A star divided.....	260
Figure 35: Unity - The endless sea .....	262
Figure 36: Car number 928.....	270
Figure 37: Being the Other .....	282
Figure 38: Relationship between absolute and nothingness .....	293

## List of Tables

Table 1: Semi-Structured Interview Schedule .....	49
Table 2: Visualisation exercise schedule.....	51
Table 3: Sand tray schedule .....	53
Table 4: Participants and their differences .....	75
Table 5: Difference Chart.....	76
Table 6: Structure of the Submissive Other .....	79
Table 7: Structure of Power and the Other.....	80
Table 8: Structure of the Isolated Other .....	81
Table 9: Structure of Internalised experience of being the other .....	82
Table 10: Structure of Symbolic experience as the Other.....	83
Table 11: Summary of Heuristic Themes.....	85

## Chapter One: Review of the Literature

### *I am a black, male, transpersonal, psychotherapist.*

I have begun this thesis with a statement of my identity. This is the positioning from which I approach this thesis, and from which I have come to question the experience of being other. This statement highlights the intersecting levels of difference and otherness I encounter in my everyday living and working life. It encapsulates the positions from which I negotiate this study, and that I bring to the question this research poses. For example, being from the Black British minority I have lived most of my life within the white majority culture in the United Kingdom; as a black man, I work within a world of psychotherapy that is majority white female; and as a transpersonal psychotherapist I exist within a profession that is mainly populated by psychoanalysts. My difference is something that I live with on a daily basis, a bridge that I have to repeatedly cross. Yet, within the world of psychotherapy, whilst there is literature around the political need to acknowledge difference, the consideration of the unconscious importance of difference has lagged behind the other realms of cultural and social philosophical thought. Although a number of psychoanalysts have attempted to breach this gap by bringing the idea of the other into the world of psychotherapy, this also highlights a missed opportunity for us to work with difference from a more unconscious and relational perspective (Frosh, 2002; Frosh & Baraitser, 2003; Poland, 2008, 2011). Their work though is very much centred around a more object relations framing of the other, one where the duality between the subject and the other is acknowledged as existing, but where the meaning of the relationship and, in particular, how this type of is lived by the other, is not considered. The aims for this research will therefore be as follows:

1. To explore the nature of being other, and provide evidence of my assumption that being the other is a universal experience;
2. To investigate if working creatively with tools common to transpersonal psychotherapy would allow for a deeper exploration of the internalised experience of otherness;
3. To also creatively investigate the relationship the other has with the majority, meaning what is it that brings the other into relationship and holds it there; and
4. To show that a longer transpersonal engagement with one's own sense of otherness is a route to psychological wholeness.

As this thesis is concerned with understanding difference from both a more relational psychotherapeutic and a transpersonal perspective it is important to ground my understanding within both of these paradigms, thereby allowing me to build upon previous models of understanding difference. I will begin by exploring post-colonial theory and its influence on my work, before considering how psychotherapy considers the other, and then how the transpersonal does as well, incorporating post-colonial theories and thereby presenting a more holistic perspective of the other. By adopting these ideas my thinking will be an expansion of the more political, social and developmental understanding of difference that we have in society today, ideas often dominated by identity construction, leading to one where the unconscious and relationality are included. This connects with social constructionists ideas that take the debate away from the dyad of identity formation and centres our understanding of difference within the realm of social interchange (Andrews, 2012). This research asserts also that whilst our relationship as the other is a universal one, that this relationship to the other is as well. Where this research differs is with

the other being seen as a route to relating to the deeper unconscious psychological other within us all, thereby bringing with it psychological wholeness, and a more complete relationship to the external other.

In focusing on the psychotherapeutic and transpersonal experiences of difference and how they are constituted relationally, it is not my intention to avoid the political, cultural, or social contexts within which ‘difference’ is constituted. It is also not my intention to ignore theory and research that explains difference from these perspectives, as these have been extremely important in raising the profile of minority groups during the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and are key to understanding the way difference is constructed and lived (J. Butler, 1990; Fanon, 2005; E. Said, 2003). However, given my relational and transpersonal focus, it is also not my intention to exhaustively review the literature on difference from writings on feminism, racism, disability or LGBTI issues, and to attempt to do so here would be to do them all a major injustice.

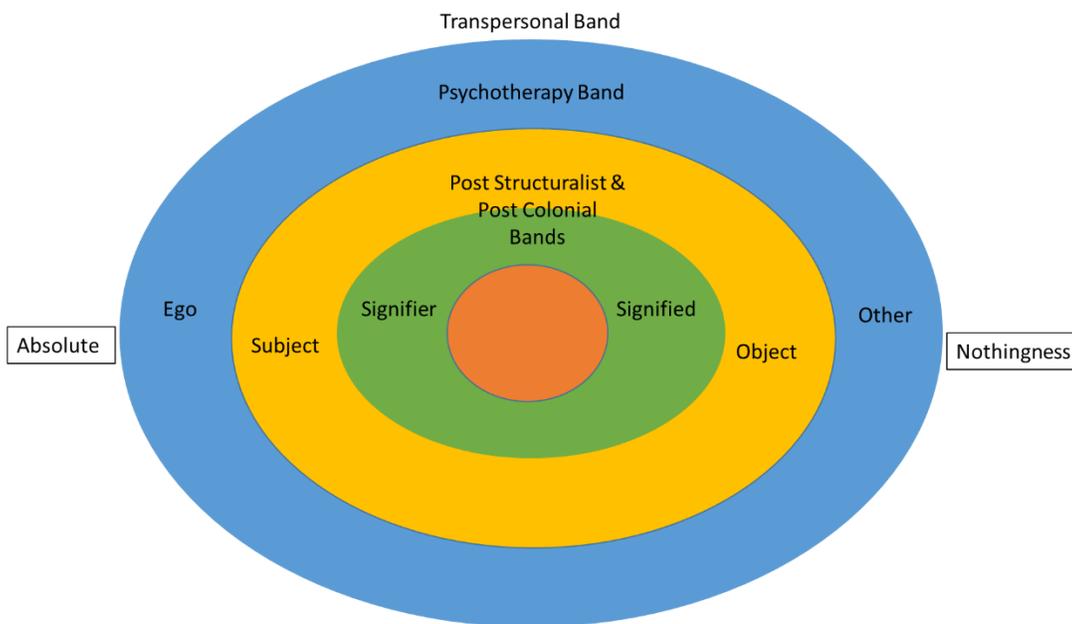


Figure 1: Introducing a Transpersonal perspective of the other

Figure 1 *'Introducing a transpersonal perspective of the other'* outlines, the positioning of my ideas. The outer band is the transpersonal band of the absolute and the nothingness, and this will be explored further on in this review of the literature. My work here though is clearly influenced by the central writings of post-structuralism, feminists, and many others who have developed ideas around our experience of the other. So, there is a movement from the centre to the outer points where my work resides. My ideas also recognise that outside of a psychodynamic approach to the other, there has been little mainstream consideration of how to work with the other within psychotherapy, and the transpersonal has been slow in understanding its relationship to the other as well.

Following the passage of outward expansion, this will therefore allow me to build a picture of the importance of my research with the two positions proffering a meeting point between the psychologically western and the more culturally diverse transpersonal. Using this method though will allow me to look at the gaps in our knowledge when it comes to understanding difference and therefore highlight just where my particular research sits in amongst the wealth of understanding discussed as I explore: *'Being the Other: A transpersonal exploration of the meaning of human difference.'*

### **Post-colonialism and the other**

Before considering the first aim of this research one should ask, why look at difference in such a seemingly generic fashion? In the past these definitions of difference emerged out of a white, majority culture, heteronormative, paradigm and were often nothing more than the majority

presenting an other against which it could define itself (Fanon, 1959). These definitions were enforced from the upper classes, so were upheld from a position of extreme privilege, with the impact of said definitions being they negated any perspective which did not fit within this majority culture paradigm. For example, during colonialism or slavery should the other fail to do so, it was then problematized by being seen as abnormal, hysterical, or aggressive, when their actions sit outside of this majority decreed normality (Akbar, 1984; Clark, 1964). Yet, should the other conform, there is a huge psychological cost to doing so, with evidence of this emergent from the whiteness theory arena which challenges the destructive social and psychological impact of the annihilation of the sense of self of the other (Ahmed, 2007). The shift in focus from a majority defined idea of difference to one defined by the other frees this research from past categorisations.

Secondly, due to the power dynamic created by the splitting of subject and object by the majority, the categories themselves are therefore limiting and create their own levels of difference; for example, if one is not dark skinned then one is often considered not black enough to be black, yet also occasionally to be accepted one has to be lighter skinned and more like the majority (Hunter, 2015; Smith, Yosso, & Solórzano, 2006). Psychotherapeutically, I would term this a *splitting of the other* where the other's identity is immediately challenged by the categorisation of the majority. One means of countering this is to take back the power inherent in self-identifying. For example, within the feminist arena, discussions around self-definitions of what it is to be woman shifted the ownership of such away from the majority (Beauvoir, 2010). What this means here is the other itself questions what it is to be other, allowing for a deeper understanding of otherness, not one confined to majority enforced stereotypes. The return of this power to self-identify is hugely important and adds flexibility to how the other is seen beyond the religious,

cultural, or scientific categorisations of what it is to be a woman, black, or of a different race or culture. My research adopts this idea by allowing the other to self-define what it is to be the outsider, as any attempt to do otherwise would have been from within one of the previously defined categories, and would inevitably have led to a majority tainted, reductionist perspective. To avert (albeit briefly) the defining gaze of the Subject, I wanted to enable a self-identification of what it means to be the other – an enterprise I acknowledge is limited by the organising logic of self and other, subject and object, centre and periphery (Benjamin, 1990; Haug, 2008; Laing, 1969).

Thirdly, the current political discourse here in the Global North contains a definite movement towards recognising these previously majority defined categories as equal, and a slow march towards accepting diversity. Yet, as Ahmed (2007) states the movement towards diversity, whilst helpful in the recognition of the other, is governed and controlled by the centre. So, a more direct exploration of the other, by the other, and carried out by another self-identified other, challenges this perspective as well. So, what my initial questions also offer is a route into a more post-colonial understanding of difference I feel is essential to underpinning my work here, as there can be no relational understanding of the other without recognising the extensive work which already exists within the field. I need to state though, it has been essential to my ideas that I include the works of post-colonial others rather than just the writers from within the majority culture as these writers have constructed ideas about the other from within their own experience as the other. To begin, Bhabha (2004) discusses the idea of mimicry in his writings, where the other seemingly copies the ways and being of the majority in order to fit in. This nicely compliments Fanon's (2005) consideration of the idea of the minority wearing a mask in order to fit in with the majority, and together they speak of the embodied false identity adopted by the other to survive. Yet, what

these ideas do not allow for is a more collective experience of the other as they are rooted within a paradigm that makes the non-white, non-male a collective minority. If adopted here, this would narrow my research so it is important to recognise how difficult an experience this is, and how regularly we all encounter such an experience. The broadening of the categorisations therefore brings into focus the collective mimicry of the other.

Yet, Fanon's (2005) ideas still hold much weight in today's world where, to offer just two examples out of many, within the black British and African-American communities discussions still rage against the straightening of black hair, or the whitening of black skin, in order to appear white and acceptable. So, incorporating the ideas of Fanon, Ahmed, Bhabha, and others, ideas of the inauthenticity of the other already begin to emerge from an exploration of the theories already existent within this area. My research though will look at the unconscious impact of being other, and will add to this debate from within a psychotherapeutic paradigm.

## **Psychotherapy, post-colonial theory and the other**

### **Object Relations and the Other**

Since psychotherapy's inception, efforts to observe the other through a psychotherapeutic lens have also proved problematic. For example, offering a post-colonial reflection on psychotherapy, Said (2003) was critical of Freud's ignorance of difference, his ire centring around the marginalisation of the working classes, and the detrimental perspective held about women. For example, with Freud's work being rooted within the upper class patriarchy of the time meant that the clinical lenses used to understand women were often tainted, for example in his labelling of

women as hysterics (Jacobs, 2003). So, any consideration of the other through a psychotherapeutic lens would already have been tainted by the influences upon, and the prejudices of, the authors of the time. What is also interesting is that Freud himself was an immigrant when he came to the United Kingdom in the years preceding World War II, and failed to recognise this within himself and its importance (Jacobs, 2003). Also, Carl Jung, in his separation from Freud and the psychoanalysts, was always an outsider being the only person not of Jewish faith (Stevens, 1990). So even here within these two-major white, male, examples from psychotherapy, the position and the pain of being the other has been totally missed, a message that has largely informed this discourse until this day.

That does not mean there were no other psychotherapists who attempted to observe their world. The best examples within psychotherapy in understanding the nature of the other emerged out of the psychodynamic psychotherapy traditions. Starting with how we form an egoic sense of self in early life, Weil and Piaget (1951) discussed childhood awareness of differences, and how identifying with some groups whilst dis-identifying with others functions as developmental achievement. Next, a Lacanian approach to the other, involving stages of mirroring, recognises that we form a sense of self by being witnessed in the gaze of the other, in this case the mother (Lacan, 2003). The problem with these and other perspectives is they leave the other invisible, making othering an event where the other sacrifices its identity to be a mirror for the ego formation of the subject.

This is not always a negative. For example, Winnicott (1969) talked of the analyst using themselves as an object for the client in order to facilitate the transference and counter-transference

needed for the repair of psychological wounds. What this does confirm is a level of narcissism within the subject where the other is not recognised as an individual in their own right. This though is within the world of psychotherapy where an analysts training makes use of the objectified self for the healing of the distressed other.

Yet, the use of an object for one's own purpose is obviously not limited to the therapy room. And when we use the other as an object this can leave them without a sense of their own identity, meaning they often have to find a means of being of their own, such as becoming an echo for the subject (Spivak, 1993). This leads to a level of inauthenticity within the other. The problem though is that an echo here is always less than the original, less substantial than the original sound. So, like a house slave that desires to be like his overseer he will always have to deal with a level of difference and incompleteness no matter the strength of the egoic echo of his master.

Also, a major flaw within psychoanalysis is the engagement with the other from a distance, inevitably objectifying the other as they saw the other as something external and pre-categorised. So, for example, when Frosh (2002) discusses the other in his papers, where he promotes a recognition and engagement with the other, he does so from a position of separation. For example, where he talks of the subject putting its hatred into the other, this objective recognition of the impact creates a third position, which is his own. Whilst I do not believe he means to distance us from the other through his papers, his work inevitably creates an inertia in our understanding in its objectivity. This is something writers like Dalal (2015) have tried to counter by encouraging therapists to think about difference with more depth, thereby manoeuvring themselves away from the numbness of traditional politicised diversity. Yet even this does not go far enough, as Dalal to

is caught in the subject/object dyad of object relations and rarely speaks of how he relates to his own sense of otherness.

For example, in my own articles I discuss how a psychodynamic perspective freely acknowledges there is a power dynamic in the relationship between the subject and the other (Turner, 2016b). This is often left unchallenged in mainstream psychodynamic theory, with relationships between therapists and clients being seen as simply an expression of transference/countertransference, as if this positioned the relationship outside current relationships of power. In this context, the impact of this power based interaction on the other and its identity is left unrecognised and unconsidered in the therapy context. In this sense, I argue, therapists miss an opportunity to treat the therapeutic interaction as a microcosm of broader social relations of power, ignoring the interface of the personal and political, and overlooking how the social relations that construct othering outside the therapy room are reproduced within in it. In this sense, the subaltern is silenced in many therapeutic encounters, as its reproduction in the therapy context is ignored. I extend Sartre's (1943) view that within sexual relationships there is always a power dynamic, seeing this as an inevitable consequence of their interaction where sex involves the taking of power over the other either overtly or covertly. In this thesis, I explore how this overt and covert power dynamic is acted out in multiple relational contexts, and how it is specifically reproduced in the therapeutic context, as client becomes 'known' by the therapist. I develop the argument of those theorists who have argued for the importance of acknowledging the conscious and unconscious aspects of othering as it is reproduced within the therapy context, naming the socially constituted dynamics that produce the client as subject, and as object (Dalal, 2012; Davids, 2012). One of the aims of this research therefore is to understand this power dynamic from the other's

socially located and specific personal-political perspectives, and to begin to recognise that which draws it to the subject.

Finally, another problem is again the white, heteronormative, perspective on the other within psychotherapy that has only over the past 20 years or so been challenged by therapists from within and without of the psychodynamic norm. For example, what is missing is often perspectives like Davids' (2012) where he considered the internalised impact of being other from a racial perspective, recognising the unconscious' role within psychotherapy whilst suggesting routes towards its exploration. Or Benjamin's (1998) exploration recognising the struggle for the other in being seen in relation to the subject. So, while early psychotherapists considered othering as more of a developmental stage we all go through, and whilst there have been attempts to make us think more about how this impacts, this research looks to build upon these ideas offering a more minority-focused and relational understanding from the other's perspective.

### **Buber and the Other**

As discussed above, Sartre clearly states that in any sexual relationship there will be a power dynamic inbuilt. This bleak assessment of human relationships was challenged by Buber in his seminal work *I and Thou* (Buber, 2010) where he espoused the notion that we construct many different types of relationships with the other, be they individuals or the world around us. These are broken down into either an I-Thou or an I-It. The I-It relationship is where the It we relate to is not seen as it actually is but becomes a construct to fulfil a need of that particular I. If an I-It relationship does not involve seeing the other as individually unique then this is a type of objectification. The important point is the possible dehumanising impact of being an It for an I,

with objectification being the denial of the reality of that individual person, and with that It/other then being used to serve the individual I (or group I) in some fashion. This is invaluable as I am especially interested in just what the unconscious impact of this It position is for an individual and/or collective. For example, an American Psychological Association paper on the impact of discrimination in the United States, discusses the increased levels of stress in an individual, or a group, when they encounter prejudice (Anderson et al., 2016). So, in acting in accordance with the stereotype and denying the humanity of the other, this must impact on someone seen as different. This is hugely important, as how does the stereotyped other deal with not being seen? What does it feel like? Do they internalise this experience of having their humanity denied? These questions are relevant to the second aim of this research, that there should be a creative exploration of the internalised experience as other, using techniques common to transpersonal psychotherapy.

Buber also states that the thou in the I-thou relationship is actually a gateway to God (1998). For this review, this is especially important for two reasons. Firstly, his ideas open a gateway to the spiritual via a transpersonal recognition of the other, and secondly, they echo perspectives expressed within Afrocentric spiritual beliefs, ideas about which will be discussed more fully later in this review.

Buber's work though provides an alternative around the nature of the I itself. Although he does not say so himself explicitly, there is a large difference between the I of the I-Thou relationship and the I of the I-It objectification. For example, to fix another in place for one's own need means I have to access a different part of myself than I would do were I seeking out a relationship with another. This objectification speaks of the I holding a selfishness within itself, a

self-serving aspect that Freud (Morrison, 1986) discusses when considering narcissism, or from the developmental perspective of early life attachment theories (Mitchell, 1986). The narcissism of the I position is also important in the building of types of othering, where the I avoids an I-Thou interaction or the potentiality of relationship. Or, from a transpersonal angle, the I instead takes on the position of the divine placing the other as its servant, repositioning the other accordingly (Walach, 2008). This hiding being driven by an anxiety provoked within the I by the prospect of the It becoming potentially another Thou in its presence. My idea here links with those of Whiteness theorists, whose ideas in the context of this research centred on the anxious motivation that led to the conquering and stereotyping of different sexes, groups or cultures (Huddart, 2006; Proctor, 2004).

Buber also understood that an individual can inhabit many types of I, for example I could choose to be seen as a therapist, black, a man, or anything else that I choose to be. From a more phenomenological perspective, these aspects then represent the totality of who I am as a human being when placed together. But from a stereotypical perspective if someone relates to me as just a black man then they are denying all the other aspects of who I happen to be, that I am middle-aged, that I am a therapist etc., coupled with an acting towards that sliver-It as they think it should be. It is this narrowing of the other individual that is important here, as we can often forget, or choose to ignore, the fullness of the person opposite us in our interactions with the other. This shows how easy it is to vary our relationship to the Thou to that of a stereotyped It.

This is particularly strange given that Buber's own views emerged out of his wartime experiences in World War II. A combination of these ideas would then give rise to two types of I

position, the relational I and the narcissistic I. This explanation of Buber's idea then addresses the obvious flaws within his thinking and begins to tie his thinking to that of the existentialists and the post-colonialists.

When seen through a post-colonial lens, the other is not something to be met with compassion and empathy but a threat to not only the narcissistic I's sense of being but also to its position of power (Fanon, 1959). In certain circumstances this is acceptable; for example, in competitions the competing individuals or teams contest the said event for the betterment of themselves, of society and of humanity. But even at the end of the game there are attempts made by the competitors to offer each other respect. It is when the power dynamic involves the 'not seeing' of the other that the problem begins, when the narcissistic I recognizes its position as under threat from the human existence of the other that the desire to win actually becomes a desire to annihilate the other. This counterpoint is the relational I. This is the part of the I that seeks out relationship with the other. It is the I that takes responsibility for the other and learns from it. This echoes Buber, who suggested a more intimate symbiotic connection between subject and the other as he states 'my thou affects me, as I affect it' (2010, p. 15). Within psychotherapy Frosh (2002) talks of relating to the other from a more empathic standpoint. This more humanistic perspective contrasts well with Laplanche (1998) who saw the other as primary and talked about how the other resides within us on an unconscious level. This need to see the other via the relational I echoes the call of the numerous authors who have called for a more relational understanding of difference. For example from Irigaray's (1993) consideration of the need to valorise difference and to look at our relationship with the other, and Gilligan's (1995) exhortation that we understand the world around us from a more empathic and relational perspective, in other words seeing our environment

as a thou. Bringing all of these opinions together is to show the universal nature of the relationship to the other, from those involving power dynamics to those which are more relational, whilst embracing our collective responsibility to each other. This again reminds us of the first aim of my research.

The last problem to be presented here thus far is that the work of Buber centres itself on the conscious world. As this is a study rooted within both the worlds of psychotherapy and the unconscious, it is essential that I return to these roots to explore the more unconscious aspect of the aforementioned self-other dyad. This discussion is also relevant as my research will look predominantly at the internal, unconscious and archetypal experience of difference that as I discussed in my introduction to this paper are most often ignored. To understand this aspect of the therapeutic relationship I will therefore be looking at how the other is presented in work which considers the unconscious.

### **The Unconscious and the Other**

A cornerstone of this research is the exploration of the relationship between the personal unconscious and the collective. Using creative sand tray techniques and personal testimonies one of the aim of this research is to build a picture of the collective experience of being different through the projections that the other has onto the majority. How this is achieved is through the use of symbolism to access the personal projections one has onto an object. The meaning of these projections when explored by the participant, or the client in therapy, would then reveal their symbolic connection to the collective unconscious and therefore the archetypes which lie beyond (Castellana & Donfrancesco, 2005). Understanding projections is important as for the analyst von

Franz, projection was the ‘unconscious, that is, unperceived and unintentional, transfer of subjective psychic elements onto an outer element’ (1980, p. 3). This means when this psychic material is split off by the ego and cast outwards, it finds a home on an outer object where it awaits to be reabsorbed at a later date. So, we collectively project material either onto a group, or onto individuals, material which arises out of the collective unconscious and therefore is representative of the archetypes themselves. This process of splitting off and projection does not begin as an adult though. As Washburn discusses in his work on early life development from a transpersonal/psychodynamic perspective, this is a process that starts very early in life, a process that he calls ‘primary repression’ (1995, p. 20), with the ego forming itself around that psychic material which is left, so it is this early spitting off of an aspect of who we are that starts to create the first internal split where the ego/psyche dyad is formed. To maintain its position of dominance over the psyche, the ego then needs to keep rejecting these psychic aspects of itself, and forces this material into the shadow. It was Jung’s belief that the shadow is the externalised other that I am seeking within my project (Stevens, 1990). My research though finds its ground not in the pre-egoic formation of difference, as per Washburn, and in these areas already covered in some depth by the likes of Piaget, Weil (1951) and Aboud (1988) amongst others who have mapped out the stages a child goes through in an encounter with difference. Nor is this study involved in the defining or understanding of difference, as studied within say feminism or gender studies, where there is a strong mapping of the human experience in its diversity and its complexity. My work finds its grounding in the trans-egoic stage of development and relationship, where identity has already been formed and is challenged by the presence of the other (Wilber, 1989). So, as per my fourth aim for this research, it is my strong belief that our encounter as the other can be seen as a stage of individuation with the dissolving of these same egoic structures that were created in early

life. An area Wilber (1989) discusses in his work, this basically involves a movement beyond the ego towards a gradual re-engagement with a more genuine sense of self. Essentially this is where this transpersonal study of difference comes into its fullness of being, and where relatedness for me becomes most prominent in shifting this discourse away from early life studies of difference to seeing difference as holding self-actualising potential. Projection, in the context of this research, then becomes essential as we consider this need we have for an externalised object to cast our unwanted psychic material onto. Von Franz even goes on to suggest that ‘whole groups can project collectively so that their mistaken judgement passes officially for the acceptable description of reality’ (1980, p. 4). Von Franz’s concept of some kind of collective projectivity reintroduces the possibility of understanding the social, personal, and unconscious nature of power in the therapeutic relationship, and shows how readily projection and stereotyping of an other involves the fixing of oneself and of one’s perception of reality.

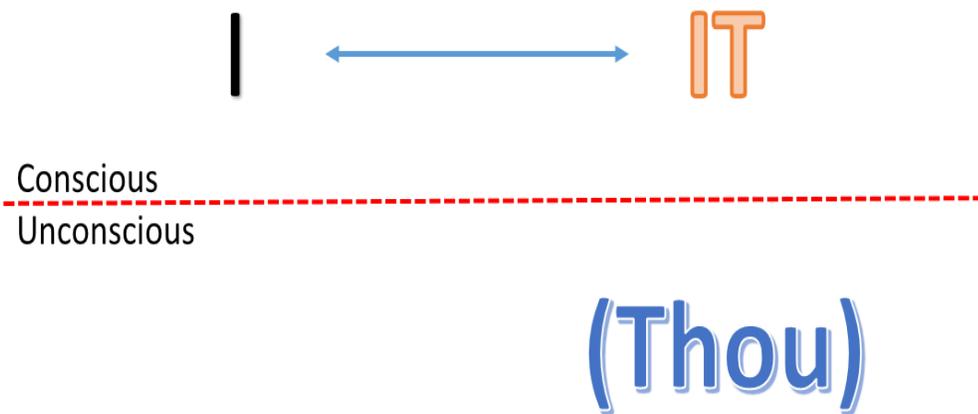
The delicate interplay between the collective unconscious and the personal therefore means that when we project onto an other from a position of personal bias, we do so influenced by ideas learnt from the collective unconscious of our particular group. So, when we fix our singular perception of reality, what we are really doing is enforcing this using the projections and stereotypes of the collective to add weight to our unconscious argument. The anxiety provoked by the mere presence of the other arises in conjunction with the need to repel that which threatens the fragile personal ego, hence the need to use the collective experience. This unrecognised anxiety then leads to the adoption of positions of power, where the other has to be subjugated by the majority in order for this power to be managed (Butler, 1997). My idea therefore ties my work to whiteness theorists who have argued about the fragility of the majority as being an important

factor in prejudice (Seshadri-Crooks, 2000). Othering here therefore becomes a delicate interplay between the personal unconscious and the collective.

It is important to recognise the impact of psychic othering upon another person, and I am convinced the creative techniques used in this study will symbolically uncover this psychic experience. In the context of this research the detrimental inability of the egoic subject to own its projections shouts of a resistance to psychological growth and change, be it on an individual or on a group/collective level. So already we see the crossovers between the work of Buber and Jung within the context of my research. As previously stated, whilst Buber looked at the conscious relationship between subject and object, my consideration of the work of Jung and the transpersonal then allows this study an understanding of the unconscious material also directing it.

To understand fully the psychic material that is split off and pushed into the shadow, I would like to present Jung's consideration of the negative impact of projection onto an object. Jung posited the idea that the other is the shadow (Stevens, 1990), with the shadow being the repressed material suppressed and forced into the unconscious in order to comply with the social, familial, cultural, or other rules which would make us acceptable. His statement though, in an echo of Buber's work, talks about the collective other. His idea went further with the labelling of the collective other as evil by the same narcissistic ego that is looking to maintain control over its domain, its driver being a fear of its own annihilation. Yet underneath, this fear of individual annihilation is merely a fear of an ego dying away and allowing something of that same projected material to return. This personal egoic fear therefore is what has been used to formulate laws, to promote patriarchal religious strictures, and to create other structures involved in the oppression

of the other. Taking this into the unconscious, this oppression of collective others is also a suppression of psychic aspects of the personal self (Stevens, 1990). In understanding the other, it is the ego's belief in these oppressive laws and structures, and its denial of responsibility for the other, that keeps the other apart, and at the same time leaves much of our psychic self in the shadow. Jung clearly talked about the shadow as the other in the dyad, raising the spectre of the shadow of the subject being held by the other as the object. It is this idea of the other as the shadow that is also important for me to understand in my work, together with the potential for recovery of these aspects and what they mean for an individual, or group, from a psychotherapeutic perspective.



*Figure 2: Buber/Jung conjunctio*

Figure 2, *the Buber/Jung conjunctio*, explores this further. A combination of the Buberian and Jungian ideas here allows us to understand the nature of being the other in a different fashion. For example, when the other becomes an It for the I what this means is that the other's authentic sense of self is forced into the unconscious, hence the bracketed Thou within the diagram. The other is therefore a combination of the IT/(Thou) as explored in my own paper on the subject (D. Turner, 2016a). The importance of this in regard to my research is that my work looks to

understand the experience of this other, firstly to understand phenomenologically just what the other is, then to consider just how the (Thou) is formed, and thirdly to understand what the (Thou) is when it is projected upon the I.

This last perspective brings up the idea of individuation. The withdrawing of projections, and the owning of psychic material forced into the shadow, is key here in the development of the Self, as the subject becomes themselves to their fullest potential. Although very much driven by his own psychology to look inwards, Jung himself believed that individuation was a process that was rooted as much in our connection to the outer world as it was to the internal. As Jung said, ‘true relatedness can only come with relationship to one’s internal self’ (Stevens, 1990, p. 268) highlighting this importance. In relating this back to difference, his idea here means that only by connecting to our own internalised other or other can we even begin to connect to the other outside of us. This echoes the aforementioned point about the re-collection of projections, but also mirrors Buber’s (2010) about an internal thou and our relationship to it.

Jung argued for a change of relationship with the other in the returning of these projections as he stated ‘when a person has been caught in blinding projections relating to his environment and they are withdrawn, in many cases this in no way annuls or sets aside relationship. On the contrary, a genuine ‘deeper’ relation emerges, no longer rooted in egoistic moods, struggles or illusions, but rather in the feeling of being connected to one another via an absolute, objective principle’ (von Franz, 1980, p. 174). This highlights not only the transpersonal potential of removing projections from another, but also the shifting from the I-It relationship to the I-Thou of Buber’s work and how this might occur. This quote also highlights the importance of exploring

our personal unconscious projections to form a different relationship with the external collective other. This is an important point. Inadvertently Jung understood that when we withdraw our projections from others, we then begin to separate from the groups we previously thought we needed to belong to, allowing our newly rediscovered sense of Self to guide us towards those previously objectified diverse others we now find that we hold a deeper connection to (von Franz, 1980). This is no different to holding a belief in an ideal, becoming that idea with all its flaws and inherent prejudices, before realising that one is more than just that ideal and connecting with all those one had held at a distance. For Jung, this removal of projections meant that we would be less likely to objectify the other and opened the door to the potential of a deeper relationship to both ourselves and the other.

The inclusion of this unconscious relational aspect here therefore builds upon the ideas where the other self-defines. It acknowledges that identity is governed by unconscious processes and the other is heavily influenced by this. The relational also challenges the strict psychodynamic paradigm where the other is objectified, whilst lessening the power dynamic between subject and object. The other is therefore seen and acknowledged by a combination of the subject recognising that it has its own sense of otherness, and by the other owning its own authentic identity. My research will therefore creatively tie the sense of otherness and the owning of the other's identity together.

The difficulty with the ideas presented above though is there are always projections, meaning we regularly see the other as fearful, or objectify them. Jung's own history underlines this idea, and the charges of racism and sexism levelled at him by theorists of many disciplines.

For example, Von Raffay saw Jung's anima, the internalised feminine, as negating real women and a form of sexism (von Raffay, 2000). To therefore truly experience the relational, and to see beyond all of our projections from the other, is an extremely difficult thing to do, and at best only temporary. A project such as this one has not been attempted before for this reason, underlining just why psychotherapy has been so reluctant to challenge anything more than the most rudimentary psychodynamic thought processes around this topic. It is this difficulty in recognising, understanding and therefore knowing our other that this research is going to rectify, hence the grounding of this research partly within a psychotherapeutic paradigm.

To summarise, the psychotherapeutic at best explores an object relations perspective of the other. This though misses out on any relational exploration of difference, and also of the unconscious experience of being the other. My work builds upon this by using creative techniques to present a relational vision whilst also exploring the unconscious relationship we have to the other. It also looks at this new material in opposition to the relational and the social constructions of difference. With this lens newly formed, this review of the literature will now progress to a more purely transpersonal explication of our relationship to the other.

### **The Transpersonal and the Other**

Figure 1 above, entitled *introducing a Transpersonal perspective of the other*, outlines our varying layers of understanding of the other, whilst recognising there is a transpersonal band as well. Again, my understanding incorporates post-structuralist thinking, feminist thinking, and the early work of psychotherapists who considered the other, moving from the green circle, to the yellow circle to the blue. It includes now a relational psychotherapeutic band, incorporating the

ideas posited in the section above via Buber, Jung and other theorists. I need to clearly restate here that the circles show this process is not hierarchical, meaning there is no movement from the centre outwards to an ultimate understanding within the transpersonal. The ripples move outwards and inwards as well, like waves against a shore, so that as the transpersonal is influenced by the writings and words of the post-structuralist position, so will the post-structuralist's be influenced by the transpersonal and the psychotherapeutic.

In order to understand where transpersonal ideas of the other reside in relation to those of psychotherapy and even postcolonial theories it is important to recognise that the transpersonal in the Global North has collapsed into the same trap of over-relying upon the hierarchies contained within the visions of its earliest thinkers. This therefore leads here to spiritual othering, where those religious practices which were deemed as satanic etc., are marginalised by a religious centre. So, whilst this section provides an overview of the position of the transpersonal band, the next section will explore the band itself through an exploration of spiritual othering, together with its impact upon our collective understanding of the spiritual.

### **Hegemony and the spiritual other**

Exploring the construction of whiteness, Ahmed highlights how whiteness becomes 'a point from which the world unfolds' (2007, p. 154). What she means is that socio-political arrangements centre on whiteness being a hegemonic term, and that, like a spider's web all points radiate out from the middle. This presumed centrality of whiteness means that the racialized other is constantly defined in relation to it, becoming increasingly visible, whilst whiteness itself is the invisible norm against which the other is made apparent. This creates the privilege of invisibility

for that which is deemed the beginning, and simultaneous others that are regularly problematized. For example, Ray and Rosow (2012) discuss the privilege and invisibility of their white male student subjects versus the problematized raised visibility of their black peers on American college campuses. What this article does is show how the other is often seen as a problem to be moulded, watched or feared, and how white male culture is seen as safe and therefore invisible. Ideas around Western interactions with worldwide religious and spiritual beliefs also hold distinct echoes of this interaction. For example, Candomble, the Brazilian religion born out of the roots of West African slaves, had to incorporate Christian rituals and beliefs in order to survive with no questions raised against their Christian overseers (Van De Port, 2005). On other occasions, this hegemonizing of the other led to the absolute exclusion of that which was seen as spiritually other. In both sets, the more traditional aspects were rejected as being unchristian, with many rituals either having to be suppressed or disappearing altogether. This whitening of spirituality was a regular occurrence during colonial times, meaning more indigenous religious practices were often problematized or banned by the religious rulers of the times.

Yet, this spiritual whitening did not happen to all religions in the same fashion. For others, such as Hinduism and some of the other Eastern traditions, they were made acceptable by the fascinations of the colonisers of the times, or by the importing of forms and aspects of the religions which were then incorporated within the majority culture of the Global North. Yoga, martial arts, and even forms of meditation and mindfulness are excellent examples of this process, and could be seen as having become acceptable by being exotified by the majority and thereby seen as other but also as desirable. This exotification of the spiritual other is a form of rejection as these practices rarely if ever exist in their purest or original forms. It could also be seen as a rejection of the true

spirituality of many of these cultures, and is in fact a form of spiritual othering which still sits at the centre of that which we call the transpersonal today.

It is also a rejection of the other out of the majority's own fear. Furthermore, within psychology, in what is often termed white fragility, the subject is often reactive by its encounter with the other. Di Angelo (2011) discusses this topic stating this fear is a fear of the threat of the other towards white equilibrium. This makes sense even from a religious colonial perspective where the majority would regularly encounter that which was deemed as different and judged as strange. So, to reject the other out of a fear of the other sits at the core of our being. This therefore makes white fragility a collective anxiety in our encounter with the other. It is not just rooted within majority culture.

Where transpersonal hegemony further emerges is in the unconscious idealisation of those Global Northern religions, with their invisibility meaning they are rarely questioned or analysed for their own flaws or inaccuracies by the other, and often taken as perfect. Next to this, the censored, exotified transpersonal other is allowed. It is seen, modified until it is accepted, and then incorporated into the thinking of the transpersonal, where it is then universalised. It is these types of unconscious scripts which reside centrally within the thinking of many of the leading lights of the transpersonal and are only irregularly contested, either by the author themselves or by their peers. Excellent examples of this emerge out of Wilber's early writings where he creates a hierarchical structure of consciousness, rooted very much in eastern mysticism and the traditional European religions (Wilber, 1989). That his thinking evolved over time is to his credit, his acknowledgement of many of the spiritual others left out of his original hypotheses giving his ideas

a more inclusive aspect. Yet, many of his ideas still held the feeling of being presented and universalised by a man from the majority culture.

The danger here is a form of narcissism that resides in the formation of any new group, or collection of ideas that involves the universalization and pinnacleisation of a perspective from which point it is difficult to offer another opinion. Types of guru worship fit into the category of what is often termed transpersonal narcissism, where the guru draws towards himself that which he needs in order to bolster his own sense of specialness (Walach, 2008). The first problem with this is he is rarely questioned, and when he is that other is problematized or exorcised from the group. The second, is the guru will oftentimes act out their shadow in some type of abuse of power. The importance of recognising this spiritually is that the very human egoic need to define and delineate spiritual paths and practices means the spiritual I must create a spiritual other which can be pushed into the shadow, suppressed and projected upon.

This westernised idea of transpersonal identity speaks of the innate prejudicial nature of humanity within the Global North to objectively self-identify against that which is opposite. The problem here though is that the decision to identify in such a fashion removes one's own spiritual self from the equation. It also confirms that the rooting of this spiritual identity within such an I – It paradigm, with its echoes of the existential, postcolonial and other arenas, is an unavoidable aspect of identity formation no matter which paradigm one emerges out of.

To counter much of this, Ferrer, Heron and others quested for a more participatory vision of the transpersonal where ideas from a number of thinkers would be collated to create an overall

picture of spirituality (Ferrer, 2002; Heron & Reason, 1997). Their ideas also included the researcher asking questions about their own spirituality which would have been essential for any understanding. Other perspectives emerged out of Gross and Byrne who in differing ways ask for their unique feminist angles on religion to be recognised and accepted, and my own paper asking for the inclusion of a more Afrocentric vision of spirituality within the transpersonal (Byrne, 2012; Gross, 2004; Turner, Callaghan, & Gordon-Finlayson, 2015). In order to escape the neo-colonial cloak it has fallen into, these ideas will be essential. This is an essential consideration for my research; that I offer my own vision of the transpersonal to avoid the spiritual othering previously mentioned in this section where the centralised spiritual norm is invisible against an objectified and problematized spiritual other. To facilitate this, I will now argue how the other exists within a transpersonal paradigm, by drawing upon a variety of spiritual ideas which I feel are relevant to my research.

### **Relational Spirituality and 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. 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 exhorted by Ferrer and Heron.

Also, in Afrocentric spirituality, the honouring of the other in rituals, the telling of stories, and the use of prayer and song helps us to maintain a connection to the other that has been lost in some European religions. For example, Omojola's (2010) important paper on Yoruba culture explores the role of the musician in meeting the spiritual and social needs of the community, or the links to the ancestors, the spirits and God. Okpewho (1992) though considers the importance of storytelling and the oral histories of ancestors, spirits and Gods, in the maintaining of a relationship with the other. These examples therefore provide us with a route back to Buber's idea of how a meeting with the other is an encounter with God when we follow the I-Thou route. What they also posit is how when we distance ourselves from either our environment or our spiritual selves, that this is a form of spiritual othering, where in our efforts to say control the environment for our own purposes, we alienate ourselves from aspects that we truly need (Adams, 2009). My idea also ties itself to the first of my aims for this research; that we all have experience being the other, and underlines the whole project as an exploration of just what this experience of being the other entails.

In addition to the risk of homogenising African culture, it is important to state, that the aim here is not to present African spirituality as one complete body, especially given that there are over 50 countries and hundreds of tribes within these domains, each of which have differing perspectives on spirituality. My purpose here is twofold: firstly, to present an Afrocentric perspective which brings into view my own African-Caribbean cultural background and, as my

parents were slaves who were moved from West Africa, to root this exploration of spirituality within an area of Africa to which I have an indirect connection. Secondly, it is to present the relationship between the one and the many as a being hugely important in understanding our relationship to the other.

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. God is therefore a singular union of opposites, the absolute and the 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/nothingness 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 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 nothingness by colonising it. The encounter with the nothingness is therefore a realisation of the existence of God within the infinite nothingness. 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 nothingness 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 nothingness as explored in figure 3 below.

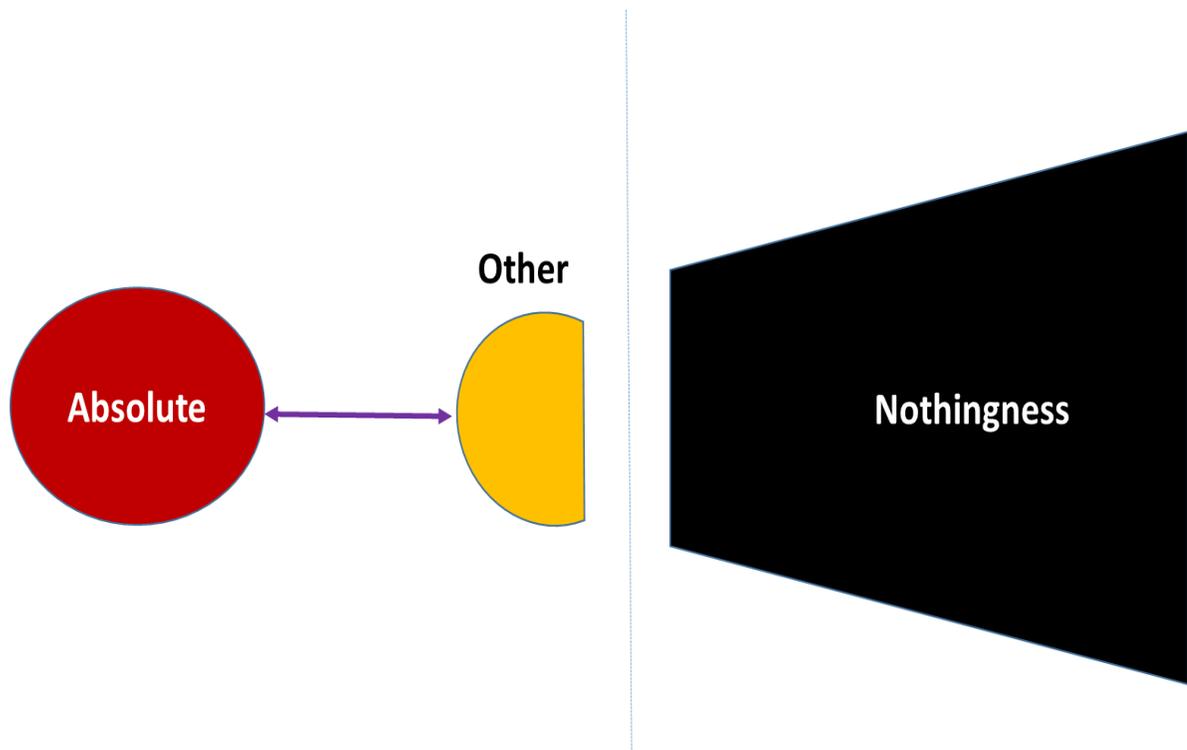


Figure 3: Absolute Nothingness

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 nothingness, 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 nothingness, attempting to become god by rejecting God. The other here therefore becomes an additional barrier between the absolute and the nothingness.

On a practical level though, the absolute becomes that which in its denial of the nothingness 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, dehumanization, 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 nothingness. 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. This is the spiritual objectified experience of the other that I also see as central to a more transpersonal perspective on the otherness. My view therefore is that the absolute here in its fear based creation of the other has negated the ego challenging possibility of the infinite differences, and therefore the potential for the absolute, held within the foreign, cultural, or gendered others. And in doing so, to maintain this egoic sense of the absolute, it rejects the possibility of meeting God within the infinite.

Conversely, within a more Afrocentric, or relational, experience of the other, the absolute sees its relationship with the nothingness 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 nothingness (Mark & Lyons, 2010; Paris, Clark, Smith, & Oliver, 1993). So, at its most ideal point there is no other. And whilst it sees the nothingness within all things around it, the absolute also sees itself within that nothingness, meaning that it chooses a less objectified stance in relation to the other, adopting one which is more subjectified or relational. These ideas sit at the core of the philosophy of Ubuntu where 'I am because we are' (Oppenheim, 2012). What this speaks of is the very delicate and real interaction, and therefore mutual identification, between the absolute and the nothingness, a clear departure from that of the narcissistic absolute in its self-identification against what it sees itself as not and other. Here the nothingness is seen as a part of itself, and therefore as part of a wider whole, a community where

together we make up what is. This more subjective perspective though is not unique to Africa, being one held within the more traditional religious practices common to say the Maori population of New Zealand, and amongst the Native Americans of North America, where the nothingness is everything around oneself and the intimate connection is seen as a spiritual one (Mark & Lyons, 2010; Paris et al., 1993). 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. So, any departure from the spiritual hegemony of the transpersonal to a more participatory version of the spiritual would involve a shift from the absolute-other dyad to an absolute/nothingness conjunctio where the spiritual is relationally defined.

Ultimately, for this review of the literature, from a transpersonal perspective the other is seen as either that which could enrich us and through which we collectively find our identity, or as that which we use to define us by making it less than ourselves through projection and annihilation. This is where the ideas of Buber, Jung and Afrocentric spirituality and many others all collide. In the clear understanding that to truly know what it is to be needs all of our combined knowledge and experience of being, echoing Cohen's idea here that when brought together they bring more control over emotions, and greater awareness of the psychological experience of being the other (Cohen, 2010). It sees the other as an aspect of the collective self which humanity has denied for far too long but which in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century is returning into focus.

**Summary of the review of the literature**

In this chapter I have outlined the contributions of postcolonial, psychotherapeutic, and transpersonal accounts of the other, and have argued for the need for a stronger synthesis of these perspectives. I have also clearly outlined just how my research differs from the ideas and research preceding it, exploring the importance of the self-definition of the other and how this positions my study firmly within the relational. This was followed by an explication of just how the other is formed from a transpersonal perspective; how the other is drawn out of the infinite nothingness by the powerful draw of the narcissistic absolute; the other's identity being a narrow stereotypical snapshot of its potential. As the aims of this research are to explore the relational experience of difference, what it is to be the other, and how a creative engagement with our sense of otherness is a route towards psychological wholeness, in the following chapter I will explore the methodologies used to explore *'Being the Other: a transpersonal exploration of the meaning of human difference.'*

## Chapter Two: Methodology

As stated at the beginning of the review of the literature, I walk with varying types of difference every day, be they based around my race, my gender, or my profession. A personal approach to this research has therefore always been inevitable, so this research has a strong phenomenological and heuristic spine running through it. In addition, this thesis integrates qualitative interviews and creative methods to understand the experience of being othered. Within transpersonal psychotherapy the use of creativity is often at the forefront of understanding the unconscious, with dreams, visualisations and methods of play therapy being just some of the techniques used in assisting clients with their process (Rowan, 1993). This roots my work within the relational band discussed within the review of the literature, whilst allowing for an alternative exploration of the more unconscious relationship we all have to the other within the social sciences, and echoing Cohen's call for a softer more transpersonal approach to research (Cohen, 2013). In this chapter I will therefore be discussing this heuristic/phenomenological combination and how this underpins my research. This will be followed by an in depth explication of phenomenological research method used here, then the heuristic research method designed by Moustakas (1990). Then I will discuss the use of self-interviews, a technique emergent out of Moustakas' work on heuristics but which I have developed into an important cornerstone for this project. Finally, I will then present a close consideration of the ethical issues encountered within the period of this research and their possible implications, before offering a brief summary to encapsulate the whole process undertaken thus far to uncover; *'Being the Other: a transpersonal exploration of the meaning of human difference.'*

### **Exploring relational difference**

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, 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. My research therefore views the other as an aspect we all have a relationship with, and looks to understand just why this shift from an It to a Thou is so fraught with emotional, and psychological, difficulties. As Merleau-Ponty considers in his work ‘the things of the world are not simply neutral objects which stand before us for our contemplation. Each one of them symbolises or recalls a particular way of behaving, provoking in us reactions which are either favourable or unfavourable’ (2002, p. 48). This phenomenological perspective therefore presents a more human and relational understanding of this experience as the other that we all encounter. In adopting a phenomenological approach this research will then create space alongside the more political and social constructs of difference, where the personal everyday experience of difference leads to a recovering of personal responsibility for the other. This will occur by bringing a clearer understanding of just what the other is, moving it outside of the political categorisations discussed within the review of the literature. This will also mean an exploration of how the other deals with the oftentimes difficult experience of being othered and seen as different, unlocking just why this experience is so difficult for us all, yet also so important to be aware of.

As Merleau-Ponty states ‘when our gaze travels over what lies before us, at every moment we are forced to adopt a certain point of view and these snapshots of any given area of the landscape cannot be superimposed one upon the other’ (2002, p. 40). What these snapshots do is allow for the exploration of each of them in order to build a composite picture of that which has been photographed. Therefore, in separating the participants from their own other and asking them to look at what the other is, Merleau-Ponty’s phenomenological approach provides space to investigate just what the other is for an individual. This also allows for this researcher to acknowledge their own heuristic role in the formation of the other for the participants as it considers the relationship between participant and researcher.

Merleau-Ponty (2002) explores the experience of being the other, and how we each see and relate to the other before us, whilst strongly respecting the rights of all participants to therefore have their equal voice heard around their experience of difference. This essential point also acknowledges not only the universality of experience of the phenomena but also that the disparate voices that experience this phenomenon each have a role to play in its understanding. Tying this relational approach to my research aims; if the idea that difference is something we all encounter, then to gain a full understanding of the experience would need a methodology that at least tries 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 that not only is the other an entity who acts on us at all times, as well as being who we are as well, but that this is of huge importance as I uncover: '*Being the Other: A Transpersonal exploration of human difference.*'

### **Methods and methodology**

Three main methods for data collection were used in this project. These were as follows and each will be discussed in turn:

- Phenomenological interviews with twenty-five participants using semi-structured interviews and creative techniques;
- Heuristic research section, allowing for an exploration of being the other over a longer period of time; and
- Self-Interviews, to ascertain the deeper unconscious experience of being the other during this heuristic period of the research.

#### **Phenomenological interviews**

Twenty-five participants were interviewed using a blend of one-to-one interviewing techniques and creative methods. The interviews were a maximum of two hours long and structured to provide creative data via:

1. A short Semi-Structured interview which went into some depth around participants' experience of difference;
2. Two creative exercises:

- a. A visualisation around one of the participant's aforementioned experiences of difference be they from early in their life to something more present (the experience of which they discussed and then drew);
- b. A Sand Tray exercise, where myself and my participant selected symbols that represented themselves, me as they saw me in that present moment, and our relationship.

Each stage of the interview process will now be discussed in detail.

### **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, and was also a reminder that as I too was part of the process, I would be participating within the interview myself, a view held by Sorrell and Redmond (1995) who discuss this very style of interviewing in an article on nursing. A full explication of the questions used is held in table 1 below:

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 experienced 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?

Table 1: Semi-Structured Interview Schedule

The open-ended questioning here created the level of relationship and connection necessary in order to construct the necessary container for the following creative exercises. 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**

The creative activities involved a visualisation and a sand tray exercise. It was felt that the internalised experience of difference could be accessed a number of ways, for example through the free association techniques favoured by Jung (Storr, 1979) or by using visualisations, but 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, and in my experience as a psychotherapist it is only by working with the body that one is then able to access the impact of an internalised experience. 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 full procedure is presented below as table 2:

- Using this experience, 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: I 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?

*Table 2: Visualisation exercise schedule*

The visualisation exercise involved the participant reliving one of their memories of difference and being taken back into that experience. This exercise worked in a similar fashion 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. This exercise 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, and follows on from Cox and Thielgaard's (1986) idea that symbols presented would be the echoes of the same symbol within the unconscious.

### **Sand tray exercise**

The sand tray is an established method for accessing unconscious material (Bradway, 2006). It was used in this study because, again, working with symbols allowed for the unconscious presentation of internal or repressed unconscious material around difference (Cox & Thielgaard, 1986). The exercise, which was designed by myself, involved the participant selecting three objects from a thousand predetermined toys to represent themselves, myself and our relationship. My design for the exercise took its direction from the Buberian idea that there as well as an I and thou/it position there is a third one, that was the in-between space, from where often springs creativity or spirituality (Buber, 2002). These toys would then be placed in a tray of sand. The exercise, much like the visualisation exercise above, was chosen to move beyond the rational into the unconscious truth of an experience. Another perspective on the use of sand tray in psychotherapy involves its ability to move beyond the limitations of the verbal and connect with the pre-verbal, and perinatal, consciousness, crossing cultural, gender, sexual and other boundaries and offering a more universal experience of an unconscious phenomena than say using just words

might (Labovitz Boik & Anna Goodwin, 2000). Another crucial consideration when working with symbols and sand tray in this context is its ability to hold the duality of ‘psychic opposition’ (B. A. Turner, 2005, p. 38). In this context, this brings us back to a consideration of the limitations of the dualistic perspectives of difference that are often presented from more political, developmental or social perspectives, for example, and roots this particular work more within the relational vision of the transpersonal. A full presentation of the exercise is presented below as table 3:

<p>For this next exercise, I invited the client to select three symbols. One that represented themselves, a second for myself as they saw me there, and a third for the space between us as they experience our relationship today. At the same time, I also selected symbols outlining the same relationship in reverse.</p> <p>Then in the Sand Tray we divided the sand tray into two halves, with us each taking a section, and displayed the symbols as we saw fit.</p> <p>Participants were then invited to talk about their images in the sand tray, with the following questions acting as prompts;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Why have you selected these items? What do they mean to you?</li> <li>• Why do you feel you have positioned these objects in this way?</li> <li>• What do you feel these objects have to say about each other? How do they relate?</li> <li>• What qualities do each of the objects have?</li> <li>• Is there anything else you would like to say about your sand tray?</li> </ul> <p>I then invited the participant to ask me, the researcher, the same set of questions before finally asking them the following;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are there any other questions you would like to ask?</li> <li>• How do you view my sand tray?</li> </ul>
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*Table 3: Sand tray schedule*

It was also important for this thesis that my own experience as a researcher be logged, together with a close consideration of the impact my relationship with my participant others may

have had on myself. This view arose from the sense that often, and especially within psychotherapy, the fact that the researcher is not present in the research in some way, could have been seen as a type of flaw to the results of the research itself (Romanyshyn, 2010). How do I see my participants? What are my projections onto them? How does my experience of them inform who I am now? These were essential considerations given that this research was designed to consider the relational experience of the other, and for me as the researcher to leave myself outside of research fully would lead to a large gap in knowledge within this particular study. If this is a relational exploration of difference, then given that as the researcher this same phenomenon was in the room right there and then, that there would be a wealth of important additional research material which could be used in this research. In asking my participants to choose a symbol they felt represented myself, for the purpose of this exercise, I would therefore become an 'It' for my them (Buber, 2010), a blank screen for them to project whatever they needed to onto me in that instance, much like the role a therapist would actively perform in more traditional psychodynamic psychotherapy (Winnicott, 1969). I therefore also chose three symbols allowing me to see just which aspects of myself I had projected onto my participants.

### **Summary of creative exercises**

Both of these creative exercises worked with the unconscious by using symbols to represent both the internalised experience of difference, and the more archetypal experience of the other (Cox & Thielgaard, 1986). These creative techniques associated with transpersonal psychotherapy were helpful in accessing the unconscious as there are no other studies that have creatively looked at our internalised experience of being the other. This is also phenomenological because these creative techniques allow for a variety of unconscious human experiences to be presented which

will provide a composite relational picture of the experience of difference built by myself and my participants. As this research relies predominantly on the experiences of others, as well as myself, I will now discuss the selection criteria for this project, exploring how I found and selected my participants and exploring why the selection criteria chosen was essential to the core universality of this project.

### **Participants**

Detailed consideration was given to whether those taking part in this research were co-researchers, working with me on this project to co-construct knowledge of othering, or whether they were participants whose stories I would be collecting to create an overall picture of their experiences of being different. Going counter to Moustakas (1994) who felt that phenomenological research was co-created, and thereby these were co-researchers, I have decided that throughout this particular project those taking part were participants as their engagement involved an interview and an initial telephone conversation and nothing else. There is still a co-creation here, through my regular engagement with the words and the images generated by my participants, but as their actual physical engagement is minimal then they are not co-researchers. This demarcation is important as it recognises a different type of relationship between myself and my participants, and highlights the responsibility placed upon my shoulders in making sure their stories were authentically told.

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 in the CCPE kitchen, and client waiting

room. All the flyers were sent out on the 1<sup>st</sup> of February 2013 to the locations mentioned. Initial contacts came from potential participants within a week, but the first few were just enquiries to ascertain the nature of the study and were not followed up. The first interview was conducted within a month, and all 25 were completed by the end of 2013. 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 these 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, and although not all were interviewed this meant the interviews were conducted over an exhausting ten-month time frame.

As stated in the review of the literature it was important that in allowing participants to define their own sense of difference this in no way meant the hegemonic differences discussed in the review of the literature were not existent; quite the contrary. What this meant is that although the socially constructed categories were still present, they were not always the primary reason why my participants volunteered to take part in this research. This then opened my research to not only the usual, more political structures of difference, but also presented itself to those who were maybe Goths, short in stature, struggling with differences based around the expectations of past generations, or anyone who felt they had a more unique experience of difference together with an understanding of their struggles. The main issue was that the participants have had to work through their sense of difference (within psychotherapy for example) so ideally, they would be comfortable discussing their challenges. An initial conversation via email or telephone was conducted with all

potential participants to ascertain their suitability, which helped to clarify any concerns they too may have had about taking part. This also allowed me to consider any prohibiting factors (e.g. mental health, severe illness, etc.). With the few who were unsuitable it was important to weigh my care for the participant alongside any of my own unconscious prejudices. Yet, even with my ethical duty of care for a couple of potential participants who I felt should not take part for mental health reasons what I realised was that it was impossible not to create a sense of other by my excluding some people, or they excluding themselves. Even the ethical factor that dictated that all participants had to be over the age of 18, created a separation between those who were deemed by society to be adult and those who were not, so one of the realisations was just how difficult it is within research to not create and therefore silence the subaltern (Said, 1989). What was most important though was the awareness of the challenges and the pressure placed upon myself, the researcher, within this part of the process, and this greater awareness of the problems of being totally inclusive led to me making special provision for the elderly, disabled or special needs as per Mertens & Ginsberg (2008).

### **Data analysis**

This research has a phenomenological epistemology, so the interviews were analysed using phenomenological research methods (Moustakas, 1994). Moustakas' approach was chosen because it would enable an engagement with the lived experience of difference, and would allow an analysis of the unconscious relational and transpersonal understanding participants have of that experience. It would also importantly offer personal and social significance (Merleau-ponty, 1962; Moustakas, 1994). As this research is based around the extrapolation of an overall picture of a phenomenon that humanity encounters daily, it was therefore hugely important to allow for the

‘overall’ providing space for the possibility of the missed experiences of others as well. The picture therefore just has to be good enough. In following the various stages laid out by Moustakas, I felt I would gain a clearer perspective on an entity that is in constant movement and flight and cannot really be contained within a single theoretical strand. That is not to say that other research methodologies could not be employed in future research, as I strongly believe that they can. It is my view that at this stage, and from this early transpersonal perspective, that a more relational, and in addition cautious perspective was needed to understand this unconscious entity.

Moustakas outlines several research stages. Firstly, the *epoche* stage involved the initial reading around the subject of difference and the other, the writing of the initial research proposal, and the undertaking of a preliminary personal practice interview. Space was built into my working week as I moved from working four full days as a psychotherapist to three, thereby providing me with two days for my project, space that then allowed me to fully immerse myself in this research project. As recommended by Moustakas, included within this stage my personal heuristic exploration allowed for the increased understanding of this internalised space for the research, thereby giving me a greater empathy to the challenges of my participants, an aspect that added to the comfort created within and therefore for my participants. All of these together began to open an internal space for me to refine my initial ideas to a point where when final clearance was given for me to begin my research, and my flyers were sent out via email, the responses were immediate and surprising. This initial period also I feel allowed my participants the space to reveal more about their own experiences of difference, with most interviews lasting on average 1 hour and 40 minutes and the longest being at almost 2 hours long.

Once this stage had been completed, in the *phenomenological reduction* period I read through each of the completed transcripts six times to fully absorb the participant's experience of difference and how they related to the other. On each read through I annotated the transcript with a different colour of pen in to track my own sense making of the participant's words. During this process, using intuition as advocated by Moustakas (1994), a deeper understanding of the interview would emerge on about the fourth or fifth reading of the transcript, so that by the time I reached the sixth read through a full understanding of the interview had been reached.

Only when this complete understanding of the participant experience was achieved did I start the formal analysis, beginning a process of coding, collecting together corresponding passages, before building themes that were emergent from the data. This process involved placing post-it notes of each of the stages of the participant interview on two A3 sized board in my home office. Once completed, the boards would be studied, often for hours, to draw forth the themes which sat central to each of my participant's experience of being other. This process often took days to complete, and time was regularly taken away from studying the boards to complete other tasks within the research, so as to return to them refreshed and able to see patterns of the themes anew. Similarities in the participant's statements were then listed, and an overall theme for each list was produced.

Once fully explored, the interviews were therefore fully analysed to produce a participant textual experience, where how they experienced difference was fully understood, contrasted to their structural experience of the other, where the other itself was seen and witnessed. Essentially, I was able to present both how the participant's encountered difference, and its impact upon them,

alongside their own understanding of just what difference actually was through their eyes, thereby showing their relationship to the phenomena of the other.

The *imaginative variation* stage was the most complicated, yet also the most important section. This involved the drawing forth from the material further themes that represented my participant's experience of difference, knowledge that would then further inform the individual structural and textual descriptions. The challenge here especially was to use imagination, intuition and the participant's transcripts to fully understand their experience of the visualisation exercise and the sand tray work. Additional hours were spent reading through these specific exercises to more fully understand the depth of experience of each of my participants, and to uncover more fully their internalised experience of difference, their projections onto myself, and the experience of the other. This process also involved returning to the initial themes derived to check for metaphors, or parts of their stories, which connected to the creative exercises. This was especially important given the unconscious process involved in creating the images and sand trays, and was employed to ground these exercises within the participant's own reality.

This stage of the process though is not one espoused by Moustakas, who did not write about the phenomenological approach being one that could be used with creative techniques. For this research, this adaptation was created and developed by myself as a means of bringing transpersonal techniques which bring the unconscious to the surface, into relationship with more traditional research methods.

The twenty-five textual and structural descriptions would then be combined to create an overall phenomenological textual study of the all participant's experience of difference and an overall structural presentation of just what the other was for the participants. This stage then led to an overall *synthesis* where, within this particular project, the other was understood from a purely transpersonal and phenomenological perception. Through this process, I therefore aimed to build a thorough understanding of difference that includes both the *noema* and *noemis*, meaning an understanding of that which was experienced, called the noema, and the actual way it was itself experienced, the noemis, (Moustakas, 1994). This would be the conclusion of my work with my participants.

### **Heuristic Research**

This research also has a heuristic epistemology as it was quickly apparent that there would be a lot of worthwhile research material available to this research should I also engage with my own sense of the other. A longer study into the impact of relational difference was employed as one of my aims of this research was to prove that when we relate to the other, then we are ultimately relating to aspects of oneself that have previously been split off and projected onto another. These aspects could then lead to significant personal growth. This is one of the key tenets of the heuristic research method in that it should lead to a period of personal transformation which, as discussed previously, from a psychotherapeutic perspective, involves the accessing of unconscious material (Moustakas, 1990). This heuristic methodology was also employed to assist this research in shifting the focus from the political to the relational (this time the relationship to one's inner self), and echoing the move beyond Jung's (1971) ego perspective and into the unconscious. As per the work conducted with my participants in the previous section, play and creativity would also be

utilised allowing my own process to move beyond the rational to the irrational, or beyond the idea of ‘Aristotelian logic’ as suggested by Rowan (1993, p. 8). This section of the methodology will therefore discuss in far more depth the steps undertaken to access this researcher’s unconscious experience of difference, looking at some of the problems encountered when doing so, and exploring some of the decisions made to facilitate fully this process.

It is important here to outline the various stages of a heuristic process (Moustakas, 1990) before going into more depth as to how I covered each of these stages in turn for my own particular project. Briefly, these are;

- Initial Engagement – which occurs when one formulates one’s question, inviting forward any and all material that relates to it;
- Immersion – where one is enveloped by the material pertaining to the research question;
- Incubation – the subtle letting go into the unconscious of all that has been discovered;
- Illumination – the sudden moments, or the rising up to consciousness, of an understanding of the phenomena;
- Explication – the refining and re-refining process of that previous understanding;
- Creative Synthesis – which is the bringing together of all that has been discovered so it can be disseminated.

To outline the heuristic process of data collection further, the *Initial Engagement* stage involved the formulating and refining of the research question time and again allowing any and all material that might be pertinent to the research question to flow forth. In reality, this stage occurred

from the minute this researcher was accepted for his Research PhD with the writing of the first, very basic Research Proposal. This began a process that took many months of refining and re-refining my question, reading any material that might pertain to my topic, before narrowing my focus to understand how my own research was different to that which has gone before. This then flowed into the *Immersion* stage where I sought out anything and everything that pertained to my topic, be they articles, books, YouTube clips, or any other type of interaction that it was felt was of use. Also, for a period of six months this researcher kept a weekly journal of notes of my thoughts and experiences of difference. This diary also included any dreams that had arisen from within my unconscious during this time, and any other incidents that might have occurred. Also during this stage, four self-interviews were conducted to ascertain my own deeper connection to my sense of otherness.

All four self-interviews were recorded and transcribed, alongside the diary and, as stated, this section of the research in all took six months to complete. On consideration, the importance of the length of the *Immersion* meant that it was structured to run alongside the aforementioned participant interviews. This then triangulated my understanding of the lived impact of difference on myself the researcher. Each of my own interviews would involve my meeting with people I had no experience of working with before, meaning they would all be as different to me in some way as I would be to them, thereby allowing for projections to arise within the space between us. It was also important to place a boundary on the end of this period to give myself time and space to separate from the difficult experience of working on one's own sense of difference before the next stages, *Incubation* and *Illumination*, began.

Drawing these two sections together shows just how close they are. The Incubation process itself then lasted another six months into early 2014 where all the interviews and the diary entries were set aside. This part of the process allowed myself as the researcher time to carry out other areas of research within this project, taking myself away from my own process only to allow myself the chance to look at my own material with more objective eyes later on. This did not mean that moments of illumination, where ideas about my own process intuitively arose out of my unconscious, did not occur. To the contrary, additional notes were made of realisations around the nature of my otherness, many of which would then become the bedrock of my later results sections. The illumination stage for this project, also included the transcribing and reading through of the self-interview transcripts several times to ascertain and fully understand my own process, and bringing this stage in line with the phenomenological reduction stage of my participants. The dreams were also analysed for patterns, symbols, and themes to aid understanding the more unconscious elements of my own process, with my hope being that all the data derived throughout the 6 months would present a comprehensive picture of my experience of being the other. To complete this stage fully, a draft textual and structural analysis of the experience of being different and also what the other actually was, was completed.

At the completion of this process, the process then moved onto Moustakas' *explication* stage which meant that this researcher was then forced to review, reconsider and re-examine all of the varying levels of understanding that the previous stages had uncovered. This section required an additional level of soul-searching, or refining, of the knowledge previously gleaned to build a composite picture of my own experience of difference and a consideration of how this process has changed myself the researcher. For Moustakas, when this process is complete it should then flow

into the *creative synthesis* stage, which for him involves the presentation of a story or a poem, or the writing of a song, or some other creative means by which the journey of the researcher could be expressed. This involved the thematising of the data derived from my longer exploration, together with a presentation of the results alongside the images and sand tray pictures derived from the interviews.

### **Heuristic Self-Interviews**

To explore the self-interviews in more depth these have proven to be a hugely important addition to the heuristic stage of this research. As stated, I was also interviewed on four separate occasions about my experiences of difference, with my own interviewer using the same questions and techniques on myself of sand tray work and visualisations, as outlined in the previous phenomenological section, thereby allowing me to access my own unconscious experiences of being different. The aim of the self-interview was to challenge this researcher in uncovering his own deeper experience of difference, his own prejudices, and his own coping mechanisms. It was also thought that by my accessing my own sense of difference I might avoid some of the more unconscious pitfalls of working with such a wide ranging and diverse group of participants, as encountered for example by Edwards (1996) whose own sense of being a white woman when working with a very separate cultural group led to significant problems in gaining participants for her project.

The self-interviews helped to highlight how challenging it is to look at one's own sense of difference when encountering the other, and also how necessary this step is as well. On a personal level, this researcher found the immersion stage, including the self-interviews, to be extremely

challenging, and I was often very aware of my own defences when it came to pushing myself in my interviews or when it came to recording my thoughts, writing my diary, or recording my dreams. Periods of acting out and avoidance, the draw of self-destructive addictive practices and many other means were unconsciously employed as ways of not engaging with my own process, bringing into focus one of the criticisms of heuristic research and making the self-interviews important from another viewpoint which I will now discuss. Sela-Smith's (2002) article suggested that one of the reasons for some of the resistance and ambivalence employed by heuristic researchers is that in the initial engagement phase the question has not fully formed from within and is therefore incomplete. Yet, for personal transformation to occur within the heuristic researcher the ego of the researcher needs to at least be flexible enough to allow this to happen. The noticing and recording of any resistance and ambivalence is therefore an invaluable indicator towards the difficulties of conducting heuristic research, and raises to the surface from the unconscious just how challenging personal transformation through research actually is. This is another reason self-interviews were employed; to nullify the impact of the ambivalence and to encourage the recording of the resistance against personal change. In allowing myself to be interviewed, not once but on four different occasions, this personal process was allowed to deepen further. Although this self-interview stage echoes Moustakas' (1990) self-questioning period, where the researcher interviews themselves, it was felt that self-questioning around so personal a topic might have led to a form of self-deception where the ambivalence prompted by so unconscious a debate was avoided, and the transformation as well as a lot of worthwhile research material would have been missed. The self-interviews were therefore conducted with a colleague, a very experienced fellow psychotherapist, female, who is also very experienced in the creative techniques utilised in this research. To present more of her background, she also teaches in Higher Education, is trained in the transpersonal, and understood

the clinical and relational framework this research resided within. She was not though a member of my research team, her role being purely that of a participant. Her presence in my research therefore allowed me to access invaluable material which my resistances might have prevented me from otherwise ascertaining.

Secondly, this qualitative research procedural departure, and my working with an experienced practitioner, challenged any resistances on my part to working at depth. This also enabled me to consider my own prejudices so they would have less of an impact upon my participant interviews. Haigh (2012) recognises the importance of at least considering the impact of her difference in her thesis exploring social work amongst the indigenous communities of Australia. Yet, although there has been much exploration of the impact of the researcher upon the research, papers like this though are extremely rare, meaning the researcher's own unconscious material quite often influences the results. So, alongside their usefulness to heuristic research, this is another reason why the self-interviews were conducted here.

### **Summary of the heuristic process**

Although Moustakas' (1990) varying stages of heuristic research sound like a linear process I should state strongly that they are not, and that at times, one stage merged into another and vice versa. For example, even though from an ethical perspective the immersion stage only officially began once clearance had been given for the project, prior to permission being received notes were being taken, dreams were being recorded, and the process of transformation had begun. This was also true for the initial engagement stage, which I realised only with hindsight (and with the explosion of interest in this project from within and without once official clearance had been

received) that I had stumbled onto a question that resonated with so many as well as with myself. It is important to note therefore that although the heuristic research process moulds itself around the researcher, at times the varying degrees of overlap often creates confusion as well as provided clarity about the research data as I looked to understand *'Being the Other: A Transpersonal exploration of human difference.?'* Having fully covered the heuristic section and presented my understanding and reasoning for the many decisions undertaken, I will now move ahead to discussing the ethical points that centred on this research project.

### **Ethical Considerations**

Both McLeod (2003) and Braud & Anderson (1998) talk about the social responsibility for any type of research as an ethical consideration. One of the major reasons for undertaking my project was so that it would have an important influence on the very narrow transpersonal and psychotherapeutic perspectives around difference presently observed in the West. As McLeod clearly states in his consideration of counselling research ethics these differ little from the weighing of ethics when undertaking actual clinical work. This is especially important as being a psychotherapist I am always aware of my need to ethically care for my clients and often have to make assessments on their behalf within my clinical practice. In designing this research, thoroughly measuring the varying levels of ethical consideration for each stage was especially important given the unconscious material being worked with in the creative exercises.

It was important in my selection of participants that University of Northampton code of research ethics were adhered to, and that these regulations did not prejudicially exclude potential others. This therefore meant I had to carefully consider each of my potential participants in turn,

weighing their participation against the ethical structures of the associations mentioned below. As stated, an example of this is that several potential candidates were not selected for mental health reasons. Also, as a psychotherapist, I also had to adhere to the research guidelines of the BACP (British Association of Counselling and Psychotherapy) and the UKCP, and also due to the nature of this research the British Psychological Society (BPS). In addition, I also undertook a Criminal Records Check prior to my research project commencing.

To summarise these ethical points adhered to, as per the BACP ethical guidelines it was important to maintain separate boundaries between therapist and researcher, meaning my own private clients were immediately excluded from the research. Secondly, as this research centred on working with unconscious material and visualisations, a contra-indication centred around potential participants with a mental health diagnosis. It was also therefore envisaged that clients such as this would have difficulty in containing the difficult emotional material raised by this work and it should not be undertaken. This echoes issues presented by Mertens & Ginsberg (2008) around the awareness of any researcher when it comes to working with difference. Although special provision was made for the elderly, disabled, or those with special needs, there was also a felt need within myself to work harder on my own prejudices in order not to discriminate when in interviews with participants whose sense of difference I had not previously encountered. Although this stage has already been mentioned in the heuristic section, there was also an ethical reason for developing this inner awareness further, and the anti-discriminatory work of Lago & Smith (2003) proved an invaluable guide in presenting their considerations of working with the type of differences I had not met before.

Next, University of Northampton guidelines stated that all participants also needed to be above 18 years of age. From our initial contact, each of the participants were informed of the nature of the research at an initial interview verbally and via an Information Sheet. Participants were also informed that they could withdraw at any time during the research until the publication of the thesis, and if they wished to withdraw, then any records of their participation would be destroyed. My contact mobile number and university contact details were also provided to all participants to maintain the differentiation between my research student status and that of the psychotherapist. There was no element of deception, which has been maintained throughout the research process.

In relation to the interviews themselves, all the interviews were held at the same venue, the Centre for Counselling and Psychotherapy Education (CCPE), to maintain a sense of uniformity for the alchemical container, and for the practical reason that this was where the toys for the sand tray work were housed. Before the research began, permission was therefore obtained from the CCPE. At the beginning of the interviews, permission was also sought from each of my participants for the interview to be digitally recorded and the creative exercises to be digitally photographed, and it was made clear that participants did not have to answer any question if they did not wish to and could stop the interview at any time. All my participant's personal details were subsequently kept confidential and separate from the data, in a locked metal filing cabinet located in the researcher's office, and all personal information was only kept for the purpose of the research and destroyed three months after its completion (except the transcripts and images).

During the interview, participants were reminded that they would not at any time be identified in the research report or the final thesis. All identities were therefore confidential, and

if any of the participants wished to withdraw, this confidentiality would still be maintained ad infinitum. In addition to this for my own personal details, each participant would be allocated a code to hide their identity, the details of places, other people and certain other information would be excluded, and the participant's names changed.

An important consideration also meant that my participants should already have their own counsellor, or have already worked through issues of difference within psychotherapy in some fashion. This would therefore mean they had some type of containment around their experience of being different, or if any issues came up for them during the interview, then they would be able to take this back to their counsellor, or talk to myself about the issues raised.

The ethical considerations for the heuristic research were equally as important. My own process involved making myself an It for several months, a process that was both difficult and, at times, felt quite self-destructive. Whilst already acknowledging that many of the other ethical standards would also apply to myself, it was also necessary for me to see my self-interviews in particular as a type of ethical checkpoint, or self-therapy, which acted as a means to ascertain my own well-being. The containment of regular PhD supervision at the University of Northampton, peer group PhD supervision at the CCPE, personal psychotherapy, and time away from the actual research provided a necessary container for my own work, as did its time limited nature. All of this together allowed this researcher to eventually step free of the research to a safe distance where he could observe his work, and to recollect and resume his own life in turn.

It is also important to ethically consider points where ethical boundaries have collided against my stated aims, for example, around the setting of a minimum age for any of my participants of 18 years old. Working with younger participants would have meant obtaining additional ethical clearance as they are covered by additional child protection laws, but it did set an interestingly noticeable limit on my exploration of Being the Other. Whilst the views of adolescents and younger children may well vary in comparison to those of the over 18s, for there to be a truly holistic understanding of our experience of difference I would have needed to include all potential groupings. Although, an acceptable ethical consideration, this obvious clash of the organisational against the requirements of this research leaves a potential gap in knowledge, but it does mean the under 18s may provide an avenue for future research into the unconscious experience of difference within children.

### **Summary of Methodology Chapter**

I have now presented my aims for this research to understand *Being the Other: A Transpersonal exploration of human difference*. To summarise, all the participants had self-defined as other as this is an experience we all encounter and the pre-existing categories marginalise and create alternative layers of otherness. The phenomenological approach utilised in this thesis therefore allowed for the exploration of a collective relational understanding of the experience we all have as the other. To facilitate this fully, creative techniques common to transpersonal psychotherapy were adopted to ascertain the participants' internalised experience of being other, whilst the sand play exercises were also designed to present the externalised unconscious connection to the subject. Finally, the heuristic section of my research was designed to look at the

long-term experience of being the other, and to look at the possibilities for personal growth contained within the experience of otherness.

### **Chapter Three: Participant and themes overview**

This is a phenomenological and heuristic research project, so the aim here has been to explore my own and my participants lived experiences of being the other in order for me to build a picture of just what the other is at this stage. This initial results chapter will therefore present some of the background to my participants, together with a presentation and brief discussion of how the early results echo the points raised in the review of the literature. Following this will be a brief overview of the phenomenological and heuristic themes for this research. A deeper more complete explication of all these results will begin from chapter four onwards.

#### **Background to participants and their differences**

The first point of recognition for these research results is in the complexity of experiences of difference. For example, table 4 below, *participants and their differences*, presents each of the participants in turn, together with their various differences. Observing the table, it is important to notice that a good number of my participants presented with more than one type of difference. For example, Amanda presented with three types of difference; childhood, feeling different to the rest of her family, and a more innocuous felt experience as the other.

The second aspect to recognise here is the movement from traditional categorisations of difference towards a more normalised experience as the other. As discussed in the review of the literature, the religious and political formations of difference have followed the rules and regulations laid out by these organisations. The other though, and therefore our human experience

of difference, tracks a different path altogether, and only occasionally included these more traditional categorisations.

Co-Res Code	Age	Co Res Differences
Jonas	40	Childhood, Cultural
Amanda	38	Childhood, Familial, Felt Exp of Difference
Michael	45	LGBTI, Twin, Childhood, Family, Gender
Oliver	45	Twin
Barbara	48	Religious, Childhood, Racial
Jayne	42	Cultural, Generational
Zara	38	Childhood
Frances	35	Childhood, Marriage outside culture
Rose	43	Childhood, Generational
Yvette	65	Childhood, Generational, Family
Sasha	53	LGBTI, Childhood, Disability
Max	35	Cultural, Racial
Anja	46	Childhood, Privilege
Missy	40	Cultural, Racial, Gender, Privilege
Christina	43	Religious, Cultural
Carl	37	LGBTI
Jeff	18	Generational
Rowena	50	Racial
Rafe	39	Felt Experience as different, Disability
Martine	40	Racial, Disability
Paola	30	Religious, LGBTI
Daniel	36	LGBTI,
Gorge	47	LGBTI, Cultural
Alejandra	55	Married outside culture, Cultural
Paulina	29	Childhood, Cultural

*Table 4: Participants and their differences*

An excellent example of this emerges out of Rafe's presentation of difference, where he often felt different as a man working in the city of London, but also had a disability which left him occasionally feeling like an outsider. Yet, whereas Rafe might not always feel separate to other men, for example should he be on his own, his disability would always be with him. His

experience was not unique within my research, meaning that we encounter experiences as the other in a variety of ways, and often at the same time.

Table 5, *the difference chart*, takes the idea of there being multiple types of other a stage further. Here the number of times each difference was recorded was collated, before being presented in graph form. This therefore allowed me to see just how regularly both the more traditional and non-traditional categories of difference actually presented.

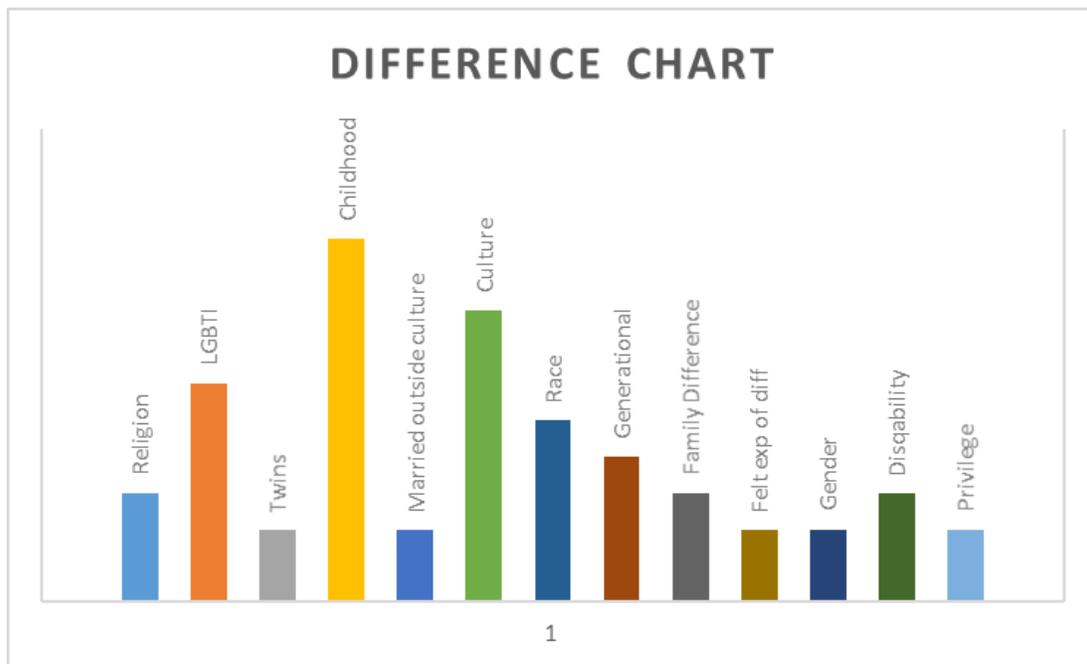


Table 5: Difference Chart

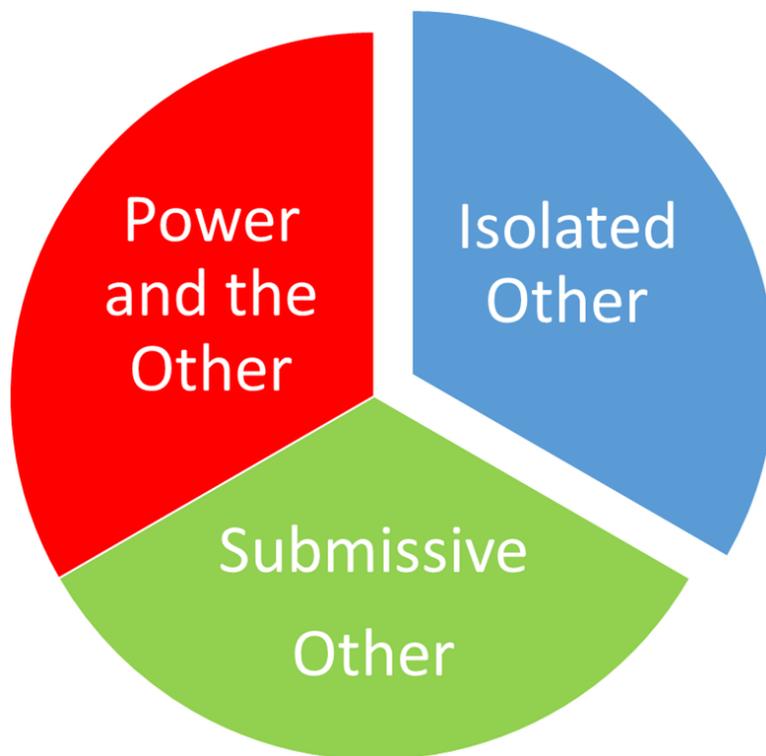
The most important aspect to notice here is just how important childhood differences were as this was the highest reported by participants. In their paper on the topic Ponteretto, Utsey and Pedersen discuss the importance of parents educating their children around difference. What this table shows is just how painful the experience of childhood othering is for the outsider, thereby

adding to the debate around early egoic formation discussed in the review of the literature (Ponterotto, Utsey, Pedersen, 2006). The preponderance of cultural difference, which is the next highest in the list, is worth mentioning next. This experience of difference relates to the fact this research was conducted in London, where there are a good number of cultures, of languages spoken, and a very rich sense of diversity. Of all the traditional categories of difference this one was the most relevant for this research.

### **Introducing the phenomenological themes**

The first aim of this research involved an exploration of the nature of being other, and provide evidence confirming my assumption that being the other is a universal experience. In now introducing the phenomenological themes, my research now sees the participant's experience as other meaning they are isolated, defeated, or have unhappily submitted to the will of the absolute in order to survive, and even when feeling accepted the sense of otherness still resides within. As Poland (2008) suggests, where even in trying so hard to fit in and be a part of a more powerful whole, this isolation and separateness continues and grows. Furthermore, my research shows the participant's lived experience as the other as being more challenging than that presented by Levinas (1961) where he sees the absolute as having a duty to the other, believing that through the other we know our self. It is also different from Buber's ideas as in seeing the dyadic relationships as either the distancing of the objectified other, or as the relationality of the subjectified other. This difference is held not only in the experience of the other torn out of the nothingness, but also in the positioning of the absolute. To expand this, a truly spiritual absolute is able to sit with the nothingness, it is not fearful and is complete and incomplete in its own space. An imperfect absolute, or the human spiritual being, is unable to meet this ideal. So instead of creating the other

for itself to project upon, it has to learn to acknowledge and accept its imperfections. When adopting a more relational position than this is usually possible, but from a more spiritually narcissistic perspective it will try to deny its imperfections or its humanity by projecting these onto the other, and negating the presence of the nothingness. It will denigrate the other, attempt to make the other less than itself, or aim to have power and dominion over the other. This second point, that the absolute changes in its relationship with the other, is hugely important in differentiating my work from Buber's as he does not suggest any difference in the I in his work. So, whilst this research offers a new perspective upon our understanding of what it is to be the other, as this is about my participant's experience as the other and/or the nothingness, my results will also bring with it a new perspective on what it is to be the absolute as well. The next three chapters though will talk extensively about my participant's experiences as the other, with their experiences split into three main types; the submissive, the angry and the isolated, as presented in Figure 4 below.



*Figure 4: Main phenomenological themes*

This leads me to describe the experience of the other as oscillating interchangeably between these three states. Psychologically, the other is therefore our shadow, an idea initially posited within psychotherapy by Jung (Stevens, 1990), and proffered by writers such as Kristeva (1994), Benjamin (1998), von Franz (1980) and numerous others, whose collective ideas talked about our potential being hidden in the shadow projected onto the other. Transpersonally, my research though leads me to believe the lived experience of being the other is an intensely difficult one where the other lives as the shadow of the absolute, in darkness whilst the objectifying absolute lives in light.

The combinations here of both phenomenological and transpersonal means of understanding the other within this research has therefore led to the following sets of results that add to the debate around the experience as the other. Considering this in regard to figure 1, entitled the *main phenomenological themes*, the other can adopt any one of three positions. It can be submissive, can engage in its power, or can be isolated. Within each of these three themes, and the subsequent sub-themes which complete them, the experience of being the other and the process of othering is different. These themes will be briefly presented in a table format below, followed by a brief recap of the main ideas within each main theme. The first of these themes presented in chapter 4 was the *submissive other* and is presented as table 6 below.

Main Theme	Submissive other
	Silencing of the other
Sub themes	The other is confused about the rules
	The clichéd other

Table 6: Structure of the Submissive Other

Here, all three of these sub-themes are motivated by the other's need to feel safe, with that projected safety to be provided by the absolute. Within this theme though othering is the encouragement to assimilate by threat of exclusion or destruction. In its submission to the wishes of the absolute this then forces the other to split off its true identity thereby forcing much of its real identity into the unconscious. The next stage of assimilation involves the other attempting to understand the rules of the majority, and involves a negotiation for the other around how it is meant to be. This then leads us towards the third sub-theme where, as the other gives up its identity, it is then often stereotyped as other. It may also embrace the role of the clichéd other in order to still have some type of identity.

Main Theme	Power and the other
	Narcissism and the other
Sub themes	The other drawn to otherness
	The other seen as a threat

Table 7: Structure of Power and the Other

In chapter 5, othering within the *power and the other*, presented above as table 7, involves the other constantly struggling for authenticity and to be seen in relation to the absolute. The problem with this there is tension between the two; a tension between the often delicate, occasionally aggressive, negotiation between the otherness and the absolute both of whom want to be seen reflected against the opposite. Othering here involves the attempts to maintain the objective presence of the subject or object against the other's wishes, and is an experience that

flows in both directions. For example, within the sub-theme, *narcissism and the other*, this process involves the other being forced into this position by its interaction with the absolute. Under this theme, the ordeal within this experience as other is acknowledged, yet to survive the other then creates alternative others in order not to have to experience this feeling of outsidersness. Within the second sub-theme, the other being drawn to fighting for alternative others encourages it to find a confidence and its own voice. Conversely, for some their mere presence was seen as a threat as presented in the third sub-theme and the identity of the other is contained by varying forms of bullying by the absolute.

Main Theme	Isolated other
	Other meets its creativity and potential
Sub themes	The other encounters loneliness and solitude
	The other is fearful of intimacy

Table 8: Structure of the Isolated Other

Table 8 presents *the isolation of the other*, as discussed in chapter 6. This theme presented othering as an acceptance of a distant relationship to the absolute. This almost non-relationship also defined some the participants in the study, meaning they self-identified, their identities not necessarily being tied to the presence of the absolute. Although often challenging, this was not always a negative experience for the other. For example, within the first sub-theme, the *other meets its creativity and potential*, participant Yvette's creativity brought her solace from her sadness. Within the second theme though Daniel's exclusion from his friends for being gay brought with it some very painful feelings of isolation, with his blaming himself for his exclusion

and wondering what was wrong with himself. The third sub-theme, the *other's fearfulness of intimacy* meant the other either avoided relationship or developed relationships which were co-dependent in an attempt to repair the painful wound of isolation.

The second aim of this research was to show that working creatively, and with tools common to transpersonal psychotherapy, would allow for a deeper exploration of the experience of otherness. Chapter 7, table 9 below, therefore presents three themes within the heading of the, *internalised experience of being the other*. This chapter presented the phenomenological experience arising out of the first of the creative tools utilised in this research study to understand the unconscious experience of being the other.

Title	Internalised experience of being the other
	Tension of the opposites
Themes	Death Separation

Table 9: Structure of Internalised experience of being the other

Within this theme there is an attempt here to maintain a *Tension of the Opposites*, echoing Buber's (2002) assertion that holding this tension leads one to the building of a creative space in-between. The tension of the opposites here though is the struggle to be either fully authentic or to end up being inauthentic, to be literally be alive or dead. The additional problem for these participants was the unilateral maintenance of this tension, it was not being held by anyone but themselves, suggesting an internalised contradiction. The next theme, *Death*, discussed the

internalised experience of being the other, with examples emergent from the stories of both Carl and Alejandra who both presented imagery and words where there was an unconscious effort to destroy that which made them the outsider. The final theme, *Separation*, included the first recognition that the nothingness other was separate from their own unconscious potential held within the other. This theme is the first to relate to the splitting that the nothingness endures when othered by the absolute, and the constant struggle to maintain a sense of self in the face of the absolute.

The third aim of this research was to creatively investigate the connection the other has with the majority. Chapter 8 therefore involved the second creative exercise, the sand tray work, where we uncovered the projections the other has onto the absolute. To restate, all the participants had already self-identified as other, the aim was to use myself as an othered blank screen for them to project upon to. The themes gleaned within this chapter are summarised as table 10, below.

Title	Symbolic experience as the other
Themes	Other fixes its identity in relation to the absolute Other sees potential in its relationship to the absolute Humble I and the other
Sub Themes	Meeting of opposites Other fearful of the absolute

Table 10: Structure of Symbolic experience as the Other

The first theme, *the other fixes its identity in relationship to the absolute*, recognised that the other will use a mixture of the erotic and the aggressive to maintain both its connection to the absolute and its simultaneous rejection. The next theme, where *the other recognises its potential through the relationship with the absolute*, speaks of a different type of relational dyad. Here, as Jung (Stevens, 1990) recognised, the other is the shadow, with the symbolism and stories here speaking clearly of the reflected potential held for the other within this relational dyad. Here the absolute acts as a mirror for the unconscious psychic potential of the other. The third theme, *the humble I and the other*, then discuss the relationship between the other and the absolute when the absolute moves from a non-relational to a relational position. The first sub-theme, *the meeting of opposites*, discussed the potential for a mature relationship where the other and the absolute recognise both their similarities and their differences. The second sub-theme though, *the other is fearful of the absolute*, saw the other distancing itself, or hiding itself, from an absolute which was in no way threatening

### **Summary of the heuristic themes**

Chapter 9 explored the last aim of this research, which was to show that a longer transpersonal engagement with one's own sense of otherness would be a route to psychological wholeness. This engagement and transformation sits at the core of transpersonal work and also brings us closer to the Transpersonal more godlike oneness with everything. The themes themselves are presented as table 11 below.

Title	Heuristic Themes
	Descent
Themes	Identifying the authentic/inauthentic split
	Other avoids being in the shadow
	Tension of the opposites
	Union of opposites
	Authenticity of the other involves being seen

*Table 11: Summary of Heuristic Themes*

To summarise the heuristic themes, the early themes involved understanding the aspects of self which had been split off into the unconscious, together with my own projections as the other onto the absolute. The work of reintegrating the shadow here included accessing a lot of fear around my previous sense of self, before allowing it to be destroyed by my own internalised other. The symbols arising out of the dreams, the visualisations and the sand tray work, when analysed also allowed myself to access a momentary period of oneness reconnection between the other and the nothingness, a spiritual union of opposites where peace and harmony reside.

### Summary

My reasoning for presenting the background to my participants within this chapter was to begin to show the complex nature of how we relate to difference, and the numerous types of differences which one inhabits at any given time. This positioning thereby begins to draw my discourse around difference out from the more political and religious structures which have underpinned it. This overview, together with a brief consideration of the phenomenological and heuristic themes, start to underline the many ways the other is formed and maintained. The following chapters, chapters four to six, will phenomenologically explore this experience of being the other in more depth. This will then be followed in chapter seven and eight with a deeper phenomenological consideration of the internalised impact of being the other, together with an exploration of the unconscious connection the other has with the absolute. Then finally, in chapter nine, the themes from the heuristic section of my research will be considered in depth and via an alchemical lens. As the first of these three main themes is *the submission of the other*, the process of othering, together with the experience of the other in/as shadow, will therefore be explored next.

#### Chapter Four: Submission of the other

The first aim of this research was to explore the nature of being other, and confirm, or otherwise, my assumption that being the other is a universal experience. In understanding the experience of the other it is important to recognize the various means by which the other is formed including, but not limited to, excellent examples from the post colonialists, for example from Fanon (2005) who recognized the impact of colonialism upon the colonized. Yet, as Kirschner states when providing an overview,

*'no matter what their situation or amount of power, it seems to be in the very nature of absolutes to engage in a fundamental, multifaceted process of othering, in which they identify, describe, and make attributions about others in order to shore up their own (group and individual) identities'*

*(2012, p. 218),*

Kirschner socially locates his statement here, making othering an inevitable consequence of the absolute encountering the other. Conversely though, Fanon is more concerned with the impact of othering upon the other. So here we start to add post-colonial knowledge to the transpersonal base. This chapter therefore begins an exploration of the impact of othering upon the other via phenomenological and creative lenses. This is the impact of being othered upon the other specifically that is most important to my research, and begins with figure 5, *the submissive other*, which explores how the process of othering works in bringing the submissive other into line with the dominant absolute as a means of control.

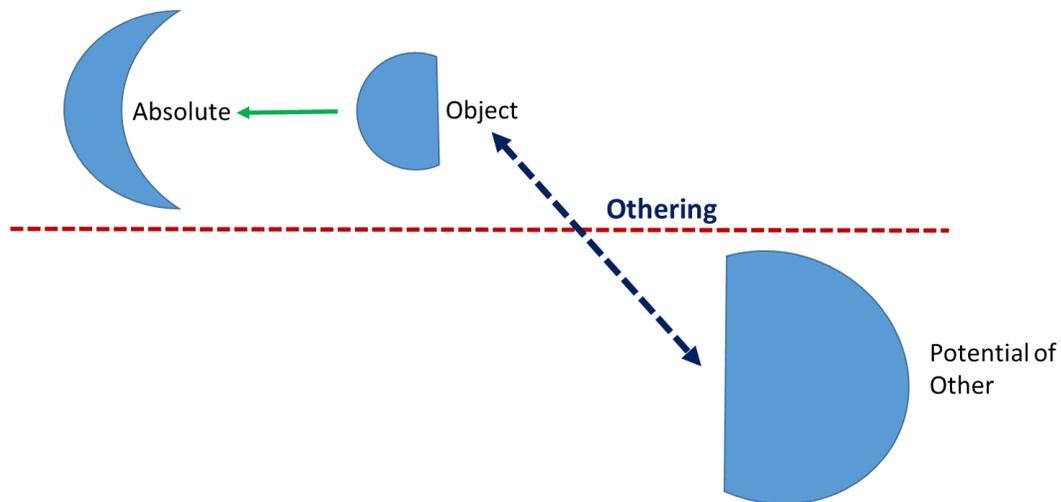


Figure 5: *The Submissive Other*

As one can see from the figure, as the submissive other is drawn inexorably towards the absolute, or tries to be more like the absolute, the othering process actually involves a separation from its own authentic self, an aspect which is then left, suppressed, within the unconscious. It is not that the absolute others the other in this instance. It is that in order for the other to feel accepted by the absolute it has to suppress aspects of itself. This is the driving force behind the political idea of the assimilation of the other, for example, where the other is actively encouraged to shed its own identity and take on one passed onto it by the cultural majority, otherwise the other is deemed a threat to that society, is punished, or is marginalized (Hall, 1996). What I recognize now is that, for some, in the other's desire to fit in, or the pressure for the other to fit in, the other can other itself, objectifying or stereotyping itself to be deemed acceptable by the absolute. This is not to blame the other for this process, as there is still a threat levelled against the other by the absolute if it does not do so. This is to show that the process of othering, and the power dynamics that are used to enforce the submission of the other, are far more complicated and subtle than previously thought. Examples of this include the politics of assimilation, where the other is forced to adopt

the culture identity of the majority (Brubaker, 2001), the reality being that this is an active process of othering of the other that is both physically and psychologically detrimental.

This can happen in many ways but for the first of my sub-themes under the Submission of the Other I understand the othering here to be driven by a fear of annihilation. This is an idea that sits particularly strongly in the work of Kristeva, in particular where she sees the experience of other as “Experiencing hatred”: that is the way the foreigner often expresses his life, but the double meaning of the phrase escapes him,’ continuing ‘like a child that hides, fearful and guilty, convinced beforehand that it deserves its parents’ anger.’ (1994, p. 13). Although Kristeva’s statement sits within a more social constructionist perspective, in the context of my work with individuals it is this submission of the other under the hate filled gaze of the majority that has been experienced as either a silencing, stereotyping or being forced to adhere to an alien set of rules by my participants. In the analysis that follows, I will argue that being silenced under the hateful gaze of the absolute would also have an unconscious cost upon the other, so I will therefore now be presenting evidence of how my participants felt silenced and the cost to themselves.

**Silencing of the other**

In this sub-theme othering refers to the experience of silencing, or of losing ‘voice’. A good initial example of this gradual stripping away of the voice of the other comes from my first participant, Michael. A trans man he was born as the only girl in a family with five brothers. Michael spoke of this early experience that he ‘had grown up with the threat of being sent away’ if he did not conform to his parent’s wishes. Often labelled as an outsider and as difficult, the encouragement for him to submit was a regular experience for him. In his adult life, Michael offered the following example of being told he had to conform:

*‘There was a tutor that had a problem with me, told me I was not authentic, and I had to play out for him to agree I was authentic, and to tick me off as being ok to continue. That was a problem, and I didn’t feel I could go to anyone about that. I had to perform and pretend to be authentic before he would say ‘ok, yes now I accept you are authentic.’*

Michael here is speaking about a counselling training course he was undertaking at the time. His words speak of his experience of a tutor whom assumes he is not being authentic, his assumption being combined with a threat of expulsion if he were not to follow the route laid out for him by the tutor. Authenticity of the other is therefore seen as threatening by the absolute. There is a need for the other to conform and be inauthentic in order be accepted by the absolute. This therefore means Michael had to risk being inauthentic to himself in his having to perform for the absolute to be accepted, any deviation from this path resulting in annihilation in the form of expulsion. The use of the word ‘perform’ is also important as it suggests Michael knew what was happening to his authenticity, and of his powerlessness to do anything about it. It also says that

his tutor needed him to ‘perform’ to the tutor’s standard of being trans gender, not by Michael’s own standards. Regarding this powerlessness, Michael also spoke of feeling silenced, the silencing matching a more post-colonial perspective, for example Kristeva’s idea where he has a voice but is bullied into silencing it by the oppression of the tutor (Kristeva, 1994). It is not that he has no voice, it is that he is frightened of using it out of a threat of being excluded from his course. The voice here is therefore silenced, Michael has to sacrifice any power and agency he might have had, and he is forced to take on a role he clearly states he did not wish to. Offering another example from a previous experience, Michael said:

*‘I’d done my first training, I got my clients and in fact I went totally self-employed in 1992. And one of the group supervisors said he thought it would not be a good idea, you’re taking a bit of a risk. But I wasn’t, as I had done my sums, I was fine. But also, the very same supervisor when people in the group were sort of being quite, I don’t know, harsh with me, you know, trying to find fault, had no idea that I was quite anxious. I was very humble about doing the course because I said, actually, I want to do the thing thoroughly. So, they had no idea. I wanted to do the whole thing thoroughly, and also, I didn’t rate the teaching on my other training, and it was excellent here, so I was very pleased. But that supervisor told me not to stick my head up above the parapet otherwise. So, I’ve had a few experiences here and I’m not sure how much it is because I am different in one way or different in another.’*

Even though Michael talks of being self-employed already, the silencing here is an encouragement to fit in, his performance and inauthenticity meaning he took up a persona that

meant he was less than he actually was. This type of experience echoes Callaghan's (2003) work where students upon a psychology course felt like they were losing an important aspect of themselves in the encouragement to adopt a predetermined, and also quite alien, way of being. In exploring Michael's experience via Callaghan's lens, his words express the bodily dissociation that the other endures when attempting to fit into a culture, or in this case a system, alien to them no matter if they already hold an identity of their own. Additionally, though there is Michael's emotional expression of his anxiety at having to do as such here, and the felt experience of having to fit in. He is told there is a way to be in order for him to become a counsellor, but this runs counter to his own authenticity, or his own self-constructed identity as a counsellor. Instead of his training encouraging him to expand his identity to include the new one for the course he was undertaking, he was encouraged to shed the original one and adopt another. Therefore, in Michael's story he was not allowed to be fully himself, he had to keep his head 'below the parapet' to survive, and it is this form of silencing which therefore means the other is not allowed to be, or is fearful of being, authentic in the face of the absolute. This is a theme that continues as Michael discussed his trans gender.

*'People won't necessarily understand and they will react against when they realise, and how do you tell a person, you know, when you meet them, any sort of person, I don't mean a relation or that sort of thing. How do you tell a person? I'd rather they know me as a person first and then they know about that. But you know I had quite a difficult time here in the training, from some students, because I didn't say straight away to people because I wanted them to know me as me, and then when I did, you know, some people were offended or annoyed with me that I didn't say right at the beginning, but it is a difficult one to handle,*

*because I don't want that to be my identity. I don't know, when I get up in the morning, I don't say I'm transsexual or transgender, or transmit. No, I'm Michael.*

Michael's trans identity here is that which is othered out of a fear of how his peers might view and fix his identity were they to know the truth. There is an interplay here between Michael searching for a means to be seen by the absolute as a good student, and also by his peers as a 'good man' which means that his authenticity, or his difference, is something which would make him look bad in their eyes. Michael describes himself as having struggled with how people see him, meaning his peers in this section have a lot of power over him as he struggles to be authentic, and find his voice as a trans man. It is this that led to his own silence, a silencing enforced upon him from outside at the cost of his authenticity, with authenticity also being an enforced category. A post-colonial and psychotherapeutic combination here means of understanding this is that silence of the other is the wall that produces the echo position in the narcissus/echo dyad (Freud, 2014; Spivak, 1993). The other is therefore an object to bounce back the words of the narcissistic I, whilst retaining no identity of its own. The problem with the acceptance of this role is the self-destructive nature of acceptance of one's position as the submissive other, and can lead to issues of depression or physical ailments (Fredrickson & Harrison, 2005), or to increased obesity and other illnesses (C. Butler, Tull, Chambers, Taylor, & Ph, 2002; Tull et al., 1999). This also sits post-colonially within the work of Fanon (1959) and his ideas around the cost on the colonized of the impact of colonialism. These areas of study point to the cost undergone by the silent, inauthentic I in accepting, yet also a resisting, of the projections of the Narcissistic I, a battle entered out of a fear of its own annihilation.

Transpersonally though, on an internal level, for the participants, in the submission of their own other there is inevitably a denial of their own potential. As Adame and Leitner observes when discussing the work of Buber ‘in the I-Thou moment of meeting, . . . , we have the potential to be powerfully confirmed and truly seen by another who we have chosen to risk this level of intimacy’ (2010, p. 58). Although their statement revolves around external relationships this is equally important for internal ones as well as the internal other gives one the sense of identity, rootedness and personal sense of self. Michael’s experience explored here is of submission forced upon the other by the absolute by threat of annihilation. This illustrates that for him to actually submit then leads the other towards a type of personal annihilation.

**The other is confused about the rules**

Rules form a part of one's identity. From knowing how to be based on your gender, to understanding what is expected of you because of race, colour, or creed, the idea of who one is benefits from structures that are both inherent within us when we are born, passed down to us through the generations, and constructed from the desires of the society we live in. For the submissive other, the taking on of an identity passed on to it by the absolute involves a question of just what the rules are before it can accept the rules placed upon it. To explore this conflict further, Yvette's experience of difference was predominantly generational. From a family of academics going back several generations, although she was expected to become one herself, Yvette felt she never measured up to the family's high academic standards, being more creative and emotional as a child. She often felt like an outsider at school, and described herself as late in many ways; with her first period, her first boyfriend, losing her virginity, and other life experiences that left her feeling like an outsider and not 'normal'. She had few friends, and felt she did not really belong to her family group. She was often left with a sense that others 'got it,' that they understood the rules whilst she did not. As she stated:

*'I just was very unhappy, and then all the way through school never being able to really make good friends, or if I did make good friends then they would abandon me and I would think what is it about me that, what's going on? Kind of not, being unable to understand why the world is the way it is and everybody else seems to get it.'*

For Yvette, the rules here are not clearly spoken, they are implied or hinted at, and this is a common experience for the other. The absolute constructed rules are not always overt, they are

consistently covertly implied, with the other then being left to decipher the code laid out before them. These socially constructed rules for Yvette left her feeling like an outsider and disconnected from her peers. Her statement speaks of the self-blaming of the other when it does not know the rules of the majority. The idea therefore that everyone else 'got it' and she did not pertains to my view that knowing, or not, exactly what the rules are is an important part of being other. As Yvette discusses when I asked her what it was like not to know the rules:

*'Well very confusing and the feeling that there must be something wrong with me and well then later the feeling that I was a bit mad. Actually, my brother told me I was, so that sort of confirmed my fears although I knew deep down I wasn't. But just that feeling of not being able to belong and trying to do what everybody else does but not getting it. Not being able to. And not knowing why, so just being very, very confused. The obvious thing was at one point I thought I must be adopted, I thought I don't belong to this family, this family can't be my family cos I just don't fit in here, so I mean I'm sure that is a very common feeling. But then you know I'd look at them and look at photos of them and see the similarities and hear my mum talking about when I was born and thinking, I must be part of it, I must be.'*

Interestingly, Yvette asserts her outsidership as something normal, as if the full emotional impact of being the other has become suppressed. This is her coping with being othered, by her brother for example, or even by herself when she looks at the pictures. The suppression of the felt experience of the other is a self-created coping mechanism driven by being unable to contain this experience on her own, and mirrors Bion's ideas around the containment of difficult experiences

by the parent. This coping mechanism is important as it fully mirrors figure 4, *the submissive other*, and the unconscious material the other has to detach itself from to comply with the wishes of the absolute. The madness that Yvette expresses in this passage is how she judges herself for not being knowledgeable about how to be as part of the majority. There is a confusion here which speaks of the conflict between the rules and the authenticity of the other. So, whereas the absolute in its knowing of the rules does not have to endure any confusion, for the other the drive to submit to the absolute leads to a conflict of identity. For example, where Yvette asks herself if she is adopted, she is speaking of her separation from the majority, her identity being different to that presented opposite her. This contrasts though to her seeing a picture of herself and her family and the similarities between them and the pride this brings with it. There is a paradox here again between these two types of identity. Firstly, between her inability to fit in with her academic family, versus the similarities her mother talked about from when she was born. This confusion then is created by an inner sense that she does not belong against the external proof that she is a part of the family opposite her. This sense of confusion was also apparent in Yvette's story later in her interview where she related this back to what I have termed her generational difference:

*'On my father's side, my ancestors they were scientists they were botanists, they were quite well known, eminent Victorian scientists, and all my life I've had it sort of drummed into me that my family is special. That we are special. There's sort of been an expectation that I would be special but a kind of acknowledgement that I'm not living up to all of that, and that I'm not. So, that's come from really early on and also from really, really early on, being told that children are to be seen and not heard. And I remember a very, very distinct invitation, we went to as a family, when the adults all went into one room and the children*

*were taken off by a complete stranger, presumably a nanny, and we were sent to another room and given a meal, and I just didn't understand any of what was going on and I felt, sort of felt that I didn't, just this constant feeling of not belonging and not understanding, and being very confused, and wanting to be part but not being able to be.'*

Othering here centres around the familial script here that denoted Yvette's family as special or unique, a script that she found she could not live up to. It is this that therefore leaves her confused as to what her role is or should be without this generational identity. This also fits with the expression of her Victorian parenting, a means of collective parenting which was normal for the time, where on an individual level she felt she endured a different type of silencing and was marginalized as she was a child and was treated as someone separate. Again, the confusion of not being a part of something, of not being with the other academics, and the pain to be accepted as part of the group sits heavily in Yvette's story. A good way of understanding the coping mechanisms presented here for dealing with the experience of having to negotiate two ways of being is via the lens of acculturation. Post-colonially, in Bhatia's (2002) consideration of acculturation, where persons of mixed heritage often have to negotiate two cultures and the detrimental impact of not doing so, he clearly discusses the fact that majority cultures do not have to straddle the First World/Homeland dividing line like the other has to. My research though leads me to recognize that the acculturated negotiation between the adopted identity of the majority and the identity one feels most comfortable with, means that this negotiation occurs in more ways than just culturally. For example, the paradox in Yvette's story is an example where the other has to negotiate between these two; the first being the one she was born in to, the second being her more artistic self. Another layer of the paradox emerges out of Yvette's origins, where she is actually

from a privileged background of academics, versus her more artistic self again which feels it does not fit in with that world. Where these are both important here is in the recognizing of the confusion and difficulties inherent for the other in making this transition from being the outsider to being part of the majority, with its often-unforeseen misunderstandings. Yvette though highlights this best where she states of her dinner party experience *'I just didn't understand any of what was going on and I felt, sort of felt that I didn't, just this constant feeling of not belonging and not understanding, and being very confused.'* Yvette's sense of confusion unsettles her sense of belonging, of being part of what is going on. She is othered by her failure to understand the taken-for-granted rules of the social encounter.

Looking through a post-colonial lens, where colonization meant the colonized had to adopt both positions in the divide, an action that Fanon (1959) argued had a hugely detrimental impact upon the colonized themselves, this confusion is part of that detrimental impact. In an ideal world, for this adoption of the rules of the absolute to work for the other, the only healthy way for it to take place would be alongside their own rooted sense of self, or as Bryan states when talking about the importance of homesickness, *'there is a longing for or desire to return to a rooted place'* (2005, p. 44).

Although in the context of this article Bryan clearly means a return to a physical place, for the purpose of this study the desire to return to a place of origin is less to do with returning to one's own gender, culture, or homeland, but more to do with returning to one's own transpersonal divine ground or the inner core of self (Washburn, 1995). This is important as this drive has to be suppressed to maintain the other's submission to the absolute. Another problem here in the

adoption of the cultural rules though can lead an acceptance of the stereotype placed upon it by the absolute, for example Yvette's role as the obedient child separated from the adults. In submitting to the absolute giving up its sense of identity, with all its own rules, and in an attempt to understand those of the absolute, this leads to a loss of the other's own identity, making the other an It which is then used by the Narcissistic I for the projection of its own psychic material. The other is not known for itself, for its uniqueness etc. It becomes known for what the absolute needs it to be. It is here that narcissus' echo comes into being (Spivak, 1993). There is a very subtle interplay of power here that encourages the submission and then taking advantage of the Thou by the narcissistic I, and as previously stated, the threat of the anger of the narcissistic I, sometimes coupled with the desire to be accepted can lead to a type of collusion that is ultimately destructive for the other's sense of self-identity. The need to find an identity is an idea emergent from my research which will be continued in the next sub theme, *the clichéd other*.

**Clichéd other**

The last sub theme that fits under the heading of the *submissive other* is the *clichéd other*, and is derived from the requirement of the submissive other to find an identity of its own (Haug, 1987, 2008). One important means of doing this is with the acceptance of the clichéd identity, which could also be seen as a type of stereotype, placed upon it by the majority. Within this third theme I will therefore be presenting examples of where my participants managed their experience of being the otherness by adopting a clichéd way of being, an adoption that gave them a sense of protection.

The aggressiveness of being the clichéd other was something Max endured. His sense of being the other arose out of his ancestors being German peasants who were removed to Hungary during the time of the Austrian/Hungarian empire, but once they had become naturalized Hungarians were sent back to Germany by the Russians after WWII. On their return to Germany his family were seen very much as outsiders in the small village they inhabited. The theme of his identity arose from the following interaction where he mentioned:

*'I remember quite really vividly being at the playground and that was more towards the indigenous population. And one of the older women was pointing at me and saying something like 'there is one of those Hungarians. They're always causing trouble!' I went 'I don't understand' and then over the years I heard the stories about how my uncle when 20 grew up they were labelled the 'Hungarian gangs' and they were just fighting the locals all the time. It is an interesting one. As the Eastern Block disintegrated and the Berlin wall came down, lots of white Russian immigrants moved into Germany into this area as*

*they claimed German ancestry as well. So, the whole history was repeated as they were seen as Russian and treated like scum by many people, and again formed their own little gangs. Interestingly, my relatives really sympathized with them. I don't know, I didn't really actually make sense to me why people would look at me that way until very much later.'*

Haug used memory work as a means of exploring the experience of the visible other, where the other has adopted a culturally allocated identity. Her work explored the sexual cliché women became cloaked within, the memory work technique being a means of making women active agents in their own lives (Haug, 1987). In Max's statement, we see the clichéd identity placed upon Max. Whilst playing with the local children he is separated out as other, and the stereotypical identity of being a troublemaker is placed upon him, an identity which leads him to feel confused. It is only later that he understands where the cliché might have originated from, together with a witnessing of the pattern of the other battling to be seen by the majority, but his words also speak of a separateness from the Hungarian gangs. The impact of this aggressive stereotyping of the other, and the conflict this led to, can clearly be seen here through Max's eyes, through his own experience, and his witnessing of those experiences endured not only by his family, but by the Russians who moved to Germany post the end of the Cold War. The tension around acceptance of the stereotype here emerges more I feel from the immigrants raising of their own flag, asserting their own identity, against their fighting with the locals who stereotyped them as other and therefore troublesome, where the struggle to be authentic brought with it conflict with the majority. From Max's story emerges a sense that he was confused about what the Germans were seeing when they were judging him, and it is this confusion that resonates quite strongly in his story.

Max's experience also brings to mind Barnes, Mercer, and Shakespeare's idea out of disability studies where they see 'cultural stereotyping as a form of oppression used as a rationalization for treating disabled people as deficient' (quoted in Woo, 2012, p. 20). His statement is that even though Max was a child, he was already being labelled by the majority as other, and therefore as a problem, or as deficient. This was a regular experience for the participants in this sub-theme; the labelling, and the mistreatment. It is also important to note the struggle, or the fighting back, of those labelled, hence the need of the gangs to fight back, with the collective struggle serving the purpose of ridding one of the collective experience of othering. My argument here is this regular engagement with the cliché was a challenge for the participants who I will argue were not being seen for who they were, but for the fears of the absolute, with these fears being used to make them conform.

Similar to overt and covert narcissism (Bizumic & Duckitt, 2008; Rose, 2002), where the overt is characterized by aspects such as grandiosity and exhibitionism, and the covert by self-centredness, there are forms of overt and covert othering. Although cliché here is a cognitive process where the subject labels the other as something thereby making it into an object, it is also a shaming of the other that encourages the other to conform to an identity that is not its own. What the adoption of the cliché also encourages within the other is a splitting from a more authentic means of being to become something smaller and more two dimensional. For example, where Max discusses the stereotype placed upon his community by the majority in Germany he is wise enough to see the paradoxical confusion between who he himself is and the identity given to him by the women pointing in his direction. It is as if Max was saying that this should actually be his identity, so the confusion arises out of being both different to the majority view of how they should

be and, on consideration of the cliché itself, different to the actual cliché presented. This therefore increases the sense of outsidership, through the separation from his cultural peers and his adopted country, doubly making them different from external reference points of identity.

Max's story explores the manipulation of the other into a format that can be used by the absolute for its own projections. Yet, there is also a resistance to these projections, presented by Max in the rebelliousness of the other in the face of the stereotyping. Psychotherapeutically, both positions also challenge the true authenticity of the other as an individual in their own right. In all these examples, important questions were asked about who the participants were in their own minds, with differing results.

## Summary

In this chapter I have explored the emergent themes around the *submissive other*. An important element of this analysis shows the varying means the other adopts to survive taking on this position for the absolute, be it by silencing its own voice, or by adopting the cliché placed upon it. What this tells us about the experience of being the other is that although there is a compliance with the absolute, there is also a will towards authenticity, driven by a rebelliousness or an acknowledgement that the other is performing in some fashion. The drawing together of postcolonial and transpersonal positions here begins to show the struggle for the other to maintain its identity whilst under the powerful destructive, or stereotypical gaze of the absolute. My research therefore shows that for the other to survive it needs to find a means to be accepted by the majority, hence the adoption of the role of the submissive It. This acceptance of the identity passed onto it by the absolute causes a paradoxical problem where the other has to hold the tension between the identity passed onto them by the absolute, and that which they see within themselves. Secondly, the stages of this acceptance of identity here are also important to notice as there is an obvious splitting between the authentic sense of self and a type of cultural persona where the other takes on the identity expected of it by the absolute. In this study, my participants clearly elucidated experiences as other where they were forced to conform and submit, struggle to learn a new set of rules whilst giving up their own, and accept the stereotypes placed upon them by the absolute. From a more dramatic perspective, all this holds echoes of the writings of Akbar (1984) in his consideration of the role of house negroes over field negroes during the time of slavery, and how the house negro ingratiated him/herself into the slave owner's home by adopting the role cast onto them.

It is this sacrificing of identity and authenticity in the face of a more powerful absolute that I feel forms the basis of racism, sexism and prejudice against the other. It is this that has also more recently given rise to its counterpoint, the recovering of responsibility for personal and group identity identified within the feminist movement and LGBTQ studies, to name but two areas, where the questioning of what it is to be a woman (Beauvoir, 2010; J. Butler, 1990), or what is the world like beyond the more heteronormative vision often presented as the only one (Clarke, 2002; Downs, 2005). These and many other viewpoints I feel form the basis of my next section, the power of the other, where the question of identity and authenticity move into another arena.

### Chapter Five: Power and the other

The idea that power brings with it identity is an area discussed at length within Foucault's writings where he saw power as a means for the subject to self-identify (Newman, 2005). This though leaves a hole in understanding just what the impact of this lack of power is for the other, how it survives the annihilation of its own identity in the face of a power struggle with the absolute, and how it finds its own power, if at all. Whereas in the previous chapter the other either had no voice or was yet to discover it, here the other begins to search for its own power. It is the discovery of this power that sits central to the many movements which have felt the need to speak up, a move away from their position as the invisible masses. Even the ideas of both Buber (1998) and Levinas (Hand, 2009), as presented in my review of the literature, were very much influenced by their differing difficult experiences as other during World War II. It is therefore no surprise that in my research the desire to stand up and be acknowledged, and to self-identify, resonated for some of my participants, as the greater the repression of the potential of the other, the greater the unconscious, and then conscious, expression of this potential.

It is important therefore to acknowledge the strength of feeling and power that sits within this other not as something entirely negative nor as something entirely positive either. Whilst, as I have previously suggested, on a societal level the voice and power of the other is an invaluable voice in the world today, on a more individual level for my participants the experience of power is not always as positive or does not always allow one to be truly authentic. It is these ideas which will be discussed as I present my participants experiences in turn. My initial thinking around the experience of the other in relation to power is presented in Figure 6, *power and the other*, below.

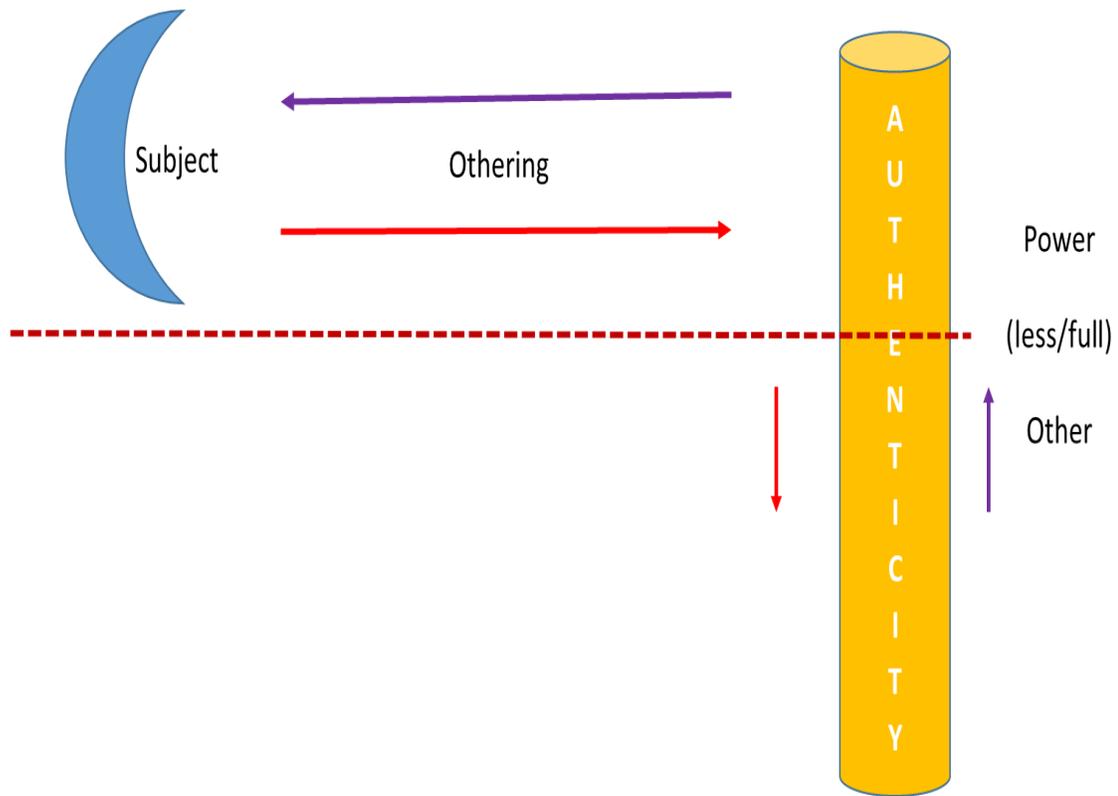


Figure 6: Power and the other

There is a delicate interplay based around power dynamics between the other in its drive to be seen as authentic and the absolute. This differs from figure 5, *the submissive other*, of the previous set of sub themes, in that the object fights to retain a sense of its own authenticity in relation to the relentless othering of the absolute. The more authentic the other can be, the more of its self is made conscious, whilst conversely, the greater the experience of othering from the absolute, the less authentic the other is allowed to be. Also of importance is the unconscious relationship for the other where power is concerned. Additionally, although the absolute is identified out of the relationship to power, my assertion here is that the other is identified by its absence. This therefore creates the struggle for an identity. Yet, no matter the level of power

gained or given up by the other there is still a distance between the other and the absolute which is also important to note.

Othering here therefore is intimately tied to power, and its use by either the absolute or the other is to be seen as either all powerful (as the absolute strives to be in some instances) or seen as authentic (as the other needs to be occasionally). This differs from the previous chapter where previously the othering of the submissive It involved giving up power and authenticity to the absolute, here the other begins to find ways to be more powerful and authentic, that can also involve varying degrees of acknowledgement by the absolute. Echoing Spivak's (1993) idea of the other as having a voice, here the other asserts itself because its voice has not been heard, often bringing itself into conflict with the subject. This means that in some ways the inner authenticity of the other here is still in question. The diagram above speaks of this. Noticing the distancing of the other by the absolute, the authenticity of the other then becomes like an iceberg, with its majority authentic self-submerged until it finds a strong enough voice to assert itself and raise its self above the surface where it can be seen. This contrasts with the experience of the other which is powerless. For the other it adopts ways and means which will either allow it to create absolute groups of its own, or alternatively other groups for it to in turn hold imaginary power over. This need for power therefore informs the first of my subthemes, that of the narcissistic other.

**Narcissism of the other**

The idea of the other using a narcissistic defence to escape the more painful experiences of being the other emerges from Sasha's story. Born in Wales, her family moved to England when she was a child meaning she was an outsider from an early age, with things like her accent setting her apart. Sasha's experience, for this part of the interview, involved her comparing her experiences as a divorced mother of one, to the other mothers in middle class area where she lived. As she explained:

*'When I had my daughter as well and ok, she is 12 years old now. I had her, and I didn't think I'd be a very good mother and I struggled with being a mother, and I was the only mum out of the mums who had babies at the same time still breast feeding, all the others at 10 weeks their babies were sleeping through the night and doing what they should be and I was in chaos. I was the only one breast feeding and not giving solid food at 3 months. And I guess I could list all my differences. And even now when I'm out with friends and they're all like mothers and domestic goddesses and they bake and they have beautiful houses, and I'm not house proud, I have a house but it is lived in.'*

Throughout this section, Sasha compares herself unfavourably as a mother to other mothers around her, seeing herself as struggling for not breast feeding her child or living in chaos in comparison. Not being able to make her child sleep through the night, or get her child to do what she felt it should be doing means she was in chaos, a chaos that also sets her apart from the others. She sees herself not only as other but also as bad in this passage presented here, as if being able to have her child sleep on cue or on solid foods at an early age were a badge of honour she had failed

to obtain. It was not explored where these ideals of how she should be as a mother emerged from, or were real, but at the very least they spoke of societal norms that most mothers would have encountered at some time. There is a specific need to compare herself to her peers here within these statements, a need suggestive of a type of narcissism termed as centrifugal narcissism (Zondag, 2004) where the narcissist hold within them a need to compare them self to the external, often unfavourably.

This example highlights the idea that narcissism plays a major part in being other, and sits within the banner of the 'power and the other', involving a struggle between the narcissistic I and what I will term the narcissistic other. This tension is clearly recognized within Benjamin's work where she states 'the demand to respect the different Other (and its negative form, the objection to being silenced), has no basis other than a problematic form of guilt, a projection of one's own injured narcissism on to the other. Likewise, the demand to be recognized in one's difference, raised from the position of other, would have no basis other than narcissism' (1998, p. 98). I would challenge the suggestion though that these positions are entrenched. For some, from a transpersonal perspective the idea of being other in relation to the absolute brings up nothing more than abject horror, forcing the narcissistic other to find a means of being an absolute in its own way. Here though, for Sasha there is an undercurrent of a need to be the same as the other mothers, and to feel recognized for her difference, which relates to the narcissistic other that Benjamin speaks of. Understanding the narcissistic other in this section very much involved understanding the role of narcissism for my participants, and how narcissism plays a role in the formulation of the narcissistic other.

Psychotherapeutically, Jung (1990) saw the narcissistic retreat into fantasy as a barrier to actual individuation, the idea here adds to this seeing narcissism as a defence against the other, and therefore the shadow projected upon it. My argument here is that the other is also able to use this defence but by creating others of its own. This suggests more than one type of narcissism, and brings to the surface Zondag's (2004) ideas, defining two different types of narcissism. Firstly, centrifugal narcissism involving the narcissistic I being identified by the relationship to the other. The other here lifts the narcissistic I onto a pedestal, and the narcissistic I works hard to maintain its presence there by not acknowledging the presence of the other as an I in its own right. The second version is the centripetal narcissism, where the other is ruled by the absolute, is easily hurt and open to criticism, where the narcissistic I displays a type of false humility that garners it sympathy. Where there is a distinct difference in how the narcissistic wound presents for the other is in its more defensive nature, or as a protection against the transpersonal other I discuss in the introduction to this section. Using these ideas about narcissism through the lens of Sasha's story, she then offered an example of just how she coped with these experiences where she states:

*Sasha: I think there's an illusion that I have a sense of specialness.*

*DT: what does that mean, when you say specialness, how would you relate that to, actually two questions, what does specialness mean to you, in this context?*

*Sasha: being untouchable. If I say that out loud, it is safety in being different but specialness, if I think about specialness, it is a defence I think it is linked to grandiosity, it is one of my defences, being intellectually superior, in groups particularly. An example of this is I've started a placement and the supervision group is um, it is people of all different, I was going to say faith, modalities, so there*

*is an xxxx person and a xxxxx person and xxx supervisor. The first time I obviously felt a bit insecure in the group the grandiosity kicks in big time, and I'm like showing off the things I know, all the unconscious stuff, and haven't you ever done visualisations or that kind of thing, and blah. And I took it to therapy thinking I'm so fucking grandiose as I was feeling so threatened.'*

Sasha acknowledges that positioning herself as special is a defence against feeling less than those that she has found herself, or placed herself, in comparison with. Offering a work example, she sees the grandiosity she displays in relation to her peers as a defence against the feeling of threat that also emerges out of this unfavourable comparison with others. The other here therefore feels powerless in relation to the majority, its narcissistic grandiose defence a means of snatching power back from the perceived majority. In making herself powerful here Sasha therefore does not have to feel as worthless as she did with the mothers from the previous quote. The narcissistic other ultimately assumes the narcissistic defence as a protection against feeling the full emotional impact of being seen as less than, or from a transpersonal perspective it makes itself everything in order to avoid being seen as other by the perceived majority. As the interview progressed Sasha did explore the benefits for her in having her own group where she felt she belonged. When asked about when she felt like she did not need the defence, she stated:

*'My friends come along to see me, my real friends. Also, they're scattered around London so there's not that community but I feel I belong. I don't feel different then, I feel connected, but the grandiosity and shame is gone. I just feel connected with friends.'*

Within Sasha's statement she importantly ties together the shame of being the other, of being powerless, together with the defensiveness of her grandiosity. Her need to be a part of the majority also brings into question her authenticity, as with her friends there is no desire to be anything more than she is, there is no comparison, and the feelings shame and guilt that emerge from being less than then disappear.

To explore these feelings further, shame and grandiosity are often presented as opposing sides of narcissism, for example in Spivak's (1993) paper on narcissism where she clearly presents narcissism as a block towards working with or acknowledgment of the other. Here though, it is the personal experience of being the other that is being avoided. So, where this is important for Sasha is that her antidote to the position of the narcissistic other comes with her relationship to her friends, who although separate to her by the distances present in a metropolis, allow her to feel connected and a sense of belonging when they are together.

It is this centripetal narcissism that sits strongest I feel for my participants. Although the absolute is still present, it is present from a more removed position, and the narcissistic other attempts to avoid the shame of being the other by manufacturing its own sense as the absolute, creating its own others. To explain further, Sasha explores this in her statement, repeated below, where she states;

*'The first time I obviously felt a bit insecure in the group the grandiosity kicks in big time, and I'm like showing off the things I know and all the unconscious stuff, and haven't you ever done visualisations or that kind of thing.'*

What Sasha is admitting to here is how she protected herself from her own sense of insecurity by competing with the others in her group, and belittling them as well, behaviours directly related to narcissism as discussed in a paper by Besser and Priel (2010) who saw these actions as a means of self-protection against a perceived threat to one's identity. The identity here being Sasha's work identity. Here this narcissistic othering holds significant echoes of points raised from within the post-colonial field of whiteness theory (Seshadri-Crooks, 2000), where this time it is less so the anxiety of the majority that creates the other, but the anxiety of the other that then in turn creates more others. My understanding here is that otherness and othering are like ripples on a lake that can move forever onwards creating more and more others in their wake, a metaphor exemplified by Sasha's experience as other in comparison with the mothers around her and her subsequent grandiose need to other her peers in her supervisory group to make herself feel superior and powerful. It was her anxiety at being made to be seen as 'less than' by her peers, together with the shame this would have entailed, that led to such a reaction and a snatching of power by creating their own other. This is an important point to make in the light of one of my earliest assertions, with this being the other is something we all experience. Here though I have begun to show evidence of just how this experience occurs and repeats itself meaning that not only will we all experience being the other, but that we all in varying ways will other the other to protect our fragile sense of self.

**Other drawn to otherness**

In his final book, the Nigerian post-colonial author Chinua Achebe tells a story from his childhood during colonial times where he studied the book *Mister Johnson*, and his utter distaste for the perspective of Africa presented within such a Eurocentric tome when he states that ‘it did open my eyes to the fact that my home was under attack and that my home was not merely a house or a town but, more importantly, an awakening story in whose ambience my own existence has first begun to assemble its fragments into a coherence and meaning’ (Achebe, 2003, p. 38). For the other who is drawn to other, it is the home that is under attack that is important here, the home, as Achebe states being a sense of self. Yet, as Said (Ashcroft & Ahluwalia, 1999) explores in his writings, the idea of a return home is a fallacy, an impossibility as that home, or my example here that sense of self, has long since been changed by the process of othering. The other being drawn to other is therefore an attempt to return to a home that has long since been changed, the home here being not something inside of oneself but a construction cobbled together from shared experiences of othering by the majority. This is the other who therefore fights and supports others that my participants discussed in this section.

The first participant in this section through whom I will explore my idea was Liam. Born of Jewish parents who fled to Scotland from Estonia after WWII, changing their surnames on arrival in order to avoid the prejudices of the time, Liam’s experience of difference began before he was born. In his working life, he often worked for companies that were mainly Jewish, again something he saw as setting him apart from the rest of society. Liam was also gay, but felt his sexuality was an aspect of himself which society saw as outside of perceived norms, so much so that he became a gay activist in his 20s standing up for gay rights, as he stated:

*'It probably started with a sense of my own confidence, my self-confidence increasing because in my late teens early 20s, although I was politically active, socially and in work I lacked, I perceived myself as lacking. It was only when I, through luck or whatever, it came to a point where there were, the negative where I could realise that any negative effect of me being who I was, would be negligible. Effectively I had, I realised that I had some power in relation to how I related to the world. So, I would be perhaps more aware of prejudice, and I would be more vocal about it at a personal level, and in general to a political level. Whereas in my 20s my addressing difference was really political activism, or social activism, in amongst the (inaudible), as I became empowered, it became more personal and more social. And perhaps, and certainly more conflicting or conflictual because I would disengage from dynamics, or would contest dynamics that I perceived as being rooted in prejudice, or lack of knowledge. Whereas before I wouldn't have planned to do that on a personal level, I would have on an institutional or political level.'*

It is important to notice the 'start point' for Liam was a period where he saw himself as lacking in confidence. What was important for him was that in his gaining confidence he also seemed to find some power, gradually turning the use of this power towards the fight for gay rights. This is different to the experiences of those in the section above on the *narcissistic other* where their powerlessness to change their position led to an internal taking up of power, the othering of others, and the creation of what is then a manufactured sense of self. For Liam, his position and identity as the other is real, but it is something to be fought against, a battle for the other to be seen as the same as the absolute. As we can see, there is a taking back of some power, making it very

different to the first theme of the Submissive Other where power is given away in order to feel safe. Alongside Liam gradually gaining some personal and social power comes the awareness of a potential conflict with the majority as the other opens its eyes to the prejudices around him. When I say though that only some power returns to the collective other constructed here, this is not total as it is important to note the continued social imbalances where the other is still marginalised, denigrated, or abused by the majority decades after the advent of feminism, the civil rights movement and LGBTQ activists to name but a few, that there is still a fight to be recognised by the absolute. For Liam, what is important to notice about this is the growing sense of power that fighting for the other gave him:

*'A sense of confidence and a sense of my being empowered. In practical ways, with money, with position and so on. In practical concepts, I felt empowered to do things, whereas when I was younger I didn't have that power, and I probably increased the difference myself by going into the ghetto mentality.'*

For Liam, power here is secured therefore through financial means and the gathering of social status, and not rooted within a sense of who he is. There is a distancing of himself from his own personal other, and an attempt to identify with the criteria of the majority. What this personal and social power does bring is a recognition that he is surrounding himself by those also seen as other by the majority together with the impact of this experience, the ghetto mentality. The coming together of the other in a group was for Liam an attempt to find community and power when there was none, as if doing so helped to avoid the occasional pain that sits alongside being the other in solitude. There is a strong call towards the previous theme, *narcissism of the other*, where in his

position as an activist and in his ghettoization, Liam found himself a group that he can belong to and fight for, therefore making himself superior to them in an unconscious fashion. He is both part of the group, yet also in his identification with the majority and his position as an activist, separate to them as well. His empathy for the other is therefore a means of feeling powerful. What this also means is that the themes for my participants were not experienced in isolation to each other, and that many of my participants experienced more than one theme at various times dependent upon their own unique interaction with the absolute.

Another aspect of the other being drawn to other is explored through my next participant. Alejandra was born and raised in Venezuela as part of a small Jewish community in the country. Even though she attended a non-Jewish school, and experienced regular teasing and bullying from her peers, she always felt drawn to other people from her culture. Offering an example of this Alejandra stated:

*Alej: I remember when we were young, my sister and I we used to go to these sorts of after school things which was about art, and just different things like music and drawing and making puppets and so on. And there was this other Jewish girl who looked very different as she had ginger hair, but that's not a thing that bothered me too much. So, we sort of sided with her. We thought it was the 3 of us against the world.*

*DT: Your own little group there. What was it like for you to form that little triad the three musketeers?*

*Alej: We would follow, we were there for each other. it felt safer, in a way.*

*DT: What makes you say safer, any reason why?*

*Alej: Because sometimes you do feel a bit attacked and that's not nice. When you are in a group, but when you are on your own... so, that might feel a little bit lonely and I mean strangely, not very much looking for it consciously, I always ended up being friends with Jewish girls at school. So, we would talk and then after a while I would find out they were Jewish as well.*

Here we see more the safety inherent in connection to fellow others, with the driver being the fear of being attacked, aspects that resonate with Liam's experience. For Alejandra where she states, *'there were three of us against the world'* she is talking about the separateness of their experience, and the powerlessness and the fearful nature of the experience of being in a minority in her school. There is a safety in numbers here, yet even though she found her own mini-ghetto they still felt occasionally attacked. The togetherness of their group also counteracts the other's difficult feelings, and not just powerlessness, that of the loneliness of being the other. Where there is a similarity in the experiences of Alejandra and Liam is in the negating of any other deeper differences within their chosen groups to feel more complete, more powerful, or safer. Where also there is a difference though is in the felt experience of connection and safety, which is subtler than that expressed by Liam, although both are driven to find their own group by a sense of powerlessness or the loneliness of being outsiders. Furthering our exploration, when asked what she found easier about being with other Jewish people, Alejandra went on to say:

*'there is something that you understand each other, there is an affinity, there is a sort of common ground that exists for you to find at times. It feels like that. It is very easy to relate. I suppose it is culture, education, I don't know.'*

This implied connection is something made conscious out of a need for safety from an implied fear of the majority, and echoes Liam's idea that he felt more at home in the 'gay ghetto'. There is an identity here which is not just in political categorisations. As Alejandra stated in her interview, her being drawing to otherness was also a very subtle felt experience, be it one that also brought safety and companionship.

The empathy for the other clearly emerges out of being the other in these stories, which is very different to the transpersonal ideas posited by Buber (2010) where in their own separate ways they argue that we find compassion for the other in order to fully understand ourselves. For Liam, the other that is being rescued has been in some way left in deficit by anything from perceived circumstances to outright prejudice. The other that then acts as the rescuer enters the play as a saviour, hoping to offer the other something different, but also, I will argue here, hoping to save themselves out of a need for not just mutual recognition but the safety of a group identity as well.

Psychotherapeutically, Storr suggests that 'if an individual's requirement to be recognized and appreciated as a person in his own right has not been met, the normal drive toward self-affirmation and self-assertion becomes intensified and transmuted into hostility' (1991, p. 121). In this context, for Liam and Alejandra their experiences as the other are very real, and neither was able to feel appreciated or safe. The 'hostility' Storr speaks of here is not a fighting back against

the establishment, but an assertion of itself for the other, a recognition of the power that the other does have to come together with the disadvantaged either for advocacy, or for safety, or for both. The individual experience and the collective are therefore intertwined here. This, for me, is just one of the driving forces for civil rights, feminism, LGBTQ studies. The inherent, and normal, desire to be seen as individuals and groups in their own rights. Ultimately, this is a fight to be seen and respected as the other by the majority. It does not necessarily mean that this is the authentic purpose of the individual other, and it does not mean that the other is necessarily considered the equal of the absolute. What it does pose though is a distinct challenge towards the status quo of the absolute, which is where the next sub-theme, the *'presence of the other is seen as a threat'* begins.

**Presence of the other is seen as a threat**

Following on from *'the other is drawn to otherness'*, as previously stated my research recognises that as the other asserts the rights of others, be it through activism or by just the group presence, it then becomes a threat to the absolute. Its very presence then speaks of the conflict the other encounters in its subjugation, successful or otherwise, by the absolute. The idea that the other lives in fear is nothing new though. As Kristeva states when discussing the experience of the other, "experiencing hatred": that is the way the foreigner often expresses his life, but the double meaning of the phrase escapes him. Constantly feeling the hatred of others, knowing no other environment than that hatred' (Kristeva, 1994, p. 13). It is this living with fear that is a constant for the other here, its companionship making the other wary of the new world around itself. It is perhaps this theme most of all, which motivated me to undertake this project, and which resonates with me most of all.

An excellent introduction to this topic emerged out of Paola's story. Raised in a suburb of South London, she was often bullied as her mother was Greek, and Paola in turn was seen as an outsider and was herself ostracized by her peers. Discussing what she witnessed as a child, Paola stated

*'my mum always used to get beaten up at the school gates by these really chavvy women, because my mum's really attractive and the other dads liked her because she's Greek. Everyone thought 'she loves herself' and they were quite racist. My mum is 70 now, I think she came to England at 20 so that in those days before I was born, back then it just seemed like everyone was against us. When we moved into the street, everyone called us gypsies.*

*I don't really remember much but it was awful. I remember everyone trying to beat my mum up, it was the most weird thing. And everyone used to walk past and call out 'slag' or whatever. And my mum couldn't speak much English so it was a bit, it was really weird because in school the teachers, the teachers and the head, always didn't like me and my sister but they were worse with me because I would cry at anything, but I didn't know how to, I didn't know how to, what do you call it, communicate, so the only way I could do it was to cry, I don't know why, but maybe it is because I was ill beforehand.*

It is important to notice Paola's early judgements against those who had abused her, her anger here being palpable. This experience was though constructed out of the racially motivated labels placed upon herself by these same absolutes and the regular name calling and abuse the family endured. Although in Paola's statements she did not recall much of the experience of being the other, it is important to note that she clearly discusses the impact of witnessing her mother being beaten up, with her mother having to make sense of her own experience, and this has been internalized in her own experience of school where she did not know what to do and could not communicate with the authorities. The abuse here has not only been internalized but has been passed down the generations, and as an outsider is powerless to prevent any of the abuse being meted out upon it, its very presence being seen as threatening and therefore in need of being destroyed.

Paola's example therefore speaks strongly of the oppressive nature of being the outsider via the lens of both the bullying her mother experienced and Paola being picked upon by the teachers in her school. What is also interesting is that this experience fits excellently with

Kristeva's earlier assertion that the other, both adult and child, lives in a sense of fear much of the time. This living with fear sat strongly within my participant's experiences within this theme. For example, Paola continued by stating:

*'And then I went back to, I started secondary school and the bullying started again. my family never wanted people round the house, they didn't want to know anyone, because to them the world was evil, you know, they just thought everyone is going to harm us. They don't have friends, my mum and dad, so it is like everything is like a little bubble, yeah, so it is kind of like it is definitely got better but looking back it was so rigid and I didn't think I was different until I started school is what I mean, by saying talking about school, because it is only when you compare yourself.'*

Paola's family found a modicum of safety within their own family group, excluding anyone, even friends from visiting the house, a point which echoes the previous sub theme where the other was drawn to otherness from a need for safety. Here though, the fear of harm, and the powerlessness against it, sit heavily in Paola's words. For this participant, her family did not even allow themselves any friends, with the rigidity of the bubble, like an extreme example of ghettoization, being a protection against the powerlessness felt in relation to the absolute. Ultimately though, the fear experienced here is the fear of annihilation. Psychotherapeutically, Bromberg (1983) suggests that this fear emerges because of a poorly formed sense of self, yet, for my participants the 'sense of self' here is an identity which is seen as the other, which is not mirrored. There is an invisibility enforced upon the other by the absolute which therefore leads to a fear of its very existence. Continuing our exploration, Paola's experience though as an outsider,

where she witnessed the bullying her mother endured, then filtered into her adult life where she discussed her first working experience for a large shop in East London:

*'Even when I worked in XXXXXX. Ugh! At lunchtimes, I couldn't, I just couldn't sit in the canteen cos all the older women were really bitchy to me and they just didn't like me. And some of the younger guys would sort of come up to my counter and chat with me, and the women were just 'what are you doing!?' and it was like 'oh my god?' So, I felt like they made me even more different in that when I'm an adult, because they assumed I was attractive and I must be flirting and because they were jealous they would treat me horribly. But I didn't feel like that inside. It is almost like being punished you don't feel that you are, but then I used to spend lunchtimes in the toilet in XXXXX just thinking 'it is going to be half an hour what can I do?' oh and it was horrible that toilet, but you know, knowing you are avoiding it just makes it harder, cos it makes it bigger, makes everything more of an issue.'*

Paola's experience of being seen as a threat, inherited from her parents, clearly meant she had to withdraw out of a need for safety. This even involved her hiding in the toilet for her lunch hour, mimicking the siege mentality experience her family endured when she was growing up. This difficult experience was particularly painful for Paola, her tears during the session underlining the still deep seated wound having to hide herself repeatedly left her with. Paola's experience as the other here involved the projection of envious feelings onto her from those who compared their beauty with hers, in a similar fashion to the experience of her mother. This is important to note because as Paola stated, even though the women might have seen her as attractive she did not

experience the same within herself, her words expressing her fragility in the face of such hostility. There is a sense of the absolute's envy of Paola's 'beauty' a projection onto her that did not resonate with how she saw herself, based upon my comparison of her words about herself and those of her abusers. What is important is that her being 'more beautiful' is seen as threatening by the majority, so they try to separate themselves from it; another form of destruction of the other I will argue here.

To expand this point further, envy of the other, and the inability of the absolute to contain such basic feelings, might be another reason for the aggression wrought against the other, a point raised by Whitford, who goes on to suggest that envy disturbs the 'narcissistic fantasy of omnipotence' (2003, p. 36), with the omnipotence on this occasion being of that which the subject believes of itself. This envy though is an envy of what the other is imagined to be, meaning that in reality it has nothing to do with the other. For example, Paola did not ask the men to sit with her. Envy here is based around the projections placed upon the other by the absolute, the stereotype of the attractive blonde woman for example, projections which the absolute then interacts with, be it aggressively or otherwise. It is not interacting with the real other at all though (and this is the most important aspect), so its need to destroy that projected aspect it is envious of in the other is an egoic need to destroy an aspect of itself which undermines its sense of omnipotence. The other here is guilty of nothing at all other than existing as a mirror for the absolute.

Considering the experiences of my participants through a more theoretical lens, I will assert here that the hostility experienced by some of my participants was to do with their newness within their own disparate worlds. This was particularly resonant in Paola's story, her mother being a

Greek immigrant who moved to the United Kingdom to be with her English husband. Their very presence here leads to a perceived threat to the dominance of the narcissistic grandiosity of the signifier, with narcissism in this instance being ‘the instinctive hostility to anything new or different or other than self (Whitford, 2003, p. 32). What this means is the anxiety felt by the absolute in the presence of something different or unusual is then translated into anger towards it, an anger that is used in either the destruction or the forced subjugation of the other. Post-structurally, Paola’s hiding out of a fear for her very existence speaks of the other hiding its own identity having lost the power struggle with the absolute. There is a painful, reluctant, acceptance of the position of the envied other under the misused power of the absolute. Meaning that what all my participants here in this section have explained is that as the other they live in constant fear of being attacked for being different to a perceived norm.

**Summary**

As originally stated in the introduction to this section the relationship between power and the other involves a striving to forge its own identity in relation to the absolute, or from a transpersonal perspective to move away from the position of other to one of its own self-defined absoluteness. This does not mean it is not still identified by the perceived absolute opposite it, quite the contrary; what it asks is for the absolute to re-identify itself in relation to itself as the other. Efforts are therefore made to formulate either a signifier/signified relationship of one's own, or to gather around itself numerous others that it will fight for. Both positions though speak of the struggle to formulate an identity whilst clouded by a fear of the absolute, as emphasizes by the *'presence of the other seen as a threat'* sub-theme where efforts to have a different identity were denigrated or destroyed. The next section will therefore look at what happens for the other when they can formulate that sense of identity that is separate to that expected of them by the absolute. How do they maintain this identity? What is it? And what is the cost of building this separate sense of self? These questions will be considered in the next section, the *'Isolated Other.'*

## Chapter Six: Isolated Otherness

Over 20 years ago now Edward Said (1993a) gave a series of talks as part of the Reith Lectures where he considered the role of the intellectual as an outsider of their own community. In the second of these particular lectures, Said interestingly discusses the difficulties the intellectual, which in this case means the person who we turn to for a differing perspective on society, might have in offering their opinion. Yet, about 20 minutes into the lecture he then turns his attention towards the positives side of being an outsider, and the creativity that this position can foster if the intellectual harnesses their gifts correctly. It is this juxtaposition between the negatives of being the outsider and the potential positives that is important here for the other. To explore this further figure 7 offers the experience of the *'Isolated Other.'*

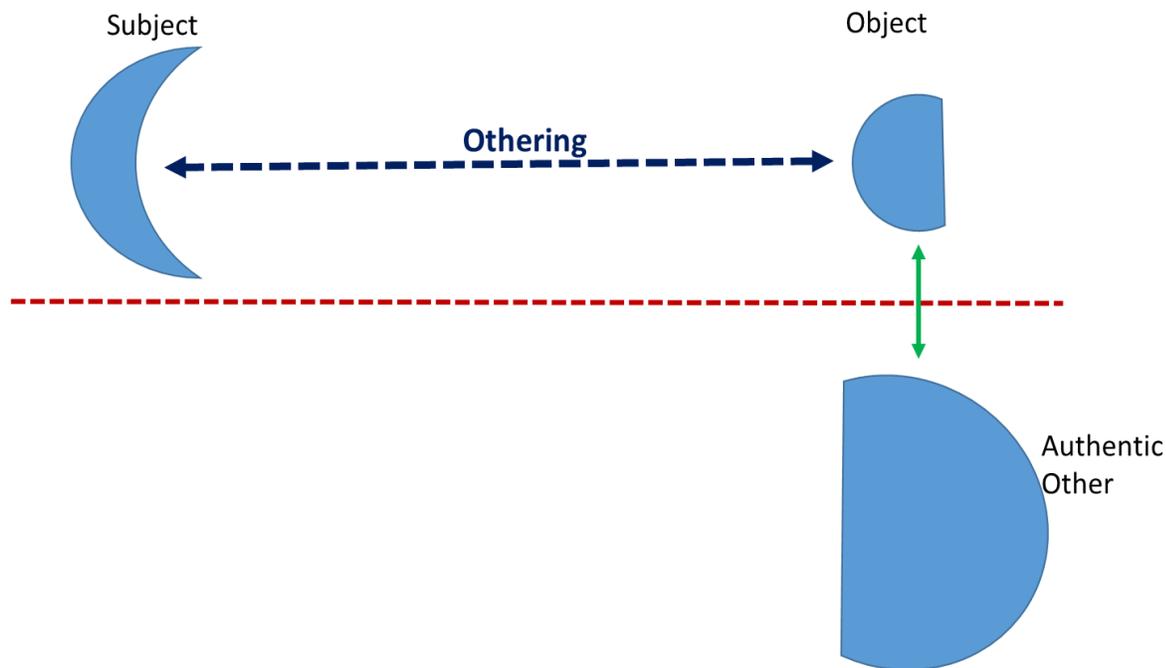


Figure 7: *Isolated Otherness*

The process of othering here is different to that presented in the last two chapters in that the other being on the outside can be beneficial for society. For example, the other serves the greater society in presenting to it what it wants or needs to progress and grow, and the other here is allowed to be what it wants to be in return. Alternatively, the other may find itself ostracised by the majority, the othering process involving a separation from the absolute which then leaves it without relationship or with only a connection to itself for comfort. So, whilst my opinion is the other is still identified by its relationship to the majority, much like the intellectual is by society, the other here may also choose to self-define, meaning there is an attempt to build their own absolute, and contradictorily can lead to the other accessing its own potential, often in creative form. Being the other here is not altogether negative, although it does hold a more isolated feel to it.

The three themes that therefore sit within the Isolated Other umbrella are '*the other meets its creativity and potential*', where the other finds solace within its own inner world of creativity and what this means for the other; '*the loneliness and solitude of the other*', where the isolation of the process of othering leads to a sense of sadness at its separation; and '*the other is wary of groups*', where the idea of relationship for the other, be it with alternative others or with the absolute is frightening. I will therefore begin this section with an exploration of the first of these, the other meets its creativity and potential.

### **The Other meets its creativity and potential**

The first of the three themes that fit under the umbrella *'Isolated other'* involves the exploration of my participants of their use of creativity as the isolated other. This is important as potential, creativity and imagination, add meaning for individuals. As Storr quotes from his essay on the processes which promote recovery from neurotic distress 'the first factor is the patient adopts some scheme or system of thought that appears to make sense out of his distress' (1988, p. 74). The importance of this quote is that for some the isolation of being separated from the majority is distressing, like a child separated from its family. My research idea is that being cast into isolation is a form of distress for many, and that making meaning out of this distress is a very human reaction to this experience. How they make meaning out of this distress may vary, but often it arises for the other by their accessing their potential, creative or otherwise.

To explore the link between the isolation, the distress and creativity, I will now present the first of my participants in this section, Yvette. Yvette was from a family of academics going back several generations, and although she was expected to become one herself, felt she never measured up to their high standards, being more creative and emotional as a child. Exploring her experience of her family, Yvette stated:

*'My reality wasn't their reality. We were living in separate realities in a way. I was living in one world which made some sense to me, although it didn't. They were living in a world which didn't make any sense to me, because anything that I experienced they dismissed, they said it was my imagination. And they used to say, 'god you've got a vivid imagination,'*

*which maybe I have I don't know. For me it is real. That sounds a bit psychotic, or schizophrenic.'*

The importance of her statements here is to underline the separateness of her world in comparison to her family, from the sense that she was living in an alternative reality to them to the judgements placed upon her by her family as being in some way strange, being dismissed or seeing herself as schizophrenic. The other here then experiences this alternative experience of reality. Even the statement after the judgement about her imagination speaks of the struggle to be seen by her family, where she questions if she does have a vivid imagination or not, a questioning of her beliefs.

The distress and creativity that emerged out of this sense of separation and isolation then emerged out of the next stage of our interview. For Yvette, her experience at school was equally challenging, mirroring the same difficulties she endured at home. This confusion that emerged out of not fitting in at home or with her peers at school had a sobering effect on Yvette, and left her to retreat into her creativity, a space that she found to be soothing but lonely. She says of this time;

*'I then went to boarding school at XXXX and carried on with piano and it became the world I could retreat to and if things went wrong I would go up to the piano practice rooms and stay there for hours sometimes all by myself, practicing, playing the piano. It was, I suppose it was a place that made sense, it didn't require words, it didn't have to justify itself. It didn't have to explain. There was nobody else there just me. I feel quite emotional*

*about that. It was wonderful, and nobody knew I did it, so that was a sort of being different, being on my own.'*

The things going wrong holds echoes of the distress Yvette experienced whilst at school, the separation leading her to take comfort in her isolation. The distress in these words and the previous paragraph speaks of the struggle of the transpersonal other to be understood by the absolute. In her isolation, this is not needed. Yvette can play the piano and the world makes perfect sense to her in these moments. No explanation is necessary for the other here, everything just is, together with the emotional release present in Yvette's words of finally feeling understood even if it is only by her unconscious self.

Another example emerged out of Carl's story. A middle aged gay man, he was bullied at school as he was seen as overly feminine. An artist by profession his creativity has played a strong role in his life, from the time he became a Goth in his teens, an act which set him apart from his peers even more. Of how creativity influenced the years when he was seen as an outsider Carl talked about this wistfully, stating:

*'I think I reminisce about that time the sort of early 80s late 70s. I'm still really into music now, but I'm less, you know, back in my teenage years, I strived to make a statement and to get a reaction and what have you. Whereas now, it feels like it is more integrated and I feel a lot more comfortable with not making a statement or I don't deliberately set out to be different. I don't think. Although my partner would say that I do! (laughing) But I don't*

*see it as a conscious aggressive kind of you know reactive thing. Which it was at the time. I was kind of building my difference around standing out.'*

Carl speaks here of the *isolated other* looking to make a statement to get a reaction of some kind, meaning to be seen by the majority. His experience being rooted in his teenage years is interesting as in the global north the need to assert oneself and separate oneself from society or family is a fairly common occurrence. Carl's use of his partner's opinion, that he deliberately set out to be different, is also quite telling. Although not aggressively meant, they speak of a desire in Carl which is different to Yvette, that desire to be different. He is clearly aware that he will stand out if he makes himself different, so acknowledges this, as scary as it might be, which contrasts to Yvette's experience where she wanted to be a part of something and feel understood. So, for Carl, he embraced his difference and took solace in standing out, in being the other, which in my opinion fits in with my earlier idea of the other making meaning and finding an identity out of their otherness. Our discussion then progressed to how his love of music helped him as he was growing up:

*'I think I went from being in a creative industry where I was always doing really well, getting really good response and feedback, to a place where I kind of expected to have the same experience, and I didn't. And so, it has been a real challenge from that perspective, when slowly, you know, finding my own way in this field is a very different sort of thing. Um, but I think I'm also an artist in my heart, I think, so I do have creative projects on the go, and um, so again through the process of writing about self-doubt it is finding the way*

*that you can, you know, come up with something that you don't need other people's approval.'*

For Carl being the outsider, and for him to fully own his creativity, he has to risk not being seen by the absolute, whilst conversely to be witnessed by the absolute risks suppressing something of his creativity as well. For Carl, his authentic self is as a creative type and he clearly recognises there is a tension between being creative and experiencing the judgements of the majority which may emerge in conjunction to this. Carl is speaking of a mind/heart split between these two positions, something that is also present in Yvette's words to a lesser degree, which suggests the conflict is also internal; can one be truly authentic versus the mental anxiety of worrying what others will think if one truly is.

For many, the isolation of being an outsider leads to one being dangerously vulnerable in the face of those who would take advantage of such a situation, a group, or an individual. Returning to Yvette though, who is symptomatic of the experiences of all my participants, their creativity and creative outlets seem to both define who they were as well as offer solace. This echoes Storr's psychotherapeutic point where he states, 'interests, as well as relationships, play an important part in defining individual identity and in giving meaning to a person's life' (Storr, 1988, p. 73). These interests discussed above are therefore not wholly negative expressions of the self, especially as they can often lead to great achievements for the other. In this thesis, it does though reveal a splitting apart from the aspect of the self that desires relationship, and the covering up of its own neurosis.

Considering this theme via a more theoretical lens, as Levinas (Hand, 2009; 1989; 1961) suggests, through the other I know myself. With this he means that the potential for growth of the absolute is held within its engagement with the other. For these participants, though, the pain of being the other means any potential arises out of the pain and rejection of being the transpersonal other. For example, Yvette's experience at the piano, isolated from her peers, speaks poignantly of the rejection she must have experienced. In this instance being the other therefore counters Levinas' idea that one knows oneself through being part of a group, as it here suggests at best only a very indirect relationship with the absolute, built upon rejection, where the other relies upon itself to know itself.

This distance from the absolute for the other also deserves closer theoretical consideration. Although engaging with their potential, be it creative or otherwise, the other simultaneously maintains their sense of isolation and distance from the absolute. Rank (1961) saw this process as designed to console an ego who when faced with its own weaknesses, provides itself not only with a sense of its own immortality and specialness, but with a reconnection with its own loneliness. His idea is relevant here as it presents another aspect of the 'Isolated It' wound. What this means is the 'Isolated It's' responsibilities are not towards the outer thou but to its own self, not necessarily out of selfishness but out of a mixture of fear and anxiety towards the external world. Seeing this through Frosh's idea that 'if we cannot place the other first, we are not human subjects at all' (2002, p. 393), this means that the other when faced with no other to relate to finds its own humanity from within, building their own internalized or unconscious absolute in order that their sense of being is still confirmed, or the other discovers solace and its existence within its own internal other.

**The other encounters loneliness and solitude**

To borrow an idea from Storr (1988), creativity often springs from solitude. This is the predominant reason for the theme of other encounters loneliness and solitude following on so closely to that of potential. For the participants presented above, as previously stated their engagement with their own creativity in my opinion gave them an identity outside of that determined by the absolute. Both Levinas and Buber wrote about the other out of a position of isolation and separation from the majority European cultures of the time, and another to underpin my literature review, Jung, created his introspective tome the Red Book not long after his separation from a group which contained Adler, Freud and other Jewish psychoanalysts.

Whilst my participants in the previous section used their experience as other to build and create, it is important to note that being the outsider is not always easy, an idea suggested by Storr (1988), who explores the detrimental psychological impact of the isolation experienced by the other within his work. His views echoed the experience of some of my participants for whom the loneliness and isolation of being the outsider was difficult to bear, especially in early life. To underline this point further, Daniel's story becomes important. Originally from Portugal he was bullied from the age of 8 for being gay, both at school and in his local church group. He regularly experienced loneliness, and offered this example from a church trip when he was 9 years old:

*'So, there was 8 of us, and it was great. And it was the day or weekend before I was going to start high School I was really happy, I knew all they guys who were coming as one of them had been my classmates at Middle School. I knew other people because we were doing these sort of Saturday sessions even though I didn't feel really close to them but you*

*know. And I always felt strange, I never felt the connection. Especially as they were all boys. I think that's what happened. The difference between feeling weird amongst boys as well, that's where it started, you know. It was, again, it is so many things coming together at the same time. Feeling different, feeling different not only in my own sexuality, or whatever it was, but actually feeling different to other men, and feeling different to women. Because I'm not a woman but I felt different to other boys as well somehow. It just felt that there was something different. I remember going to this thing and I remember that it was the point where we had to choose to sleep together, in rooms. And I ended up sleeping in the only room with one bed because nobody wanted to share a room with me. I remember crying. I remember I still have a very, very vivid memory of that. I remember crying and thinking 'what's wrong with me?' 'what?' Even my friend, you know, just he wanted to share the room basically with someone else. He didn't want to share with me, and I just felt rejected.'*

Daniel talks about the happiness of being a part of the group of the boys in this extract, but whilst he is happy that which makes him other is suppressed. This is important to notice as it resonates with a theme from chapter four, *the submissive other*, where the other suppresses that which makes it the other. Yet, even though he expresses his happiness at being part of the group he still feels disconnected from the other boys around him, as if no matter how much he tried to build a relationship with these other boys based on their similar experience of being on the trip, the underlying differences would still resurface making him the outsider. Daniel even questions his masculinity at this point believing that if he is not a man then he has no real identity, so the other here when separated out from the absolute then questions just what it actually is. Daniel's

overall felt experience as the outsider then translated itself to a real one where the other boys refuse to share a room with him, even the one boy he saw as a close friend.

As per other participants in this chapter, Daniel blames himself as a means of making sense of his isolation, which again shows how traumatic this experience is for some. For Daniel, his sense of isolation and rejection was to become a regular companion during his 20s and onwards. Offering an experience from when he went to a gay festival in Europe stated:

*'I remember for a while in the evening I was going up with this guy. Like sort of doing things together, but I just felt no connection. You know when you feel I'm with you but it does not feel right as I feel different, I know we're different. And then at some point I ended up going around and feeling really low, feeling again like an outsider and I remember going back into my room, everyone was still out, it was 3 or 4 of us sharing the room, everyone was still out partying. I remember the sun was rising and I remember me having a cup of coffee and listening to my MP3 player, and just loving it. Loving the fact of being there and waiting for the sun to rise. It felt like ok you made it through this night, it is ok, you're ok. And it is strange.'*

The struggle for connection is a theme which will be considered in more depth later, but Daniel's story shows that even from the difficult early experience of being the outsider, his sense of isolation was something that he often experienced as an adult. There is a comfort to being on his own as an adult, which he acknowledges later in this passage, but also a desire to have someone to share things with. Building on my earlier idea, there is a repeated attachment pattern between

the signified and the signifier that mirrors that between a child and a parent. Borrowing from Bowlby's (1988) ideas around attachment theory, and matching this to Piaget and Weil's (1951) ideas about how early life experiences influence our ability to understand those we see as different, the other is often forced to explore the world from an insecure base. This means its isolation is a constant factor, and the draw for Daniel to have some type of connection is similar to one where the other is drawn to, and wants to, have a relationship to others but is wary of such a union.

At this point, it is worth bringing in another perspective that sits closer to the ideas of the loneliness and the solitude of the other that it experiences when separated from the absolute. Benjamin discusses such a dilemma for the other suggesting that this occurs when the other loses the external locus of its identity, an experience which then plunges it into a pit of 'unbearable aloneness or an escape into merger with like-self beings' (1998, p. 96). What this sub-theme then explores is this very aloneness and this quest for similar otherness that Benjamin states is important here, but that can on occasion remove the other from the pit of despair that is being the isolated other. Where my research differs from Benjamin's reasoning is with my participant's experiences showing the intersubjective tension of this dyad, and also its early life creation. Both are hugely important in understanding the experience of the other as one not just borne out of an adult politicized experience of being different, but as one forged out of an earlier experience of childhood exclusion.

Identity formation is another problem for the isolated other. The other in solitude denies itself the opportunity for personal growth (an important fact discussed in more depth in the Chapter eight of this thesis), meaning its own unconscious absolute then is unable to interact with an

external other, or must find various Other's from which to learn, echoing Benjamin's earlier point. There is no absolute to learn from as in Daniel's examples, or even the absolute rejects the other denying it the chance to learn. And although there is a desire to connect there is also an ambivalence towards the same. What this ultimately means is that the relationship between absolute and other is a tenuous one, a very delicate experience for both. Yet, if the other removes itself without the ability to either create its own sense of self out of its creativity, or to find its own group, then its psychological wellbeing is at risk.

**The other is fearful of intimacy**

The last theme in this chapter follows neatly from my participant's previous theme where the other experiences isolation and solitude, in that it then asks the following question hinted at in the last paragraph: if the other has its own world how does it build relationship? Goodman, Dueck and Langdal (2010) in their paper on intimacy and the other, consider intimacy as the domain of the absolute only, and how in its narcissism it rejects intimacy with the other. The issue here is how does the other itself manage this divide? What are its challenges in not being able to establish such intimacy?

An atypical example arises out of Paulina's story. For Paulina, her sense of difference arose from the fact her mother was a Russian artist and her father was from Australia, the combination of which left her feeling like she had unusual parents as everyone else at her school had parents who were several generations English. Exploring her story, Paulina discussed how this difficulty in forming relationships at school impacts her still today where she stated:

*I think it is mainly hard to find a relationship. Most of my relationships have been with sort of slightly unusual guys, like the guys I've dated, my last main relationship was with a guy who had Croatian parents but went to Westminster, which is a boy's private school. I think the reason we bonded, or the reason I was attracted to him, apart from a lot of other things, was because he grew up with foreign parents in a very, you know, kind of English community, you know? So, we sort of both had that in common, so I think we both feel different from our parents, but also different from our friends, and I think that was quite a nice, I think that was something that definitely created a bond for us with that. And I have*

*dated other guys who are kind of maybe, I've dated an Estonian guy before, one from, another boy I dated he had a dad who was from Japan, so all kind of you know, but then also grew up in a very English boarding school way. So, I think there's been that, you know. I think when I've been with completely English guys who have had English parenting, their parents, their grandparents have all been from here, I feel like, I don't like it because I think I feel too different. I feel they don't get me, you know, for having this kind of different foreign slightly foreign upbringing you know?*

Paulina talks clearly here of her struggles to find relationship, interestingly finding herself drawn to people she viewed as outsiders herself, even though both parties were educated within a majority culture education system. This contrasted with the conscious efforts she expresses in avoiding men from the majority culture, deeming the contrast of cultures as making her feel too different, with her sense of otherness being more pronounced. So, for Paulina there is a clarity of thought for her in knowing she feels more comfortable dating men who were also outsiders, echoing the theme the *'other is drawn to otherness.'* The problem though with dating men who were outsiders was that this draw to otherness held its own problems, as Paulina explores in this next extract:

*'I think our relationship (with her last boyfriend) was co-dependent and I think possibly, I mean now that you mention it, maybe some of the co-dependence came out of that because it is really hard I think to find people with maybe foreign, like, I think I clung onto him a lot because I felt like that was something we had in common, you know. And the kind of fear of it is quite hard to, I think, to find someone like that. So maybe I was stuck in the*

*relationship for longer than I should because I felt like he understood that part of me. I mean I think he used to say what he found hard about his parents is they'd sit at the dinner table and speak Estonian the whole time whilst he and his brothers were eating and he didn't understand as he was never taught it. So, I remember he got really upset once, and cried to me, like you know, a grown big guy about the fact his parents speak a different language. And I completely understood that because there'd been so many times when I'd heard my mum on the phone in Russian.'*

Where Paulina talks about co-dependency what she means is in searching for a relationship with a similar other she then found herself stuck in this relationship out of a fear of being alone, and a fear of not finding anyone else who could relate to her like her then partner could. This is the '*other being drawn to otherness*' from the earlier chapter, but where this is different is there is a clear acknowledgement of the fear and pain inherent in being outside of a relationship. This is emphasised by Paulina's story of her boyfriend and the painfulness of his not having been taught Estonian, a story which resonated with Paulina's own experience with her mother speaking Russian.

To explore further, this drive towards a co-dependent relationship is the cost for Paulina in being the other, and echoes the struggle to be with the loneliness of the outsider, hence the drive to be with others who she deems as similar, in their otherness. Yet conversely, alongside this also resides the fact that to hold a relationship the differences need to be pushed to one side, which as per Paulina's story fails to happen so she witnesses her partner's familial difference, which is difficult for her. This struggle to attach to the majority, which I have discussed already in this

section, is relevant here. For Paulina and my participants, their quest for connection, and therefore identity, led them to reject that which they viewed as too alien, and to co-dependently attach to that which they saw as similar in their separation from the absolute. Additionally, of this ambivalence, from a more post-colonial perspective, Said sees the exile of the intellectual one as punctuated by a profound sense of loss (Ashcroft & Ahluwalia, 1999). How this relates to my participant's experiences is that it is the inability to stay with that sense of loss that drives the other, Paulina, into a co-dependent relationship. Loss, it should also be stated, is also the loss of identity, status, and everything else presented and promised by the mere presence of the subject, a temptation the other knows that it cannot resist without great cost to itself.

For my participants who experienced this struggle to relate, this ambivalence also involves a cycle of rejection – acceptance – rejection, meaning the other here, because of its inability to connect with the absolute, is then left unable to trust, build or maintain relationships. When considering what it is to be the other, it is this aspect that also underlies Paulina's statement that she had dated other men from outside of England, and that she was drawn to slightly unusual men. There is a questing here for connection through the other others around her. Yet, this lack of a 'secure base' to use Bowlby's (1988) idea here means there is a stress and insecurity around relationships for all my participants shared in this section, hence for Paulina the need for a more co-dependent connection. The base here would have been provided by the absolute, the security being a sense of security in their identity and their role in relation to the absolute. Transpersonally, for the isolated other though, their role is questionable, and the security of their external, and therefore I will argue here internal, ground is more unstable meaning their relationships, just like those for some insecurely attached children, echo this same pattern of ambivalence.

## Summary

In this chapter I have presented the three sub-themes of the isolated other, their experiences being punctuated by a profound sense of separation from the otherness, tempered either by relations to their own creativity, or to other others in co-dependent relationships. The importance of this theme, is that it highlights the very different fashion within which the other is formed by the othering of the absolute, and how in the absence of an external focus of identity the other finds and forms a sense of self. The aim of this chapter has therefore been to conclude the presentation of my participant's experiences of what it means to be other via the lens of three different main themes, the submissive other, power and the other, and the isolated other. Each of these themes was then broken down into three more sub-themes, with the whole nine being explored in turn. This full phenomenological elucidation of the participant experiences evidences the idea that only by presenting a rounded collective picture of the experience of being the other can we then hope to understand just what the other is (Merleau-ponty, 1962, 2002; Moustakas, 1994). The first thing to note is that a phenomenological exploration of the experience as other has led myself already to a deepening in understanding of what it is to be the other or the outsider, in that there is an attempt to escape the other of being the outsider, or there is an embrace of the other with its paradox of potential and isolation from relationship. This already begins to separate us hugely from the rigidity of the political classifications of difference, and underlines my own assertion from within my methodology chapter that experiences as the other are universal. To add emphasis to my point, even though my participants have discussed the more politicized categories of difference (for example, Max, Paola and Paulina all discussed cultural difference) there were other differences presented in these chapters (age and generational, for example). Also, most participants presented more than one experience as the other, meaning that there are continued layers of difference and

various types of separation from the absolute. Together, these mean that we are constantly engaging in a battle to fit in, to separate, or to deal with our isolation (the three themes presented here) as the other, sometimes simultaneously, oftentimes dependent upon the numerous interactions we engage in on a regular basis. The problem with this so far is that although there is a presentation of just how my participants experienced being other, the deeper understanding of just what the Nothingness is has yet to fully emerge. The next two chapters, chapters seven and eight, will present my understanding of firstly what the unconscious experience of othering actually entails for the other and then the nothingness, and then secondly, the type(s) of non-dyadic relationships between the absolute, the other and the nothingness. Then chapter nine will present the themes that arise out of my extended engagement with understanding my own experience as the other, and my engagement with the nothingness.

All of these three together are important as they underline my belief that the Nothingness as an archetype that acts upon us at all times, and that only by combining phenomenology and the creativity common to the transpersonal can we then hope to realize its impact upon us (Rowan, 1993; Valle & Mohs, 2006). As previously stated in the methodology section, my hypothesis was that the nothingness is an archetype that resides in the collective unconscious. Therefore, the results from the more creative exercises that have been employed here will eventually access this level as discussed in the following chapters. These chapters will also provide more evidence of the importance of understanding difference within my project, *'Unity to Duality: A Transpersonal exploration of the meaning of human difference.'*

### **Chapter Seven: Unconscious experience as other**

The second aim of this research was to show that working creatively with tools common to transpersonal psychotherapy allows for a deeper exploration of the internalised experience of otherness. As in the review of the literature, this was derived from the combination Buberian/Jungian idea that instead of there being a simple I-Thou or I-It relationship, when the I becomes narcissistically self-serving the combination becomes I-IT (Thou) (Buber, 2010; Stevens, 1990). What this means is that the (Thou) here is in the shadow whilst the absolute uses the other as a mirror for itself. This chapter is therefore interested in creatively presenting the unconscious cost to the other of being (Thou).

I will therefore be presenting the data emergent from the second stage of the interviews, where the participants were invited to work with an experience as the other/(thou) within a visualization. The visualization allowed them to access the bodily memory of this experience, from which a symbolic image would be selected and later drawn. The use of the body was important here as within traditional bodywork therapy the body holds memory, and using symbolism and metaphor then acts as a bridge to bring this imagery into the conscious world where it can undergo analysis (Cox & Thielgaard, 1986; Lowen, 2013). As previously stated, this is a phenomenological research project where meaning and understanding of the phenomena being explored is derived from the participant experience of the phenomena. To therefore understand the drawings produced by my participants, and in order that this research remain within the phenomenological arena, it was important that the words of the participants underpin any meaning for the image itself. A double hermeneutic would then be applied by my adding my own meaning

to the drawings, connecting them to the words of my participants as well. This sits within the approach designed by Moustakas (1994) where the noema, or the unconscious experience is understood by utilizing the participant's own words, in order to ascertain just what an unconscious experience of being the other actually is, or the noemis. It also means this research sits within the relational paradigm explored by Merleau-Ponty (1962), where the relational experience of a phenomena brings with it meaning of the phenomena itself.

This double hermeneutic meant that I gained a thorough understanding of the images pertaining to the unconscious experience as the other. Out of the 25 participants, three main themes were unveiled. These were *Tension of Opposites*, where through the process of othering the participants were, if only temporarily, able to hold the space in-between where even though they are separate they are also a part of something, their singular experience of being other resulting in a dyadic splitting of what is simultaneously comfortable and uncomfortable. This illustrates that there is often a struggle for the other in maintaining a sense of authenticity when in relationship with the absolute, a tension driven by the absolute's anxiety. *Death*, is the next theme and involves an experience where the other strongly feels the urge to destroy that which makes them different out of an overwhelming drive to fit in and be a part of the absolute. Finally, there is *Separation*, which explores the participant's deep sadness at being the (thou), separated from the absolute and cast into the darkness of the nothingness. The next stage of this chapter will therefore be a presentation of my participant's experiences in relation to these three themes together with an analysis of what they mean. The first theme is therefore the Tension of Opposites.

### Tension of the Opposites

Simplistically put, the subject and the object are opposites that identify each other. This is a point that Hegel (1976) makes in his ‘Master/Slave’ argument where he argues that as much as the master needs the slave, the slave needs the master as well, with both needing the other in order to construct an identity. Using this as a metaphor in this instance, this desire for the subject then leads to a struggle for authenticity on the part of the other; meaning it both craves it and resists it in varying measures and at varying times. This therefore creates an unconscious tension of opposites within the other, with the other’s own psychic material being split off or destroyed. It is this part of our self, our potential, that I believe we see in the world in the form of projection, and which von Franz (1980) discusses when she explores the path of individuation as being one where individuals, and I will argue groups as well, need to recover their projections from where they lay.

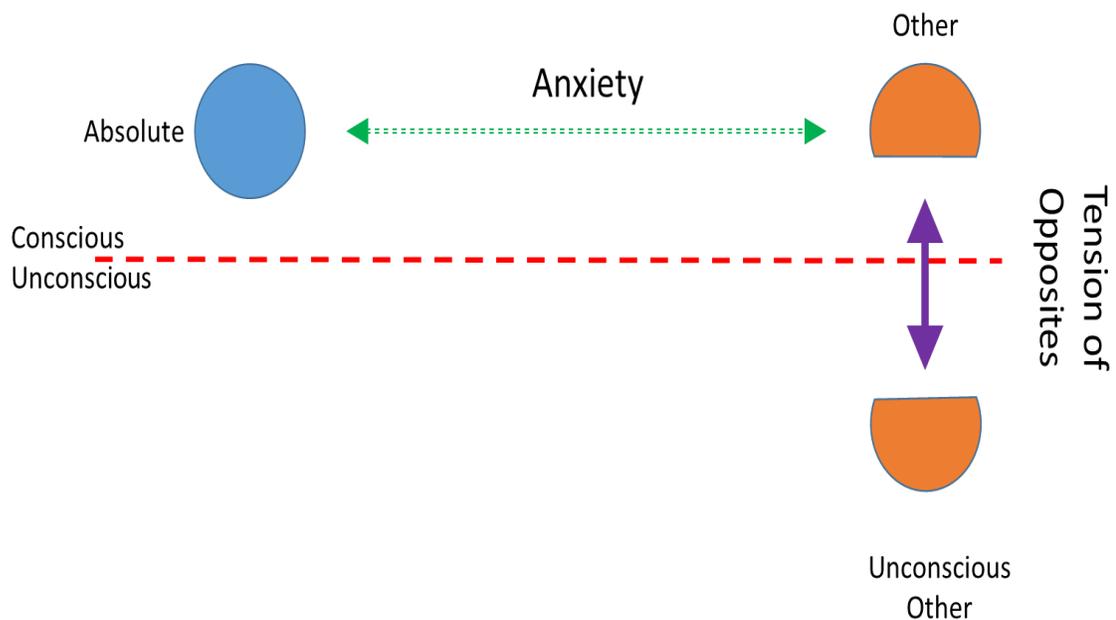


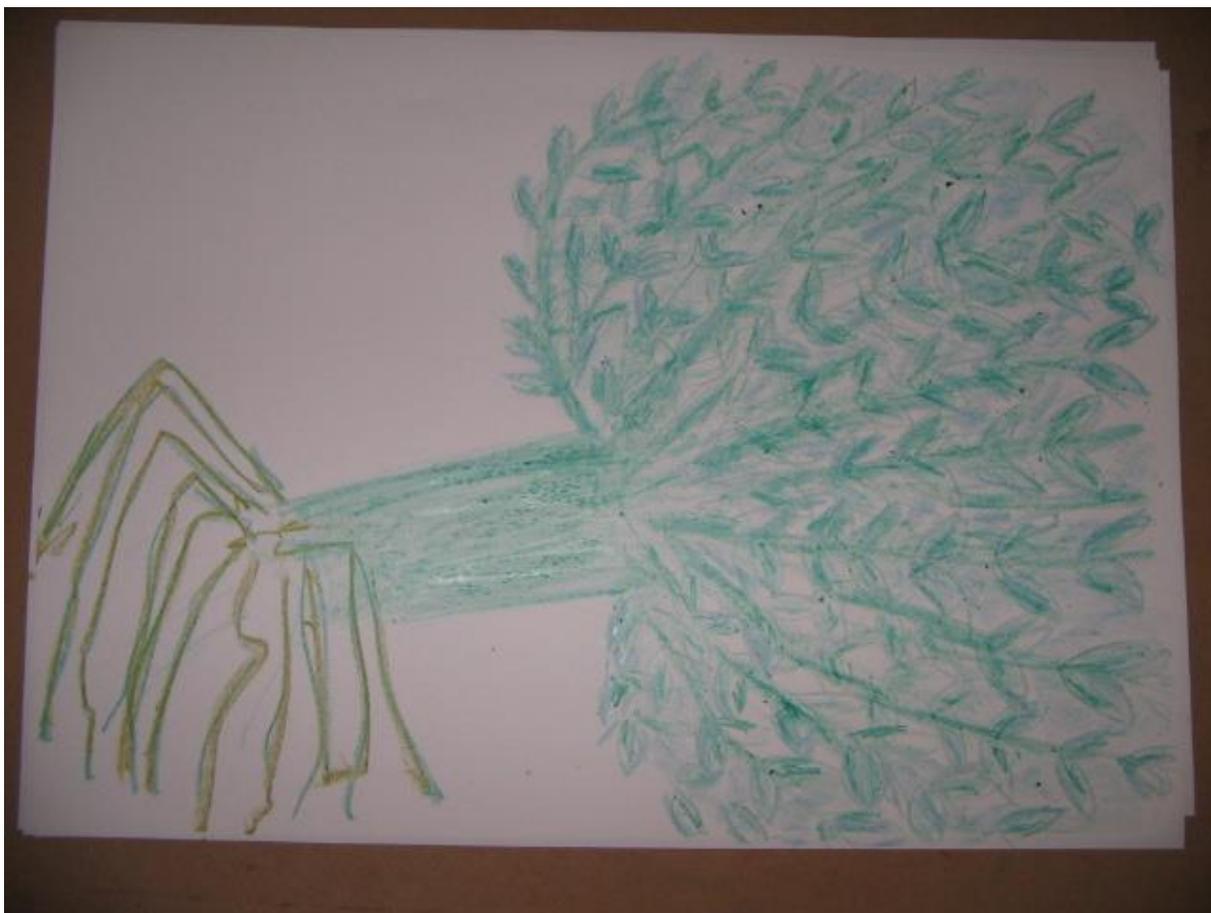
Figure 8: Tension of the Opposites

What figure 8, *the tension of opposites*, displays is that the tension is actually an internalized one within the other, a tension driven by its interaction with an anxious absolute. The inability to maintain a distance from the anxiety of the absolute results in a form of splitting within the other, and creates a tension between the IT-(Thou) positions. Christina's story explores this perfectly. The first of my participants, Christina was Jewish but went to a non-Jewish school in the UK. Her sense of difference stemmed from the fact that she was presently working in Toulouse in France with her husband where although she felt like an outsider she found she enjoyed the experience and was drawn to those she saw as different in France. Perhaps also prompted by the fact that I myself am black, my identity and therefore my own sense of otherness, being an increasingly important indicator as to why she felt able to express herself to me as indicated by the passage below, where she stated:

*'And it is interesting to me, because when I go there looking for difference, I look for the black taxi drivers, and I'll get in and I want to know about their lives in Toulouse, even though my experience of being there is that I'm not like these French people, so it is very alive for me that, actually. The rest is kind of difference that I know and I kind of live with. This is new.'*

Christina's words speak here of the tension between being the outsider and acknowledging her difference as she visits France, and her wanting to fit in with the black taxi drivers, as if there was a kind of affinity held in knowing more about them. For her there is a comfort in knowing about them, in engaging with her difference, as there is in working with myself, a black male, on this project. There is also a distancing of *'these French people'* held in her words as well which

is important to notice, as if the other here also stereotypes, Christina's words preceding her expression that she lives with difference all the time. Interestingly, there is an additional juxtaposition where given Christina's position as a white Western woman she still holds enough authority to ask of the black French other that he reveal himself to her, as if she is shifting from a position of otherness as an outsider in France to a position of power as a white Western woman. For her visualisation, Christina chose to work with an experience from one of her trips to France, where she would regularly meet a group of men at the airport who were travelling to France for work. About her internalised experience of being the only woman in the group she created an image of a felled tree.



*Figure 9: Christina's felled tree of life*

Discussing the qualities of the tree Christina said: ‘

*‘It is lush and green and full of leaves, you know, it is really yeah, it is very green, it is vibrant.....yeah, it is got real life. Life force to it, and um, there’s a desire in me to find creatures in it.’*

The interesting thing to notice about Christina’s words and the actual picture of the tree are that they contradict each other. For Christina, she presents the tree as being full of life, but whilst this holds true in her reality, the actual image of a felled tree means it is something that is dying or is dead. From a transpersonal perspective, it is this juxtaposition between life and death which sits strongest in this theme and holds the tension of the opposites of absolute and otherness. Christina then talked some more about the tree, recalling a link to her Jewish roots:

*‘It is kind of interesting that, I kind of realised that as I, cos I was just thinking about trees and I was thinking about the tree of life, kabbalah, I was thinking about I’d just been reading an article about Chagall, who was a Russian Jewish painter, who was who I feel a lot of connection with because he draws pictures of sort of Jewish (inaudible) and things like that, and spiritually it feels very alive to me. And I don’t know why that came to my mind, I suppose I was just thinking about that kind of thing really. And this really felt like the real tree of life thing. It felt full of life and I wanted, I didn’t see any, but I wanted there to be earth.’*

Christina's words here speak of the richness of her cultural heritage, through the paintings of Chagall, and her quest for something of the earth to plant her tree in. As a reminder, for Christina, her experience as the other emerged from a place where hers was one of few Jewish families in her community, so this spiritual idea of connection resonates with this. The inverted tree in the Kabbalistic tradition is a symbol of connection to the spiritual, something that Christina discusses here. The idea of connection itself though is also important, as for her the connection to the men around her, being part of their group as she travelled to France, seemed to be important. Christina though does not talk about the tree being on its side, and with her words on this occasion comes this researcher's recognition that it is her spiritual self that is seen to be dying when she is the other. So, with Christina being so strongly drawn to otherness it is hugely important to notice that the image, although presented with positive connotations has an underside that hints at something distorted, or disconnected from, within her.

My next example underlines this point beautifully in its imagery. Michael is a Trans Man. He was aware of his difference from an early age, being born the only girl in a family with four brothers. In a departure to my other participants, he chose to work with a dream he had had of his experience as the other. Due to space, a section of the dream only is presented below:

*M: then I see him (an unnamed man who approaches him), and he has brown hair, a beard, he is probably in his thirties. I notice bare feet sandals, I look at mine, and I notice we're dressed the same sort of way. And he seems to be an acquaintance. Feels like an acquaintance, someone I've met before, but I don't necessarily know very well. But everything feels friendly. And I start talking and I don't know how*

*the conversation begins but there, it seems to be quite friendly, casual, and then I start saying something to him about what I understand about love and I know this is of a spiritual kind but then when I'm dreaming it, yes, this is what I understand about love, and living your life in a loving way. Being guided by love. And he is listening but then it is a very sort of echo-y place and our voices carry, and other people are hearing the voices and coming towards, from the shadows, and they seem to be coming from the right. Definitely.*

*DT: so as they approach you, what's that like for you? These shadowy people coming out of the shadows.*

*M: I'm not sure, I can feel a sort of hesitancy in me, because this is just a one to one conversation. But I'm aware they've come to listen, so maybe that's, that feels to be when I become more aware of the impact of what I'm saying. That what I'm saying is actually quite challenging, and yeah, they're sort of just quite close now. Just standing listening, they're not saying anything and very quickly I get a sense of discomfort, tension, in them, but also in me because of feelings in them.*

Michael's words speak about the experience of being a part of a group and being heard by someone he knows. He feels comfortable in their presence. Yet, when others overhear him and start to approach he becomes nervous. A couple of things then seem to happen for Michael. Firstly, he moves from the position of the absolute in a one to one situation, to one of the other when there is a group. There is an intimacy in the one to one connection that Michael can contain and be with, yet when this intimacy increases he becomes anxious. Secondly, the rising tension in the group leads to him censoring himself. Here we begin to see the delicate and difficult interplay between

the subject and the other and then the unconscious other. To explore this in more depth, what this means is that othering is an awareness of the discomfort arising within the absolute, together with an assumption that the other is the cause of that anxiety. The cost of taking responsibility for the anxiety within the absolute then becomes the change in authenticity of the other. So, in a separation from Christina, Michael is expressing that he is more comfortable being an outsider in a smaller group of two than he is being a part of the larger whole.



*Figure 10: Michael's Curly Wurly and Scarab Beetle*

Michael presented two images for his experiences within the dream, presented previously as Figure 10; the first was a more colourful image to represent his experience of being heard by the group, whilst the second emerged out of his experience towards the end where he felt more agitation. In our discussion of the two images that emerged out of his visualisation he described them as follows:

*'(Of the Curly Wurly) Chewey and it is soft, but that where it is not like a banana is that it is glowie and got a very beautiful luminescence. Very glowie, beautiful colour, pale yellow, becoming more of a goldie yellow, and its deep pinkie maroon edging, where it curls, scallopy. I think, I'm not sure the technical term, in and out curly wurly business at the top.'*

Of the experience of the second image, the Scarab Beetle, he stated the following:

*'There's something, there's a kind of a dull energy about it, rather than a real glowie thing that I had with the flower, something dull. Restricting. Containing. Imprisoning. But, but the image of the wings somehow suggests that it could be transformed. But it is not a very, it is not a very comfortable feeling.'*

The contrasting images express Michael's contrasting experiences of being the other, from the colourful luminescence of the comfort of being with just one friend, to the shadowy emotional discomfort of the scarab beetle. His discomfort here is embodied, as if he has taken this on from the group before him. This difference even extends to how Michael speaks of both images, his

words being flowing and expressive when discussing the first image, and then changing to something more staccato and fearful perhaps in his discussion of the beetle. The process of othering therefore extends to a struggle to be authentic in the face of the group of anxious external absolutes. It should be stated that the image of being part of the group was represented by a 'curly wurly' type of shape, and was situated around the heart. There was a freedom attached to this image. The tension in the dream came out as the Scarab beetle image was located around the solar plexus, and was an image Michael found particularly difficult to draw finding the first image far more comfortable to complete.

What is important about these images is again there is a tension that arises within the body, of belonging versus the anxiety his mere presence provokes within the absolute. Again, the choice of colours is important, but this time Michael has gone for reds and greens to emphasise his comfort at being a part of a group, and the tone black to display his discomfort of wanting to get away from the group. The experience here, although opposite to that presented by Yvette regarding where he felt most comfortable, holds obvious similarities in the choice of colours. The vibrancy of the colours versus the simplicity of the tone is I will argue here a metaphorical depiction of the tension between the absolute and the other. Exploring this, Praglin's paper on Buber and Winnicott states, 'Buber first calls forth the concept of *'das Zwischenmenschliche'*, which he later refines to mean the dialogical realm, the world of relatedness between persons,' (2006, p. 2). What they both fail to recognise, as presented by my participants here, is that this interplay between absolute and other is an intrapsychic, or intrapersonal, experience as well interpersonal one. The importance of this cannot be over stated here. The participants presented here in their varying means have, because of their experience as the other, been left with a split between the sense of themselves that desires

to fit in, and what is left when they do. Jung (1963) follows this idea via his unio-mentalis in alchemy where there is a re-union between the mind and the body, his idea being that for growth to occur one has to be made aware of the psychological split within oneself. Therefore, what my research reveals is that the process of interpersonal othering creates an intrapersonal split that leaves the mind separate from the body, and therefore the egoic self in a state of psychological distress. The opposite here in these stories is the participant as other, as that which sits outside of group, and in each of these stories there is an attempt by the participant to be part of the absolute to repair this split. The results of this attempt as we can see are often varied, and the unconscious experience of this, be it positive or negative, then sits within the same part of the heart centre, or according to Govinda (cited in Peters, 1990) from a transpersonal perspective is representative of the union of opposites, the head and the heart. For example, Michael's attempts to connect with the group led to the 'curly wurly' image, which was more colourful, whilst in his separation he was left with the dark tones of the scarab beetle. But this leaves one final question. What happens when the experience of being the other, and the images generated, no longer hold the tension of the opposites as presented here? Given the experiences of life and death and authenticity and inauthenticity presented here, it would make sense that for some participants it would be difficult to hold this battle between such powerful opposing forces. The next two sections will therefore consider what happens when this tension breaks down.

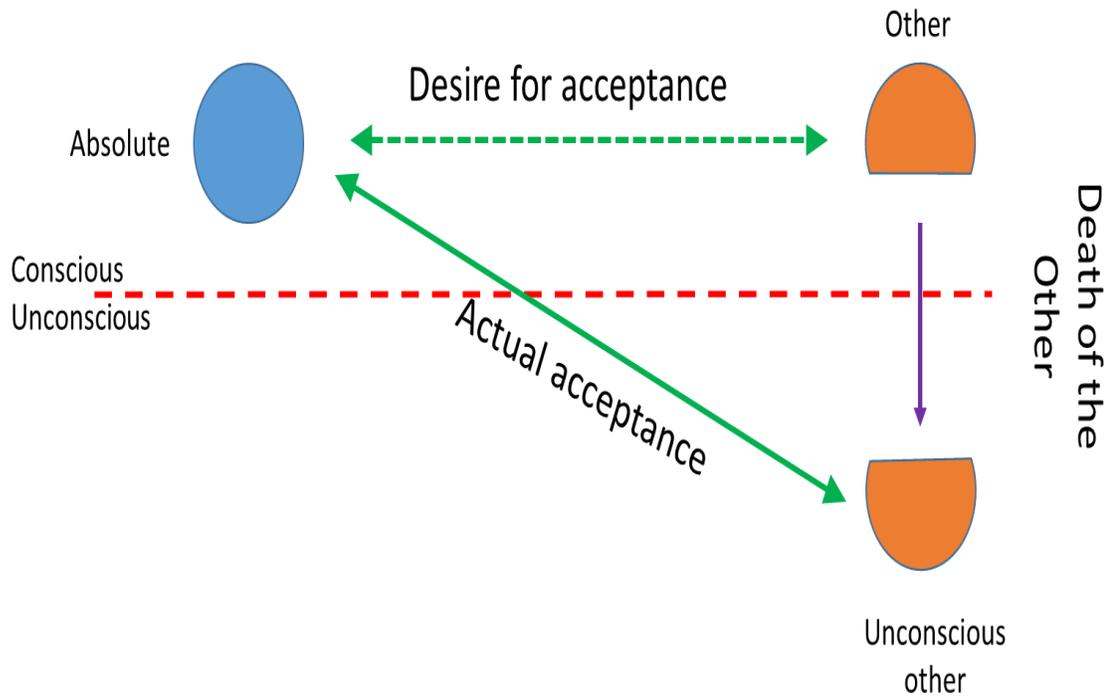
**Death**

Figure 11: Death of the unconscious other

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. For the participants in this section though, the other struggles to be seen by the absolute except through the gaze of its own specialness, and this creates a conflict different to the first theme, the *tension of the opposites*. Figure 11, *the death of the unconscious other*, 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 reminded 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. There is no option to fit in with the majority, as per the theme *tension of the opposites*, there is only Carl being encouraged via his unique gift. 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:



Figure 12: Carl's woman crossing the Styx

*'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 12, 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 (E. 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. For myself, 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 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.

The idea of the other destroying that which makes them separate continues with my next participant, Alejandra. Born and raised in Venezuela as part of a small Jewish community there, she was educated at a non-Jewish school. For the purpose of this exercise, she chose an experience which emerged out of a family trip to Argentina. Recalling her time there she stated:

*'I don't know if you remember, it was quite a few, probably 15 years ago, I was visiting Buenos Aires and there was this bomb in a Jewish centre which was in a very central place so the whole building came down and lots of people died, and people who worked there and who were visiting there, and also people from all the shops as it was very commercial. Jewish commercial, so that was a big thing. And I remember I was in a taxi going somewhere and a guy was talking about that, and he made a comment something like, what was it he said? "The bomb killed a lot of Jewish people." In a way, I can't remember how he said it, but in the way he said it he made a difference between Jewish people and*

*Argentinian people. Like Jewish people are not Argentinian. And that really enraged me and I did say something like "Jewish people are also Argentinian!" It is not a separate thing like catholic and not Argentinian. And that was, but I felt I should have said something more, I just made a comment then I shut up. And then I felt bad about it,*

She continued:

*'It was excluding Jewish people from being, if you're Jewish your Jewish, it was like saying why don't you go and live in Israel. A bit like saying why don't all catholic people go live in the Vatican.'*

Alejandra's words speak here of her resistance to being othered. Although not Argentinian, there is strength in her words as she resists the prejudice held in the words of the taxi driver that Argentinians cannot be Jewish. Yet, also interestingly, her expression to the driver also leads to her censoring herself, and then to her feeling bad about even speaking up in the first place. What this speaks of is that the other gets angry when they are othered, perhaps more obviously in Alejandra's experience but still obvious in Carls' with the aggressive destruction of his work. In both cases, there is a suppression of this anger, and almost an acceptance of the position of the other. Returning to Alejandra story, there is a strength apparent in her words. Already coming from a small community this experience clearly impacted upon her, both of the bombing she was present in Argentina for and the prejudice of the taxi driver. On working with the visualisation of the experience, Alejandra also experience a sensation in her throat area, with her ambivalence about speaking up apparent in the following interesting memory:

*Alej: well I remember this in a film. I couldn't watch. I had to switch it off after the scene. Have you seen the Pianist?*

*DT: I haven't, but I know of the movie*

*Alej: Well it is in the film. It is this family, they're in the house on the top floor, and the SS uniform and people (inaudible) and it was so they so they knock and they open and they found these people there and they start treating people badly. There is a grandfather in a wheelchair and they just literally throw him out of the window in the winter.*

*DT: And that's the image that comes up, them throwing him out of the window.*

*Alej: A totally defenceless person.*

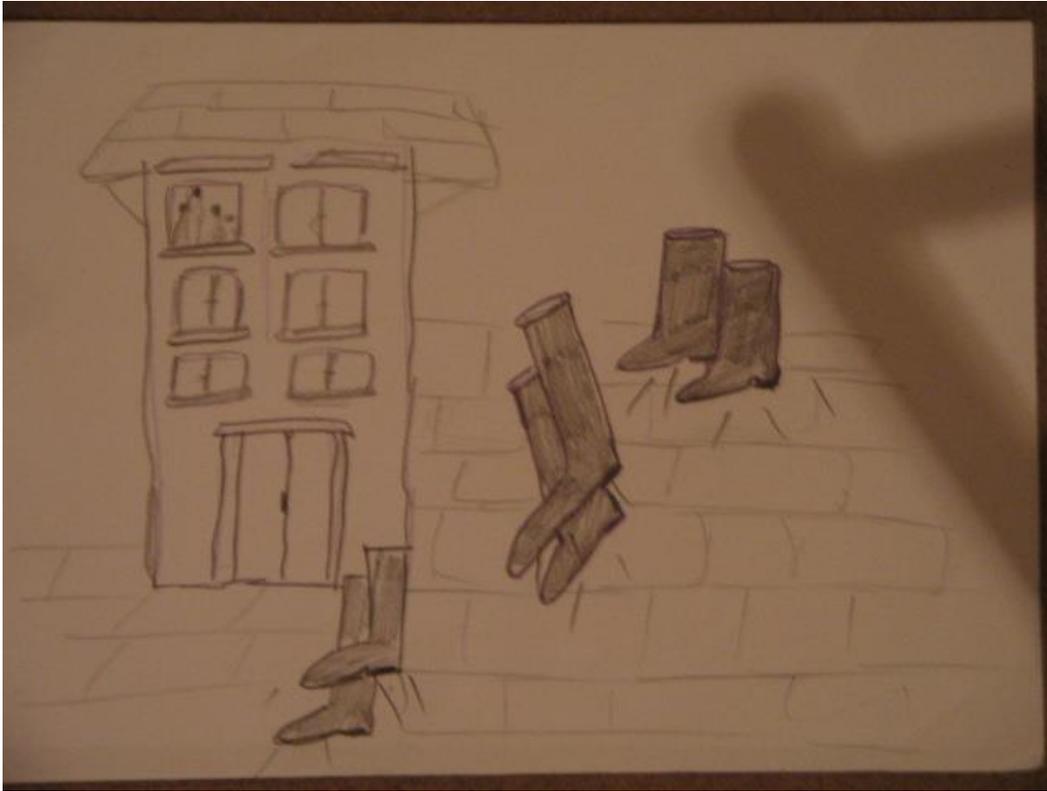
*DT: how are you feeling as you talk about this? It is quite a graphic sort of image.*

*Alej: I'm just, it makes me tearful as I couldn't watch the film after that. I couldn't stand it.*

*DT: how are you feeling now?*

*Alej: sad.*

Within this passage, Alejandra talks of the same annihilation she witnessed in Argentina, and also that she experienced in the back of the taxi cab. Her ambivalence is also apparent here in the struggle to both watch and avoid the harrowing scenes held in the film, her rejecting sitting and watching the film with her partner matching her inability to speak up. Alejandra presented this experience in the image below.



*Figure 13: Alejandra's disabled Jewish man being thrown out of the window*

As one can see from the image and the words combined, the sense of sadness and death also hang heavy over this experience for Alejandra. In only partially speaking up for her culture in the taxi she has unconsciously internalised the ‘murder’ of her Jewish sense of self. This is something that both Carl and Alejandra’s examples have in common, this unconscious desire to destroy that which makes them separate or other. There is also a difficulty in holding the tension of the opposites presented in the first theme, which sits closer to the heart, and the further my participants moved from their centre the more the unconscious desire to fit in and destroy that which made them separate arose within them.

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 in this context 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 images here speak 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 means the murdering of the that which makes one different, plunging it into the nothingness of not existing. From an existential social constructionist perspective, 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 Alejandra it arose out of the cultural idea that it was downright dangerous and scary to be Jewish; for Carl that being feminine and creative was not acceptable. In the suppression of this 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. The unconscious experience of othering is therefore a very challenging one for these participants, but differently to those who were able to maintain the tension of the opposites in that the anger at, and attempted suppression of, their otherness has become a key component within their struggle as other. The next theme though considers the impact of othering and its subsequent separation from another perspective altogether, through images which speak of the experience of separation apparent in being the other.

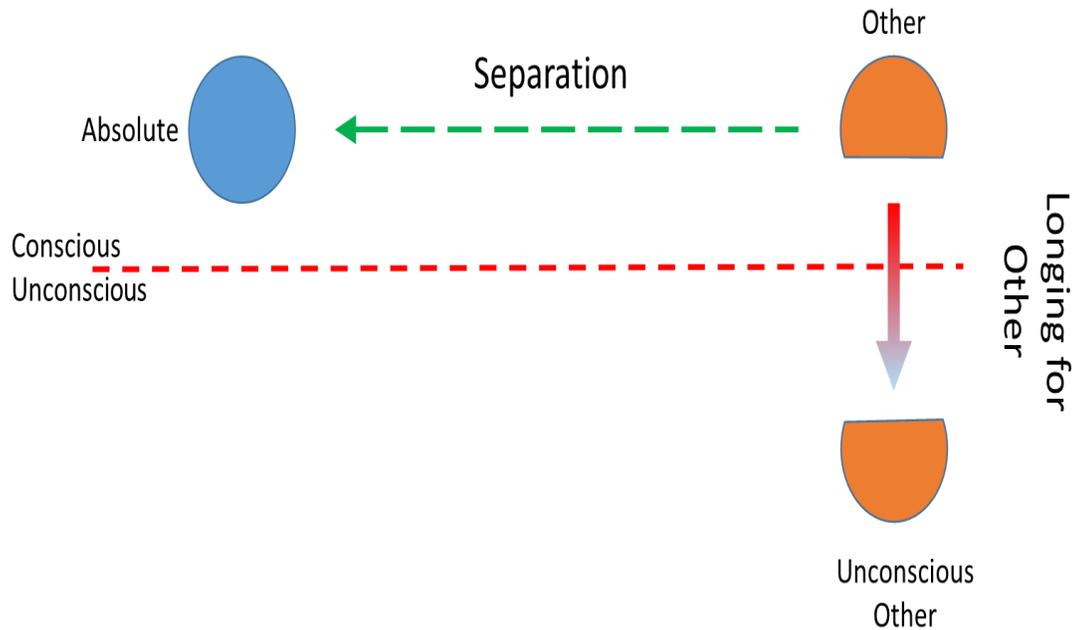
**Separation from potential**

Figure 14: Separation from potential

The main themes to arise from the images in this section encompass the theme of *separation from potential*, as presented in figure 14. The separation here is a more abstract one than in the last theme, death, where there were often quite violent moments of exclusion for the participants. From a Hindu perspective, this theme echoes the idea that the separation from the absolute and one's own unconscious potential leaves one quite literally feeling dead (Gandhi, 1976). Here the sense of othering is a subtle and gradual process, holding within it a growing sense of separation both from the absolute and themselves. The potential here for my participants is that which they long for as reflected back at them by the absolute, a distant longing prompted by their actual exclusion. What separation from potential ultimately means though is the participants are separated from an aspect of themselves that is seen as others, and which hold

within it the key to their authenticity. The separation also leads these participants to sit in the space of nothingness where they are isolated and one their own in an endless space. What the stories and images will therefore show is just how this separation and splitting occurs and the painful ramifications of this for the other. To illustrate this further the story of my participant Gorge is important here. Gorge, who was originally from Colombia, moved to London to work as a scientist. The last born of 6 children, as the names of his grandparents were taken by his siblings, he was given the name of a type of car. He was also raised by his grandparents, whilst his other siblings stayed with the parents. For Gorge, his choice for the visualisation centred around the following experience of being the outsider:

*“I don’t know if this is relevant, in terms of an introspective. Whenever I say listen to a song or I see something that I found it very unusual, very threatening, very out of the box, I get very excited and I go to it because ‘wow!’ and then don’t see the reaction. That’s very, so it is very me.”*

For Gorge, his experience of being different to his siblings was apparent from the moment he was named. Here though he speaks of the importance of his being other, and his draw to otherness. He speaks of being drawn to unusualness, even if what was unusual could also be seen as slightly threatening. It is as if he is most at home being the other. Yet, although these statements offer simple expressions of his experience as other, in working with the memory of this he came up with the following, far more dramatic, image about which he said:



Figure 15: Gorge outside the gates

*It is like, it looks like a spherical glowing from the middle shape, the yellow light. And I'm on the dark side, on the left, and I can see my face and part of my body from the reflection, from the lights going on in myself. It reminds me of one of these paintings from an artist I can't remember. Everything seems to be life around the light. I'm curious. Ok. Now, I've moved behind the gate or sort of jail and the light has become the moon behind iron bars. Iron bars, I'm behind holding them, and the moon is just in front of me. Now I'm nostalgic, melancholic, it is cloudy. It is peaceful but at the same time it is very nostalgic. Somehow, I don't feel trapped. I'm holding onto them, and I don't feel trapped behind them. I'm wearing a hat, a hat and a raincoat. Strange. I'm seeing myself, I mean I'm behind myself, and I see myself holding onto these bars looking at the moon. It is all*

*white and black. The yellow has gone now, it is just white and black. It is a deep black and very I would say steeped in white.'*

Gorge's speak of his being in darkness with the light beyond and out of reach. There is a light and dark split here accompanied by Gorge's feelings of melancholia, nostalgia and longing. He is holding onto the gates, looking inwards at the large building, standing in the darkness whilst the sun is on the other side of the barrier. The sense of nostalgia suggests that Gorge has been here before as if knowing he belongs on the other side of the fence. The sense of hope is important here as it brings with it a type of longing for what lies beyond the gate; the house, the sunlight. Also important is the gate and his separation from the village' that lies beyond. There is a calling to belong verses his sense of separateness. Home, family and hope, all belong on the other side of the gate. Whereas he is cast into the darkness of separation as the other. Whilst this disconnect is more obvious because of the presence of the gate than say with the words some other participants have used, there is a longing here for Gorge, a melancholy built into his imagery. He is cast in shadow here, his being drawn as black acting as testimony to this, whilst there is a sun in the sky beyond.

The felt sense of being other therefore brings with it a heightened awareness of separateness from one's own potential, and his position in the darkness of the nothingness. The pain of separateness is then metaphorically presented as a separateness from home for example, as per Gorge's example. This sense of separateness and longing is also key to Barbara's story. Participant Barbara came from a small Jewish community living in Wales, her sense of being an

outsider being especially heightened as she attended a Christian school. Offering an example from her time there Barbara stated:

*'It was a girl's school. Because I was Jewish, we were told we weren't allowed to take part in assembly, so at some point in assembly the deputy head said, 'would the Jewesses assemble at the back.' The Jewesses would leave, and it is the only time I've ever heard that term. So, we were sent outside just to sit and chat and then we were invited back in for the rest, so there was sort of respect that we didn't have to take part in service, in the religious Christian part, and then we were brought back in.'*

Although Barbara here talks of being labelled as other by the headmistress it is presented as if the headmistress' actions were from a place of respect for her as the other. The labelling of the other here as 'Jewesses' though could be seen as problematic in particular as this is a term which Barbara herself had never even heard of, leaving her confused. The term itself though is a pejorative one and although seemingly delivered with a sense that the teacher is doing her a service, holds the weight of disdain. It is a horrible term, one designed to put down the other, distancing them from the majority. This belittling though apparent to myself seems to have been missed by Barbara, suggesting that this experience had become normalised. Also apparent is that even with the supposed respect of the headmistress Barbara acknowledges her separation led to herself and the other girls being left to their own devices where they would just talk amongst themselves. This is also problematic as the other here is shown a type of pseudo-respect yet is also abandoned. So, whilst not necessarily a challenging experience, Barbara's example highlights the separation (dis)respectfully engineered by her school in order to respect her religion. For the visualisation

though Barbara chose to work with a more challenging memory from her time at the school, stating:

*'I was about 11 or 12 and I was at a disco, my first disco, I borrowed my sister's bright red yellow and black platform shoes, they weren't my size as she had bigger feet than I had, but I had to wear something fashionable. So, I wore these shoes, felt really uncomfortable in them, and got to the disco, and somebody I didn't know very well, but she was in my class at school, she offered me a cigarette. So, there I was smoking at 11 or 12 and feeling really uncomfortable, walking to and fro, trying to find people to talk to I think, or find a place to stand, and one of the other girls who I didn't know said to this friend who I was with 'if your friend walks past again, I'm going to hit her.' As I was sort of walking opposite uncomfortably, very self-consciously, and I can remember again feeling really shamed and upset, and different.'*

Barbara here talks about fitting in and being seen as if this is a challenging experience for her. The efforts she therefore makes only served in making her an object in the eyes of the other girl and her peers who in their aggressive commenting on her presence serve to highlight Barbara's own discomfort at being seen. There is also a sense that she was being seen, and this was not acceptable for her peers, hence the threat to hit her and the feelings of shame and separateness exacerbated by their reaction to her. Working with this memory, the visualisation though brought up an image for her of a 'pregnancy ball' which was located in her lower stomach. As she said of the ball,

*'it is almost like pregnancy, and there is a tightness in here, and there's I think this ball, this big ball. It sort of does cover that area too, a big ball of sadness.'*



*Figure 16: Barbara's pregnancy ball of potential*

Her description of the ball, presented as figure 16, continues with;

*'The pregnancy ball is like a sort of universe, it is almost like a globe, a soft globe, and because of the sort of association with pregnancy I think my mind has dissociated because*

*also not having children and trying to but not succeeding that's part of my more recent life so that's sort of taking me to a place that's more problematic.'*

These words speak of another type of separation for Barbara, that of her not being a mother and the desire for that experience. This together with her trying to fit in with her peers at school highlights the other's quest for inclusion together with the pain of exclusion. The dissociation mentioned here was not a real one, and the co-researcher was in no danger at any time. What is important to recognise though is in connecting with the experience of othering Barbara has immediately connected and then disconnected from difficult memories and feelings partly associated with them. In discussing the image further Barbara continued by describing it thusly:

*'It is heavy, its mottled and rich, its soft, it is a sort of potential, I think the fact it is a pregnancy means that it is a potential.'*

The potential contained in Barbara's ball is clear here, clear in her use of the words 'potential' and 'pregnancy' there is a desire to 'give birth' to something through her experience as an outsider. But this ball is tinged with sadness in her story as it reminded her of other ways in which Barbara sees herself as different, like her desire to be a mother, something hinted at in the story but not explored any further. Symbolically though this symbol holds powerful resonance. Washburn speaks of ambivalence of a child's separation-individuation process thusly where he states 'the intensity of this ambivalence, as we have seen, is sufficient to split the child's world in two. It splits the primary object representation, the Great Mother, into two seemingly independent and mutually exclusive realities: the Good mother and the Terrible mother' (1995, p. 93). He then

goes on to discuss where the Good/Bad child split common to Kleinian therapy emerges at this point, but where this quote is important is it highlights for the other the early life nature of this unconscious split, where the mother, or in this case the potential for individuation, is lost during a process of othering.

Within psychoanalysis the idea of primal repression is also important here. A Freudian concept, Kristeva viewed this as a means for a society to separate itself from aspects deemed to be unsavoury (Kristeva, 1982). Yet, contrasting this to a more transpersonal perspective Washburn argued that primal repression involved the separation of the ego from one's own potential (Washburn, 1995). Of course there are positives and negatives to this experience, but of the negatives Washburn expressed that 'the primary negative consequence of primal repression is that in protecting the ego from nonegoic and interpersonal influences it also closes the ego to these influences and thereby disconnects the ego from the original bases of its being' (1995, p. 20). Washburn's words here explore how the other copes with being the other, with their ego shutting them off from any access to their intrapersonal and interpersonal potential. Both Barbara and Gorge's experiences were symptomatic of this separation from potential driven by this process of othering. For Barbara, her potential was held internally as a 'pregnancy ball', whilst for Gorge this was more 'external' in his separation from the lights of the big house opposite him. Also, the potential in both pictures was colourful and rich, whilst Gorge was cast in tones and shadow and Barbara was absent from her picture altogether. There is a living in nothingness for these participants, meaning they are seen as less than and the language to denigrate is just subtle enough to almost avoid detection as such. This is different to the theme '*death*' in that for those participants there was an attempt to force that which made them different into the shadow. Here,

the participants cast themselves into shadow; they are not seen (hence Barbara's total absence), or are separated and hidden in the darkness away from the light.

Understanding both experiences from a Zen Buddhist perspective is helpful here. Carter (2013) in discussing Nishitani Keiji's work on the other from a Zen Buddhist perspective saw that there was a constant flow between the absolute and the separate, following this by stating that the 'I is the Thou and the Thou is the I. Nishitani states that they have become 'non-differentiated' resulting in genuine compassion and revealing the true meaning of loving another as oneself' (2013, p. 121). Where his work is important here is that there is no flow from the separate to the other. The nothingness is invisible, whose only response to the presence of the other and the absolute beyond is one of longing. Ultimately, in the examples presented under this theme the other recognises its separation from its own potential in experiences where it longs for connection.

### Summary

This second stage of the research considered the relationship between the IT(Thou) of my combined Buberian/Jungian approach to understanding the nature and experience of being the other from when the I has become self-serving. Although there is still a relationship here, in his paper discussing patterns of otherness, Coelho Jr and Figueiredo (2003) discuss the desire for union based upon a shared religious reality, an idea that even though they talk about the idea of intersubjectivity, does not really explore just what this actually is. Using this metaphorically here, what my research has shown is the difficulties inherent in maintaining an intersubjective space between absolute and other, yet also how essential it can be for personal growth. From witnessing the tension, to exploring how a means of denying this intersubjective space for the other can involve a destroying of that which makes the other unique, to the sadness and the longing that can come from being rooted within one's nothingness, all of these means of exploring our ability to sit within or, on the whole, reject this ongoing tension have been presented by my participants.

The second important aspect is to notice that the separation from the other is not just an interpersonal experience, it is also an intrapersonal one as well. What this means is that for Carl and those participants with this unconscious drive to kill their otherness, that this was based around an interpersonal need to be a part of the group. Whilst for Gorge and the participants theirs was an intrapersonal separation from a deeper potential. The most important examples though are presented by those participants who were able to maintain the tension of the opposites, their desire to be a part of the group held in direct opposition to the pain or desire to be apart and alone. This is the very human tension apparent in the work of Nishida (1989) and Washburn (1995) wherein they suggest that ultimately any human connection to God is reached through the tension of the

opposites, whilst only God itself is simultaneously everything and nothing. What my research also presents though is how important it is to maintain this tension, otherwise there is a type of unconscious splitting which results in the ‘killing off’ or separation from the aspect of the self that is deemed different.

What this chapter ultimately shows is the difficult unconscious experience of being the other with the distancing of levels of the self that this entails. This chapter also shows that only by exploring these experiences as the other more widely do we begin to arrive at as thorough a composite picture as presented here. On a more practical level, this helps to highlight the great psychological pain we as society place the other under in any process of othering. Together with the other’s experience of separation as akin to a type of death, my research then starts to underline some of the invaluable work undertaken in the Caribbean where a link between the stress of internalised racism and obesity and diabetes was established (Butler et al., 2002; Tull et al., 1999). It is an incredibly painful experience to be the outsider, one that if understood more fully would probably prompt many to work harder at creating ways for greater inclusivity of others. Where my research does differ though is in taking a direct look through the eyes of the other at the emotional impact of being the other through creativity and the symbolic world, work that has not been done previously. It is this understanding of the experience of the other through creativity which will be explored further in the next chapter, which will discuss the themes to emerge out of the sand tray section of my interviews.

### **Chapter Eight: Symbolic experience as other**

Winnicott (1969) spoke about the importance of the psychoanalyst being able to hold the projections of the client, with projections being the unprocessed unconscious psychic material of the client. When correctly contained, the ability to hold and reflect these projections back to the client in manageable form offered clients the chance reintegration and individuation, an idea also posited from a Jungian perspective by von Franz (1980) who saw the other as often holding the projections of the majority. My research aim for this section of the research involved creatively investigating the connection the other has with the majority; meaning what is it that brings the other into relationship and holds it there. In this chapter, therefore, the aim was to consider the projections of the other, and how these projections maintain, or not, their position as the other in relation to the absolute. In a fashion the idea here is to underline some of the ideas raised Fanon and Hegel (Villet, 2011), who both reasoned that the Master/Slave dialectic was a mutual one, and that as much as the master needed the slave in order to affirm his identity, so to equally did the slave need the master. My idea here though is that this is not always correct, and that whilst on occasion the signified creates its own signifier to maintain its own false sense of self, alternatively, the other sees within the subject the means of its own transformation.

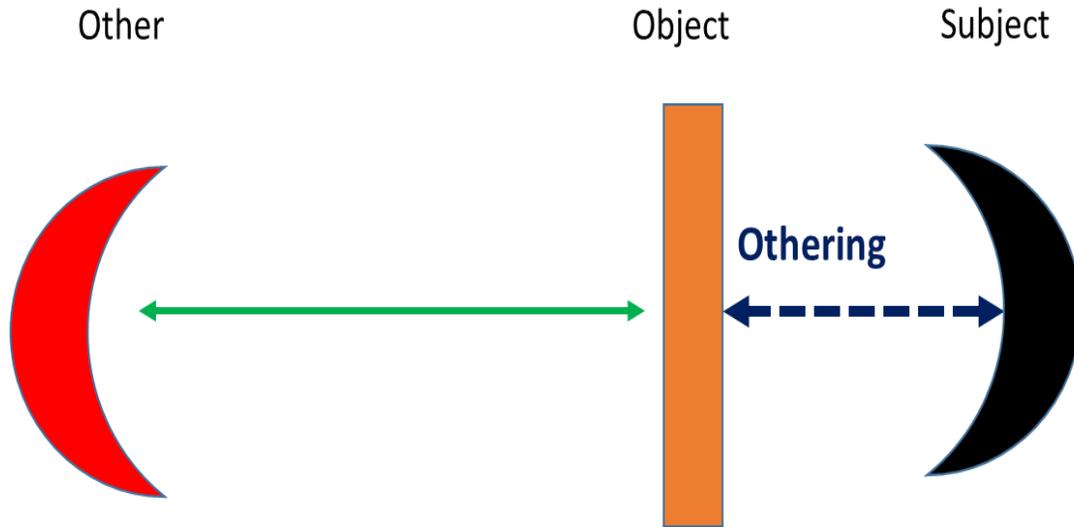


Figure 17: Othering the absolute

The exercise was then constructed to use myself as the signifier as outlined in figure 17, *othering the absolute*, above. The meaning behind this was because my participants, in volunteering to take part in this research project, had done so by self-identifying as other, thereby making myself the absolute. So, working with the sand tray technique would therefore bring to the surface the unconscious material that ties the other to the subject. This would then allow me to uncover both the projections the other has onto the signifier, and also uncover some of the reasoning behind the pull of the other towards the signifier.

Homeyer and Sweeney (2011) offer an interesting perspective on sand play therapy, seeing it as an expressive and projective mode of psychotherapy involving the unfolding of intra- and inter-personal issues through the use of specific sand play materials as a nonverbal medium of communication. Whereas Bradway, Chambers and Chara (n.d.) in a review of a book on sand play work talk of this intra/inter-personal relationship being formed out of the early life separation between mother and child. From a transpersonal perspective though, what the other perspectives

neglect is the separation from God as posited in the works of Washburn (1995), where he talks of the levels of splitting that the self has to undergo in its coming into the world. In his work, Washburn explores the many layers of splitting the soul must undergo to form an unconscious identity, his argument being that this formation leads to aspects of the self which are then cast into the unconscious. Most important here though are the works of Rowan (2011) and Hermans (2014) and their ideas centring around the dialogical self, where the unconscious sub-personalities within us all when encouraged to relate to each other, may then promote reintegration and reunion. Sand play therefore proved to be the perfect vehicle to uncover this unconscious material and has allowed me to identify these initial splits in order for future reintegration and spiritual growth (the results of which will be explored further in chapter 9's thematic explication of my heuristic research).

But what were the other's projections onto myself in this exercise? Through a thorough analysis of the data from the sand trays, three main themes arose from this section of the interviews. Firstly, that the *Other fixes its identity in relation to the absolute*; secondly, *the other uses the absolute as a means of inspiration and growth*; and lastly when the Other was encouraged to withdraw its projections the Other either '*accepted the presence of the absolute*' or was '*fearful and rejecting of the absolute*'. This chapter will therefore cover each of these in turn using the words and sand plays created by my participants to add emphasis to my ideas.

**Other fixes its identity in relationship to the Absolute**

In his paper on the other, Frosh (2002) talks about the signifier being aware of the object but even though this may at times be a concern this is secondary to its own needs, his point being centred around the signifiers primary need that it finds its identity through the mirrored gaze of other. What he does not do is really try to understand just what it might be that the other wants, instead preferring to observe and understand the other from a distance, as there is as much of a need for the other to find an identity as there is for the signifier. Where my research differs greatly from other approaches is in its continued consideration of the perspective of the other itself; for example, to reflect back Frosh's point, what does it want from the signifier? What has been most important in my use of sand play to understand the other is that it has assisted me in understanding the nature of the other-signifier relationship. For example, the first important thing to notice under this theme is my awareness that othering in this instance involves the unconscious suppression of one's own signifier. This signifier is then projected out onto a supposed signifier/subject in order to now unconsciously maintain the slave position within the dialectic Fanon (1959) talks of. An excellent first example of this emerged out of Daniel's interview. A middle-aged man, he was bullied as a child both at school and at his local church group for being gay. Originally from Portugal, another of his differences was that he often did not find it easy to relate to other gay men. For the sand play exercise, Daniel chose a bear to represent me, a shaman for himself and a hippo for our relationship. The sand play is presented as figure 17 below.

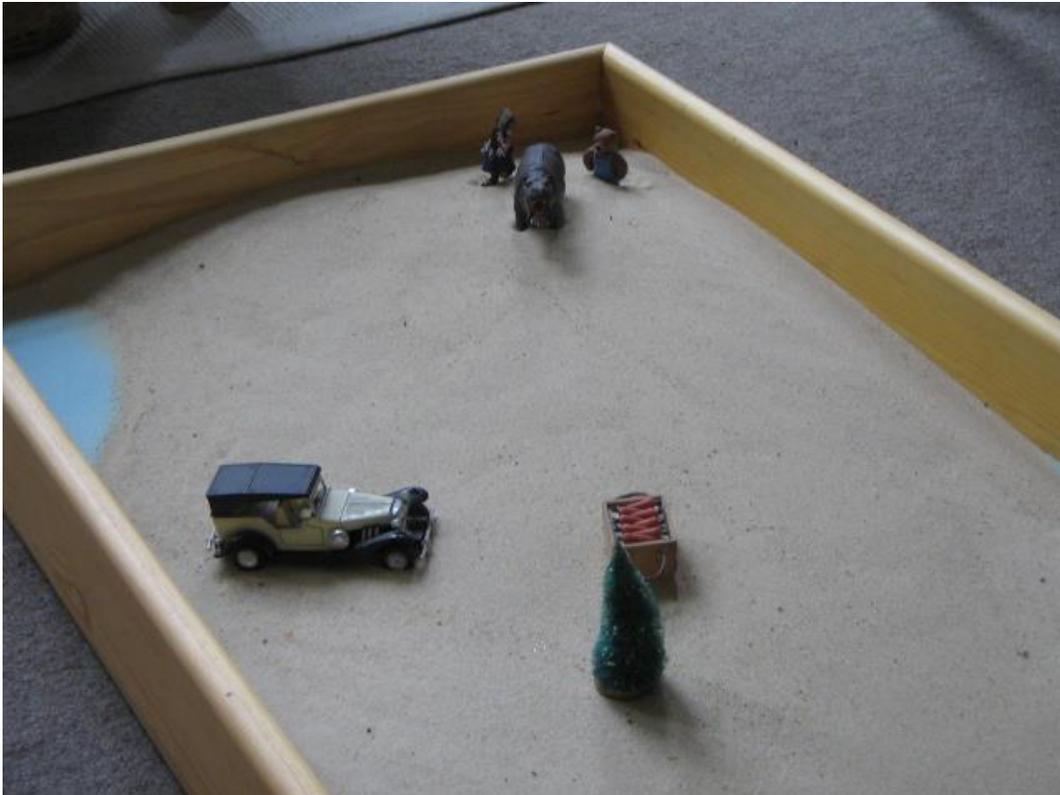


Figure 18: Daniel's sand tray

As we explored the sand play, Daniel expressed the following about the symbols:

*Dan: The first thing I thought is I really hope there's a bear for you, because I have the sort of bear, but the side of the bear that is sweet. A sort of motherly figure in a sense, a bear, because that's how I perceive you, very gentle, caring and yeah, um, I just couldn't think of anything else, it just came straight away. Bang! There's a bear, you know. And, you know, very likeable animals, you know, bears you can think also of the polar bear, one of the most sort of the, and of course there's the other side to a bear, but I don't know you enough to know what the other side is. In terms of me that was easy, the other two I really struggled with. The second one I*

*finally found something, and that's because I see myself as a shaman, and I thought that's it, it was the one that grabbed me. So, I thought that's a shaman, and then I just for the relationship, I don't know why I picked it, a hippo. I don't know why, I just suddenly thought 'that's cute, I'm gonna go for that.' I don't know what it is but I just went for it. I don't know you that well, but there is something sweet in hippos, and they're very, I think now that I think about it, if you think phenomenologically about a hippo. Hippos are very ancient animals, they live in waters, but they live in the land as well, it is very, they're big but they are soft at the same time, they're not attacking. There's something sweet and soft in them, at the same time I have never seen any of them, so I think there is something of the really unknown, as I know you but really, I don't. I was going to say I put them close together, it didn't feel they belonged in the centre, I like them there in the corner, me and you and then this thing coming up out of us, and we're sort of guiding it.*

Daniel seems to have taken to me in this tray. His first instinct is to choose something 'sweet' for myself in the form of the bear, seeing me as gentle, caring and motherly. This symbol and the symbol for the relationship, the hippo, he also found difficult to select, whereas the shaman for himself was much easier. Also, his exploration of the nature of his relationship to his projection is that it is an enduring one, one that has lasted a long time. It is therefore important to notice three things when considering Daniel and his sand play. Firstly, bears and hippos as he says are also family orientated animals, territorial, and aggressive, whereas the shaman is a solitary soul often situated on the outside of the tribe or group. Already my opinion is that Daniel has projected the

more group centred aspect of himself onto me here. It is also important at this point to notice the relationship as the hippo. For him the relationship is based around power dynamics, hence the choice of a symbol so calm but also so deadly. Secondly, it also seems important here to notice the positioning of his symbols. Daniel says that he chose to place all his symbols in the corner of the tray. The position of these symbols, and in particular that of the hippo, facing outwards at the other symbols, suggest a defensiveness, or something of a deficit, a common theme when considering his position as the outsider. Where this fits in with my research question is we immediately begin to see on a deeper level the projections of the other onto the majority, aspects of the self of the other that in their not being owned tie the other to be absolute.

Returning to Daniel, his choice of the Shaman is interesting. As well as being solitary people, during the interview he made what I feel was a very important point about them stating:

*'They're quite crazy, as I said they have proto borderline character traits, and they're very angry people, the original shaman.'*

As well as the shaman having a purpose, there is an element of madness here, and in particular of anger, resonates from his side of the tray towards mine. In their presence and positioning, there is an anger within the shaman and the hippo, that is there less with the bear, although all three collectively seem to have an anger towards my own side of the tray. The last point here is an interesting unconscious perspective on bears, centring around his going to a 'Bear Week' festival which is presented below:

*Dan: Do you know what Bear is about? It is a gay category. It is sort of big, hairy, maybe old, but it is actually quite, yeah, big but not muscle with fat if you want, in that sense. It was Bear week and I had lost a stone, and I, you know, I was 'oh my god, I'm in the wrong week! I shouldn't be here!' But the interesting part is, it is a big thing. They come from all over Europe. The place is gay friendly usually, and it was, what's the word if you have a bee's nest. A hive. I was like 'oh for god sake' and there were loads of gay bars and places, and everything. I was on my own and there were couples. I hadn't expected that, silly me of course, I had expected to go on holiday and maybe you chat to the person next door, but not in a cruising way, just chatting and having a chat, and it was good to know somebody, and that's it. I wasn't aiming for a whole full on Soho/Vauxhall sort of thing. And I was there and I just felt like I didn't fit in, because people were like in couples or groups and I was going out for dinner and I was on my own. I didn't notice many people on their own like that. I was really weird, really weird, because all the memories came up. I thought I'm so different, I feel so different, I feel like, you know, it is still there, but it was great because for me it was an opportunity to actually check in with me about that. It was difficult, but like even my, I was renting a room in a guesthouse, even the landlord, the owner, was like going clubbing, going out at midnight.*

Relating this back to his sand play, Daniel has unconsciously sexualised my objective self in his tray, from the projection of the 'Bear Week' onto myself, to the statements above that I was 'sweet', meaning that there is an erotic element in the other remaining connected to the absolute. Secondly, whilst there is a desire here to fit in with the group, yet also a fear or anger at

the majority, projected both as the bear and as the authority across the room. This is even presented via his story where he chooses to attend 'Bear Week' yet finds himself on the outside from the very beginning. In the end, Daniel is more comfortable being in his own space, the majority being a threat to his sense of being, and something he has to fight against. He both desires to be with me, and eroticises my presence, but is also wary of being too close to me, hence the aggression present in the sand tray. The idea that the other projects its anger at the objectified signifier (in this case myself as the researcher) also sits central to Rowena's sand play exercise. A white middle aged woman who was born in Rhodesia during the days of minority white colonial rule, she left the country to study in South Africa. For her sand play exercise, presented as figure 19 below, Rowena chose a white princess for herself, batman for myself and a stallion for our relationship.



Figure 19: Rowena's sand tray

Discussing the sand play, Rowena had the following to say about the symbols, and initially the princess as she stated:

*Row: and I think that's (the Princess) because thinking about difference it is been a bit of a fight. It is kind of like I've always been sort of Joan of Arc-ish in a way. Sort of up for the challenge. And I used to be a real champion and fight for others, and I guess that's a rescuer in me, and there's a sort of standing back and saying this is about you know everybody's blocked, I don't want to. But it has been, certainly*

*around the dyslexia, I guess I didn't realise how much of a struggle it was. And growing up in Africa, you know, being accepted as a white woman.'*

Even with her statements about the princess positioning her as the other, through her being white in Rhodesia, her being a woman within a patriarchy, and her having dyslexia at school, she has also taken up the position of the saviour, which in itself contains power. Of myself as batman she says:

*'well I think it was largely the stature. Cloaked, don't really know you. You know, what lies within. But I think being batman of course he's the superhero so it is not kind of threatening, yeah.'*

The words used here, and the positioning of the symbols, talk about the paradox she has projected onto myself, of the hero who is non-threatening whilst also taking on an aggressive position at the same time, as if the character of herself she has projected outwards is trying to balance itself. The paradox here holds distinct echoes of the hippo from Daniel's sand tray, as if both participants are saying there is something threatening about the projected role I have adopted for this exercise. Talking about the relationship now, Rowena stated:

*'why the stallion? Why? It was just intuitive. And it struck me as something, it is kind of natural, moving, well I feel kind of natural in the relationship I suppose, it is moving, it is quite powerful, yeah, and just of the earth I think that is the other thing.'*

My perspective on her side of the tray is that whilst the white figure is herself in this instance, batman is a darker figure, a man dressed mainly in black. So, it is important to notice the incongruence between Rowena stating her desire to fight for minorities, whilst in the tray she is threatening to decapitate myself as the dark knight. The choice of the black stallion as the relationship I will argue is to do with colour and is a sexualised image, echoing the bear again from Daniel's sand tray. What is also interesting here is the switching of positions for the two participants between the relationship being sexualised and my objectified self being sexualised, with the symbol representing the threat swapping roles as well. This could be due to the gender difference between the participants, but it could also be symptomatic of the flexible nature of the projections into the space between us, meaning that when one is seen as present in the absolute, the other sits in the space in between but does not disappear. Together though they speak highly of the ambivalent nature of the pull/push between the other and the absolute, a conflict for the other that if not rectified it ultimately loses.

At this point, Rowena then makes an effort to reframe the tray, stating that the original box was perhaps a little too orderly. She moves the tray around so that my symbols (I am Donatello, she is a white horse, and the relationship is the box) are placed all together so that she can climb onto the black horse and jump my relationship.



*Figure 20: Rowena's reframed sand tray*

Notice how even with the reframing of the sand play, the princess with the sword is still waving it at Batman, the masculine protector of what is right in both scenarios. Notice also, that the sexualized object projected upon myself is by the side of the princess. So, whilst there is again the pull towards me, there is also an anger that is not expressed in her words, but is through the imagery of what I (as her object in Donatello) mean to her, echoing the fear that Daniel unconsciously expressed towards myself in his tray. I then become her subject for real, not just as a projection. Both are hold similarities to my interactions with Daniel and Rowena in that my objectified persona then has to contain something threatening that they do not wish to own for themselves. Within this theme all these participants were still unconsciously struggling with their signifier/signified difference, with the signifier often projected out onto myself in the tray, where even though they might express something positive towards me consciously, they would then

unconsciously interact with it quite aggressively. One of the most surprising things in this exercise was that my participants in all these instances presented aspects of our difference in the relationship space between us, be it about race or power; as presented by the black horse or the African hippopotamus. This denotes how important it is to be aware of my own impact on an investigation into difference, be it in this research project or elsewhere, and how this will sit unconsciously in the intersubjective space between myself and the other at any time. What this exercise also begins to show is that the othering of the absolute is in part driven by the non-recognition of the erotic pull towards the absolute. How this comes in to being I am not sure, as this would be a topic for another study, but there is definitely an initial relational pull between absolute and other that has like the pull of a black hole on a planet distorted by the grandiosity of the absolute.

This struggle for the other is a struggle to maintain their own sense of identity in the face of a projected absolute. So, for Rowena my presence as her absolute in the tray gave her something to save and to fight against as a white princess wielding a sword, my own black identity having been both negated by her projection and reformatted as a sexualized black stallion. In these cases, the other holds its otherness as an identity so tightly that it is fearful of letting it go. The next means of interaction involves the other seeing its own potential reflected back at itself from the objectified signifier. This will be covered in the next sub theme, the *other sees its own potential in relationship with the absolute*.

**Other sees potential in relationship with the Absolute**

In her article on image work within nursing Elliott talks about how 'healing can be enhanced and opens up the possibility of personal transformation' (2003, p. 120). Although here Elliott is discussing images such as drawing, this is also an important factor in my choosing to work with the sand play as it is the creativity involved that offers the possibility of transformation. The idea of othering here is also different. Whereas in the previous theme the participants othered themselves to maintain an identity which whilst not truly authentic offered them solitude or safety, in this theme what I will be exploring is that being the other the othering involves a separation from an unconscious part of themselves which the sand play work then leads them to reintegrate. In a fashion, the importance of the sand play work is similar to Herman's (2004) idea of the dialogical self where aspects of the self that have been split off in the past are recovered and reintegrated through the relationship and inter-subjectivity. This idea returns us to the Buberian idea that through the other we ultimately know ourselves. In this instance, the reintegration involves the other parts of the self being displayed in a tray for them to witness and interact with. It is these important distinctions that separate this theme from the previous one above. Here my participants were able to see the potential in their relationship with the signifier, so whilst once again I was the object for them to project onto, what this means is what was projected and the trays themselves were very different in the choice of symbols and the experiences of the participants themselves.

My next participant Jeff is a good example here. The youngest of my participants at 19 his difference was generational in that he had been encouraged by his father to follow the paternal route to Marlborough, to Oxford, and then to a job in banking in the City of London. A creative

person at heart, he struggled with this, even having what he called an ‘early life crisis’ at around the age of 14, and he suffered from bouts of depression. For the sand play exercise, presented as figure 21 below, he chose a fish for himself, superman for myself and an eraser for our relationship. The fish and superman did not raise any sort of conscious meaning for Jeff, but the eraser seemed to puzzle him.



Figure 21: Jeff's sand tray - superman and the fish

He says of the eraser that:

*‘It is kind of annoying I picked that cos I feel its stuff I’ve already, everything we’ve talked about, stuff I’ve talked about with people, everything that I’ve gone through, felt and*

*understood, and the rubber kind of implies that I'm still trying to not erase it but I'm trying to erase it, but almost get through it. Or perhaps it is erasing my prejudices against it.'* And *'But again and the eraser fits in with the breaking down of barriers, but I don't know what barriers there are to bring down. I like to feel I'm quite well, like, versed in, quite in touch with my feelings and what I've been through and who I am, and I kind of think that, I almost do feel there is something missing which also ties in with the call, it is about what we spoke about, I'm still on that fine line between whatever and being the role.'*

For Jeff, the eraser seems self-explanatory, with the erasing of the past barriers, but it is also the absence within himself that he sees in the sand. He is absent, he has been erased, and this echoes the emptiness and loss he expresses in his words. Although not consciously aware of it, earlier in the interview Jeff spoke about the Superman movie 'Man of Steel' (Snyder, 2013), the trailer of which had been released around the time of our interview. About this he stated:

*Jeff: There's two quotes which are quite memorable in that trailer; the first is there's the army lady saying, 'how do you find the person who has spent their whole life hiding?' which I quite like, and the other one is his adopted dad I guess said it was something like 'you owe it to yourself to find out why you're here, you were sent here for a reason from another world, you owe it to yourself.*

*DT: and those two quotes resonate for you, any idea why?*

*Jeff: well they're just particularly memorable, and I guess it is kind of clear what the meaning is, um.*

*DT: so maybe you owe it to yourself to keep finding out who you are...*

*Alright, anything else you want to say?*

*Jeff: I'm regretting positioning the fish, just because it is on its side, it looks dead.*

This interaction is important as even though Jeff had no conscious idea as to why he had chosen the symbols of Superman and the fish, on closer reflection his story had more of a resonance with these symbols than first realised. Firstly, it is important to recognise that the fish is perched upon sand, it is out of water! This fish is actually going to die where it is now, and is suffocating on the land which is not its natural habitat. This is hugely important of the struggle Jeff underwent to fit in at the same school the rest of his paternal line attended. Secondly, Superman in this instance therefore becomes his potential, the movie becomes the path he has taken into film school. What is also important is that he has been struggling to break the role laid out for him by his patriarchy and that the image he chose, Superman, is also a man, but in this case, he is a man from a different world, his real name, Kal El, meaning hope in Hebrew. Labovitz Boik and Goodwin (2000) suggest that the choice of Superman has to do with the conflict between good and evil within an individual. This is of special importance here as this symbol represents Jeff's struggle to be himself. So, the struggle is not just presented in the words chosen, but also in the symbols used. The theme of the other therefore seeing its potential reflected back at itself through myself as their object resonates strongly here. A third option is a consideration of the regularity of the hero archetype appearing in the sand trays, both here in this theme and in the last one as well in the form of Batman and Donatello. There is a projection of an ideal here onto myself, the perfect hero that is going to save those less fortunate. Freire (Straubhaar, 2015) would consider this an aspect of the white saviour complex, where whiteness involves the grandiose adoption of a position of power and superiority, and a belief that only they can save the other. The regularity of the

projection of the superhero onto my objectified self though here speaks of this saviour complex being something held between the subject and the other. What this means is that a distorted, unowned aspect of the other wants to be saved by the subject. I say unowned here as it is only when this aspect is returned to its owner, the other, that the other then feels complete enough within itself to care for itself fully, an idea which will be explored more in the heuristic chapter.

My next participant, Paulina, also saw the potential for personal growth within her sand play, but in a slightly different fashion. Although raised in London, Paulina's difference arose from the fact her mother was a Russian artist and her father was from Australia. This left her feeling like she had unusual parents as everyone else at her school had parents who were several generations English and had jobs in banking or in accountancy. At school she struggled to fit in, developing an eating disorder as part of her struggle to feel accepted by the other girls. For our sand play exercise Paulina chose a princess for herself, a wizard for myself, and the relationship was a clear box (figure 22).



Figure 22: Pauline's sand tray - the princess and the wizard

Paulina stated the following about the images she presented:

*'I chose that princess, but she's not like a standard princess like in the dress. There's like a darkness about her, and difference. And she's also looking in a mirror because I think, and because we're talking about me a lot. Sort of looking at a lot of stuff and that. I chose the wizard because you are teaching me new things, and in control of the situation. Maybe there's something you know that I don't. And I chose the box because I don't know, I like the look of the box, and it seemed like there was, it was fragile and there were some secrets inside. Because I think we're kind of looking at things which are maybe hidden, but maybe talked about a lot, so we can see into that together.'*

The importance of these images is that the princess is looking at herself, a symbol of narcissism, whereas the wizard holds the potential here. To say something about the wizard, again we have a superhero, albeit this time in mystical form. What is also interesting is that across these two themes the heroes are presented as all male characters as well, the only differences being there was a darkness in Batman, whereas with Superman and the wizard here there is a whiteness, and a quality of light. In this theme, the two participants relate to me as if they know me and are looking to me to guide them, but as I had no knowledge of them before this interview, my reasoning here is that they project a guide like figure onto my objectified self. But it is Paulina's discussion of the clear box that is most interesting, with the idea that she can see that which is hidden within, yet it also seems to speak of the emptiness of this theme, mirroring Jeff's eraser. These are very different relational symbols to the previous theme where the relationship was animalistic or hidden. The second impression here is that her being other, as presented by the princess, left her feeling isolated and separate as emphasised by this exchange where Paulina talked about what it was like for her at school:

*'So from starting at that school, actually from the moment my parents got divorced at the previous school, I was the first one in my class for my parents to separate. So that automatically made me feel really lonely, and different from everyone.'*

The appearance of the wizard symbol, and its holding fire, is also interesting. As Turner suggests 'this stage of transformation may be held in the sand play by angels or wizards or fairy godmothers who wield magic' (2005, p. 182). Taken all together it is then obvious that from the

relationship presented in the sand play springs the potential for the personal growth of the other held in the words of Buber (2002), Levinas (1989), and Jung (1990). Confirming this and adding to my idea Paulina suggested that:

*'I think the wizard is more kind of looking out, there's more a sense of extraversion with the fire, whereas the princess is more looking in. Yeah. And maybe that's also like my idea of the masculine and the feminine, and I do think, I think men are so different from women, and I think for me especially because I grew up in a girl's school and without my dad about much, stuff like that. I see men as complete aliens. I don't really have male friends.'*

So the wizard leads Paulina to transform her position from one where she is looking inwards to one where she is looking outwards, or from a more narcissistic position where she is self-absorbed to a more interpersonal one (B. Turner, 2005). The othering of the absolute here involves a process of idealisation of the masculine figure projected onto my objectified self, whilst the other here protects herself by becoming self-absorbed. The sense of othering is also apparent in the total negation of my colour, and the presentation of both superman and the wizard as white male characters. The third means of othering in both of these trays emerges out of the positioning of the characters themselves. In Jeff's tray, superman and the fish are at separate ends of the tray, whereas in this tray they are turned away from each other. This othering of potential is perhaps built more on distance from one another than on the aggression and eroticism of the previous theme. Another way of observing Paulina's path to developing male friends whilst questioning how she is as a woman, a way that ties her words together with her sand play work, is that she is accessing her potential via her unconscious other in the form of her animus. As the Jungian Analyst Kalff

states ‘through a one-sided adaptation to the external world with the mask of the persona, the internal world of the unconscious is repressed – that world incorporated in the opposite-gender soul-image of the Animus’ (1991, p. 2). In owning this aspect of herself my view is she then can be more authentic to herself, and care less what others think of her. In fact, after our meeting I received an email from Paulina stating that she realised just this, that she no longer needed to make others like her and that she was free to be herself.

To therefore end this theme, of the aspects of these sand play exercises that stand out most of all it is worth noting a couple here. Firstly, during this exercise the symbols projected upon myself have been vastly different to the previous theme, for example, they have been wizards and heroes, versus bears or darker characters. In all the cases under this theme, the images chosen for myself, and the reasons behind them, differed from the last theme in that there was less of a sense of my own colour difference. Nearly all of the participants chose white figures to represent their projected experience of myself, but every participant chose a human being. This is a marked difference to the last set of sand plays. For the other that desires transformation the symbol used more often than not therefore has to be human, or over a period of time I will argue here will move from a more primal form to something more human, echoing Wilson and Ryan (2005), who saw this transformation as part of the process towards the re-integration of an aspect of the self that has been suppressed, on this occasion by the other. Secondly, I have been seen as an object by my participants in a more positive fashion on this occasion than within the last theme, and the need of my participants to change my projected role has been absent. Where this perhaps proved problematic was in the absence of the erotic/dynamic push/pull of the previous theme, meaning that here there was a slightly subtler distancing of the potential in the cross sand tray separation of

Jeff and the turned back of Paola's. This meant that whereas in the last theme my role involved taking a more dynamic position and fielding a lot of aggression, at least there was some interaction on my part. Here my role was more static and it was more of a challenge to connect to my participants. Lastly, the other/transformation relationship then shows there is a different additional relationship to the signifier/signified relationship of the post-colonial theorists hidden within the interaction between subject and object. Whereas within the first theme of other/signifier, there was more of a power dynamic involved between the dyad, here I, in the form of the signifier, have been made into an object upon which aspects of the other have been projected, and then reclaimed. In these instances, the wizard of transformation or the superman of the movies was projected upon myself, and in these examples the participants had or were starting to own the aspect of themselves lost by being other. It should also be noted here that this change did not entail any difference of note in my own approach towards the participants, meaning I was no less myself with the participants in my previous theme than I was here with those presented. This leads me to surmise that there is little choice in the role that I play for the other in which projection I hold. I could be overly narcissistic or quite humble, but how that is seen and experienced by the other is controlled by them, not by myself. This therefore gives the other more power in the dyad than it is often given credit for, and especially regarding the potential for its own transformation.

The next two sub themes though will explore my participant's experience when the projections are removed, and I, as the absolute, play a more present role in relationship to the other, with both sub themes fitting under the more generalised heading, the relational I and the other.

### **The Relational I and the other**

The importance of this theme centres around the removal of projections from the interaction between the absolute and the other. Whereas in figure 16, *othering the absolute*, my role as the absolute involved self-objectification, within this theme, both myself and my participant were encouraged to just be ourselves in relation to each other. The reasoning behind this centres around ideas Myers (1985) suggests in her paper on bringing a more Afrocentric perspective to the transpersonal, where she argues that ultimately spirit and matter become one thing. The tension of opposites though, where the opposing forces are acknowledged and held within oneself, is this space in-between where the opposites reside, a space which is the ultimate reality for humanity. It is this which was investigated by this third theme, and the last stage of the sand play work, where again I played a role in the tray where we considered how my own symbols interacted with those of my participant. In this section, there will therefore be more of my own words as well as those of my participant, with this part of the chapter being the perfect signpost towards the next chapter which covers the themes arising out of my heuristic exploration of difference. My work here on this third theme allows the relational I, as discussed in the review of the literature, to emerge into relationship with the other. This theme then allows the other to either remain as an It or as a Thou in relation to the now humble I. This theme then considers the impact of this more relational position held by both, and postulates as to the ease or the struggle for the other to then build in relationship. Ultimately, what this means is that in some instances the other either looks to maintain the relationship with the humble I, or it rejects it as a threat to its identity as the other. This third theme therefore speaks this split between the I inherent within us all. It also considers the qualities needed in order to engage with the other, and the properties inherent in a rejection of

the other, recognized out of a consideration of what would happen between two others when their projections were removed and they were forced to actually relate.

### **The meeting of opposites**

The first participant within this theme was Barbara. Barbara came from a Jewish family living in Wales at a time where there were very few in her community, and the only other Jewish family in her neighbourhood were markedly more religious than her own. Barbara talked of her family quietly stressing their cultural difference to her from an early age, and of the oppressive nature this created. For this sand play exercise, Barbara chose a pink egg for herself whilst I chose a large dinosaur. Barbara placed her items in the tray first, and I placed mine in afterwards. During our discussion about the tray, we both noted how protective the dinosaur seemed to be of the egg. Barbara also said the following about the egg, presented as figure 23, stating:



*Figure 23: Barbara's egg and Dwight's dinosaur*

*B: my immediate reaction was to put myself right underneath him, so you would sort of be protecting me, that was where I put myself, but actually, you know what, I still want to put it there.*

*DT: ok. I was thinking about this the other day, when I was a kid, I had this fascination with dinosaurs for months. Something a 40-odd year old man doesn't think about very often, but you put this dinosaur protecting ...*

*B: protecting an egg.*

*DT: what is it about the egg that draws you to it?*

*B: It is pink (laughs), so it is a girl, it is fun, it is bright, it is beautiful, it is colourful, it is vibrant, but it is also potential, it is also potential life, and it is all sort of enclosed in one thing, it hasn't burst out yet, so it is about growth, it is about, yeah, possibility, potential. But it is an egg, so it is very, very, young. But it is also quite big and bold, that's what I think about the egg.*

*DT: the dinosaur is quite old, ancient if you like. Archetypal. Did Jung say the earlier the repression the more ancient the image that comes up in dreams. One protecting the other. Do they lay eggs? I think they did.*

*B: I think they did. But it is not a dinosaur egg, it is almost like the dinosaur is protecting somebody else's egg, and that's maybe the difference. And a dinosaur from this angle, this dinosaur looks really sweet.*

*DT: the egg is so big that he's not that threatening really.*

*B: he's not going to eat the egg, is he? Those arms, for me anyway, those arms are like 'don't come near this egg.'*

*DT: I imagine him rolling the egg somewhere safe.'*

This interaction shows us both playing very active roles. As Barbara states, even though she is different to myself, she sees a connection between us, as if in my positioning of the dinosaur I am protective of her. Already, one can observe the difference in interaction compared to the last two sub themes, where my role was more passive and invited more projection. Here my role is more dynamic, and in this instance Barbara welcomes this interaction, noticing our differences, not feeling fearful of our differences as she states that I am not going to eat her, whilst also feeling respectful of our differences as well.

A very striking aspect of this egg came in the late admission of a cultural connection to the egg for Barbara, where she added '*the egg is also an ancient image too, and also the egg is also used a lot in Jewish rituals.*' The youthfulness of the egg and the primitiveness of the dinosaur are both important here. As Jung (1964) suggests in his study of symbolism, the earlier the repression then the more primitive the symbols, and Barbara clearly states that her symbol is a very, very, youthful egg, whilst for myself whatever I am suppressing here emerges very early on as I have chosen a dinosaur. My consideration of the images in the tray leads me to the following conclusions; that I am there to help Barbara own her cultural heritage, as if my dinosaur is her protector in some fashion, and that I am mirroring the early repression of her Jewish identity in order for her to re-own and contain it within herself in some fashion. She is allowing herself to be seen by me. Yet, conversely there is also a passivity about the egg which is interesting here, a vulnerability and a subtle power dynamic where the dinosaur towers over the egg as if it could smash it at any time. My argument here is that in my accepting of Barbara's other, there is a tension built into the relationship whereby even though we are not equal, this inequality is out in

the open. The containing of her Jewish heritage and the power dynamic are the tension I am speaking of here within this theme, with one more obvious/conscious than the other. There is trust here in the other on her part towards me, and I feel no urge to destroy the egg beneath me, making trust and vulnerability qualities of the relational I in its relationship to the other.

For Yvette, her experience of difference was generational. Born into a family of academics going back several generations, she was expected to become one herself, but Yvette never felt she measured up to her family's high standards, being more creative and emotional as a child. She often felt like an outsider at school, and was late in many ways; with her first period, her first boyfriend, losing her virginity, and other life experiences that left her feeling like an outsider and not normal. For this sand play exercise, this involved a contra-sexual switch of roles as Yvette chose a male tiger, whereas I selected a female elephant.



Figure 24: Yvette's tiger and Dwight's elephant

The feeling of this exercise was that there was more relationship between the pair of us. This was borne out by Yvette's observations when watching the animals interacting. As she stated:

*Y: Oooh, an elephant. Ok. Well actually, this is not a very ferocious tiger.*

*DT: he's not?*

*Y: this tiger is saying 'hello, rather like the look of you,'*

*DT: and she is quite solid.*

*Y: she? Well that's a she, is it?*

*DT: well yes, let's trust the unconscious Dwight. I called her a she. Don't female elephants have big tusks, I can't remember. Trunk raised. That's supposed to be*

*good luck when you point the raised trunk towards the window in homes, I don't remember where I heard that. There's nothing offensive about it. She is a little inquisitive. Yes. There's a greeting going on.*

*Y: yes, there is a greeting. Well, the elephant's quite energetic and wants to be getting on with something I think, and the tiger is probably going to follow the elephant. It looks a little bit as if it is, or she's got a plan, and the tiger 'he', it is a he tiger is waiting to see what's on offer. What the game is. What game they're gonna play. I think the tiger is waiting, and she is saying something. She is the active one, and he's the passive one, at the moment. Although when I moved him up there was a sort of saying 'ok, hello, here I am. I'm not going to hurt you. I'm not looking for a fight. I'm looking for fun and friendship. I really like the two of them together.'*

There is an inquisitiveness towards the other here on both parts, but expressed predominantly by Yvette, her words suggesting a willingness to be seen, to play, and to explore any potential relationship. Alternatively though, elephants and lions are not friends; in packs lions often hunt and kill elephants, and a single lion would be at risk of its life from a charging elephant. It is this primitive side that is also important here to notice as we have both chosen symbols which are animalistic in nature, although less so than for Barbara's sand tray where the images were prehistoric and unborn. The idea though that being seen and the risk of being destroyed is also apparent here within both our choices of symbol.

The interesting aspects of all the participants who resonated with this theme was the similarities in the symbols presented in the tray. For example, in Barbara's tray the dinosaur and

the egg were connected as dinosaurs used to lay eggs, and for Yvette the elephant and the tiger live in the same domain. There is a mutuality of existence, whilst at the same time there is an implied tension or threat that one could destroy the other at any time. For these participants and myself we were able to at least temporarily hold the absolute and the other, or the sameness and the otherness of existence at the same time. It would therefore be from the interaction between us that the creativity Buber talked about could spring were we to work together for longer. It is this symbolic tension that again appears within this sub-theme where to accept the other, there needs to be an authenticity of the subject and the other for this to safely occur. This does not mean the tension, and any potential threat, disappears. What it means is that the tension is maintained between the pairing of the subject and the object, and held there so that any potential might emerge. The qualities of acceptance, vulnerability and inquisitiveness are employed in order to engage with the other, so these are the qualities employed by the Humble I in relation to the other. But what happens when this tension is not maintained? When there is a rejection of the absolute? The second sub-theme 'other is fearful of the absolute' will explore my ideas here further.

**Other is fearful of the absolute**

Friedman (2002), in one of his many papers on the work of Martin Buber, discussed the importance of dialogue between I and Thou in the maintaining of healthy human relationships. He also noted that through the failure of the subject to see the other as an entity in their own right, the rejection of the other leads to a disintegration of reality. This is quite a strong statement to begin this section with, but it underlines the difficulty inherent in allowing the other to be seen as real in its own right! It is this idea that sits central to this sub-theme here. With it being difficult to maintain the tension of the opposites discussed in the introduction to this theme, the other rejects my presence, and although not initially aware of such, the other is actually quite fearful of it in some instances. The first example arises out of Paola's story. For Paola, her experience of being an outsider began with witnessing her mother being bullied by the other mothers in her neighbourhood because she was Greek and seen as attractive. Raised with a number of illnesses like eczema and dyslexia and having to wear an eye patch, Paola was often excluded by her peers at school. For Paola, these early experiences coloured her life meaning that she was more daring than others in her adult life, and leading her to set up a business to help disadvantaged children. For our sand play under this theme, she chose Gilgamesh whereas I selected a Lego cowboy (figure 25).



Figure 25: Paola's Gilgamesh vs Dwight's cowboy

It should be immediately noted the power that resides in the figure of Gilgamesh, who in the classic story quested for power (Eom, 2014; Ings, 2011). Here though, the symbol is placed on its back, prone, as if it is powerless, making it smaller in size than my own figure of the cowboy. The discussion of the symbols that followed was interesting as it involved the distancing for Paola from the power that Gilgamesh holds, and a reengagement with her fear of me as the signifier. In discussing the two symbols Paola said:

*Paola: it (my Lego cowboy) looks like it is going to trample mine.*

*DT: why have you put him up there?*

*Paola: because it looks like you're going to step on him*

*DT: why is he going to step on him?*

*Paola: because he is a cowboy.*

*DT: cowboys don't just step on things.*

*Paola: but he looks like he will run towards*

*DT: he's stood still, he has got his hands out, so your fear is that...*

*Paola; he doesn't feel right like that.*

*DT: but even that is interesting*

*Paola: I've got a massive fear that you're going to squish mine*

*DT: what is that fear about? There is a fear that my cowboy is going to squash  
Gilgamesh, is that right?*

*Paola: I think so, it is obviously Hindu is not it.*

*DT: so I move him from here (At this point I removed the cowboy from the sand play)*

*Paola: I feel really relaxed.*

*DT: really?*

*Paola: yeah. Do you know what it reminds me of, it reminds me in a waiting room upstairs  
of when you are on your own. Love it. The moment when people come in I freak.*

*DT: really? I notice you've just rubbed out his footprint. He's really got something  
over you.*

*(Lots of laughing at this point)*

*DT: I'm going to put him back. But notice that tension. Don't worry, he is not coming  
for you, I assure you he will stay right there. But that fear is acute.*

*Paola: it is really, it is uncomfortable.*

*DT: so much so that he has to be.*

*Paola: I could literally put him there.*

*DT: move him down there.*

*Paola: yes, it would help a little bit but I need a fence there.*

*DT: you need a fence to keep him away from you?*

*Paola: yeah. Because I'm happy on that bit, you know, I'm living the dream and then you come and spoilt it.*

*DT: spoilt it with my cowboy and his big old boots. You know he is shorter than your Gilgamesh statue, don't you?*

*Paola: yeah, but I'm lying down chilling out in the sun and vulnerable and happy, and I'm heavy with the gold, I'm really rich.*

*DT: but it feels vulnerable to be lying in the sun knowing there is a cowboy nearby. Why is it trampling is the first instinctive thing to come up?*

*Paola: because it looks like he is running, and where is he going to go if I'm in front of him, he is going to go on top of me.*

*DT: then what happens?*

*Paola: I can drown in the sand, or get invisible.*

*DT: that is an interesting statement. What does invisible mean in this case?*

*Paola: not being in the sand pit anymore, you've become the powerful one.'*

Paola here sits with the idea that the other is powerless, and that fear of being powerless belies how much she has achieved in her life, including building her own company working with children who have been bullied. My idea here though is that in this tray, Paola as the other would only allow herself to be seen without the presence of myself in the tray. There is an over

identification with her otherness, where the other is a victim and powerless, and instead of holding her side of the tension between us there is a need for me not to be there at all as it is just too scary. The other cannot allow itself to be seen by myself, so it hides itself in the sand, even though it is a God and more powerful than me. Another means of observing this is by considering that the other here is unable to maintain a relationship with itself whilst also in relationship with an external absolute, or myself in this case. Here for example, the powerful spiritual potential of Gilgamesh is not accessed when I am present, and there is a fear of me whilst I am in the tray that only dissipates when I remove my character. Any tension of opposites between two equals is not held then as for the other to be fully present it requires the absolute to be absent.

The difficulty of holding the opposites and thereby allowing herself to be seen also emerged from Rashida's interview. A black British woman of African descent, her parents took her back to Ghana when she was 9 years old where she struggled to fit in as she was considered an outsider. This continued on her return with her family to the UK a couple of years later. Her mother later joined her local church which also left her feeling like an outsider as she was different to her friends. Rashida has also been drawn to difference throughout her life, and married a Frenchman. They have three children. The fear of being seen appeared in her final sand tray exercise where Rashida chose a cat and I selected a turtle.



Figure 26: Rashida's cat vs Dwight's turtle

Rashida talked about the cat she chose as needing to stand in the corner so it could watch the rest of the tray. We moved the symbols around from time to time and this generated the following discussion:

*Ras: well you hesitated, I kind of sensed that you kind of almost do I put here or do I put it there, being very aware of where you put it, but I suppose I didn't have to worry as there was nothing else there, I just put mine in the corner, and I just, I was interested in why you put it facing that way, obviously directionally.*

*DT: I think it is just the idea of travelling, I had an idea of it travelling across in some way.*

*Ras: but then you could also say it...because it is going slowly, and if that moved it would be quicker.*

*DT: that is a good point, notice how this feels when I do this. (at this point I moved the turtle so it faced the cat) What does that bring up for you?*

*Ras: a bit more anxiety.*

*DT: what is the anxiety about?*

*Ras: like I've been seen I suppose. And the sense of getting closer and there is really nowhere to go as I'm in the corner.*

*DT: so now you feel trapped in the corner, and this person is not moving fast by the way. So now you cannot escape from there? I exaggerate this by the way. So actually, you felt safer this way when it was facing away.*

*Ras: Its funny you just do that. I can feel more relaxed when you do that. Yeah.'*

Here the other allows herself to be seen by myself, but as Rashida explains this being witnessed brings with it a lot of anxiety and fear. She does not express it, but her positioning of her cat in the corner of the tray shouts of her not feeling safe in the relationship with me. For Rashida, the conflict between being seen as other and having control over what people see is also about power. In placing her cat in the corner of the tray it is immediately in a more defensive position, but it is taking up a defensive position in relation to a non-threatening animal. The problem here with being invisible is there is no in-between space, no tension of the opposites that together with my own presence would lead to growth for us both, and that in my participants here leaving themselves invisible in relation to myself, rejecting me, or just wishing I was not there at all, there is fear of the power that they hold at their end of the dyad. This is therefore an important

point. If the other believes itself to be powerless then it will fear power in the subject, a projected power that is actually its own. This therefore means that contrary to my original idea, the projections have not gone away at all, and there is still an objectification of the absolute. Paola's Gilgamesh is the perfect example of this, a godlike figure that could only be powerful without the presence of myself in the tray; there is no room for us both to be powerful. It should also be noted that the fact I am a man may also be a factor here, and that the potential power dynamic of my gender difference might also be present in the tray. Yet, although one symbol was masculine the turtle being female is not. It is also worth noting the unconscious power interplay within a tray like this and the exchange of power that ensues in an avoidance of us holding the tension of the opposites. Ultimately then, this sub theme highlights the need of the other to sometimes maintain the projections it has onto the absolute out of its fearfulness of being seen, its lack of awareness of its own power, and its ambivalence towards subjects.

## Summary

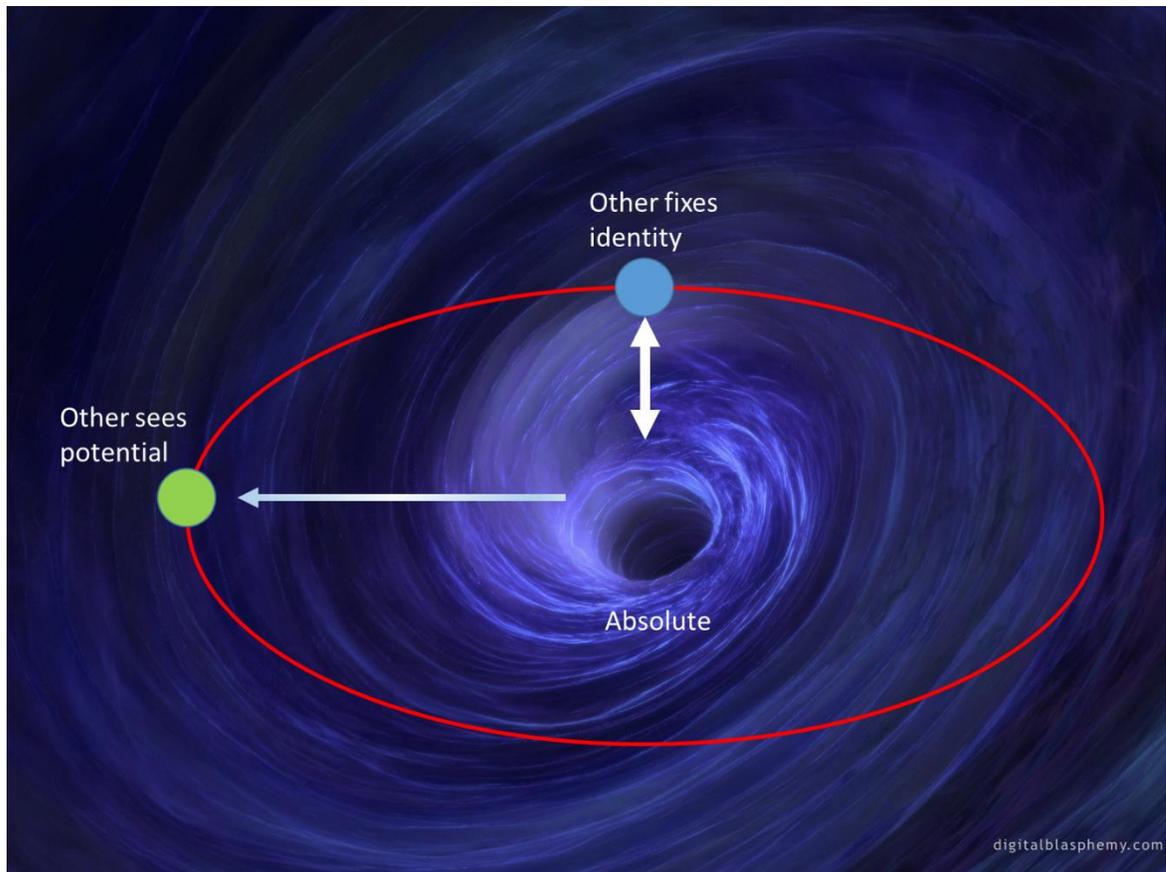


Figure 27: *Other's interaction with the absolute*

Figure 27, *the other's interaction with the absolute*, eloquently displays the results garnered from the first half of the sand tray exercises. With myself as the absolute, here presented by the black hole, my participant others engaged in projective relationships which were based around the erotic and fear, or were of a more distancing nature where the potential projected onto the absolute could clearly be seen. To discuss these results in more depth, with Daniel, his projection of the bear onto myself was interesting in that it tied itself to his quest for connection during bear week, and the bear categorization within the GSD community, the eroticization of my position as the

absolute drawing him closer towards me, whilst his fear of me drove me away. The unconscious eroticization of these sand trays was difficult for the participants and brought with it a need to fight back and keep myself at a distance. For example, in Daniel's tray where post his selection of the bear, his choice of a hippo for the relationship, a figure which was both passive and quite aggressive and territorial brought with it a conflictual nature to the experience as the other, one where one wants to relate, but is fearful of doing so. Secondly, for the other who sees their potential reflected back at them by the absolute, these projections can be maintained by a distancing from the absolute, allowing the absolute to be seen as something perfect, idealized, and something that will rescue the other or act like a saviour. A good example of this was Patricia's distancing of my own characters in her sand tray, leaving herself as a princess staring at herself in a mirror whereas I was the wizard turned away from her. These projections therefore tie the other inexorably to the absolute in a fashion not considered before in research, and also unveil the level of objectification of the absolute. Also, the other's projection of their potential onto the absolute can leave them feeling dead inside, as recognized by Jeff, for example, who in his selection and positioning of the eraser left himself as something dead, as a fish out of water. And lastly, in the second half of this exercise, in allowing myself to become more present in the research, the other was only occasionally able to maintain the tension of opposites and acknowledge my difference whilst not feeling threatened by such. In the first sub theme, the other desires connection with the absolute and is drawn towards it, but there is still a distance as there is still a slight threat present as well. There is an intimate connection between the two presented by proximity, similarity, or cultural connection which is recognised through these images.

For the second sub-theme, the other is in this case still overwhelmed by fear of the absolute. In the first of these examples, even though the image chosen by Paola, for example, was quite a powerful one, the humble I was still experienced as threatening and needed to be removed. This clearly suggests that the other at times, be it out of an already existing traumatic experience, such as Paola endured, or something else is not always ready to meet the absolute on equal terms, and may either remove itself or hide from the potential to be seen. The fear emotion here overrides any desire for connection with the absolute, meaning that it is held at a distance and seen as fearful.

Ultimately, this chapter has been a consideration of the relationship between the other and the aspects of itself reflected back at it by the absolute. Here in this chapter we see the projected psychic material the other is too fearful to own or is just unable to take ownership of. The next step is to therefore combine all of the ideas held within this chapter and the previous results chapters and consider how might working with one's own sense of otherness over a longer period of time benefit one's sense of self. The next chapter, chapter 9 will therefore present a thematic analysis of the results of my heuristic exploration of my own sense of difference over a period of 6 months.

### **Chapter Nine: Heuristic Themes**

Whilst chapters 3 to 6 of this thesis involved an exploration of the themes arising out of my semi structured interview, chapters 7 and 8 explored the unconscious experience of being the other and the symbolic experience of being other. Chapter 9 will therefore combine all of these elements as the final aim of this research was to show that working creatively with my experience as other would be a means of transpersonal reintegration. To restate, in order to achieve this a consideration of the diary entries, dreams, active imagination and sand tray exercises that were undertaken over a 6-month period was important. Creativity and active imagination were, as Jung stated, designed to constellate psychic opposites because he believed that ‘this process of coming to terms with the other in us is well worth while, because in this way we get to know aspects of our nature which we would not allow anybody else to show us and which we ourselves would never have admitted’ (Jung, 1997, p. 167). To expand this point further, my idea was that a more consistent interaction with my researcher’s own sense of difference would lead to a type of internal transformation. What this means in this context is that if the other is created in order to hold the projections of the narcissistic I of the subject, then in order for any type of individuation to occur the individual (or the group) has to recognize its projections and take ownership of them, an idea echoed in the work of von Franz (1980). This Jung felt could only be done through a period of introspection, and to an extent he is right. What I also recognise having undertaken this study, is that with the rise of the other to a position where they are seen as individuals, or groups, in their own right, much of this psychic material will have no other choice but to return to its owner. Expanding this further, within the transpersonal Washburn (1995) discusses the varying stages through which an internal identity is formed and the influences of family, culture, etc. His

understanding was that the self splits off aspects of itself to form an identity more compliant with the needs of the world it would exist within. My research though posits that this split off psychic material, or potential, is then projected upon the other, and only a creative transpersonal exploration of this material is a route towards wholeness. Where the transpersonal element adds to this is that working creatively, in this case with visualisations, sand tray work and drawing, offered a means of understanding this unconscious material, such as the reader will have witnessed in chapters 7 and 8 of this thesis (Cox & Thielgaard, 1986). Another layer is in the participatory aspect of this research, with the nature and understanding of spiritual knowledge being co-created between myself and my participants, and within this heuristic exploration co-created between myself, my inner world and my interviewer (Ferrer, 2002). Ultimately, this exploration of my experience as other fits within a transpersonal paradigm for two reasons. Firstly, because this became shadow work, where the reintegration of my own shadow through understanding my experiences as other in relation to the subject would be seen as a route towards individuation. And secondly, in echoing Johnson (1986, 1993), this project centred itself around the idea that working with active imagination, a key tenet of the transpersonal, was a route towards the reintegration of aspects of the self. I will therefore be presenting six themes which encapsulate my heuristic work in understanding my process as the other. These themes are presented in Figure 28 below:

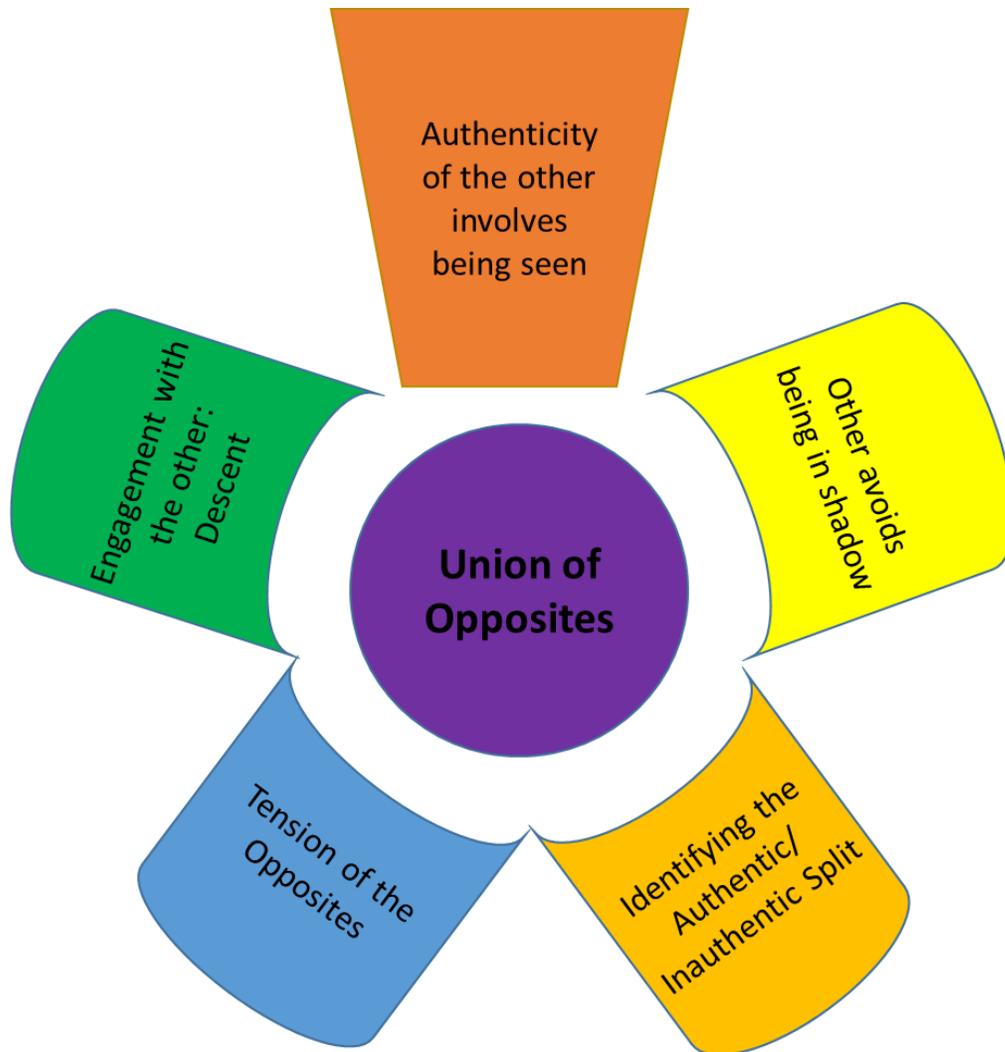


Figure 28: Heuristic themes

One of the most important aspects of presenting my themes in this fashion is to emphasise that this not a linear process where one gains transpersonal reintegration by going through a set of predetermined stages. So, although each theme will be presented in turn this is for the ease of the reader. Next, in order to further facilitate this reintegration process, during this exploration it was also important to cross reference my own experience of the themes against those of my participants in chapters three to six to further underline how my experience as the other echoes theirs. It will also be important to relate my work here back to some of the self-chosen sand play imagery from

chapter eight as well, as a consideration of some of the symbols that I myself chose during the sand tray exercises. These together will therefore offer not only a deeper understanding of just how often experiences as other can occur, but also offer a further grounding of the themes raised within those chapters previously mentioned. The analysis of the heuristic process would therefore also be very much driven by the work that had gone beforehand.

It was furthermore important that this process be witnessed through the lens of alchemy. The idea of using alchemy emerged out of the heuristic process itself as during the incubation stage I quickly felt that the ideal means of underscoring my understanding of the material, and of presenting the potential for transformation which sits centrally within the transpersonal, would be by using the alchemical model as a map to trace my progress. Jung though, 'saw the alchemical model as a means of understanding the process of human transformation as it reveals itself through dreams' (Hamilton, 2014, p. 10). Although Hamilton roots his idea within the transpersonal, here he is talking primarily about dreams. Jung though certainly recognised that dreams were not the only means to trace this alchemical transformation. By also tracking the imagery apparent in active imagination, and a regular engagement with the unconscious via meditation and other means of indwelling, the process of transformation could also be understood. So, an alchemical overview of ones process sits central to the transpersonal idea that psychological transformation can be achieved through working with one's shadow and unconscious material (C. G. Jung, 1997; Marlan, 2005). But what is alchemy in this psychological context? To explore this briefly, Hamilton (2014) suggests that there are four stages of transformation within alchemy.

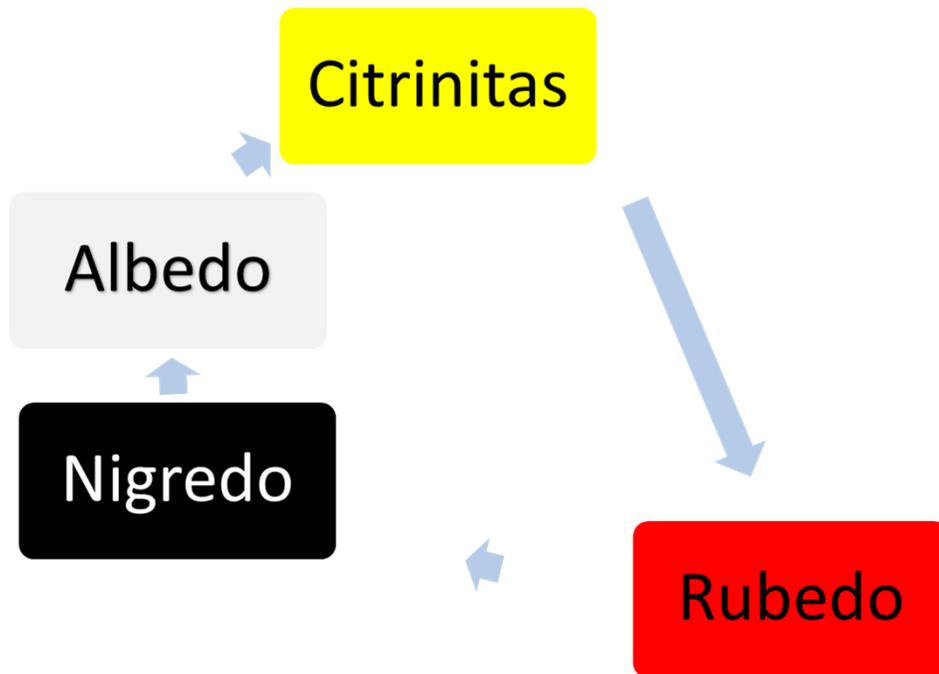


Figure 29: Alchemical stages

Figure 29, *the alchemical stages*, is presented in such a fashion to emphasise that the first three stages of the process of alchemy involve an ascent, or a moving inward to challenge the ego structures which need to be broken down for psychological transformation to occur. The last stage therefore involves a coming back down to earth for the final stage. Going into more depth, the first stage, titled nigredo, involves the breaking down of one's sense of self, an identity built around an acceptance, unconscious or otherwise, of one's role as the other. As Marlan (2005) states this stage is often termed as the dark night of the soul, where the previous egoic sense of self symbolically dies or is killed in order to make way for a new sense of being. The next stage, albedo, involves a moving towards the union of opposites, or the marriage of the egoic sense of self with aspects of itself projected into the unconscious, the peak of which is the relatively brief citrinitas stage. Then the final stage is rubedo where whatever has been learnt in the psychic reuniting of ego and unconscious must be grounded and used externally in some fashion, or as

Jung states ‘the increasing participation of consciousness, which now begins to react emotionally to the contents produced by the unconscious’ (1953/1963, p. 230). There is one caveat to my use of alchemy that is important to note at this juncture. Alchemy as designated by Jung and others has its roots predominantly planted within a Western understanding of spirituality, although its true origins can be traced back to North Africa, and with definite connections to West African spiritual traditions (Kankpeyeng, Nkumbaan, & Insoll, 2011; Marlan, 2005). For example, the spiritual beliefs of the Yoruba people in West Africa saw transformation as a process one underwent in relation to the guiding spirits and the ancestors through ritual and dreams, which is similar to western alchemy (Dalian, 2016). This is important for my research as it brings the spiritual other into focus within the transpersonal, ridding it of the cloak of colonialism which threatens to silence its importance. So, even with the whitening of alchemy in the West, it is hugely important to recognise the influence of African spirituality on alchemy thereby giving alchemy back its Afrocentric roots. As this research is about difference and the other, it is also essential that I present what I understand of the symbols and metaphors presented here from a more holistic perspective as well, bringing in other spiritual ideas and meanings that resonate for my research. As a black British man of African and Caribbean descent, it therefore seemed essential that I include meanings derived out of my own culture for some of the symbols and images presented. This is not to reinvent alchemy and rewrite the words of those already mentioned, but it is to broaden the spectrum of understanding of this process so it is less Eurocentric, a criticism often levelled at the work of Jung and many of the other early psychotherapists. Another means of considering the ideas behind alchemy is that Jung, especially during his early writing period was often prone to the exotification of the oriental religions. From a more post-colonial view, this type of criticism would be similar to that levelled by Said (2003) against Jung’s brief mentor, Sigmund Freud, in an

interesting talk where he was extremely critical of Freud for not recognising the other in his work his ideas being limited predominantly by presented from both Greco-Roman and Hebrew lenses.

Offering a similar brief critique of Jung, where I feel Jung is at fault is in his suggestion that only certain religions were part of the transpersonal, leaving out many of the more indigenous cultures, such as those of East Africa where he travelled during a time where his native Germany strove to establish itself as a colonial power. This narrowing view of the transpersonal, and also of the symbolism within alchemy, I strongly believe has contributed to the accusation that the transpersonal is guilty of engaging in the same neo-colonial narcissism as other aspects of psychotherapy (Turner et al., 2015). So, although Jungian alchemy has its roots in North African mysticism as practiced by the shamans, it has therefore been important that I offer a more culturally specific expansion of some of the symbols so as not to limit my ideas accordingly. I will therefore now be beginning the explication of my heuristic research results beginning with an exploration of the theme of *'Descent'*.

**Descent**

Marlin (2005) explores the existence of a shadow in his Eurocentric perspective on the transpersonal, his view in his book acting as a gateway to the alchemical exploration of the nigredo stage of alchemy, the first and often most difficult stage in working with an experience of otherness. His idea is key to understanding this first theme from my Heuristic research process. In my going back into my past, and considering my experiences as the other, I was always going to encounter difficult, suppressed feelings, emotions that if reintegration were possible would provide a path towards individuation. It was therefore important to consider a variety of experiences as other, and to be brave enough to dredge up these powerful unconscious feelings. This diary extract was one of my earliest attempts to engage with this difficult material:

*Diary extract: 18th Jan 13*

*Saw myself in a meeting today, the only man surrounded by female colleagues. I didn't feel intimidated, as I might have done in the past, I just felt separate. This time it was a less isolating experience for two reasons; a. I was very intrigued /interested in the topic presented, and b. I feel more confident in this (academic) space (I'm still finding my feet). Time and working out how to be are important as the other. Working out which qualities are needed/acceptable/important given the current situation.*

In Chapter six of this thesis I considered the theme of solitude and isolation as both a negative and a positive experience of being the other; positively, because as Said (1993a) discussed the outsider as an intellectual can be a positive influence on the culture it is excluded from, and negatively because as Benjamin (1998) discusses the outsider often finds it difficult to be with the

aloneness of solitude. What is also important here within this statement are my efforts to find a way not to feel in deficit to the majority within that academic space, a perspective the other can often be cast into via the power struggle between the absolute and the other. This is a common theme for the other, this sense that as other they perceive themselves as less than, and talks of a covertly narcissistic element within the other, where there is a comparison with the external to give itself validation, this being a form of centrifugal narcissism as posited by Zondag (2004) where the absolute sees itself as having power over others whilst also needing the other to validate its own sense of self.

There are also other factors which are important here. Firstly, I am the only black man, in the room, a difference created by my colour, yet it is my interest in the topic being discussed, that keeps me almost at the same level as my peers in my own perception, as if I am resisting this difference. From this diary entry, it is important here to notice two things; firstly, that the subject/other dyad involves a splitting off of power initially and a projecting of this power onto the majority, and secondly, that even in these early stages there is a growing sense of awareness that something needs to be regained in order for personal growth to occur, with both of these highlighted by my statement, *'I didn't feel intimidated, as I might have done in the past, I just felt separate.'* This separation though is not just an interpersonal one, it is also intrapersonal, as the early synchronicity of a dream on the same day also suggests:

*Dream Entry: 18th Jan 13*

*Scene from a dream where I'm in my parent's house and I'm walking through the corridors on the ground floor. It's night time and the lights are on, but as I stand by the stairs to the basement I see that downstairs is plunged into darkness, so I hesitate to go down. The dream ends with me still at the top of the stairs.*

The separateness here is presented in my reluctance to descend towards my internal other, or my shadow. My hesitation is only fleeting, but the fear of my own 'inner other', or that which I do not know about myself, is actually quite powerful, so much so that the dream ends before I go any further. This is a form of resistance to the inner change that is coming, and is part of what Jung (1963) speaks of as the initial stage of the nigredo where there is a moral standstill where all decisions are hampered by indecision. For myself, there was an acknowledgement that change was emergent, and in conjunction with this realization emerged egoic fear and resistance. There is an entering of the nigredo stage of alchemy here, an approach towards the unknown represented by what might be 'downstairs'. But it is the last dream of this month when viewed through an alchemical lens that in its simplicity underlines just how much my process during January involved the alchemical operation of nigredo:

*Dream entry: 28th Jan 2013*

*Part of a larger dream where I'm wandering around a block/building with lots of other people. I'm staying in a single room. I come to my room and the middle-aged white man next door helps me to arrange my washing, my clothes, in my room before I honourably decide to help him with his and I have to go next door to do so.*

This is a solutio dream (Hamilton, 2014). In dreams, within each alchemical process there will be certain alchemical operations that need to occur as a means of forging, or whittling down, the egoic sense of self in order to facilitate change. One of these is termed solutio as it is an operation that occurs with water. In the dream's selection of a *'middle-aged white man'* the dream is also highlighting my inauthenticity as I am tied to the absolute as presented by the white man, together with the metaphor of rinsing and washing of my dirty clothes suggesting change is coming. Another interesting aspect of the dream is that I am initially residing in a single room, on my own. A third aspect involves the clothes themselves. This is the in-between discussed by Buber (2002) where he argued that the potential for change resided in the interaction between the I and the Thou. Whilst a final perspective suggests the spiritual nature of water from an Afrocentric perspective, for example, Mbiti (1989) in his work on African religions suggests that many cultures connect the spirits to water. For example the popular spirit Mami Wata (Drewal, Nunley, & Salmons, 2008) discussed how this spirit could be seductive and also dangerous often bringing change. Ultimately though, my perspectives state there is an engagement with spirit that emerges out of an engagement with the other.

### **Identifying the Authentic/Inauthentic split**

Where post-structuralists speaks of the ability of the signified to be identified by its relationship to the signifier, from a transpersonal perspective it is important to understand that the absolute cannot exist without the nothingness separate to it, and vice versa (Belsey, 2002; Carter, 2013; Villet, 2011). Yet whereas in the first theme there was an engagement with my interpersonal otherness, and with it a growing awareness of my resistance towards engaging on a deeper level with my intrapersonal other, this next theme then brings my intrapersonal other into focus for the first time, and with it an understanding of the inauthenticity that goes with being the compliant other. This theme is important as heuristic work should challenge the researcher to change themselves in the service of science, but as is often the case with heuristic research there is often resistance to such deep change (Johnson, 1993; Sela-Smith, 2002). It was therefore important that I be interviewed every six weeks by an experienced fellow psychotherapist who would challenge my resistances to going any deeper in my understanding of myself, and who also had knowledge of working with creative methods. Our first interview was important as it brought visual form to the repressed anger that sat inside of me, a power mentioned in the previous theme as an aspect of myself that I had learnt to hide in order to fit in. As stated in the Methodology chapter, visualizations and drawings were used to facilitate the emergence and understanding of my unconscious other. Out of a visualisation I discovered the image of a Rottweiler which I subsequently drew. I discussed this image, which is figure 29, in the following exchange with my interviewer:

*Interviewer: It doesn't look like you are angry. There's something like an incongruence between the Rottweiler who wants to burst out.*

*DT: Well maybe that's part of the submission. Because that reminds me of you know, being a bit of a boy when I was a kid and you know, we always got comments on how well presented, how well behaved we were, and all that sort of stuff. Play the role to some degree. But that's not always how, you know, how I felt underneath that.*

This inauthenticity the interviewer has picked up here is important as it connects with the *Submissive Other* of chapter four where, as previously discussed, in order for the other to feel safe, it takes on the role given to it by the narcissism of the absolute. The other therefore plays the mirror for the absolute, reflecting back its self-designated superiority. My own extract is of interest as it presents a more historical perspective of this submission, of the child who had been encouraged by his parents to be a certain way in order to not appear at all threatening to the majority. The playing of the role here belies what lay underneath, so it is appropriate here for me to surmise that the Rottweiler was that which was suppressed here in order for the boy to comply with the wishes of his own parents and fit in. Returning to the interview I was then encouraged to pick up a symbol that would represent how I might like to express the power of the Rottweiler, choosing Batman. My experience of Batman was expressed in the following paragraph:



Figure 30: Rottweiler and Batman

*DT: It is the darkness of the character that attracts me to it. There is a courage, a courageousness there to put himself out time and time again for the betterment of others. He doesn't always get it right. I feel quite emotional as I say it.*

*I: For me what I see is the Rottweiler is the raw almost primitive emotion that is a response to being put down, being rendered powerless. It is like fire energy that's roaring. Whereas it becomes humanised and somehow in the superhero it becomes harnessed for a purpose.*

*DT: Ok which then becomes something which is harnessed by the humanity, by one's humanity and focused in that. To right wrongs.*

The image of the man smiling and the Rottweiler vibrating speak strongly of the dualistic split that sits central to this theme. The positioning of the image and the symbol here in figure 30 displays my angry desire to devour the Batman, to swallow or suppress him. This is what the other does in order to remain submissive, it suppresses its own power, turning it against that which might be more authentic within itself. The Batman image could also be seen as something narcissistic on my part, a narcissistic fantasy that I can save others, or post colonially via a Freirean lens my adopting the grandiose position of the white saviour is my attempt not to feel in deficit within myself (Straubhaar, 2015). Given that it was my family who forced me to suppress my Rottweiler initially because of their own desire to fit in, all of these positions would make sense. Alternatively, a more alchemical approach to the symbol of the hero suggests that it is necessary to access the qualities within this archetype in order to achieve what the alchemists would term as the 'unio mentalis' or the union of the mind and the body (Jung, 1963). For now though, this display of the opposites is an excellent example of how my words, images and symbols highlight my own false humility, an idea echoed from a transpersonal perspective by Walach (2008) who termed this the Moses complex, or the underside of transpersonal narcissism, where one sacrifices oneself for the majority. The reverse of this would be where the guru is all-knowing, or where the transpersonal narcissist becomes inebriated on their own grandiosity and tries to negate that which might be deemed the spiritual other; for example, the attempt of religions in the Global North to negate the importance of spiritual beliefs from say more indigenous cultures. In my paper where I investigate these two dyadic positions I write about the importance of creating an intersubjective space where creativity and meaning might spring forth (Turner, 2015). The transpersonal narcissist though is not interested in this creation of meaning, but instead brings meaning themselves to any problem or situation. Where this is important for my research is that the majority hold meaning for

everything, and the other, as presented by this exchange, suppresses that which makes him other, and thereby might lead to the creation of an intersubjective space, and attempts to become the same as the majority in order to fit in.

In this context, my reticence to admit to my own inner Rottweiler led to me feeling powerless in the face of the subject, hence the interchange at the meeting in the theme '*Descent*'. Yet, by admitting to its existence in my shadow-other, and seeing how it could be transformed into something positive that could be used for the benefit of others, a roadmap appears where I might now integrate this aspect of my internalised other. This theme of self-disempowerment was highlighted further in astonishing fashion via the lens of the sand tray exercise that was conducted in this interview, which is presented as figure 31 below. For myself I chose a white man, for my interviewer I selected a tall black woman, and for the relationship I selected a pterodactyl.



Figure 31: (White) interviewer as a black woman

When asked to select items by the interviewer and to explain why I had selected a pterodactyl I offered the following explanation:

*'Pterodactyl is about to take off and that's the only thing I can say – although he is partly buried in the sand... when I first put him in there he was a lot deeper in the sand. Um... Not sure, just... mmmm... actually he looks slightly fearful. Intimidated slightly. I don't know. Yeah. We'll go with that – intimidated.'*

The burying of the pterodactyl in the sand is important as it speaks of an aspect of our relationship which has been made unconscious or suppressed and is seemingly about to emerge. It is also important that I see the dinosaur as frightened, representing the intimidated fear of the absolute that has to be suppressed when the other submits and tries to become one of the majority. Building on this point, we then went on to discuss the symbol of the white man:

*'Yeah, a bit of fear or holding back in some way. I think there is some fear. There is some holding back in that figure. I actually want to say as well. This, his right hand looks like it wants to lash out at someone, like he is preparing to slap something. Which probably emanates back to our Rottweiler from earlier on.'*

This statement speaks of the anger of the other, again tying this idea back to the theme discussed in chapter four, with my inauthentic self as the other having to witness my own power displayed before me, power I had denied myself of by adopting the role of the submissive other. There is also an interesting link to the theme, *the other fixes its identity in relation to the absolute*, as presented in the sand tray work in chapter eight. I am presenting with the same aggression towards the absolute, this time represented by the interviewer, as the participants in that section. It also speaks of the rage of the Rottweiler which is pent up within this man, and barely suppressed. Its rage is directed at the black African woman, who seems to hold all of the power in the tray. My rage as an inauthentic white man speaks of both the anger that I had at a conforming aspect of myself, the fear and anger of that which has been objectified. There is a fear here of the power that she holds in her deportment, with the woman looking elegant and proud whilst the white man

seems clumsy and angry. In an attempt to get me to access that power temporarily, I was then invited to speak as the black woman:

*DT: How interesting. I am a tall elegant powerful black woman. I do my job every day. I am very in touch with the land around me. I am very loyal to my family and to my culture, to my tribe. Why me? I want to say. Hmmm.*

*I: Tell me about your power.*

*DT: It is simple really. I am it. I am that power. I don't have to try too hard. What I do and how connected I am to the world around me is my power. I get power from the water I drink and I give back power in praise and thanks.*

The importance of the three symbols together are that they show just how inauthentic I had become as the other in order to fit in with a majority through the suppression of my black identity and 'making myself white' in the process, an idea echoed by Davids (2012), who although he does not utilise creative means to understand this process acknowledges its presence. It is also important here to notice the projection of the contra-sexual other onto my interviewer in this exercise. In this context, the images here of the dinosaur and the projection of power onto the black woman tie in with the earlier realisation of powerless against the subject. The suppression of power here is also important as it ties in with the internalised experience of being the other from figure 30 where my own incongruity meant that I presented one amenable face to the world whilst holding onto another one deemed more frightening by the majority. The pterodactyl/relationship though is probably the most important symbol of all as, as previously considered, it speaks of just how early this split occurred within me echoing, Turner who in her consideration of the symbols present in

sand tray work states ‘the prominent presence of dinosaurs may allude to a long family legacy of hurt and dysfunction’ (2005, p. 158), speaking of the earliest of repressions and something most probably passed along the generations. It was also present in some of the early sand play exercises presented in chapter 8, and this symbol then links itself to my earlier statement of the boy who in childhood had learnt to be compliant to fit in and survive. This therefore leads us to the idea of projection being a means of isolating oneself from one’s own environment (C. G. Jung, 1959). On reflection, I presented other dinosaur symbols in my participant sand trays at this early point of my heuristic study, highlighting the importance of acknowledging repressed aspects of the self when working with the other.

### Other avoids being in the shadow

Earl (2001) in her rich paper on the shadow in spirituality, quite rightly suggests that the shadow if left unacknowledged is exactly the force that would create splits within the transpersonal. This impressive starting point offers an invaluable route towards understanding what must happen to the other in order for them to survive in the world. My research leads me to assert that Buber (2002, 2010), Levinas (Hand, 2009; 2006), and other theorists posited ideas around a dyadic relationship between absolute and the mirror/other. I now see this as being incomplete as there is a third route, and that is the absolute versus the mirror-object other with what I will call the shadow other in the unconscious beneath it, as presented below;

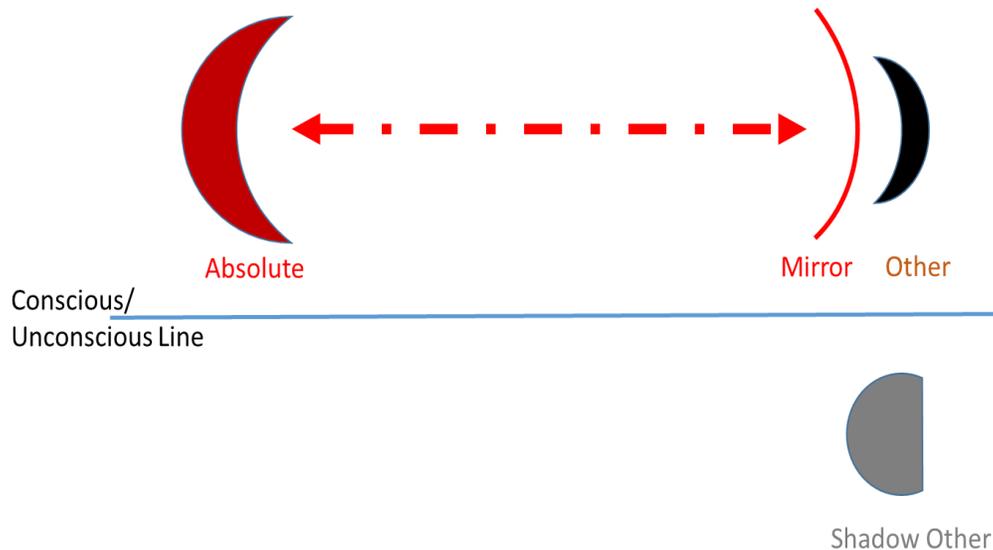


Figure 32: Transpersonal other(ing)

The important parts to recall from figure 32 are that as the absolute gazes at itself in the mirror/other, the other is then cast into darkness. It is not seen or acknowledged. And as other becomes the mirror for the absolute, there is a suppression of its own shadow, or its own potential,

into the unconscious. This is essential for this particular theme as now I have identified the split between the objectified other and the authentic other, this research then moves to understand the authentic other in the shadow of the unconscious. Yet now, in my re-engagement with my own sense of otherness, how does the other maintain this position of otherness? How does it deal with the pain of not being witnessed by the absolute? These are the overriding questions behind this the third theme. To begin to answer these questions, in my own case my sense of otherness and separation was managed by developing my own rich inner world, as per the interview extract and the image which are explored below in figure 33:



Figure 33: Early life mandala as other

*Int: So, you had a rich fantasy world?*

*DT: Yeah, yeah, every part of the house used to be a different country. So, we would move the World Cup around, every couple of years. Sometimes we'd end up in my parents' bedroom or something like that [laughs] I used to have a very rich inner world in that way. I just wanted to be Dr Who's assistant. There was the TARDIS. Then a superhero. Then a World Cup footballer, even if I didn't realise what that was. I used to read an awful lot when I was a kid, comic books, books; I talked to somebody about having a real fascination with dinosaurs at one point. I think a lot of kids do, but it is... dunno, I think that this is normal? It probably is in some way.*

The importance of the development of this internal world here is that for the other its survival involves an engagement with the narcissistic other as discussed in chapter 6. There is an immature grandiosity here constructed out of the separation from the absolute, with the image speaking of this separation with the words in green '*everyone else is outside*'. The fact the image is shaped like a world also speaks of this narcissistic position as I have literally placed myself in the middle of my own universe, around which my world rotates. This is also emphasised by the fact that three of the symbols involve being heroes or the best at something (i.e. the doctor from Dr Who, the athlete, and the superman in the cape).

Another important factor is the sense of isolation, echoing the theme discussed in chapter six, where the other holds a distance to the absolute and finds its identity within itself, for example through its creativity. Next, the fact there is an empty space in of the quadrants is interesting as it suggests something absent, or hidden. To echo another theme from Chapter six, the isolated other often coped with its separateness by creating, a point echoed by Storr (1988) in his consideration

from this perspective of the pain, and even the usefulness, of the isolation of the other. The development of these themes shows here the other is avoiding its own sense of isolation by becoming more than just the other. Yet, to return to the idea presented in figure 31, something more authentic has to be suppressed in order to be other. A series of shadowy dreams then highlights this struggle:

*Dream entry: 18<sup>th</sup> March 13*

*Scene where I'm in a dream with what looks like a Cricket or a Cockroach. I'm a little wary of it but then I let it go on its way. Then its nest jumps up at me, a mixture of twigs bound together by webbing it into a circle. The nest shocks me so much I wake up!*

The interesting thing about cockroaches is they are incredibly difficult to kill, so in this instance the repressed shadow of being the other is presented as such an animal in order to say to me that although I might have repressed it, it is still present within me. It is my ego though that wakes me up as a protection against my fear of my unconscious other. At this stage, there were many dreams of this nature, dreams that involved my searching around the basement of my 'home' for either another black man, or dreams of my being angry at the repression of others. What these dreams tell me is that my searching to understanding the other is a quest to understand myself. This is the beginning of the power of the shadow, as it starts to alert me of its presence. The dreams also alert me to another problem; that in order for there to be any kind of re-integration of the shadow, the ego which is keeping me away therefore has to succumb, or to die. Again, one of the most interesting things about the shadow work presented here is the unconscious' means of

presenting a dream involving difference which encapsulates this death perfectly, like this following dream:

*Dream entry: 29<sup>th</sup> of March:*

*Scene where I'm out food shopping and I enter a market/grocery store where lots of fruit and veg is on sale. Whilst there I stand on a forklift-trolley and I start to play doing all kinds of tricks with the handle like an acrobat dancing, balancing, bending sliding this way and that. I even see XXXXXX (an MA student) and we greet each other. As I slide out of the shop though I bump into two oriental men, one slightly plumper, who distracts me whilst his skinnier friend suddenly stabs me in the back of the head with a knife. As I fall to the ground they run off.*

The first section of the dream, where I am dancing and balancing and showing off is a very grandiose part of myself that desires to be seen and witnessed; an aspect of my narcissistic other self. It is interesting though that it is a Masters student who I greet, as if the unconscious is also suggesting that my grandiosity is holding me back from progressing beyond an MA and achieving my goal of obtaining a PhD. It is important to also consider that this is a nigredo dream, with the underlying alchemical operations of mortification, represented by images and symbols around death, and separation, where the symbols show a separation of some type (Marlan, 2005). Mortificatio and separatio often go together as alchemical operations in this stage of alchemy, so tying this together with my exploration of difference, in this the dream there is a death by the other, or that which is deemed different or separate. Ultimately, I have to die in order to be reborn, or as Hamilton states, 'anger in a dream such as this could be our fire nature acting positively in

protecting the self and helping us to individuate' (2014, p. 85). The mind, or the ego, has been split here in order for something new to emerge, for me to move beyond a Masters and achieve something more, and it is also interesting that it is that which I deem different in the dream, the two oriental men, who kill me in order for this process to happen.

**Tension of the opposites**

There are numerous theories which discuss how identity is formed out of the dyad of subject and other, master and slave, from post structuralism to mirror stages of psychotherapy, but as discussed in the previous theme, this research has led me to ascertain that there is a third force at play for the other, and this is the unconscious other. To restate, transpersonally the unconscious other is the authentic part of the other which has been forced into the unconscious in order for the absolute to maintain its prominent position to the nothingness. In a more Buberian fashion I would term this the Unconscious Thou, which when reintegrated into the other allows it to be more authentic and real, echoing Li's (2006) more Buddhist perspective where meaning making is dependent upon the thou of the dyad. The dreams and diary entries within this theme held everything from a conflict between myself and other, to a growing awareness of the tension of trying to fit in when in situations where I might have been an outsider. The following diary entry is an excellent example of the growing tension I am discussing here:

*Diary extract: 12<sup>th</sup> April*

*Difference for me has meant 'compulsion' this week. Not addiction, just an obsessive and compulsive side that comes up whenever I try to sit with this topic. The compulsion is the empty feeling at the pit of my stomach when I have to engage with the topic of difference, and my own difference. At the Anglo-Brazilian Society tour of the Houses of Parliament on Monday I was again the only black man there, although there were lots of Brazilians and English people there as well, as always. I recall the nod I gave a black security guard, a sign of acknowledgement that we were the only black people present, and also to alleviate and anxiety about being the 'Other(s)' in that situation. I feel sad talking about it now from*

*this angle as the nod, the coming together in/for a moment, is a common theme in the black community.*

Firstly, in this diary entry I am in the seat of majority power, the Houses of Parliament, and I find myself drawn to the only other black face present. The theme of the '*other is drawn to otherness*' discussed in chapter five is important here, as it speaks of the need to find safety and security in numbers. Secondly, this sense of compulsion I feel is important to acknowledge it is another aspect of being the other that is often overlooked; that of the struggle to hold an identity formed out of two cultures, the tension leading to addictive or compulsive behaviours. It is this type of argument put forward by Moloney, Hunt and Evans (2008) in their study linking acculturation theory to addiction. The tensions are many in this entry though. Firstly, there is my being a part of the Anglo-Brazilian Society, which as a black British man means I am automatically an outsider. Then there is the Society's visit to the Houses of Parliament, where we are all outsiders paying court to a colonial seat of power. The last is my own separateness from both groups as the only black man of African descent there in a group of South Americans and Europeans. These layers of difference, together with my exploration of this topic, left me very much aware of my sense of otherness. This entry is therefore my own acculturated struggle to find an identity within both cultures. It also underlines just how difficult the acculturation process actually is for an individual or a group, why there may well be such a draw to addictive behaviours as a consequence of this reintegration, and how this theme of the tension of opposites is relevant here, suggesting a possible route to also understand acculturation as an unconscious struggle to bridge between an egoic identity and a more authentic one.

Finally, for this theme, although this tension in the diary entry is presented from an interpersonal perspective, intrapersonally the tension of opposites is an important rite of passage. As Jung suggests about human beings that it is the ‘tension of the opposites in him, which in its turn tempers and intensifies his personality’ (1954, p. 144), his idea being that through the tension of ego and shadow who we are is developed and forged into something new. I agree with his idea here that this tension, this struggle, was something for me to endure under this theme, as difficult as it may have been. What was most difficult for myself in this theme was to maintain this tension. Ambivalences, avoidances, compulsions, can all seek to sabotage the ability of the other to maintain this position of opposites betwixt which sits the creativity Buber (2002) and Kitaro (1989) speak of in their works. What perhaps gets lost in Jung’s idea about this tension is the difficulty and the pain attached to this process, a perspective acculturation recognises in its numerous studies from cultural perspectives. This struggle of the opposites was therefore not only an interpersonal one, as this following dream highlights:

*Dream entry: 15<sup>th</sup> April*

*I’m watching as a young boy in a ‘Middle Eastern’ war zone as he runs along a road and then throws a grenade into a builder’s hut as we run away from it. The scene changes to me on my bunk bed in my parent’s house, my old bedroom. I’m with two young women and I’m talking about my father having bought the house in the 1950s before he kept it as it is and how it is too expensive to change now. The other woman has rescued a stray puppy and placed it in a box on the floor. It starts to panic scratching at the sides of the box. It then escapes and attacks the girl, before throwing her aside. Then it drags the other girl off the bed. She is screaming so I grab a long window hook (from work) and beat the dog*

*as it grows and its nails become unbelievably long. It then rugby tackles me and I wake up!*

This dream aggressively presents the internal unconscious conflict ensuing in this process of reintegration; from the conflict in the warzone in the first section of the dream, where I am/with the other at war, to the conflict to keep the puppy (otherwise known as my shadow) at bay with a long staff, a very phallic symbol representing my ego. Yet again though, this shadow/puppy wants to be known so it grows and attacks me, my ego's only defence being to wake me up. This is the unconscious' attempt to re-integrate projected shadow aspects discussed by von Franz (1980) in her book on the topic, where she clearly states that whole cultures would need to undergo this same process of shadow recollection in order for them to grow and proceed. The diary entry and the dream together are excellent examples of the tensions and conflicts present in this theme and speak clearly of the unconscious difficulties inherent within my efforts to reintegrate my own shadow parts in order to rediscover my authenticity.

### **Union of the Opposites**

This important theme actually started to emerge during the third month of this study into my own process as the other. During the last three months of this study, I recorded 18 conjunctio dreams of varying types. Conjunctio in this context involves the union of contra sexual opposites as a symbol for the intrapersonal reintegration of aspects of the self which have emerged out of the unconscious. From a more Jungian perspective, the idea behind the anima is that only by working with the shadow material of a client could there then be any opportunity for the client to reconnect with their true sense of self (C. Jung, 1990; E. Jung, 1957). Although ideas about the anima and animus have been criticized for years as being anything from sexist to outmoded (von Raffay, 2000), what is important here though is to notice the symbolic nature of this theme; that I, as a man, am reconnecting with that which is my first, and therefore unconscious other, presented symbolically by the feminine. To offer an example of the types of dreams during this stage, they were simple and said very little, their frequency being the important aspect here:

*Dream entry: 8<sup>th</sup> June*

*Scene where I'm in a room with X and we have just made love. She is stood beside a red wardrobe so I go to hug/embrace her. I feel as if we won't have sex again for a while although I want to tomorrow (?).*

Although, these dreams are hugely important they were not the only means by which this union was achieved during this theme as dreams of celebration were also apparent. It is also important to notice that within this theme there are fewer presentations of the themes from the other chapters, as there is less of an avoidance of being the other and there is an acceptance of the

shadow side of being the outsider. The major symbolic reference point for this theme though emerged out of the third self-interview, where not only did we identify the split between my unconscious other and the nothingness, but I was gifted a momentary experience of the union of these opposites. As the actual extract is too long to present here, the interview presented a progression through some of the themes explored above. Firstly, there was a progression from my egoic need to separate myself from the enormous star before me into the form of a spaceman watching from afar, echoing the very first theme of 'descent' and the reluctance to engage with my own sense of otherness. Then secondly, that in a confirmation of one of the ideas presented in the methodology, it is only via an investigation of the bodily experience of being the other that one can bypass the restrictions placed upon oneself by the mind (Lowen, 2013). Lastly, the nothingness is presented as being one part of a greater whole, with its own section containing nothing, emptiness, and solitude. For this exercise though, this split was presented as a star in two, presented below as Figure 34:



Figure 34: A star divided

The interview continued with an exploration of each of these pieces of the star, the first being the ‘Empty’ side:

*DT: Hmm my teeth just momentarily shook, and my blood starts to race. My right hand is tingling, part of my right hand is tingling and .... How very odd. There’s nothing here. It is like a big white space with nothing in it. All the possibilities were over here in this space. Oh, that’s very tricky. It is an empty space. I do not like this. It could be a room, it could be whatever, something like a hangar if you like, an aircraft hangar, but it is just empty. And I am walking through it. All the lights are on.*

*Interviewer: What’s the feeling?*

*DT: It is odd, it is lonely. Small. I'm in this enormous space.*

Here I am experiencing my nothingness. I sit in isolation, but opposite me on the other side of the 'star' is a world full of 'things'. This echoes the theme of 'separation' presented in chapter seven where the other sits in nothingness, and outside of their potential. This is therefore another exploration of the nothingness discussed throughout this chapter with its absence of anything; it is a void space. There is a physical discomfort in the 'shaking of the teeth' that comes with having to acknowledge this space within myself. This is a key part to an exploration of one's experience as the other, that the other has to acknowledge its own nothingness and recognise that an avoidance of this is a means of avoiding the unconscious absence of a single fixed identity, and an acceptance of the never-ending sense of potential.

The interviewer took me further into my exploration of this empty space by becoming it, by sitting within this enormous space, before encouraging me to do the same with the space full of things. Together, these spaces transformed themselves into an endless ocean, presented as figure 35:

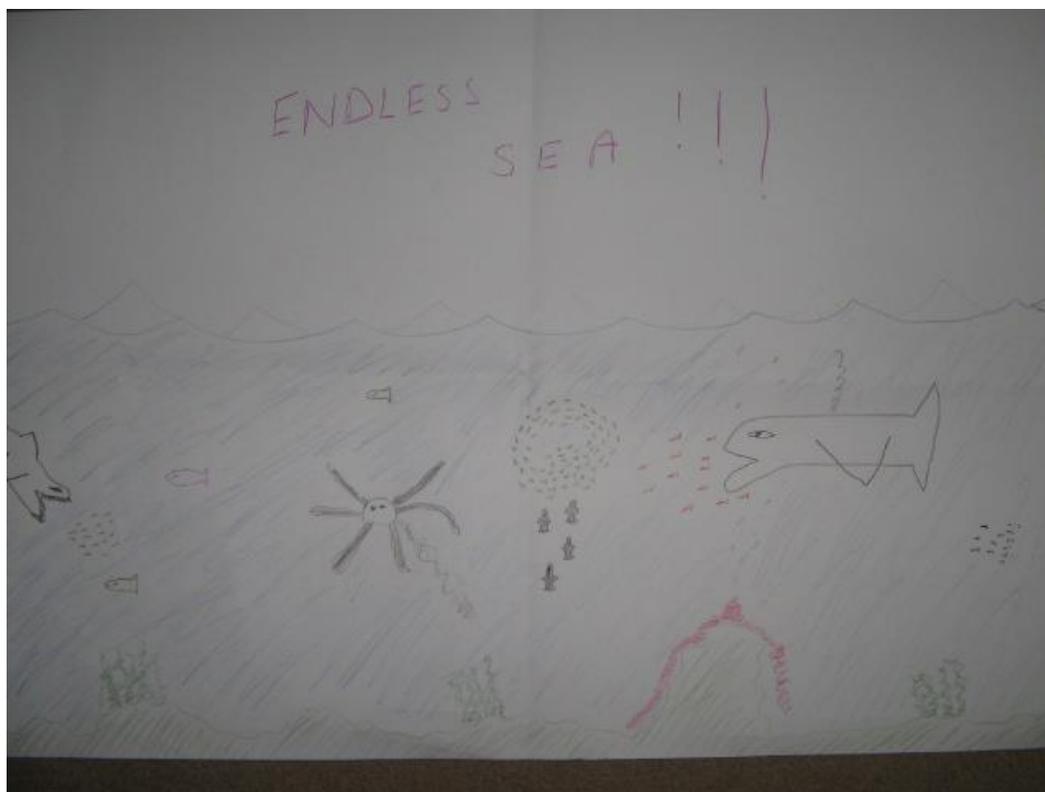


Figure 35: Unity - The endless sea

The importance of this intrapersonal transformation from the duality of just being one side of the star to being both parts in an interconnected sea should not be underestimated. It is at this point, for the first time, that a sense of Unity is achieved in this process. With it came a sense of peace and a recognition of the emotional, and experiential, differences between unity and duality as I state:

*'It is wonderful to look at. It is really quite powerful, but it is based on, yeah, the struggle to be witnessed. To feel... to feel alive, is the best way I can put it. Whereas in my space at the centre of this ocean, this endless ocean, it is different. I am alive because I am everything in this space. There is no trying, it just is. In a way, yeah. I think that's what*

*drives the struggle. That's what drives them from that earliest experience we talked about of not being seen. And yet if you are everything, then you don't need to be seen, because you automatically are. It is that paradoxical I guess.'*

The paradoxical relationship between being absolute and nothingness is wonderfully put here in my momentary experience of unity. The endlessness of everything and the combining of the two spaces which beforehand were separate have led to a temporary end to the struggle. The statement, *'if you are everything, then you don't need to be seen, because you automatically are'*, is hugely important here as it speaks of what life might be like without the very human struggle to be witnessed by the absolute. Theoretically, in some of his later writings, Nishida (1989) discusses the paradoxical position of absolute nothingness, where everything and nothing collide and creativity springs from the tension in-between, echoing similar ideas presented by Buber (2002) and within psychotherapy by Winnicott (Praglin, 2006). Where the 'endless sea' here is different is that there is no paradox, there is no nothing against which the everything collides. There is only the oneness of everything in that moment. Alchemically, this could also be called the Citrinitas stage, or 'the marriage of soul with spirit' (Hamilton, 2014, p. 11), where there is no separate sense of self, where there is only oneness or Unity. At this point, this research therefore begins to meet its aim of proving that a relational perspective towards understanding one's sense of otherness is a route towards individuation. What this theme also provides is evidence of the endlessness Nishida speaks of, and which was also discussed in the transpersonal section of the review of the literature. For the other, remembering their connection to the nothingness becomes a potent reminder that identity is nebulous, endless and spiritual.

It is this that sits at the centre of the relational perspective hinted at by Buber (2010), Levinas (1961), and emphasised in many African spiritual traditions where one learns about oneself through the experience of, and relationship to, the infinite other (Oppenheim, 2012; Paris et al., 1993). The problem here is beyond this moment there is always a duality, there is always an I and a Thou, or an absolute versus a nothingness, meaning there is always, at best, a tension between the opposites. The importance though of recognising this tension, both externally and internally and being able to move beyond it is essential in order for continued reintegration of aspects of the self to take place. To highlight the importance of this stage my dreams altered, the content now containing a more celebratory feel. The following dream is an example of this stage:

*Dream entry: 8<sup>th</sup> June*

*Scene from a long dream I think where I'm in the middle of Talgarth Rd and I'm watching as a group of people and cars come past me in celebration. I'm with several friends, including one guy who is cross-dressing, and my brother is to my right. We all wave and cheer the procession onwards as the traffic jam heads West out of the city. The guy in the sky blue dress behind me asks if he can give me a kiss. I say yes, but with no tongue (dryly), so he kisses me excitedly, smudging his lipstick on me. My brother sighs dryly next to me so we all just continue to watch the procession.*

The importance of dreams during this stage should not be understated. Like this dream, there is an unconscious celebration of the completion of a cycle of reintegration. The dream here speaks of this not only in my embracing a trans other in the car, but also in the situating of the dream on a specific road I know well from my childhood.

Three more linked areas are worth noting within this dream. Firstly, from a more Buddhist perspective the union of opposites is believed to be the goal of Tibetan mysticism (Peters, 1990), but it is important to notice a subtle change in the unconscious material presented within the dreams; that of the man in the dress who I want to embrace whilst I'm sitting in a car during a procession. For Hamilton, this would be 'the balancing of masculine and feminine aspects in the dreamer – a physical embodiment of the conjunction of masculine and feminine. This is a first step towards the ultimate alchemical goal of the union of soul and spirit' (2014, p. 212), thereby showing a progression out of the dreams of the last theme where there was more tension as my ego resisted changed. Next, the feminine/contra-sexual other in the dream is actually a symbolic representation of the nothingness. This is important as it removes it from the rationalised misunderstanding that this symbol is purely about the socially constructed qualities allocated by psychologists and psychotherapists in their attempt to understand the anima. Thirdly, it is worth noting that I am in a car with all black men, a major contrast to the early dreams of this research where my own colour/difference was often in conflict with, or desiring connection to, the subject.

Where this theme is important is in the intrapsychic pushing through of an ego defence against acknowledging my own interpersonal nothingness, to a point where I come into contact with my own intrapersonal other, experiencing a moment of unity as a reward. At this point though, this is not an experience to be repeated in the wider world. It is the interpersonal translation of this experience that fits with the citrinitas, or also an alchemical marriage of matter and spirit, but which then needs to be grounded in the alchemical operation of rubedo, or the coming back down

to earth. This means a risk for the other though, and it is this risk which is explored in the next theme where in its newfound authenticity the other risks being seen.

**The authenticity of the Other involves being seen**

Like any process of unconscious reintegration, that momentary union of the opposites cannot last forever, and whatever has been learned and reintegrated has to be used or seen outside in the wider world. There is an inevitable re-separation from the unity consciousness. This brings with it a sadness, a depressive position which in this research I will state is the spiritual longing for the other, or the eternal Thou. Where there is also a challenge is with the bringing of spiritual material back to this plain of existence where it is most useful. Together, this is the stage of Rubedo (Hamilton, 2014), where once an intrapersonal alchemical cycle has been completed, the challenge is then to use what has been learnt interpersonally as well. Elements of my final interview underline this conflict and its potential resolutions, and was discussed quite early on in the June interview as I read an entry in my heuristic journal.

*“I don't want to eat, I can't sleep and I really feel like I need to get out and enjoy myself but I haven't the energy to do so. I am in a bad mood, I have a headache, and I am feeling listless. This is how it is for me when I am the outsider, when I am alone. This is not loneliness, I have no real longing to be around others. This is the outsider in me who writes this journal, who observes others, who watches and sees so much. I am talking about when I used to go out driving for hours or just sit in a cafe and read a book. This is a part of me that looks at the world, writes it down, explores it, but smiles at the wonder and beauty and is not afraid of its darkness and dangers. The outsider in me sits outside of the norm in order to observe and witness it but it also has to be aware of when it has to be in and around others.”*

The 'depression' on reflection could also be seen as a type of sadness borne out of not accepting there is always going to be a struggle against being the other for myself. For example, whereas during May's interview I was able to sit in the place of Unity and then of the paradox of absolute nothingness (Nishida, 1989), on my return back to 'life' I was only left with my position as the other, with the absolute projected all around me. At times, the other is invisible, and when it is isolated then it will either die or form its own fantasy inner world to compensate for this overwhelming sense of invisibility. The challenge to remain present and in the world was borne out by an exchange later on in the interview:

*Interviewer: I wonder if it is something about being seen?*

*DT: Well the other is not seen. The other can do whatever it wants to in its own world. If I am sitting in a cafe, just watching the world go by, actually I am fairly invisible. Does that make sense? Or that's the belief anyway, whether I am doesn't matter altogether. So maybe there is something about... I am having to be seen here...the other is not seen.*

The idea building here is the immense intrapersonal importance for the other in being seen by its peers, friends, family, but in this case by the majority. In not being seen, the results are similar to those of a child who is not witnessed by its mother, like in Lacan's (2003) mirror stages of development within psychotherapy, or Gasparyan (2014) who early in her paper suggests the other needs another person to be mirrored by, otherwise it does not know itself. Through my research, I now realize that this is not totally correct, as the other can always form an internal mirror, an internal fantasy world to be mirrored by, the problem being that this world it built within

the limits of the imagination (be that of a child or an adult) and lacks the sophistication that an interplay with the subject can bring. Where this study is important is in the recognition that mirroring stages of life then move beyond the early life scenarios posited by Lacan, Winnicott (1961, 1969), and Klein (Mitchell, 1986) from a more psychodynamic perspective, with their varying ideas about the initial parent-child dyad; to a more relational understanding of the other where the subject knows itself by an assessment of what it is not, meaning it is not the other (E. Levinas, 2006; Stevens, 1990; von Franz, 1980); to a more transpersonal perspective where the absolute-nothingness/unconscious other splitting presented earlier. This therefore means that throughout our life we struggle repeatedly with this internal/external duality, and it is very rare that we find a space where we exist totally in sameness or isolation.

Also of interest here, and somewhat paradoxically, the removing of the projections seems to have increased my own anxiety around holding the duality internally. It is as if the purpose of projection is to provide a settled space for the ego, and the return of these projections means the constant questioning and re-questioning of the egoic positioning that has been adopted during a period of sameness. The last sand tray exercise underlines this point further, providing evidence of just how much the projections discussed earlier in this section have returned.

*DT: Ok. I have got myself as car number 928*

*Int: A car what?*

*DT: A car number 928. I have no idea what type of car it is. I am also very aware that this is a place that since I came back to the tray... it is towards a*

*corner, so it is sort of backed into a corner a bit. So, yourself here. I saw this first when we opened the box.*

*The relationship is this multifaceted whatever it is in the middle of the box here, square... the fact that you can see different things from different angles is quite important. Yeah. For all his drive and... I don't know, horsepower or whatever, the old 1960s car, a business car... sort of backed into a corner. A car with a life of its own.*



Figure 36: Car number 928

The important thing here with this sand tray is noticing the transformation of the projection on to my interviewer; no longer is she a black woman, now she is white, and no longer am I

disempowered, I am a racing car; I am fast, powerful, going places, outside the norm, desirable, and separate to most people. Alongside this, the transparency of the item in-between, representing our relationship, suggests to me that 'I can see her now!' This is hugely important in confirming the part of my hypothesis that considered relating to the other as a route to individuation, but it also confirms von Franz's (1980) idea that the recollection of projections opens the gateway towards a different type of relationship with the interpersonal other. It also adds weight to the idea that an issue in sand tray work when worked with over time can lead to a softening or changing of the symbols from something more primal to something softer as the projection recedes (Kalff, 1991; Turner, 2005). This does not mean the process is easy, as the following discussion about the tension held in the return of the projections testifies to.

*Interviewer*    *How have you experienced me in this process?*

*DT:*            *Helpful, guiding, kind. And generous with your time and wisdom as well. But the shyness I have when I sometimes look at you. This is not anything new, this has sort of been around for a very long time. And maybe what I am... I am having to face it now, if you like... I am having to actually sit and deal with whatever it is that is beyond my natural innate shyness, that's how I am sometimes.*

There is an obvious tension here in my words. In being seen, I am risking of a new type of relationship with the interpersonal other. The other here risks a different type of intimacy, where it is not about myself and my own world, or my defences, but about the other. The other here is not invisible; it is out of the shadows and is being seen, something akin to emerging out of a

darkened room and shielding one's eyes. My research though discusses the difficulties of being only the other, and how when one exits that lonely position one then has to learn how to actually relate to alternative others without the mirrored glasses of a narcissistic projection.

It is also worth noting the power of working through the major differences between the more challenging and dramatic dreams and sand tray images of the first couple of stages led to the more settled and contained dreams and sand tray images later on. This change though is one that would then need to be continually grounded in external experience, answering questions of how do I take up my power in the world? How can I recover these aspects of myself in relationships with other subjects? And how can I continually maintain this quest for a deeper sense of knowing myself accordingly? These questions meaning that the desire to be seen is not over, but is ongoing, repeating itself time and time again.

## Summary

Although the six themes presented here via an alchemical lens are in order, this was not a linear journey from one end to the other. It should be stated that even at the end of the six months of heuristic work even though there was more integration there were also other challenges in being the other. This means that if there is a cycle that it is one of many which would be ignited by undergoing such an exploration of one's own experience as other, where aspects of the more authentic self are continually investigated, worked with, and hopefully lifted free from the unconscious.

Where this research is particularly strong is in its recognition that creative work, within a heuristic framework, works incredibly well in fashioning signposts on the route towards individuation and change. This does not mean this section of the research has been at all easy. Resistances, ambivalences against transcribing, reviewing or analysing my experience have at times threatened to derail what has been a difficult exploration of psychological self-understanding. This again highlights Sela-Smith's (2002) point from the introduction about the difficulty of undertaking heuristic research, especially when working transpersonally. This also says much about the interpersonal challenges in working with one's own sense of otherness, the resistances being more common than we often recognize and perhaps going some way to explaining the wider societal struggle to acknowledge the other and therefore to acknowledge change.

With this being the final section of results, the next chapter of this thesis will now be the concluding chapter where there will be a presentation of the main themes raised throughout this research project.

## Chapter Ten: Discussion

One of the key assumptions to this research was that we all have an experience of being the other, be it as in my own case as a man of colour living in a majority white city in the United Kingdom, or like my participants, because they are of a differing gender, from another culture, or a different religion. The experience of being the other is one of the most common experiences we all have, yet within psychotherapy it is also one of the most under researched and misunderstood. Through utilising creative techniques such as visualisation, drawing and sand tray work, techniques common to transpersonal psychotherapy, I have therefore sought to understand the unconscious experience of being the other. These techniques, when understood through a phenomenological lens, were then designed to create a picture of what it is to be the other, a picture built upon the collective experiences of 25 participants.

This final chapter is therefore a review of the findings derived from this research project. I will be discussing my original contribution to knowledge, especially in the light of the original aims and the literature discussed. This chapter will discuss the recommendations for future research together with a consideration of the practical implications of my study into our experience as the other for both psychotherapy and the transpersonal. There will also be a critique throughout this chapter of any areas of development I have recognised through undertaking this research, together with my suggestions on how they might be countered in any future research

### Summary of main claims

At the beginning of this project I set out to address four related aims. These were:

1. To explore the nature of being the other, and following the above assumption, provide evidence that being the other is a universal experience;
2. To investigate if working creatively with tools common to transpersonal psychotherapy would allow for a deeper exploration of the internalised experience of otherness;
3. To also creatively investigate the relationship the other has with the majority, meaning what is it that brings the other into relationship and holds it there; and
4. To show that a longer transpersonal engagement with one's own sense of otherness is a route to psychological wholeness.

Considering research aim number one, the initial idea behind this research was that we all have an experience of being the other at some point during our lives. Given this broad statement, and the wide range of possible experiences, a phenomenological approach to understanding this experience has been essential to understanding this experience. The reasoning here is that a purely heuristic exploration of one's experience as the other would have had many limitations. Firstly, it would be a purely subjective experience of being other, without the more objective experiences derived from the explorations of my 25 participants. And secondly, recognising my own experiences as other, and in particular through the self-interviews, has been invaluable in challenging my own prejudices and assumptions throughout this research. The idea that any researcher has an indirect impact upon the research material has been a source of concern for social scientists for an age. Yet what my self-interviews allowed for was they challenged and informed

the research, counteracting any biases held within myself which may have impacted upon the research. For example, the heuristic theme *'identifying the authentic/inauthentic split'* underlines and echoes the phenomenological theme *'submission of the other'* in its recognition of the experience of being other, and the survival mechanisms put in place in order to maintain a sense of safety. The heuristic echo therefore provides a lived experience of being the other.

The participant interviews also aided a second problem. Any universalisation of my heuristic experience would in itself create the other, meaning that should someone else researching this same experience and have a differing result, their approach could have been denigrated as wrong, made invisible, or been distanced in some fashion. It has therefore been important to deploy a collective means of understanding this experience, an idea which has worked incredibly well with the richness and depth of the results derived from the words of my participants. Having completed this project, I now strongly advocate for a more relational approach to understanding transpersonal experiences, echoing Heron and Reason's (2001) call for research methods that more closely include the experience of participants, his idea being that they change to become participants. This also holds echoes of Ferrer's (2002) writings on the topic where he argues for a more participatory exploration of the transpersonal in research, thereby giving greater depth to our understanding of transpersonal phenomena. My research centres itself in and around these two paradigm shifts within the transpersonal and strongly underlines the importance of us co-creating meaning around the experience of being the other in the modern age. Without this double layering of understanding, the results presented here would not be anywhere near as rich. Secondly, my well-structured research project, where by working creatively with a breadth and range of participants and their experiences, proffered experiences and understanding that could benefit the

transpersonal greatly, broadening its range from the purely spiritual separate from the world to the spiritual within the world.

The third addition to knowledge arising out of my research emerges from the development of a transpersonal lens for understanding our experience as the other. Clearly influenced by post-colonial, feminist, and other means of understanding our experience as other, the transpersonal approach that underpins this research is a worthwhile addition to the debates surrounding this often difficult experience. To underpin my perspective here, the idea of there being a transpersonal other sits central to a paper written by myself where I advocate for the inclusion of other spiritual beliefs to assist the transpersonal in breaking free from the ego driven limitations of its own neo-colonial ideas (Turner et al., 2015). Within this paper, I speak of how out of the drive of the transpersonal to find its identity it has inadvertently become intertwined within the same colonial structures that other modalities have encountered. This has thereby created numerous spiritual others, where the spiritual traditions of numerous other cultures or religions are still marked as superstition or nonsense, and therefore seen as sitting outside of a transpersonal norm. This then allows the transpersonal to engage within a this is spiritual me versus this is spiritual not me, with the transpersonal defining itself against what it sees as other. The creation of the spiritual other, as we have witnessed, therefore becomes a means for both the absolute and the other to avoid the infinite nature of spiritual difference, which is also a route back to God. It is this third option that arises most importantly out of my research, that the absolute's fear of the infinite nothingness is core to the creation of the binary other. So, where indigenous cultures strive for connection to God through the infinite nothingness/otherness of all that resides around them, in the Global North, the inherent

anxiety around adopting an individual fixed identity leads to the creation of a binary structure and the denial of the infinite.

Following closely on from this transpersonal formation of the other, it is important to note that through this research project there is now also a greater understanding of the complex nature of being the absolute. Initially, the Buberian idea of an I-Thou/It relationship clearly suggested there was just one aspect to being the I (Buber, 2010). The idealisation of this relationship was something Levinas (2006) recognised was flawed, his understanding leading me to understand that the I was not always benevolent towards the other. This research provided me with several answers regarding this. The I is either relational and able to engage with the other, or out of its own unresolved insecurities takes on a narcissistic sense of grandiosity and uses the other as a means of holding its own unwanted unconscious psychic material. The other in this second narcissistic I-other dyad is not seen for what it is, its own true sense of self forced into the unconscious. This is where the oft questioned power dynamics begin in relation to the other, as should the other attempt to be seen then it risks annihilation. The political ideal of cultural assimilation fits into this category where the other is encouraged to become just like the majority culture, thereby losing its original sense of self in the process. The problem with this ideal is when the other steps out of line, or tries to assert its own individuality, then it is at best ridiculed, at worst denigrated or bullied. For example, the BBC (2014) story on the Brixton riots of the 1980s talked about the surprise of a conservative government which had assumed that the relatively recently arrived immigrant populations had been successfully assimilated into English culture. This ignorance of the other's inherent will to individuate meant the majority did not even suspect that the other would chose to assert its own identity to sit alongside that of the majority culture, thereby rejecting the

stereotypical one forced upon them. This is the political cost of assimilation upon the other and the later impact of this type of process upon the majority. It is therefore this type of more complex version of Buber's ideas that build upon his writings, and add weight to their arguments at the same time. The third adjustment to Buber's ideas emerges out of a combination with Jung's work on the unconscious and the other. The culmination of this combination by myself thereby gives us an I – It (Thou) relationship for when the narcissistic I needs to objectify or stereotype the other. Using the example of cultural assimilation yet again, what my research now provides evidence of is that in order for the other to become culturally compliant it has to forcibly push its own authentic identity into the unconscious. This is not to blame the other though, as this process is often driven by a threat of abuse or exclusion from the absolute. This is to recognise the impossible position the other is held within as it fights for its survival.

The fourth addition to knowledge follows this closely in the recognition of just how strongly the narcissistic absolute resists any change arising out of the presence of the nothingness. Meeting the third aim of this research, involving a consideration of the unconscious pull the other has towards the majority, what I realise now is that in the creation of the other the narcissistic absolute fixes its identity. The narcissistic absolute constitutes the other, and the other is necessary for the construction of the absolute, meaning its identity becomes fixed under the gaze of the other. As stated in the transpersonal section of my literature review, the problem here for the absolute is that identity is fluid. It is not a static point and is always changing as it negotiates its way through life. Therefore, it is so important to recognise the various types of the power dynamics employed in the absolute's relationship with the nothingness, from its creation of the other onwards. And although we are often aware of the abusive force used to make the other conform, greater

recognition of other forms of control are needed as well. For example, the seduction of the other, presented in the sand tray exercise theme *'the other fixes its identity in relation to the absolute'* discussed in depth the erotic pull for the other towards the absolute. In his paper looking at desire through the lens of the Shakespearean play Hamlet, Lacan discusses the fantasy nature of desire (Lacan, Miller, & Hulbert, 1977). The importance of this is that power here is built upon the fantasy idea of inclusion and equality, not on the reality of separateness. The other is therefore drawn into a position where its authenticity is challenged by its desire to be like the absolute, and the absolute plays upon this fantasy in order to maintain order and its own sense of superiority. Examples of this are present in chapter eight, with the sand play exercise, where Daniel found himself unconsciously drawn towards the absolute, even though he tried to resist its inexorable pull, and in Michael's story in chapter four where the submissive other finds itself having to conform to a stereotypical identity, an inauthentic identity, to comply with the wishes of the absolute.

The next point emerges out of the structure of the research itself and meets the second aim of the research, that using creative tools common to transpersonal psychotherapy allows for a deeper exploration of the experience of the other. As discussed in the summary of the results, the transpersonal and psychotherapy have much to add to the ongoing debate and understanding of the other. Developing the techniques used in this study will inevitably glean other or deeper ideas into the experience of the other, which will be essential in the continuing efforts to understand their experiences. So, the transpersonal use of metaphor here provided essential additional material, echoing the perspective presented by Cox and Thielgaard who stated that 'deictic stress serves as a guide' (1986, p. 119). They emphasise the importance of metaphor and symbolism as a means

of locating a client's psychological stress points. The importance of this for the other is these stress points centre around their experience as the other and/or the nothingness. The images derived from the creative chapters show that working with the unconscious creatively unveils these stress points in a way suggested by Davids (2012) from a more psychoanalytic perspective. This research also recognises that working with the body/mind, as posited by Lowen (2013), thereby moved this research beyond Cartesian logic to a more feminine, emotionally based awareness of this experience. This is particularly important as Lowen clearly stated that the body holds memory, with the techniques here being designed to access this memory in symbolic form. That also makes my research unique in developing techniques that can do this with such clarity. For example, the visualisation and drawing exercises clearly add weight to the debate around the importance of understanding the internalised experience of being the other, whilst the sand tray exercises eloquently explored the projections and the unconscious identity of the other in its projective relationship with the absolute. Metaphor therefore becomes a bridge between the internal and external worlds of the participant, and although not a literal representation of their experience as other present important visual cues as to the difficulties inherent within such a relationship to the absolute. For example, within the first sand tray theme, presented in chapter 8, the relationship that the other has with the absolute is one based around the erotic power that draws the fearful other inwards, versus an equally angry and fearful opposite power which helps the other maintain its distance. Within this conflict ridden standoff is hidden the narcissistic wound Benjamin (1998) speaks of from a psychodynamic perspective, where the efforts of the absolute and the other to be witnessed by their opposite are rebuffed leading to a stalemate and a dissatisfaction with the outcome.

Finally, in an exploration of the final aim of the research, the combination of these creative techniques when working heuristically have also led to a deeper realisation that working with one’s sense of otherness over a period then becomes a route towards spiritual wholeness. What this means in essence is that by uncovering the symbolic messages hidden within the body/mind, and by working hard to understand their meaning, one can now use this experience as a means of reintegrating aspects of the self that had been previously hidden. These are therefore the main claims, and this chapter will now present my recommendations for future research together with numerous important practical applications for the ideas presented here.

**Recommendations for future research and practical applications**

Given that I have now explored the additions to knowledge arising out of my research, it is important to also consider the practical applications of my work, together with my presentation of the direction of any future research into the experience of being the other.



Figure 37: Being the Other

Figure 37, *Being the Other*, above, presents a visual representation of the four strands I strongly believe are needed to take my research forward, both within the academic and public arenas, and presents the ways and means I will be using to disseminate the results and ideas which have arisen out of my research. The four categories, Public, Papers, Further Research and The Transpersonal, will be discussed in turn, with each section covering how my research might be utilised.

### **Public**

Offering now a closer consideration of this table, on the 28<sup>th</sup> of June 2017 I will be launching a YouTube Channel, entitled Being the Other (Turner, 2017). This channel will offer weekly vlogs expressing my own views about the ways the other is viewed in society today. An interactive channel, this will be open to everyone to sign up for, and will appeal to all those who have felt they were other, or feel they are disenfranchised by being in whatever way different. To underpin this channel, there is already a Facebook page set up, also entitled Being the Other, which will present blog posts, articles and talks, which I have encountered and are of benefit to the wider public. These will be channels by the other, and for the other, and on both channels, the public will be encouraged to become involved with the work as well.

Regarding this more public positioning of myself and my work, I have already appeared in a documentary, Looking for Love (Shabazz, 2015), which involved a consideration of relationships and love, and on BBC Three Counties Radio's Edward Adoo Show on Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> of July 2015 talking about how black men see black women. Both were opportunities for me to present my

ideas from the standpoint of the other, and allowed me to reach out to the BME community and the public. The aim of these additional YouTube and Facebook channels is to build upon this burgeoning public persona to push my research work out into the public domain.

### **Books and Papers**

At the time of writing, I have published several papers out of my research, including one research paper on the sand tray element of this research (D. Turner, 2015a, 2015b, 2016a, 2016b; D. Turner et al., 2015; D. Turner, Callaghan, & Gordon-Finlayson, 2016). Each of these papers has dealt with an aspect of the research I feel the wider research community needed to be aware of, from how the narcissist creates the other, to the other's draw to the majority. As the aim of this research is to influence the wider academic community into a closer consideration of the other and the experience of othering, I will be writing up to four articles per year on this topic from the academic year beginning September 2017. What will enable me to do this is my having taken on a position as Senior Lecturer at the University of Brighton as of the 1<sup>st</sup> of September 2017. Entering academia will therefore mean I will have more space to write and conduct further research, as this is part of my contract, and will act as an encouragement for me to disseminate my ideas and work within the academic community. The ideas for papers presented in Figure 37 are therefore just some of those under consideration for future articles.

In addition, the aim will be to publish my work in book form, with approaches having already been made to Karnac Books, who run a publishing scheme with the United Kingdom Council for Psychotherapy (UKCP), the psychotherapy governing body to which I am affiliated.

### **Further Research**

Psychotherapy by its very nature offers clients a chance to become more authentic. As my research now proves, one of the main problems for the other in this regard is the pull towards inauthenticity as it attempts to fit in with a majority means of being. This is important for clients. As we all have an experience of being the other, or of trying to fit in, then we are all at times going to be inauthentic. My research therefore recognises the conscious and unconscious difficulties inherent in maintaining this false sense of self and challenges them. This challenge then becomes doubly important for student counsellors and psychotherapists as we begin to recognise the power dynamics which lie in wait on trainings within the helping professions.

In the review of the literature one of the problems with psychotherapy's vision of the other involved its being very object-relations focused. Whilst that has proven to be useful in gaining an understanding of the initial formation of an egoic sense of self versus that which is deemed other, this failed to recognise the collective experience of otherness. In recognising the limitation of the political and religious categorisations we also have to help students recognise how some of the difficulties inherent in being seen as black or as a woman, for example, have arisen out of falsely being made other by said majority. In a similar vein to Butler's explorations of gender, this work therefore takes a phenomenological look at what actually constitutes being the other (1988, 1990). This research therefore redresses much of the imbalance within psychotherapy and opens the door to a more personalised exploration of one's experience as other when we move away from the categorisations constructed both politically and religiously.

As this research also centres itself within the creative and symbolic, the uncovering of the unconscious experiences of being the other are hugely important here as well. This recognition builds upon the works of Dalal (2012) and Davis (2003) who argued from a predominantly psychodynamic angle for an exploration of the experiences of the other, but in their own fashions struggled to understand the depth of this predominantly unconscious experience. This work builds hugely upon their ideas that there is a deep well of unconscious pain in-conjunction with being the other, and my results provide evidence of this.

This leads me to my next point, which involves the practical implications of this research for psychotherapy in its explorations of outsidership. Firstly, the visualisation technique becomes a very useful tool in uncovering what has become internalised in any experience as the other. For example, the present movement of people away from conflicts in the Middle East, and the subsequent European refugee crisis will require counsellors and psychotherapists to develop tools to work with the unconscious experience of outsiders exiled from their own homes. The creative techniques adjusted here can also be adopted to working cross culturally, meaning that when developed further to work with specific minority groups, these would sit well alongside studies of the struggles for refugees in coming to terms with their separation from their homeland. An example of the type of paper would be Griffith's (2001) study into the experiences of Kurds in Greece following the conflict in their homeland, and could assist not only with the traumatic experiences they left behind, but also to come to terms with adjusting to life in Greece, and their maintaining of an authentic sense of self, be it cultural or otherwise. The sand tray work is equally important as a means for practitioners to see just what has been projected upon the absolute by the other, what binds the other to the absolute, what potential is held in the other's experience of the

absolute, and how easy or difficult it is for them to remove their projections from the absolute and either exist alongside them or reject them. Again, using the example presented above of the refugees, sand tray work here could be used to help the other see for themselves why they might be drawn to here in the Global North, before recognising that on the whole these are projections of their own potential.

Another potential implication of this research for psychotherapy involves accessing a deeper understanding of the minority experience as a trainee on psychotherapy courses. These experiences offer rich insights that must be integrated into the future provision of counselling and psychotherapy trainings thereby allowing the minority experience to be fully seen and recognised. For example, Callaghan (2003) in a paper discussing the experiences of women from townships in South Africa considers the split identities that the other has to negotiate in order to become a psychologist in this instance. Where my work adds to this debate is in providing some of the tools necessary to assist minority or student others in working with their experiences as the outsider within not only psychology, but also psychotherapy and other helping professions. So, as well as a deep consideration of the experience of the other, and the recognition that this experience if left unchallenged or unmanaged can be detrimental to the other, there is an opportunity here to assist students in pushing through the invisible barriers which may still exist. This also means not excluding the majority culture student experience, but to remind them of their own occasion as other, so that we all reconnect with these difficult times of oppression and inauthenticity. Evidence of all of these emerges out of my own work as a lecturer at the Centre for Counselling and Psychotherapy Education (CCPE), where I have been lecturing students about working with their own experiences as other on their post-graduate diploma course, supervision course, and child and

family masters course for the past three years. Using the student's own recollections of being the other has often led to a rich exploration of difficult past experiences as the outsider thereby allowing them to both find compassion for others around them, and also for themselves.

### *Implications for Post-Colonialism and the other*

Importantly, another one of the main strengths of this research is the linking together of the creative transpersonal with the phenomenological through the incorporation of the visualisations, drawing, sand play within the actual research method. Cox and Thielgaard (1986) highlight this strength in their recognition of the importance of utilising the imaginary field within research, relating this back to the Heideggerian and Husserlian awareness of variable horizons. Their ideas being that only by utilising the creative can one truly hope to bring understanding to the subjective world of meaning. Adding another layer to this, these ideas tie themselves together with a more relational approach to the transpersonal and to finding meaning for subjective experiences through the collective understanding of those same experiences, echoing ideas posited by Ferrer (2002). This here helps to avoid levels of othering where, for example, experiences as other which might not have been uncovered were this a purely objective study are then dismissed as sitting outside the perceived realm of what it is to be other.

Finally, moving into the political sphere, currently much of the debate around the other centres around how to stem the tide of refugees attempting to enter the United Kingdom from mainland Europe. One of the other implications of this research should therefore be filtered back through to the political sphere to add to the debate being held there, namely that the experience of being the other, for example of being a refugee, is far more difficult and challenging, and also

potentially more psychologically damaging, than previously thought. Also, arising out of this research needs to be the understanding that the idea that assimilation is a simple matter of taking on the values of the adopted homeland brings with it the type of psychological splitting that in the future either leads to the other reacting aggressively against the homeland as it takes back its power, or to the other psychologically breaking down.

As stated in the transpersonal section of this chapter, the absolute has to recognise it is changed by any interaction with the other. Post-colonially, therefore political structures like cultural and racial assimilation or integration fail from the outset. It is also why diversity politics leads to such a long drawn out struggle for recognition and equality. For example, on the 24<sup>th</sup> of June 2016 the United Kingdom voted to leave the Economic Union in a referendum where many of the arguments were based around the movement of migrants into the country. Post the election in particular, minorities were targeted in what are termed hate crimes, communities which have often resided within the UK for several generations (Yeung, 2016). Where this is important is in recognising the fear of cultural change when faced with the other. For example, whilst the middle classes feel the impact less, the class system acting as a buffer against most interactions with the cultural or racial other, the working class is challenged in any type of merging of cultures, leading to a tribal rebuttal against the other.

What is required is for the majority to understand the other, and to recognise that once admitted everything of that culture will have inevitably changed. Therefore, my research ideas begin to add this transpersonal understanding to our knowledge of how we experience the other will add a layer of compassion to this oftentimes fraught debate, and could even, if utilised

correctly, inform and enhance the adopted culture. Said (1993b) says as much in a lecture where he speaks of the intellectual's unique position as the outsider whom sees the majority from a differing perspective, a position from where they reflect and add to the cultural composition and potential of the majority. There is an opportunity for growth here on both parts, that of the other and the absolute, or even if the absolute gave way and engaged in relationship with the nothingness. It is therefore with this understanding that recognising and witnessing the other as a means of enhancing who we are as individuals, as communities, and as a culture, that I will close this discussion section, offering a few words of closure to end this research project's exploration of what it is to be the other as we move from Being the Other.

### **The Transpersonal**

The development of a transpersonal framework to begin to understand our experience of the nothingness was an essential part of this research. The reasoning here being that without it a more spiritual exploration of the other would have been far more difficult, with this research relying instead on trying to fit into post-colonial or other paradigms which may not have suited it. There is room here for a wider exploration of the transpersonal other, be it an understanding of just how easily other transpersonal experiences are marginalised and denigrated, or of how other transpersonal voices challenge traditional white transpersonal patriarchy, for example Gross (2004) and her feminist perspective on Buddhism. The ideas situated here will lead the transpersonal towards a more holistic understanding of what the spiritual path is, as I previously stated in my own article on the subject (Turner et al., 2015). As explored in the review of the literature, this research has been strongly influenced by the depth and breadth of post-colonial ideas, feminist perspectives, LGBTI theories, and many other perspectives more commonly found

within the mainstream but absent from the important discourse around our understanding of the other within a psychotherapeutic or transpersonal paradigm. One of the practical implications of this research therefore is the addition to knowledge the opening of these perspectives has for psychotherapy and the transpersonal, adding their many ideas to an already rich spiritual and therapeutic base, and I will add also, gifting weight for a more phenomenological and participatory position when it comes to understanding the experience of the other, and other spiritual experiences as well. Yet, like my understanding of our relationship to the other, this is also not a one-way relationship. The transpersonal and psychotherapy also have much to offer the more traditional ideologies in regard to the various approaches utilised here to understand this phenomenon, with both the use of creativity and the relational, meaning making, aspect of understanding our experiences as other within this research being particularly important.

This was particularly pertinent when it came to offering an alchemical focus to my heuristic work. Even though alchemy as suggested by Jung (1963) has been predominantly moulded within an European paradigm, there is still a distinct lack of awareness of the works and mythology of the spiritual other that would have enhanced my work even further. One of the areas of work for the transpersonal then is a broadening of its perspective on alchemy so it takes on a more world centric vision. An engagement with additional spiritual beliefs from the many indigenous and other communities would actually aid the transpersonal in gaining this more world centric view I am searching for. My work goes some way to expanding the reach of the transpersonal in this regard. My work also acts as a means of avoiding transpersonal othering, adding to the more relational, participatory approaches to the transpersonal favoured by Ferrer (2002) and Heron (2001) amongst others, yet for this to continue there must also be the inclusion of other diverse

voices, such as feminist approaches, those from spiritual persons of colour. These combinations, of the creative, the participatory, and the phenomenological, have therefore added great weight to this study, bringing a richness to the experiences of my participants which sets this study apart from those which have preceded it.

Lastly, the recognition of a transpersonal lens allows for an understanding of the destruction wrought against the self within an experience of spiritual othering. This deeper absence of an internal world, the spiritual loneliness, and the absence of a connection to the unconscious other, or the eternal thou, are recognised here as extremely painful experiences. Yet, as presented in my heuristic chapter, a recognition and reacceptance of one's unconscious thou, with its removal of the projection of potential cast out onto the majority, then becomes a route towards psychological and spiritual wholeness. For example, this path towards spiritual individuation then counters the pain of colonial subjugation presented by Fanon (2005), Said (2003) and many others as the major cost of the othering of the other.

### Personal Reflections

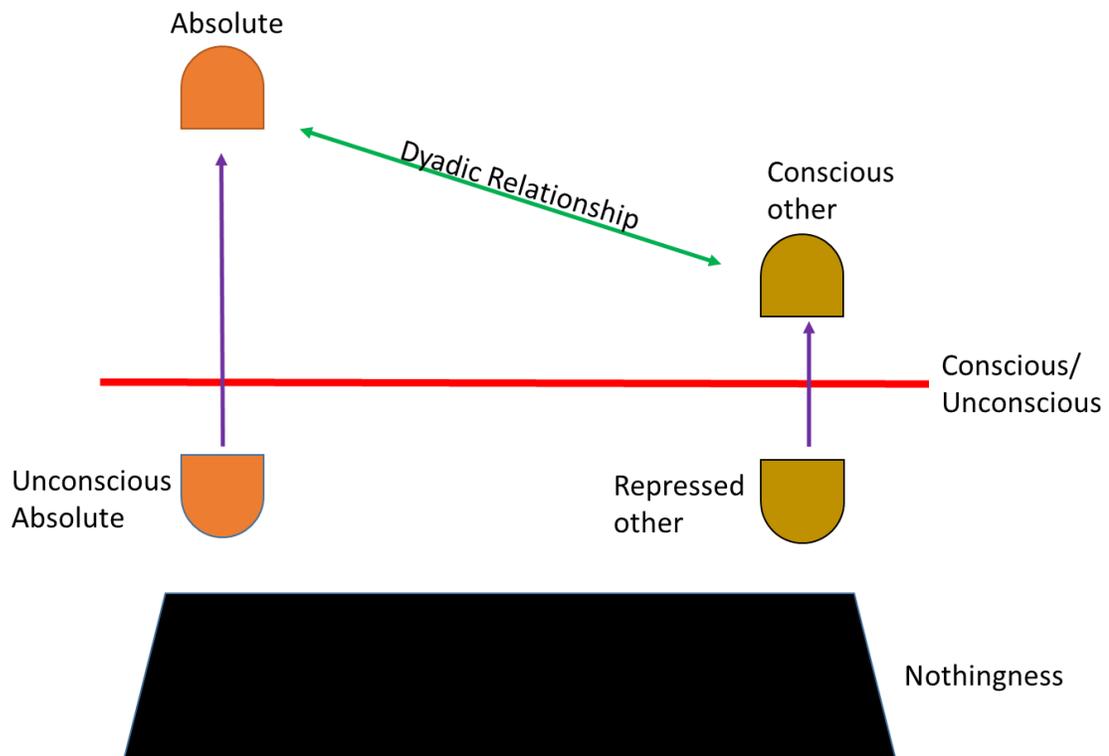


Figure 38: Relationship between absolute and nothingness

This research opened with a clear dyadic understanding of the relationship between the subject and the object, and was aimed at exploring the experience of the object; what was the phenomenological experience of being the other, and how might a deeper understanding of this experience be a route to self-knowledge and growth. As expressed in figure 38, *the relationship between the absolute and the nothingness*, is now seen as far more complex when we include the unconscious elements of our self in the equation. Firstly, the diagram clearly shows the absolute needing the objectified other to hold its inadequacies in order for it to maintain its position of power above the other. Secondly, for the other, its own over-identification with its otherness involves a denial of the potential reflected back at it by an objectified absolute. And lastly, both the absolute and the other use the tension of this dyadic relationship to maintain their sense of

inauthenticity, ultimately avoiding the presence of the nothingness and their infinite potential. It is these perspectives which emerge most strongly out of my research project.

Finally, and from a personal perspective, Romanyshyn (2010), quoting Jung and developing his idea in a paper on the importance of the researcher's position in relation to their research, speaks of the struggle for parity between inner dialogical self and the external objectivity of the researcher. One of the strengths of this research that I would like to end with, is the immense power of my interaction with my participants as they undertook their phenomenological investigation into their own sense of otherness, alongside my own internal exploration of my experience of being other. The two combined have led to considerable personal changes, both internal and external, which have meant my making numerous alterations changes in how I view myself as a black man living in the United Kingdom amongst a white majority, and to end this thesis I would like to discuss some important reflective points.

Firstly, in undertaking this work and considering my own experience as the other there has definitely been a shift from being unconscious in relationship with the absolute to becoming more conscious and self-aware of myself within this same dyad. This though has raised a number of interesting problems. Whereas my parents in their movement to the United Kingdom post the end of colonialism would have been seduced by the prospects for an easier life in the motherland, and even though I have grown up within these same ideals, I no longer feel the same about a country I have served as I did before. I find myself asking political questions about my position here in the country of my birth that I would never have posited previously. This is, I believe, a huge positive as it gives me a choice. My unconscious submissive other is being challenged all the time to wake

up and either fight for the rights of other Others who feel unseen and disrespected, or to plain leave the country of my birth and go somewhere where I feel more at home. Importantly, what this awakening of my unconscious other has done is free me from varying levels of psychological and spiritual slavery to an absolute that did nothing more than use me for its own projective needs.

Looking back, I can now see how destructive many of the previously compliant behaviours have probably been on my sense of self, and gone are many of the compliant means of interaction which meant my real views were often silenced in favour of those from the majority. Absent too are the apologies for mistakes not of my own making; and gone are many of the fears that my being, for example when I raised my voice to be heard, would be summarily destroyed in retaliation. Instead, there is a growing recognition of how much use my position as the other can have in the world, be it from becoming an academic via the writing of this thesis and developing the ideas presented here into something meaningful for future generations of psychotherapists, researchers, and persons of colour. Instead there is a personal recognition of the importance of my role in taking up the struggle to ensure that every person, be they a woman, LGBTI, disabled, BME, or of a differing religion, has the right to express themselves freely and equally, and that the majority, although they may resist the impact of this sea of change, will survive the experience. It is this idea which sat central to my published paper on the experience of being the other as a student, and which highlighted my own experiences of being made the outsider, through the difficult reactions of colleagues, and from within my own internal world (Turner, 2015a). There is the growing awareness of the personal impact being with my own sense of otherness will have on my own future, my health, my family life, and my working life, as I own perhaps for the first time in years

my personal experience as other and allow this experience to take me on a spiritual journey of self-discovery. A journey like no other, a journey with no end.

*'The irregularity of the mountain peaks that surround us is what makes them so imposing. If we tried to make them all the same they would no longer command our respect, because beauty exists not in sameness but in difference.'*

(Coelho, 2012)

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