

Process & Reflections through the lens of

Mimesis and *Alterity*

In Embodied Imagination

El coursework - Presentation and assignment by Daniel Gleeson 2021-24.



1. Contents

Pre-requisite:

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie: The danger of a single story | TED

Listen/watch <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D9lhs241zeg>.

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Man & mimesis

2. Preface

Chimamanda in her TED talk, 'On the dangers of the single story', outlines that the problem with the single story is that it is *"incomplete"*. She says towards the end of her talk, *"that stories matter, that many stories matter."* *"Stories have been used to dispossess and malign."* *Stories can be used to empower and humanise".* *"Stories can break the dignity of the people, but stories can also repair that broken dignity."* Chimamanda also says, *"That when we reject the single story and when we realise that there is never a single story about any place, we regain a kind of paradise."* A paradise of a rich tapestry of more stories and perspectives.

I stumbled upon Chimamanda's TED talk while researching for this presentation / assignment and I was impressed how the single story is a perfect description of the moment when one can become complexed ^{See Note 1} in a Jungian sense of the word and unleash wildish projections of multi layered thoughts, feelings and emotions toward someone or something else. Then once in that complex an energy stream can generate a narrowing down to a single-story or perspective of sorts and can become fixated. In this fixed perspective or single story we can find ourselves immobilised from allowing other perspectives on the matter.

I would like to use an example from my own experience to help illuminate this and how the application of the ideas of Alterity and Mimesis helped me out of my own complexed hole that I had fallen into. I would then like to use this experience to springboard further into a broader exploration of Mimesis and Alterity in the context of how we use it in our work with the Embodied Imagination processes and what benefits it brings to the work.

I would like to make a dedication of this work. Hillman makes an important distinction in his book from 1979, 'The dream and the Underworld.' In Chapter 1. 'Bridge', James sets out to orient the reader in his grounding about dreams in distinction from Freud and Jung. In his discourse of the "psychological field" James concludes the chapter with;

"The psychological field we till is the very same field worked by Freud and by Jung. It is, in fact their field. We shall plow it, however, from another angle, not with their plow or in their furrows, but by turning their soil in our style. The contours that may emerge may differ, but the field is the same limited one: the psyche of Western man in his historical tradition and cultural predicament; and

the intention is the same as theirs: to articulate a psychology that reflects the passionate importance of the individual soul. A bridge inward.

I would like to dedicate the work to the bridge builders.



3. Introduction

Mimesis and Alterity was first introduced to me in the reading of Michael Taussig's book, 'MIMESIS and ALTERITY – A particular history of the senses.' Published in 1993. The genesis of this paper has its roots in the second intensive in the first year of our three-year training in Robert Bosnak's course Embodied Imagination here in Australia and co-facilitated with Jennifer Hume and Michelle Morris.

Mimesis and Alterity forms a part of the foundational theory behind Robert Bosnak's original creation, Embodied Imagination. The introduction of Taussig's work was challenging for me. I am very familiar and comfortable with traditional Jungian authors and ideas. Dipping into Taussig's book was very foreign territory for me. I found the topic rather difficult and heavy going to process in its perspective and how it may relate to Embodied Imagination and in-turn working with dreams in the practice of Embodied Imagination. It is this difficulty that led to an emerging determination to understand the subject matter better and have a practical grasp of it in relation to Embodied Imagination. A little while after this Mimesis and Alterity themed intensive I had an experience that forms the basis of my explorations and my way into processing the ideas of Mimesis and Alterity.

One of the beauties of Robert Bosnak's work as a Zurich trained Jungian analyst from the 1970's is that he has taken great care to articulate his ideas in creative ways and often further afield from traditional Jungian resources. His work draws broadly from a variety of sources: Anthropological in the case of Mimesis and Alterity, yet other sources are found in academia, philosophy, scientific, neurological, historical and alchemical sources that give foundation to his work in Embodied Imagination. His work remains in the spirit of Jung in his pioneering endeavours of the soul to articulate what James Hillman has described in the dedication. Mimesis and Alterity is just one piece of a kaleidoscope that forms the multifaceted theory and practice of Embodied Imagination.

4. Anzac Day



In the months after our January 2022 intensive, I continued reflecting on Mimesis and Alterity with a particular focus on Alterity and the idea Robert Bosnak presents in EI that of, “the most Alien Other”. I became drawn to his idea of what was the “most” alien other in relation to the process of an Embodied Imagination session in practice. This “most alien other” underlies the focus of an Embodied Imagination session. It is often the fourth and last point of the transitions that form a composite when an EI practitioner works with a dream or memory of a client. The idea being that this was the furthest point away from habitual consciousness. The process in an EI session brings embodiment of this most alien other. It is this experience of the most alien other’s perspective we are working towards. Sensing and feeling into the embodied perspective and holding multiple perspectives simultaneously in the EI session can give rise to something new in consciousness and shifting perspective from habitual consciousness. This process allows something new to emerge.

The spark that galvanised my intrigue for using mimesis and alterity as subject matter for my EI presentation course work took an interesting turn on Anzac Day 25th April 2022. I found myself in a moment of complexity during the communal ceremony.

Every year on Anzac Day I like to attend my local Anzac parade and cenotaph ceremonies in the small Victorian country town where I live to pay my respects and have a moment to pause for reflection of this significant moment in history. My grandfather Joseph Gleeson had served in France during WW1 along with his older brother Bernard Gleeson who had died at Gallipoli one year to the day of the anniversary from when Joe enlisted.

I have been fortunate to inherit a few of Grandfather Joe’s medals and dog tag when my father passed in 2017. I like to carry Joe’s “Dog” tag with me during this time to add to the meaning and significance of it all. His name on a tag makes it more real. This Anzac Day was a post covid pandemic lockdown

parade and gathering around the local cenotaph. There was a large crowd gathered with some people still wearing masks as we stood around listening to the master of ceremonies speak. I thought he was doing an excellent job bringing us together and reminding us of the strengths and character forged by the Anzacs during the war. He related these stories of perseverance and strength in relation to our recent Covid lockdown experiences and the importance of holding strong together as a community. Being there for one another during difficult times. As he was addressing the crowd on this cold autumn morning, I began looking at the faces of others in the crowd. I was observing the solemn faces when something caught my eye over at the RSL building nearby. I noticed that the RSL had this large white banner with black writing on the veranda roof. On the banner was written "The American's MC". In shock and a sense of the perplexed, standing under the veranda were some of its members in leathers cooking at a BBQ. In an instant a big internal reaction started. I felt annoyed this "American" motorcycle "gang" had co-opted and taken over at the Australian RSL club in this way of all days. And on reflection later a sense of indignation over their blatant association to the credible RSL and their illegitimacy as a MC gang. I began to register that I was having quite a reaction. My growing awareness of my reaction to this seemingly small thing turned into a curiosity of what was happening for me, to be reacting and feeling this way. It occurred to me during this reaction that these bikers and their banner on the RSL were like the most "alien" other to me as if in a dream. With that I took this real time moment as if I was in a dream and responded to the "most alien other" these bikers in front of me as way into the "other" to gain a new perspective. Following the structured EI process of noticing and embodying the image from my learnings and practicing the transition into the other as in dreamwork I allowed myself to open up and become more receptive to this "Other" that was presenting before me. What happened next is what I find remarkable, I was not getting stuck in my single story that had rapidly formed against them. This complex erupting in me that felt so uncharacteristically biased and judgemental in perspective of them and that surprisingly to me had occurred so instantaneously and intensely. For more information on projection *See Notes 2*. I began to notice the bikers, just observing them, slowing my awareness down and sensing into them and what they were doing. To me they looked quite fearsome looking, wearing their identifying Motorcycle club attire of denim jeans and black leather boots and vests, emblazoned with "The Americans MC patches on the back. Some had

long grey hair and beards. I noticed some of them at the BBQ cooking sausages and preparing food. While others were standing dispersed in the crowd listening attentively and focused on the speaker. Two of the bikers laid a wreath of flowers at the base of the cenotaph among many other community groups as well. Feeling into these men for this short moment drew my attention to just how similar in-fact they were to me despite my initial outward appearance-based judgement I had taken. Sensing into them I could recognise their sense of reverence, respect and honour they had for this occasion of remembrance. Impressed upon me was their engagement and involvement in this community. How their efforts were to make this occasion more enjoyable through the provision of the BBQ, raising funds for the RSL and marking respects with a laying of a wreath. I realised also that each one of these men most likely had a relative who had served in either WW1 or WW2 just like me. In the end I could finally see and feel their presence as a welcome addition to this occasion and not some detraction that my initial response had judged them for. Bringing my attention to their actions and less so their frightening appearance brought me to a new appreciation and respect. My focus returned to the words of the speaker and my attention included a sense of pride in the diversity of the people with whom I was sharing this important day with. All this took place within the short space of a minute or two.

Funnily enough on a side note while writing this little Anzac story up I looked up "The American's MC" on Google and discovered that they are in-fact a charity motorcycle club not the 1% outlaw MC club like the Hells Angels that I had assumed them to be. Additionally, recently standing at the 2023 Anzac Day memorial service, the American's MC were there again cooking sausages under the RSL veranda and actively involved and engaged in the local Anzac Day proceeding. This time I went over and bought a sausage off them feeling, much less intimidated and fearful of them. How things can change through the lens of Mimesis and Alterity and not just in dreams it would seem.

Michael Taussig the world-renowned anthropologist whom Robert Bosnak has based aspects of Embodied Imagination foundational theory on with Mimesis and Alterity has remarked that studying another culture more importantly leads to discoveries about one's own culture.

Writing and researching this presentation led to a memory of another encounter with another Motorcycle group in Tasmania. This memory which

took place in March 2009 seemed to link to my Anzac Day in a particular way around fear.

For further illustration I will follow this thread that led to the activation of the complex with this memory of going hiking in Tasmania from Cradle Mountain to Lake St Claire. It was a six-day hike that culminated the last night in the Derwent Hotel and a confrontation with another Motorcycle "Gang".

5. Hikers & Bikers



After six days hiking across magnificent Tasmanian wilderness myself and three friends found ourselves in the refuge of this glorious chalet style pub. Refer photos. We were enjoying a very relaxed afternoon. The beers were flowing nicely as we played eight ball on the pool table basking in the reverie of completing the famous Tasmanian Overland Track. We had the place to ourselves, and I felt like a King of the castle. I find it amusing that of all the amazing experiences hiking the Overland track from Cradle Mountain to Lake St Claire in those six days, it is the experience in this pub that takes precedence.

We were booked in for a one night in the Derwent Hotel. The ski lodge chalet vibe this pub had going on with the massive rustic brick fireplace made for a grand finale of this epic six days. A very welcome reward indeed. Feeling so stoked despite that both soles of my hiking boots had peeled off over the first few days of the hike and had to be tied together with shoelaces, then taped, then cable tied and finally with the help of the park ranger at Windermere Hut *Tek* screwed together with a cordless screw gun. This last fixing led to a sense of walking in football boots. Certainly not comfortable but fortunately for me the boot itself remained sealed so water was kept at bay leaving my feet dry and healthy.

In the late afternoon as the sun was setting a group of patched bikers entered the pub. There were seven of them, ranging in ages between 40-60. The sense of King of the castle I had been enjoying disappeared like the instant two-minute packets of fettucine carbonara dinners consumed after a day's hiking. I was none too pleased with their presence. Things began to heat up not only literally when one of the bikers carried a rather large log and put it on the fire. Seeing his efforts and good call in keeping the fire fed, with an interest in wanting to harmonise the situation I made a remark of, "well done mate" as I was standing in line ordering my meal at the bar. He looked at me for a moment registering my words while a disapproving scowl like expression formed on his face. He said nothing to me verbally, but somehow communicated rather loudly and clearly that my appreciation was certainly not needed nor welcome. One of my friends witnessing this saw it as evidence that

things were going to end up in a bar room brawl and so began sizing the guys up, to work out who he could take out. At some point after dinner one of bikers asked us what we were doing here. My friend Rick told them we had just finished hiking the Overland track. “You idiots!” was the booming reply from the oldest of the bikers. It was at this moment Rick was sure that it was best that we got out of there for he was certain now that things were going to become violent. We were all feeling uncomfortable and the good vibes we had been enjoying were long gone now. So, we left the bar, avoided any possible altercation with them, grabbed some takeaway beers and returned to our room and played cards.

In the week leading up to delivering this account in my presentation, a feeling of urgency took hold for completion. One night I was woken up at 3am wondering why this moment with the bikers in the Derwent Hotel may have related to my moment of complexity on the Anzac Day. Desperate for resolution and some sleep I felt I had no choice but to face my fear and go into a felt sense of what was happening for me during this encounter with the bikers in the Derwent Hotel, to sense into my body what was going on and somehow find the words to describe and the connecting point to how this experience may have related to my complex arising during the Anzac Day biker encounter.

Philosopher Eugene Gendlin originally developed the concept of a felt sense, which functions as a connection between the mind and body. People experiencing a felt sense feel more in tune with their body and bodily processes and the feelings and emotions that arise there. Eugene and Carl Roger’s had discovered in their research together that those who had a developed faculty for a “Felt Sense” often had better outcomes in therapy with the most surprising reveal that it was more important than the type of therapy being worked. Inspired by this Eugene went on to develop his concept fully teaching it worldwide. Robert Bosnak has further developed this “Felt sense” experience in his unique use of embodiment practices coupled with mimesis to enter sensually into the image in what he calls a “*transit*” into the Other.

Lying in bed, I tuned back into the memory of the atmosphere of the pub, feeling the pleasure of that moment. I sensed how good it felt playing pool drinking with friends post Overland Hike celebrations – feeling like King of the castle. Relief and freedom. I felt light and a sense of expansive spaciousness in my body. Then I contrasted it with the moment the bikers entered the pub and felt the shift it brought within me. I felt into how I didn’t want them there as my body contracted and felt smaller. I felt how fearful of them I was. I felt into how unsafe this space felt now in their presence. I felt my weakness and my

disempowerment in their presence. I felt into my perceived sense the bikers had taken over of the pub like it was their domain. I felt my relinquishing of the space and my power over to them. I sensed into my resentment towards them, my contempt and anger towards them for the loss of the freedom I had felt before they arrived. I sensed into how unwelcome and unwanted I wanted them to feel. I felt my desire of rejection of them for the way that I was left feeling these awful feelings. I felt my blame for them for the way I was feeling. I felt into how my presence became like an undermining disturbance to their pleasure of this space. I sensed into these mixed emotions and my mixed up thoughts about them and myself. I sensed into a void and a certain quality of bereavement of not knowing how to deal with this situation. I sensed into my desperation to find connection and relatedness. I sensed into the failure of my abilities to bridge the gap between us. In this uncomfortable felt sense and embodiment of the Hiker / Biker moment I found myself asking, where have I felt this before because it was dawning on me that this felt sense felt so familiar.

With it came a hot flood of guilt, tears and shame as the realisation came that this was how I felt about my father, and this was how I felt around him as a child growing up. This was how I felt when he arrived home from work in the afternoon when I was a primary school kid before my parents separated. This was so like how I felt when dad would take over the TV and watch what he wanted when there were kids' programs that I would have liked to have watched. This early homelife atmosphere was just like the atmosphere I was feeling into in the Derwent Hotel in the presence of the bikers. Sitting with this experience made sense to me now why I had my instant reaction and moment of complexity on that Anzac Day. The pervasive sense of fear and rejection of the other projected into these bikers had carried through from an earlier time when it felt similar. Marie Louise Von Franz describes this moment well in her book, 'Reflections of the Soul – projection and re-collection in Jungian psychology.' and the projection of the parental images into the world around us.

I could see how my fear of the most alien Other affected my relating abilities and returned me to a childlike, disempowered state. How the felt sense allowed a safe space in which to feel these things that hadn't been processed for so long.

I really felt from an experiential perspective how the process of EI also creates a safe way of engaging with the Other. Slowing down the moment, expanding into the images and felt senses really gives rise to an expression long held but completely unfelt or worked through.

My experience with the bikers as Other on Anzac Day and at the Derwent Hotel had indeed led me back mimetically back to myself and early stress and experiences as a child.

After sensing and feeling all this in my body I returned to my 52-year-old self and felt the emergence and shift away from a habitual self as a stream of ideas on how I could have engaged with the bikers, asking them questions what it was like to ride around Tasmania? Where they had just travelled. Piqued with my own interest in motorbikes I could have engaged with them over what bikes they were riding. The options flooded in. A sense of self-assurance was returning. As an adult man I have social skills developed enough where I could have engaged creatively with the Bikers and even enjoyed the sense of occasion with them not against or opposed to them. But the fear/ trauma pattern learnt from childhood had me in a grip in both those moments.

Two days later feeling the time pressure in the Craft Exam dream as a prophecy of my incomplete presentation I found myself waking up at 3am unable to sleep and back here at the computer typing up more felt senses. I was reminded of the Kalsched's paper on 'Archetypal Defences of the personal spirit.' I became more curious whether the Archetype of the Father was active in all this complexity. This awareness adding a potential deeper perspective on this encounter.

With these new awareness's I sensed how the danger of the single narrative stories of my father I had heard of growing up radiated through these complexes. Dad as alcoholic. Dad as absent father. I could feel how the difference in the felt sense of images and memories in embodiment versus mentalising it. How embodiment brought me closer to the issue and its resolution. I could feel the life of these memories in my body. I could feel the empathetic attunement of myself and of other in it as an emergent outcome of this process. I could feel this process as a bridge between the self and the other.

Robert Bosnak has found a way to sense into these images whether it be from dream or as memories of experiences and be able to stay present to them through a hypnogogic state. Working in a dyad, Dreamer and Dreamworker through a mimetic process, a dreamer can be safely encouraged to "Transit" to the "Other", gaining awareness and knowledge from the "Others" perspective. A perspective that is held in the space and body as its own reality.

Robert Bosnak has spent many years developing, evolving, and refining his process work. James Hillman influenced Bosnak's work and his orientation of

sticking to the image rather profoundly. Bosnak, “sticks to the image” in an embodied way.

6. Embodied Imagination and the Craft

In embodied imagination we practice careful empathetic observation and mimicry, so the alien presence may come to spontaneously inhabit our body, take possession of us, and engender a great and strange correction.”

Robert Bosnak, ‘Embodiment’ p88.

Hiking and motor biking as explored in the previous chapter are two distinct forms of travel and transport. Both have certain embodied qualities that involve sensations felt in the body. Bosnak takes this sense of embodiment deeply in his process work with dreams and memories. Bosnak says in his book on ‘Embodiment’ page 10, “it takes body to perceive imagination” and that, “we are embodied by imagination”.

Once the decision was made to make Mimesis and Alterity my subject matter for my presentation and this assignment in early 2023, two dreams followed in response that seemed to illustrate specific aspects of the Embodied Imagination process in practice and Mimesis & Alterity. I will use these dreams to demonstrate these aspects and links to Mimesis and Alterity.

6a. Two dreams for illustration

Dream 1. 17th February 2023

In the beginning of this dream, mysterious alien beings have arrived on earth. (This is as a known event in the dream – not seen in the dream). I enter a smallish room painted white with very little décor that is the security room of the building housed on the third or fourth floor of a small high rise building perhaps 4-5 levels high, in some city somewhere. This floor, later in the dream becomes the room that studies these mysterious alien beings that have been somehow captured. I sit down in the room with these two newly appointed security guards that are there to assist in the process of recruitment for this alien project. I am there to be interviewed to see if I can become part of this team. There are lot of people entering the building who are also interested in becoming part of this select group. These security guys are working hard to

ensure that only those that need to be there are there. Somehow, I am important to this team being established.

There are some fragmentary dream scenes that happen before the last section of the dream. I have a memory of being outside this alien research building. There are many people milling around outside – Possibly waiting to be interviewed for the research roles. In the space between the building where the Alien project is and the next building, I see my friend Brett an artist and landscaper lying on the concrete as if passed out or unconscious. I make my way over to him to check on him and tend to him to see if he is alright.

There is another scene where I have this sense of needing to escape the floor. I go into a little alcove and remove the cover to the ducted air supply to consider escaping via the ducting in the ceiling to go undetected presumably by the alien beings.

The last stage of this dream I was on third or fourth floor of the building in what was now the Tech Laboratory Research room set up to study the alien that had been caught. There was a sense of time had now passed on by months or years possibly. Research was well underway. The room was like an art gallery. Very sparse and open. Lots of space. I noticed the doors were flush with the walls in a very sleek minimalist way, making them kind of hidden and to open them you would find storage rooms, or the techno wizardry housed behind them. The whole room has this sleek modern high tech minimalistic sensibility about it now with the walls and ceiling painted in this patinaed concrete grey. This greyness made the space feel clinical hospital like and high-tech specialty intensive care unit about it. The research laboratory has come a long way since the rudimentary makeshift “on the fly” type space that it once was.

There was this sense of knowing that there had been previous morphs and versions of the alien over the period that research had been conducted. The creature being studied now was lying in a rectangular glass incubator in the middle of the room on one side of the room in an open floor space was a male adult in human form lying as if asleep.

Its evening time and everyone has left. I am alone and about to shut up shop and head home. I switch off the overhead lights as I make my way through the space toward the door that leads out of this room. Slowly the room becomes dimmer and darker as I get closer to the door. By the time I make it close to

the door in the faint light that is left I can make out the alien sitting upright at the foot end of the incubator type cabinet. I notice he is balancing his whole body on his extended arms and hands by his side pushing up off the bed base of the incubator. I then watch his body unfurling side to side as if it is unwrapping itself. His legs are rather rubber like, flat, closed up and wrapped against his body. The gentle side to side motion unfurls the legs from the body filling up and unfolding like a frond of a fern tree. It ends with his feet landing softly and slowing on the floor. His head turns slowly, and he looks at me directly. He sees me and I panic. Without pause I rush for the door in fear that the alien is going to come after me. I grab the door handle as I pass through the threshold and pull it quickly shut behind me. But the door slams into the doorjamb striker and the handle breaks off into my hand leaving. With a jarring sense I see the door lock is already extended out. With no time to lose and quickly realising I that I won't be able to lock the door behind me, I make my way to the elevator. There is very little light in the hallway now from having switched all the lights off my only guidance is the shiny edges of the elevator door entrance. I rush inside and get to the control panel. My hand searches for the buttons that are going to shut the elevator door and lower me down to ground floor. The darkness forces me to rely on my memory of which button does what. Without fail I find the button that shut the doors and press it. The doors begin to move to close. Waiting for the door to completely close feels like an agonising eternity as I fear the alien will enter this elevator space with me. The feeling of fear is so intense that I only feel mildly relieved when the door finally closes, for I can't be completely sure it hasn't reached me here in the darkness.

Dream 2 11/3/2023

I am with a group completing an exam in a room that feels like an art room. In my hands is a small human figure about 30cms long that I have formed using felt fabric material. I am creating an artwork for this exam. There are various colours of felt fabrics in my creation. The figure is wearing a dress out made from the felt fabric. I feel this time pressure to complete it as the allocation of time for the exam is ending. The art works seem inspired by the works of Mirka Mora – the Melbourne artist.

6b. Composites & Associations

Dream 1. was worked with my EI practice partner at the time and this forms the composite. Here is an example of what a composite can look like in written form.

Composite.

1. Dan, sitting with security guys: movement from the belly right up to the forehead, the feeling of assurance - "I'm qualified to be here!"
2. The alien, lying on his back: "JUST BEING", stillness, a meditative state, essence, a "not knowing".
3. The alien, holding and unfolding: internal, in the head, intent, involved in mapping the limbs of the body, gaining knowledge, "And that can happen!"
4. Dan, as he sees the alien turn his head: lightning bolt of fear in the stomach, huge nervousness, "Got to run! Got to get out of here!"
5. Dan, in the lift, seeing the doors finally close: the slight drop of relief in the chest.

Associations:

During the Embodied imagination process associations to the images in the dream are discussed before the embodying process begins. This helps the dreamer exhaust and let go of any preconceptions and meanings about the dream. It also helps prepare and clear the way ahead for having a clarity of presence in embodiment. These associations can also be useful information to clue the dreamworker in with decision making around strategy and where the energy or emotion is in the dream for further exploration.

For illustration in the second dream, I associated the art room and the time pressure to complete the exam in the dream to an earlier experience in life. It was a moment during my Fitting and Turning apprenticeship final fourth year trade "Craft Examination" as they were called back then. I completed this in 1992 in the Art Deco building that formed the trade wing at Gordon Institute in Geelong. I recalled a moment during this trade Craft Examination that I became stressed and anxious that I was going to run out of time in completing the exercise of making two mechanical parts that had to correctly fit together. The test serves to qualify the apprentice into a tradesman and give account of the proficiency and competency of the apprentice skills from the four years of learning and training in the trade. The problem for me arose when I was forced to wait to use certain tools that were being used by other fourth year

apprentices also completing their Craft exam. There was nothing I could do in the meantime which meant that I was wasting precious time. I lamented that I could have planned better for this had I known it would bottleneck around the resources of tools and equipment.

With regards to associations to Mirka Mora's. She was well known collectively in Melbourne Victoria Australia, for her paintings, murals and making of "Soft Sculpture". I had learnt her method of "soft Sculpture" making, also in the early 1990's, from another artist when I began life drawing classes. I took Mirka's practice and made it my own for the purpose of making soft sculptures of figures from my dreams. The idea being of bringing something of the dream world into the real world and into life really appealed to me. Hand crafting and then living with the physical form of a dream image was for me a contemplative process as well as honouring the dream in my own little creative way. Little did I know then that what I was practicing was a form of mimesis.



Examples of soft sculptures of dream figures that I have made.

6.c Embodied Imagination- A Binocular perspective through Mimesis and *Alterity*.



"Pulling you this way and that, mimesis plays this trick of dancing between the very same and the very different. An impossible but necessary, indeed an everyday affair, mimesis registers both sameness and difference, of being like, and of being other. Creating stability from this instability is no small task, yet all identity formation is engaged in this habitually bracing activity in which the issue is not so much staying the same but maintaining sameness through alterity. The available histories of the Cuna shed strange light on the logic of this process, for by remaining resolutely "themselves", resolutely alter vis a' vis old Europe

as well as -note clearly-its black slaves, Cuna have been able to “stay the same” in a world of forceful change.

Michael Taussig on Alterity page 129. ‘Mimesis and Alterity- A particular history of the senses’.

The word Mimesis traces back to ancient times in Greece with Plato and Aristotle in philosophy.

Wikipedia says of Mimesis that it is a term used in literary criticism and philosophy that carries a wide range of meanings, including imitation, non-sensuous similarity, receptivity, representation, mimicry, the act of expression, the act of resembling, and the presentation of the self.

Alterity is defined as the state of being other or different; otherness.

Michael Taussig in his deciphering of the literary author Kafka, “A report to the academy” pages Xiii in his 1993 book Mimesis and Alterity calls Kafka’s reference to human’s *apish* capacity, a “Mimetic faculty”, The nature that culture uses to create second nature, the faculty to copy, imitate, make models, explore difference, yield to and become Other.

Taussig goes on to say, “*The wonder of mimesis lies in the copy, drawing on the character and power of the original to the point whereby the representation may even assume that character and that power.*”

Taussig explores the relation of mimesis to the construction of cultures and their histories in his work as an Anthropologist. Taussig originally studied as a physician, which no doubt influenced his interest in the healing practices of the shamans while working in South America.



Michael Taussig on the right with a shaman from South America.

Bosnak makes an important distinction with dreams and Embodied Imagination work that other forms of dream work overlook or make no acknowledgement. Bosnak makes clear from the outset that the dream is “Imagination’s purist creation” and what we are “working” is in fact the memory of the dream and not the dream itself. That this memory of the dream

is in fact a kind of “replica” of the original dream. Robert stresses the importance that the fidelity of the memory to the original dream is maintained. Special care is taken with working the dream in the EI process that the dream is recounted twice during the session, this often jogs the memory with more detail having been told twice.

EI approaches the dream aligned to the foundational theory of Mimesis that Taussig describes with his work on the Cuna people. He discusses at great length the power of the original object within the replica and how that the *spirit* of the original lives within the material that the replica forms. This he calls the Fetish. Taussig describes the “fetish” as the spirit that lives in the object. In EI we are working with that spirit -the life – that essence that lives within the image. Robert Bosnak’s embodying process also takes us deeper into the memory image and to that spirit that lives within the dream image. The composite that forms out of the EI dreamwork is the essence of those dream images anchored in the body. This composite becomes like a tincture that is practiced to further deepen the reinforcement of that essence in the body. Bosnak emphasises the importance of participation as a way of knowing. From the relationship of parenting - infants and mothers to alchemists to shamans. Participation as a form of communication preverbal and non-verbal ways of knowing. Prior to the 17th century participation was way of communication between an I and a thou. Subject to subject participation before the cleavage of subject and object. Bosnak emphasises the importance of using mimesis during the embodying process. By this he means the dream worker speaking back to the dreamer the descriptive words they used whilst embodying the perspective of the Other. This copying / mirroring process enables the dreamer to go deeper into the hypnagogic state facilitating greater Alterity presence and embodiment of the Other. The dreamworker is witness and walks along side the dreamer becoming part of the holding container for the dreamer to enter into and *Transit* into the unknown and most alien Other.

Carl Jung describes the dream in this way.

The dream is the small hidden door in the deepest and most intimate sanctum of the soul, which opens to that primeval cosmic night that was soul long before there was conscious ego and will be soul far beyond what a conscious ego could ever reach.”

Carl Jung CW-Vol 10: Civilisation in Transition pg.304



Embodied Imagination takes us to that place. Passing through that threshold of the small hidden door. The EI process does this for the dreamer.

Returning to the two dreams to make some links and ground the theory to the practice. In **Dream 1** Alterity is directly referenced in the “Most Alien Other” with an actual alien being housed in the glass incubator on level 4. If we look closely at this scene in the dream, the room is sparse and the lights are going down. In the beginning of the EI process we begin by entering a hypnogogic state by dropping into the body with a “Body Scan”. This essentially takes our attention away from outer life concerns and places our attention inward and into our body and its sensations. The work of EI remains in this place until the session is complete. This place is reflected in the dream space on level 4.

In an EI session the fourth or fifth transit is that of the most Alien Other”. The “Other” transits are important steps in the lead up to this fourth “most alien Other” transit. The first transit comprises establishing the dreamer in a safe space. A very important first step in the process. The second and third transits are other dream images that are becoming more alterity/different to the dreamer.

The transit to the most alien Other is often the most difficult for the dreamer and the dream worker. Robert Bosnak speaks often about the dream worker’s panic that can set in and the Dan in **Dream 1** reflects that state well. Bosnak would say the panic arises from, a sense of, “I have no idea what this dream is about”, accompanied by a host of feelings, resistances, and defences against entering the transit. The dreamworker’s panic as reflected by Dan in the dream is the fear that arises when the alien comes alive. There is a point in the transit where the dreamer crosses over in the embodiment of the Other and it is at this point that the experience of the Other becomes alive too. This is where the biggest shift of habitual consciousness can take place for the dreamer. To get to this place though, is where the art of mimesis and the Craft of EI is working the most in the process.

Following the last transit and the completion of the four or five transits the dreamworker begins recounting the *composite* back to the dreamer. This moment is not unlike the elevator ride that Dan attempts to take in Dream 1.

Riding the elevator up and down is likened to taking the dreamer through the *Composite* pausing momentarily at each level or each *transit* to assist the dreamer back into each of the embodied *transits* and *anchors* in body locations. The dreamer continues to hold all these *transits and anchors* in the body together creating a network of the *Composite*. This process happens twice with a pause in between for the dreamer to hold the *Composite* more deeply. Out of the complexity and chaos of the distilled essences of the *Composite* forms an emergent awareness phenomenon. This moment can be quite a transformative and profound experience for the dreamer and dreamworker. Bosnak again has drawn from Michael Taussig's work with the Cuna people and how they chant, dance and engage the spirit to become Other just as Dreamworkers chant the *Composite* to the dreamer to assist in deepening into it.

7. Conclusions

After much persistence with my discomfort for Mimesis and Alterity a gradual sense of clarity around this wonderful topic has begun emerging. Reflecting through the lens of Mimesis and Alterity I began to see everything as mimesis and everything as “other”. From theories of attachment in human relationships to the acupuncture needles my Chinese medicine practitioner were putting into my body – she explained that in the removal of the needle she waited for the body to let go of the needle. There was a release moment that she described as a teaching moment for the body to remember how to *let go*. The needling becoming a mimetic teaching device for the body to remember how to let go.

It seems to me that while theories of Mimesis and Alterity date back to ancient times, to Plato philosophically and in Art, it would appear not much credit has been given to it in terms of the various psychological theories that abound in our modern times. Mimesis is truly part of human nature. It moves us. It changes us. It's process in our lives develops us and forge who we are and are becoming. It provides a pathway into Other.

What I learnt through this experience with “the most alien Other” is that I seem too able to manage and regulate my reactions taking place in present time much better. I have noticed the returning of my attention from this distraction and internal reaction. It was as though, the attention to the “most alien Other” begins the process of a structure from which a bridge between the two diverging parts of self and other could be built. This led to a restoring of wholeness in a new and greater capacity. Reflecting, on the experience later I could see how through this lens of the most alien Other, even though I was still in an emotionally complexed state, that I could remain more present and engaged with my internal responses. I could become more receptive and open with the nature of the reaction. This process allowing the issue to be worked through to where I arrived at a greater sense of wholeness and enriched by incorporating these “Other” perspectives of the most alien Other. Realising through that process that what was perceived as most alien Other – *Alterity* was in-fact at least a passageway into seeing common ground and similarity even in the differences. That through this structure and attuning to a “felt sense in embodiment” I became freer of both fear and resistance to work through the issues that were arising in me. Having the safe space to do this is key to its success.

It is here that Chimamanda's idea of the danger of the single-story fits in my understanding with my experience of the bikers as a hiker and as my experience of being a son with my father. If I remained in my stance and my quickly formed narrative taking place in my mind surrounding the most alien Other a great tension arises in opposition. Without the processing into the Other I risked becoming divisively separate and immobilised within my perspective. I risked rigidity and indifference to an-Other's perspective and life lived. I risked an unsatisfactory completion and resolution to my inner tensions. I risked regaining a "lost paradise" in the words of Chimamanda. Emotional complexity and projections are part of the human experience, having a way to navigate through it is essential. Embodied Imagination is one such way.

On reflection, it occurred to me contemplating Bosnak's work, that he hasn't limited himself to ploughing this field that Freud and Jung have ploughed and that Hillman sees us turning it in *our* style. (meaning Archetypal psychology) That field of the Western man psyche', in his historical tradition and cultural predicament. Nor has Bosnak articulated a new psychology reflecting that passionate importance of the individual soul. Yet he is indeed passionate about the individual soul, although he may not call it that. Bosnak in my opinion has found a way into not only the psyche of Western man and all his traditions and cultural currents but into that, something *Other*, that something *Else* and that something *More* that is not necessarily of this Western psyche at all. You can see Bosnak in this, in the prehistoric caves in France. You can see it in his book, 'Tracks in the Wilderness of dreaming' and his explorations in dreamwork methods with, Ilyatjari the ngankari, an aboriginal spirit doctor of the Pitjantjatjara people of central Australia as an excursion into this Other than the Western psyche. The indigenous of Australia has a psyche that is not founded on this Western Tradition at all, but has met with *it* in these last three hundred years. The indigenous of Australia have their own traditions and living cultures that likely stretch back more than one hundred thousand years with indications from latest research ^{ref 10}, long before the birth of this Western Tradition took place. David Tacey speaks of this "Dreamtime" extensively in his writings, particularly in his wonderful book, 'Edge of the Sacred' and what it may mean for us westerners living here in Australia on this land, this country. You can see Bosnak beyond the western Psyche in his work in nations of the Eastern traditions like China, Taiwan, Japan & India.

In imagination more of this Other – Than the western tradition can be explored appreciated and made known.

I hope sharing my personal journey experience and encounters with the Other have help to illuminate through the lens of Mimesis and Alterity. I wish to thank Robert Bosnak, Michelle Morris and Jennifer Hume for the opportunity to present this in such a safe containing space. Especially to Jennifer for her valuable counsel during the creation of this.

8. Notes:

1. **Complex** - In Jungian psychology, a complex refers to a pattern of emotions, memories, perceptions, and desires that are organized around a common theme. These themes often stem from significant emotional experiences, often from childhood, and can have a powerful influence on a person's thoughts, feelings, and behaviours.
2. **Projection** - Marie Louse Von Franz, 'Reflections of the Soul – projection and re-collection in Jungian psychology.' Chapter 1. Definition of Projection.

"Carl Jung borrowed the term projection from Sigmund Freud but as a result of his different view of the unconscious, Jung gave that concept a quite separate, new interpretation. He used it to describe it as a psychological fact that can be observed everywhere in the everyday life of human beings, that in our ideas about other people and situations we are often liable to make misjudgements that we later have to correct, having acquired better insight. In such cases most people acknowledge their mistake and let the matter drop, without bothering to ask themselves where the false judgment or incorrect idea came from. The psychologist, however, cannot avoid this question, because to a quite special degree he must concern himself with correcting such misjudgements, since even with his usual neurotic patients he has to battle with these "crazy" ideas that impede the patients' adaptation."

"The difference between projection and common error is that an error can be corrected, without too much difficulty, by better information and then dissolve like morning fog in the sunlight. In the case of projection, on the other hand, the subject doing the projecting defends himself, and in most cases strenuously, against correction."

"Thus, Jung defined projection as an unconscious, that is, unperceived and unintentional transfer of subjective psychic elements onto an outer object" Seldom, if ever, is nothing of what is being projected is present in the object. Jung speaks of a "hook" in the object on which one hangs a projection as one hangs a coat on a coat hook.

S. Freud, Totem and Taboo, Pg 61. M.LVon F quotes Freud in her notes

"For Freud, projection is a defence mechanism through which the neurotic person frees himself of a feeling of conflict. He displaces this feeling onto another as the intended object. Freud emphasizes, though, that projection also has a part in all our perceptions of the outer world because our attention is originally directed outwards and tends to overlook endopsychic processes."

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Epilogue

Since beginning this assignment and holding the space open for learning about mimesis and relating it through this Alterity in the most alien “Other” moment on Anzac Day some interesting strange attractors have come into play.

Earlier in the year I changed job roles. From a maintenance supervisor to a maintenance planner. This change has me working alongside another planner whom I have not involved before. I had to draw upon my colleague to guide me on how to do various planning things again, mainly software program issues. During our exchanges we started to chat about our lives and our interests, and I learnt about his interest in American Indian motorcycles. Then not long after he was going on a ride with his Indian Motorcycle group to a nearby regional country Victorian town. I was in the area on that day so dropped in on him and his group. He showed me some Indian bikes and introduced me to his fellow enthusiasts. It was only on the drive home that I reflected on the uncanniness that here I was engaged with a Motorcycle club and getting along very well and feeling inspired to go buy a Triumph bike that I have long desired for. My friendship has grown with him and his passion for Indian bikes and his craftwork of making leather seats for Indian bikes that has become his side hobby.

To continue deepening the little synchronicities I started looking at motorbikes on Facebook marketplace specifically Triumph's and two came up that piqued my interest. While I didn't follow through to a purchase at this stage, one of the bikes being sold in Melbourne ended up being bought by my neighbour whom I have had no discussion with at all about any of this assignment or of my interest in the bike that he bought. Now I hear him riding around the streets past my house reminding me of my missed opportunity.

For the final climax moment of these experiences, Anzac Day rolled through again recently and as per my tradition went along to the Dawn service. Like the previous years the American Motorcycle Club members were there providing the BBQ for the local RSL. A few days later I had *my* plumber come over to my place to look at a job I needed doing. Chubb the plumber has done numerous plumbing jobs for me over the years, but I've never actually met him, only ever speaking to him on the phone or via text. When he came around to check out the job of connecting the gas to the hot water service for my shed, I recognized him from the Anzac Day celebrations as one of the members of the American Motorcycle club. I asked him if that was him at Anzac Day the other day to which he replied yes, he continued on to inform me proudly that he was the club president for 14 years also. We discussed the plumbing job and it all went smoothly with a lively engagement about my shed, his health and Anzac day. They raised \$3000 for the RSL with the BBQ – and possibly double that with their drinks bill.

These uncanny moments have kept me curious and engaged with this Biker Hiker story and my relationship to the most alien Other and Mimesis and Alterity. I am forever changed and yet still the same.

In other directions, over the years I have made various sculptures with the use of copper from old hot water tanks as my base. During the course I have been listening to the "Alchemical Series", on James Hillman's Uniform Edition No.5 book, 'Alchemical Psychology' as presented by Bosnak and Patricia Berry on the website "Jung Platform", See Note 13. Feeling very much inspired by their discourse on metals, a new series of artwork emerged for me. Six silvery creations have emerged over the last two years. I am really enjoying the new direction my creations have taken during my EI course. The first one can be found on the first page of this paper and the second on the Epilogue page.



Sculptural works by the author.

The last four sculptures came to life in the last month of the EI course in June 2024. I have reworked four silver platters into flat discs backed by various 12" records. I was imagining the spherical ball as a droplet emerging or bouncing back from the patterned embossed silver surface.

Lastly, while exploring Mimesis and Alterity I discovered Rene' Girard a French Historian, Literary critic and philosopher who has spent a lifetime writing about Mimetic theory that is so comprehensive I had to leave it out completely. But intrigued me none the less. Girard's Mimetic theory posits that human desire is not autonomous but imitative; we desire things because others desire them. This imitation, or mimesis, leads to rivalry and conflict, as people compete for the same object of desire. This led him to write extensively about the scapegoat mechanism, exploring it in myth, religious rituals and cultural practices. His work has a marked influence on anthropology, sociology, theology, psychology and literary studies, offering profound insights into human behaviour and social structures. An *Other* rabbit hole to go down and explore.