Facing the Future: Exploring the Transpersonal in Contemplating Retirement. A Heuristic Study

Sue Clodd

Alef Trust and Middlesex University

This study aimed to explore the experience of the transpersonal in contemplating retirement, as it impacted on five female co-researchers and myself. All were aged between 55 and 65 and were actively, or recently, engaged in careers in either psychotherapy or therapeutic social work. To allow for deep self-exploration, a heuristic research method, as described by Moustakas (1990), was chosen. Data was collected from my reflective, creative journal, and from the co-researchers using dialogue-based interviews. Data was analysed using an adapted form of thematic analysis. Individual and composite depictions were created and a creative synthesis developed. Two major transpersonal themes emerged: *confronting mortality and seeking authenticity and growth*. Findings suggest we cannot have the second without acknowledging the first. Subordinate themes demonstrate how we are managing this dilemma and exploring a place for ourselves in the future. Findings further suggest we do this by holding two distinct concepts of time: a linear concept relating to confronting mortality, and an expansive concept relating to seeking meaning and fulfilment in exploring new avenues or rediscovering latent parts of ourselves. These two concepts acknowledge spiritual dimensions in our lives and help us manage the knowledge of mortality. The findings are critically discussed in relation to relevant literature. Finally, the limitations of this study are explored and ideas for future research identified.

Keywords: transpersonal, heuristic research, concepts of time, mortality, authenticity and growth, women's retirement, seeking meaning, spirituality

---

Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Sue Clodd. Email: sueclodd@gmail.com

Recommended citation: Clodd, S. (2020). Facing the future: Exploring the transpersonal in contemplating retirement. A heuristic study. *Consciousness, Spirituality & Transpersonal Psychology*, 1, 94-107

This article summarises the process, scope and findings of a heuristic study exploring the transpersonal in contemplating retirement amongst a small group of similarly aged women psychotherapists. However, a core feature of heuristic research, as applied here, is the challenge to explore the primary researcher's own engagement with the topic under examination. Co-researchers are involved to the extent that their experiences contribute to the lens applied to the primary researcher's experience. In this introduction, therefore, my personal connection to the topic of the research – transpersonal meanings of retirement for women – is the focus.

Intellectually and emotionally, I had long been interested in the process of how people adjust as they move into the third and fourth ages of their lives, the 'Integrity versus Despair' dilemma (Erikson, 1950). However, this was becoming an increasingly relevant and personal topic for me in having to acknowledge my own ageing process. As a psychotherapist I have been used to working with the transitional/liminal moments in clients' lives, but I have always been better at working with others in transition than with my own transitions.

Despite my hesitancy in pursuing something so personal, and concerns about what might surface, once I had accepted that exploring this was to be the focus of my research, I could trace the steps that had brought me to this point and the questions it raised.

There were a number of strands hovering on the edges of my consciousness that kept pushing the issue into greater awareness. For example, many of us who are between our mid-fifties and mid-sixties are probably the first generation of professional women to have worked throughout our adult lives, balancing the careers and family dynamics that our mothers were told were not possible. We have the potential for a longer life after retirement, yet it felt as if there were few markers to help form this next phase of life, and many of the images of retirement seemed outdated and often conventionally masculine.

However, in addition to a sense of wanting to explore and challenge some of the perceptions of ageing in our culture, I became increasingly aware that contemplating retirement brought into sharper focus aspects of the transpersonal, aspects that ultimately go beyond our personal identities and yet needed to be personally explored. For example, I experienced an increased awareness of my mortality and a need to explore my spiritual beliefs, a greater sense of empathic connection with others and the world around me, a desire to reconnect with my creative side, and to continue to grow, aware of an ending process but not defined by it. However, given the unique nature of personal experiencing and the strong possibility that we each experience a different reality (Casemore, 2011), it was important to have an approach that allowed exploration of a topic that had deep personal significance, and so a heuristic research method (Moustakas, 1990) was chosen. This fitted well with my background in Person Centred philosophy (Rogers, 1957, 1961) which is "rooted in the immediate experiences

of the individual” (Sanders, 2012, p. 4) and matches Moustakas’ (1990) condition that “the investigator must have a direct, personal encounter with the phenomenon being investigated. There must have been actual autobiographical connections” (p. 14).

Braun and Clarke (2006) note that there are differing views concerning when the researcher should engage with the scientific literature surrounding the research question, when undertaking heuristic research. The concern is that early reading can narrow the width of your vision in the analytical process and compromise the heuristic principle of “discovery through the self” (Moustakas, 1990, p. 10). I chose to work from the data collected, into the body of knowledge and this allowed the relevant literature to provide a critical underpinning for the findings. Thus, it is more difficult and less relevant to separate the literature review from the discussion, as they become more logically entwined, and I shall honour that, within the context of this article. However, it is perhaps helpful to know at the outset, that the literature review fell into the following broad areas:

- Confronting mortality.
- The importance of seeking meaning in facing mortality.
- The concepts of time in the ageing process.
- Spiritual growth in the ageing process.
- Retirement as a liminal point.
- Retirement as rebirth.

Method

Whilst there are elements of the therapeutic process about exploring the deep personal levels of a meaningful issue, heuristic research is not personal therapy, and Moustakas (1990) outlines a phased approach, which helps to set some safe boundaries (Hiles, 2002). Although setting the phases implies a linear movement through them, my experience is that it was more cyclic, and phases were re-entered and explored iteratively.

Initial engagement

In this phase a “basic theme or question emerges as central” (Moustakas, 1990, p. 43). The topic appeared, not consciously bidden, in different settings, conversations, books, articles, in silence, poetry, work with older clients and my own reflective process. The more I engaged in self-dialogue about being the age I was, the more the research question crystallised.

Immersion

In the hope of gaining clarity about this transition experience, I kept a personal journal, reflecting regularly on my cognitive and emotional processes and including any relevant articles, poems, music and song lyrics that resonated with the topic. Aware that my

own sense of spirituality had moved from a broadly Christian theology, to a sense of the Divine as some sort of Higher Consciousness, internal to us and collectively shared, I explored this process in meditation, Quaker meetings and a theological discussion group. I also read poetry and articles that referenced ageing, retirement, spirituality and death.

In summary, reflections flowed in and out of the following broad areas:

- The ageing process and mortality.
- The spirituality of ageing and my beliefs about a divinity and consciousness.
- Loss of working life.
- Feminism and identity in my life.
- What do I want next?
- The importance of music to me

To gain a broader perspective and draw out some of the meanings in the exploration of the transpersonal in contemplating retirement, five female co-researchers, Ruby, Bryn, Sejal, Sally and Rena (pseudonyms) were invited to participate. All of us were aged between 55 and 65, we all had experience of therapeutic practice and had worked for all of our adult lives. They were all known to me and were familiar with self-reflective processes, and were willing to share their experiences at some depth. Previous general conversations had indicated that some of the things I was grappling with were also familiar to them.

Unstructured interviews were conducted with each co-researcher, lasting approximately an hour. Each taped interview followed a brief introduction explaining the nature of the research and asking co-researchers for any reflections and thoughts about their experience of being old enough to contemplate retirement. Moustakas believed this type of interview was most consistent with “the rhythm and flow of heuristic exploration and search for meaning” (Moustakas, 1990, p. 47).

Incubation

The emphasis in this phase is that “the researcher retreats from the intense, concentrated focus on the question” (Moustakas, 1990, p. 28). After the interviews were finished, I put a time limit on my journaling and cycled through reading the journal, listening and re-reading the interview transcripts. In letting the data ‘simmer’ in this way I gradually gained a sense of understanding of the data.

Illumination

This is where the research experience “breaks through into conscious awareness” (Moustakas, 1990, p. 29), if the researcher has been receptive to their intuition and tacit knowledge. Re-immersing myself in the data and moving back and forth between the incubation and illumination phases led to a sense of some of the patterns and themes that were present in the data.

Explication

Both Moustakas (1990) and Sela-Smith (2002) suggest that further immersion in all the data would allow themes to emerge clearly, “a comprehensive depiction of the core or dominant themes are developed” (Moustakas, 1990, p. 31). However, I found it more complex than that, and care was needed not to prejudge the analysis. I found myself recycling through previous phases before embarking on a formal data analysis. In order to do justice to the enormous wealth of data I had, I used a form of thematic analysis, developing a ‘seven steps’ process, based loosely on the phased approach suggested by Braun and Clarke (2006). This method felt respectful, treating the data with rigorous care, looking at it from many angles, focusing on nuance and texture and involving my co-researchers at each stage.

This process allowed the co-creation of individual depictions for each researcher based on their experiences, expressed in their interview. A group depiction that reflected our common experiences and themes was then created and agreed with my co-researchers, and a final creative synthesis developed that attempts to express all the components and core themes uncovered during this process.

Results

In an article of this length, it is difficult to do justice to the depth and insights of the contributions from my co-researchers, so what follows is the group depiction that illustrates the “qualities and themes manifested in the data” (Moustakas, 1990, p. 51).

Group depiction of the experience of the transpersonal in contemplating retirement

As women between our mid-fifties and mid-sixties, we are mindful of the potential difficulties of the ageing process, but there is a profound sense of being in a state of transition, that contemplating retirement presents us with the two big questions of *‘how do I want to live my life from now on?’* and *‘how do I manage the knowledge of mortality?’*.

There is an increased awareness of a physical end point to our lives and this colours much of the experience of contemplating retirement. We realise that we have to acknowledge this awareness in order to be able to grow into this next phase of our lives. For some, this human life is only part of the soul’s journey, for others this is all we have, a sense of non-existence before birth and non-existence after death. However, for us all there is a view of somehow returning our atoms to the universe at the end of conscious life, and we all recognise this as a spiritual process. We have varying degrees of comfort about these thoughts, but we are all agreed that making the ending as good as possible is an obligation, as well as a gift to those left behind. We would all subscribe to what one participant described as a desire “to go into the universe with dignity” (Sejal).

For all, there is a growing sense of the interconnectedness of people, and of our connections with nature, the earth and the universe, a move to a more transpersonal understanding, and this affects our views of this new phase in our lives. Despite the differing spiritual beliefs, there is an understanding that having a full ageing process is a gift to be used wisely, with a sense of the ending as a profound, almost sacred moment. Time is seen as precious and involves both a linear process that relates to an acknowledgement of mortality, and an outward movement, an expanding form of cyclic time, embracing new possibilities. There is a reluctant acceptance of this phase as being time-limited, but with a sense of wanting to use that time to soar, to find new ways of using our energy, skills and expertise. There could be time, “for a whole new career” (Rena); “to learn to fly” (Ruby); “to have safe adventures” (Bryn). For all of us, there is a sense of wanting to rediscover who we are. Understanding meaning in thoughts, feelings and actions has been important to us, both personally and professionally. There is a common sense of searching for meaning in this transitional process and this resonates with our experience of working with clients. We look to expand our understanding of the spiritual and the nature of mortality through the creativity of the natural world, poetry, literature and music, as well as exploring our own processes and practices.

We are conscious of the messages our bodies are giving us about not being as young on the outside as we feel on the inside. We are aware of our responsibilities towards our bodies and, in different ways, are trying to service the “slightly worn out car” (Bryn). However, we want to go beyond the concept that successful old age is solely about minimising physical decline, we are looking for a more conscious process than that. This is not wanting to exchange one process for another, but a desire for balance and synthesis.

There is a strong sense of feeling more internally grounded than when we were younger, but now less visible to society. There is a keenness to stay visible, to challenge the rules if necessary, to use the confidence we have gained to still have a voice and influence. We are aware of our limitations and the stumbling blocks, both personal and cultural, that might get in the way. We do not intend to fade quietly away, we want to fight to improve the dignity of ageing, learn and experience more, and feel a responsibility to ‘make a good end’.

There are few markers for our generation to guide us through this process of ‘retirement’, so there is a sense of pioneering, of stepping into the unknown, which is both scary and exciting. We do not see retirement as a passive process, as a disengagement from society. It is an active opportunity to develop, to try new things, to reconnect with, and recognise, aspects of ourselves that time, experiences and opportunities have blunted, or kept hidden. Sally expressed it in a very powerful image that the process is like the Invisible Man putting back on the bandages: we are re-discovering the layers that make up who we are. None of us expressed regret at any of the choices we have made so far, and we recognise that we may have spiritual or emotional issues to resolve, but see this next phase as a rebirth, a time to burgeon, to become fully ourselves.

Transpersonal themes identified from data analysis

Although the expression of the transpersonal in response to the questions, ‘how do I want to live my life from now on?’ and ‘how do I manage the knowledge of mortality?’, varies across the group, the themes are common to all. They are summarised below in Table 1, as two superordinate themes, accompanied by relevant subordinate themes (each of these themes is expanded in the Discussion section).

Table 1

Themes identified from data analysis

Superordinate themes	Subordinate themes
Confronting mortality	Spirituality and beliefs Searching for meaning Understanding our sense of the time left to us
Seeking authenticity and growth	Retirement as rebirth Re-engaging with parts of the self Finding our place in the future

Creative Synthesis

The creative synthesis is an amalgamation of my own experiences of exploring the transpersonal in contemplating retirement, this research process, and the individual and collective experiences of my co-researchers.

What developed was a painting entitled, “The sound waves of our lives”, prompted by the phrase used by Sally in her interview, “not dying with the music still in us” (Figure 1). This resonated with me, partly because music is such an important part of my own life, and partly because it contains both the knowledge of death and the desire to live this next phase of life fully and creatively. It also speaks to the belief of our lives rippling through time and serves as a summary of our collective experience.

The image of the horn epitomises the complex and convoluted process through which we are passing. The sound waves signify our life force, multi-stranded, all individual, passing through this process, mixing but maintaining their individuality. They burst forth into this next phase of life, dynamic, powerful and exuberant. Eventually they reach the point beyond human hearing, where they continue to ripple through the universe until the end of time.

Figure 1

Creative synthesis 'The sound waves of our lives'

Note: Water colour and acrylic on canvas. Approx. size 46cms x 35cms.

Discussion

The findings suggest that we cannot fully engage with *seeking authenticity and growth* in this next stage of our lives, without coming to terms with our own *mortality* (see Table 1). This central dilemma is pertinently described as, “how the existential self handles the new potentials of autonomy and self-actualisation, and how it grapples with the problems of finitude, mortality and apparent meaninglessness” (Wilber, 1984, p. 107).

This dilemma is central to the creative synthesis (Figure 1) – our life force, indeed all aspects of our experiences, get pushed, stretched and squashed through the process of retirement, (the complexity of the French horn), and emerge expanded, full of energy. Further growth is not only possible but essential. However, the possibility of full growth is only possible if we accept that there will come a point when the sound waves of our lives travel beyond human hearing, joining with the unknowable.

This is clearly not new psychological knowledge, but it is new to our experiencing as we reflect on the transpersonal in ageing and retirement. The subordinate themes define how we are making sense of this dilemma.

Findings suggest that contemplating stepping through to retirement is not a simple shift from rigid, monochromatic time to less linear, polychromatic time, as suggested by Hall (1983). We are already holding *two distinct concepts of time* when we contemplate the future, and this helps us to acknowledge mortality, whilst seeking authenticity and growth. Time is seen as precious and involves both a linear process that relates to an acknowledgement of mortality, but also as an outward movement, an expanding form of cyclic time, embracing new possibilities. The following diagram (Figure 2) attempts to illustrate this.

Figure 2

Diagram to show dual concepts of time

There is support for the idea that the sense of chronological time can be shifted, by adopting a different perspective, or by developing new skills and interests (Carstensen et al., 1999; Helman, 2005). However, experiential evidence suggests that holding two concepts of time has occurred spontaneously and is possibly a subconscious aspect of our individual growth. Bryn described this marrying process as “squaring the circle”, which expresses how difficult this process can be.

Frankl (1963) and Maslow (1999) believed that the need for personal or existential meaning was universal, and Baumeister (1991) suggests this is linked to our need for control. This seems to be reflected in our wish “to go into the universe with dignity” (Sejal).

Our exploration of *spirituality* seemed closely linked to our search for *meaning* in accepting *mortality*. Deacon (1997) suggests that this sense of seeking is an important and innate part of spiritual development and human motivation. It is clear from the data that we have all moved into broader concepts of spirituality and transpersonal connectedness and away from traditional, religious expressions of belief. However, though there are differences in how we each perceive what happens to our soul after death, there is a shared sense of peace about our atoms returning to the universe and a sense of being a part of a circle. Hence my use of the sound waves image in the creative synthesis, a sense of becoming part of the cosmos.

The idea of growth and further development in ageing seems contrary to the view of older people disengaging with life (Cummings & Newall, 1960; Peck, 1965). However, support for the potential of further spiritual development comes from Tornstam (1989), who argued that what other theorists called ‘disengagement’ was in fact a process called gerotranscendence. This describes a shift in our process from a materialistic and rational view, to a more transcendent and connected view, a perception echoed by all involved in co-creating this research.

Tornstam (1989) suggests that transcendent experience lies within us, is accessible to all, aids growth, and is a natural process that can be impeded or shifted forward by any major life event. In contemplating retirement, a major life event for us all, a forward movement is indeed detected, and is evidenced by the increased contemplation of connectedness, mortality and spiritual questioning and the desire to re-engage with parts of ourselves, as well as to discover new things.

This sense of forward movement is also present in the work of earlier transpersonal psychologists. Jung (1933), Maslow (1954) and Rogers (1961) all believed that the human spirit has an inherent, instinctive tendency towards growth and development of the self. Maslow saw the developmental process as a drive towards self-transcendence and a dissolving of the preoccupations of the ego. Battista (1996) suggested that this model anticipated the pre-personal/personal/transpersonal model of Wilber (1986). Particularly pertinent here is Wilber’s ‘vision-logic’ stage of development which comes at the end of the personal stage of development, on the cusp of moving into the transpersonal stage, and is characterised by an integration of thought and feeling that leads to the capacity for the intuitive understanding of complex patterns. I believe there is resonance here with our continued search for meaning and our desire to hold the two realities of life and death, whilst continuing to grow.

The second superordinate theme, *seeking authenticity and growth*, could be described as the outward movement of the inner, existential dilemma of facing mortality, thus echoing the shape and marrying process previously shown in the diagram describing the two concepts of time. In the creative synthesis, the ribbons coming out of the bell of the French horn are stronger for the reason that not only do we flourish, but we are

acknowledging *retirement* as rebirth, beginning the process of *re-engaging with parts of the self* previously set to one side, and thus *finding our place in the future*.

We all saw retirement as a new stage, a following through from the phase of being ‘travellers in a transitional area’ (Turner, 1962), into a new age. In the creative synthesis, this transition zone is shown in the French horn, with its complex, convoluted piping. The important benefit of this transition is the opportunity to engage in what Tillich (1952) called ‘freedom to be an individual’, now that its antithesis, ‘the freedom to be a part of’, is lessened. Bolen (2004) uses the image of the cocoon, neither caterpillar nor butterfly, where you cannot be sure whether it is an ending or a beginning, ‘a womb or a tomb’. One of the tasks of this phase is to decide how to gather the pieces in order to decide what to keep and what to leave behind.

Washburn (2000) suggests that the imaginal intuition of the younger self can re-emerge at a later stage, by a process that sees development originating from the pre-conscious depths of the psyche, to where it returns during the second half of life. It then reintegrates with aspects that have been lost along the way. Bolen (2004) suggests this reconnection is like sorting seeds, or a birthing process, after which comes the maturing of the aspects we wish to keep, relative to our life at the time. However, it also means leaving parts of us, ‘gifts’, languishing in the ‘underworld of potential’ (Bolen, 2004). Bolen expresses this new life, for both men and women, as the potential to be a Crone, an archetypal figure pre-existing in the collective unconscious that embodies inner knowing, wisdom and compassion. The qualities described, that we wish to carry forward are those of the Crone figure. This seems to encapsulate the re-birthing element of retirement, the desire to re-engage with parts of ourselves and confirms our ability to find our place in the future,

Part of *finding our place in the future* involves holding the experience of our past with the possibilities of the future. Yalom (2008) urges us to consider the ripple effects of our lives, both now and after we have died. The ripples are both known and unknown, hence the sound waves element in the creative synthesis. Bolen (2001) refers to this as the circle of influence that we have, and the importance of exploring the sense of humble empowerment and relational nature that Croning gives us. We are called to become more aware of our surroundings and our connection to the earth and the spirit, and to take seriously our responsibility for the whole. Fundamentally we are called to look for a sense of internal and external balance in our lives at this point and resolve some of our tensions present in this moment. This, perhaps, also serves as a protective process. It is hard to face the complete truth, but we are able, by expanding our sense of time outwards and embracing the Croning potential, to attend to mortality in layers, so that we can truly “consummate our lives” and “die at the right time” (Nietzsche, as cited in Yalom, 2008, p. 50).

Limitations

- This study involved a small group of women only and it is a piece of self-research. Therefore, no generalisations can be assumed, as it is based on the internal subjective experience of the “I who feels” (Sela-Smith, 2001, p. 24).
- In trying to explicate tacit knowledge I might have missed or misinterpreted something, particularly if I accepted something, “in awareness through language, whilst what I have experienced was out of awareness” (Stern, 1985, p. 175).
- Validity in self-search research is based on whether the researcher has fully explicated the meaning of the experience, so there is a danger of shifting from the “I who feels” to “the observation of the self, responding to feeling” (Wilber, 1997, p. 23). I believe I have honoured this process.
- The study is not replicable, as my insights and experience are now different as a consequence of this research, which captured a snapshot of a point in time for us all.

Future possibilities

There are a number of areas in which further research could be developed:

- Investigating whether setting up relevant groups, as suggested by the co-researchers, to explore these issues further, is a source of support to women contemplating retirement and confronting mortality.
- Investigating whether the distinct concepts of time, apparent in this research, are more commonly held by women facing this life stage.
- Re-connecting with co-researchers in five years’ time to see whether spiritual perspectives have changed and how this impacts on our views about life after death.
- Our working life has often been bound up with our sense of identity, so exploring women’s understanding of the Crone figure and how that impacts on our sense of identity as older women.

Acknowledgements

This article is based on the final dissertation research project undertaken by the author and supervised by Prof. Les Lancaster. It was submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the MSc programme in Professional Development: Consciousness, Spirituality and Transpersonal Psychology. The programme was delivered by Alef Trust in collaboration with the Professional Development Foundation. The degree was quality assured and accredited by Middlesex University, UK.

References

- Battista, J.R. (1996). Abraham Maslow and Robert Assagioli: pioneers of transpersonal psychology. In B. W. Scotton, A. B. Chinen, & J. R. Battista (Eds.) *Textbook of transpersonal psychiatry and psychology* (pp. 52-61). Basic Books.

- Baumeister, R.F. (1991). *Meanings of life*. Guilford Press
- Bolen, J. S. (2001). *Goddesses in older women*. Harper Collins.
- Bolen, J. S. (2004). *Transitions as liminal and archetypal situation*. Lecture delivered to The Mythic Imagination Institute.
https://www.mythicjourneys.org/newsletter_julo5_transitions_bolen.html
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77-101. <https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp0630a>
- Carstensen, L.L, Isaacowitz, D.M., & Charles, S. T. (1999). Taking time seriously: A theory of socio-emotional selectivity. *American Psychologist*, 54(3), 165-181.
<https://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.54.3.165>
- Casemore, R. (2011). *Person-centred counselling in a nutshell* (2nd ed.). Sage.
- Cumming, E., Dean, L. R., Newell, D.S., & McCaffrey, I. (1960). Disengagement – a tentative theory of ageing. *Sociometry*, 23(1), 23-35. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2786135>
- Deacon, T.W. (1997). *The symbolic species: The co-evolution of language and the brain*. Norton and Co.
- Erikson, E. (1950). *Childhood and society*. Norton.
- Frankl, V. E. (1963). *Man's search for meaning*. Washington Square Press.
- Hall, E. T. (1983). *The dance of life: The other dimension of time*. Anchor/Doubleday.
- Helman, C. G. (2005). Cultural aspects of time and ageing. *EMBO Reports*, 6, S54-S58.
<https://doi.org/10.1038/sj.embor.7400402>
- Hiles, D. (2002). *Narrative and heuristic approaches to transpersonal research and practice*. Paper presented to CCPE, London. <http://psy.dmu.ac.uk/drhiles/N&Hpaper.htm>
- Jung, G. (1933). *Modern man in search of a soul*. Harcourt Braces and World.
- Maslow, A. H. (1954). *Motivation and personality*. Harpers.
- Maslow, A. H. (1999). *Towards a psychology of being* (3rd ed.). Wiley & Sons.
- Moustakas, C. (1990). *Heuristic research design: methodology and applications*. Sage Publications.
- Peck, R. (1965). Psychological development in the second half of life. In J. E. Anderson (Ed.) *Psychological aspects of ageing* (pp. 75-80). American Psychological Association.
<https://doi.org/10.1037/10032-005>
- Rogers, C. R. (1957). The necessary and sufficient conditions of therapeutic personality change. *Journal of Consulting Psychology*, 21(2), 95-103.
- Rogers, C.R. (1961). *On becoming a person: A therapist's view of psychotherapy*. Constable & Co Ltd.
- Sanders, P. (2012). History of client-centred therapy and the person-centred approach: events, dates and ideas. In P. Sanders (Ed.), *The Tribes of the Person-Centred Nation*. (2nd ed.; pp.1-20). PCSS Books.
- Sela-Smith, S. (2002). Heuristic research: a review and critique of Moustakas's method. *Journal of Humanistic Psychology*, 42(3), 53-88.
<https://doi.org/10.1177%2F0022167802423004>
- Stern, D. N. (1985). *The interpersonal world of the infant: A view from psychoanalysis and developmental psychology*. Basic Books.
- Tillich, P. (1952). *The courage to be*. Yale University Press.

- Tornstam, L. (1989). Gero-transcendence: a reformulation of the disengagement theory. *Ageing*, 1(1), 55-63. <https://doi.org/10.1007/bf03323876>
- Turner, V. (1962). Three symbols of passage in Ndembo circumcision ritual. In M. Gluckman, (Ed). *Essays on the ritual of social relations* (pp. 124-173). Manchester University Press.
- Washburn, M. (2000). Transpersonal cognition in developmental perspective. In T. Hart, P.L. Nelson, & K. Puhakka (Eds.) *Transpersonal knowing: Exploring the horizon of consciousness* (pp. 185-212). State University of New York.
- Wilber, K. (1984). The developmental spectrum and psychopathology: Part I, stages and types of pathology. *Journal of Transpersonal Psychology*, 16(1), 75-118. <http://www.atpweb.org/jtparchive/trps-16-84-01-075.pdf>
- Wilber, K. (1997). *The eye of the spirit: An integral version for a world gone slightly mad*. Shambala.
- Yalom, I. D. (2008). *Staring at the sun*. Piatkus.

About the Author

Sue Clodd is a Senior Accredited Psychotherapist (MBACP) with a particular interest in the role of transitions and the role of spirituality in our lives. She feels her working life has been a privilege, combining so many of the things she values. She has considerable experience of working with children, students and adults, she is aware of how often it is liminal points that bring people to seek therapy. She is also a qualified teacher and her specialisms have been music; psychology and counselling. Currently, she has a supervision practice, primarily for therapists working in the education sector. Sue's family and friends figure strongly in her life and are a source of strength and fun. She is passionate about music and theatre and gets to live performances whenever she can. Sue is a Quaker and values the contemplative nature of Quaker Meetings. She also enjoys walking, camping, reading, dancing, socialising and trying to be creative.

Copyright © 2020 Clodd. This is an open-access article licensed and distributed under the terms of the [Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/). The use, distribution or reproduction in other forums is permitted, provided the original author(s) or licensor are credited and that the original publication in this journal is cited, in accordance with accepted academic practice. No use, distribution or reproduction is permitted which does not comply with these terms.