

**“SACRED PSYCHOANALYSIS” – AN INTERPRETATION OF
THE EMERGENCE AND ENGAGEMENT OF RELIGION AND
SPIRITUALITY IN CONTEMPORARY PSYCHOANALYSIS**

by

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ABSTRACT

From the 1970s the emergence of religion and spirituality in psychoanalysis is a unique development, given its traditional pathologizing stance. This research examines how and why 'sacred psychoanalysis' came about and whether this represents a new analytic movement with definable features or a diffuse phenomena within psychoanalysis that parallels developments elsewhere. After identifying the research context, a discussion of definitions and qualitative reflexive methodology follows. An account of religious and spiritual engagement in psychoanalysis in the UK and the USA provides a narrative of key people and texts, with a focus on the theoretical foundations established by Winnicott and Bion. This leads to a detailed examination of the literary narratives of religious and spiritual engagement understood from: Christian; Natural; Maternal; Jewish; Buddhist; Hindu; Muslim; Mystical; and Intersubjective perspectives, synthesized into an interpretative framework of sacred psychoanalysis. Qualitative interviews were then undertaken with leading experts focusing on the lived experience of contemporary psychoanalysts. From a larger sample, eleven interviews were selected for a thematic narrative analysis and from within this sample, six interviews were then the focus of a reflexive intersubjective analysis, utilizing psychoanalytic techniques. This research concludes that three forms of sacred psychoanalysis can be identified embracing a generic framework for theoretical and clinical understanding; a framework for intersubjective presence; and a framework for spiritual/sacred encounter.

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INTRODUCTION

My conscious engagement with Freud emerged during my training as a minister of religion working out what theology meant in the context of doing group therapy with in-patients in a psychiatric hospital. At first it seemed as if I was acquiring some esoteric knowledge represented by the 24-volumes of the *Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud* proudly displayed in a locked glass cabinet in the hospital library. At another level I intuitively understood Freud's insights into the unconscious and saw these evidenced in both Church and theological college. This research represents the fulfilment of my longstanding desire to understand how psychoanalysis, religion and spirituality connect, and influence each other.

This thesis advances the interpretation that a new category termed 'sacred psychoanalysis' can be identified within contemporary psychoanalysis, which accounts for the emergence of religion and spirituality as subjects of theoretical and clinical importance in the last 30 years. Sacred psychoanalysis throws new light on: the limitations of Freud's account of religion that has dominated psychoanalysis; the contours of the recent history of psychoanalysis focusing on both religious and spiritual engagement (from the 1970s); the development of contemporary psychoanalysis as a pluralistic and accommodating enterprise for religion and spirituality; and the lived experience of contemporary psychoanalysts working with religious and spiritual issues, for themselves and their patients. It is in this context that my research is set. The thesis is structured in four parts, providing an interlocking foundation to support the conclusion that sacred psychoanalysis is an important category that has evolved within the pluralistic framework of contemporary psychoanalysis.

PART A: Chapters 1-6

In the opening section of this thesis I introduce the context in which the research is located and frames the subject - the emergence of religion and spirituality in contemporary psychoanalysis. The psychoanalytic context illustrates how Freud's views on religion are no longer regarded as 'compelling or correct'. The personal context locates the researcher within the subject and offers critical and reflexive engagement on my motivation in doing this research. This places the research within a qualitative and reflexive paradigm outlined in detail in part C.

The methodological context includes discussion of reflexivity, ontology, epistemology and intersubjective ways of knowing. I argue for the importance of ontology preceding epistemology, leading to identification of my ontological assumptions. These have the potential to reveal new ways of being and seeing, but also the potential to distort perspective through the lens of a personal vision. It is important therefore that these assumptions are allowed a voice, adding a reflexive dimension that has been missing from the existing debate concerning religion and spirituality in psychoanalysis.

The latter chapters of part A offer clarification, discussion and definition of contemporary psychoanalysis, religion, spirituality and the sacred, locating the research within current academic debates. Sacred psychoanalysis has evolved as part of these wider debates and enables psychoanalysis to be involved beyond its own limited theoretical, clinical and political boundaries. This is seen in historical context, and by providing a brief account of key developments and people in the engagement of religion and spirituality, before turning

to contemporary psychoanalysis and the recent debates stemming from the 1970s. Two parallel accounts cover the distinctive developments in both the UK and the USA.

PART B: Chapters 7-16

Having outlined wide-ranging contextual issues in part A that circle around the subject discursively, I adopt a more linear approach in chronicling the evolution of sacred psychoanalysis from the 1970s to the present day. While several brief accounts have been published as part of wider discussions or research (Meissner 1984a; Symington 1994; Simmonds 2003, 2006; Black 2006), no detailed narrative of religious or spiritual engagement in psychoanalysis has so far been written. This thesis offers a new account of these vitally important developments. Beginning with the theoretical foundations established by Winnicott and Bion, I go on to tell the story of pioneering psychoanalysts who describe being at the margins of psychoanalytic thought by engaging with issues of religion and spirituality. Their narratives and subsequent engagement with contemporary psychoanalysis marks the recovery or rediscovery of an important aspect of psychoanalytic history. The following chapters examine creative forms of theoretical engagement understood from the following perspectives:

- Christian¹
- Natural Religion
- Maternal
- Jewish
- Buddhist

¹ The Christian traditions represented here are predominately drawn from the Western Church. Eastern Orthodox Christianity has had little engagement with psychoanalysis, though one of the very few responses is found in Chirban's edited work (Chirban 1996).

- Hindu
- Muslim
- Mystical
- Intersubjective

These offer new insights into the psychoanalytic process itself and are synthesized into an interpretative framework of sacred psychoanalysis, dealt with in detail in part D.

PART C: Chapters 17-24

Building on the literary, textual, historical and theoretical account of religious and spiritual engagement within contemporary psychoanalysis, I now examine these from another perspective. Part C develops the rationale for and the use of two particular research methodologies to examine the present-day views of psychoanalysts exploring issues of religion and spirituality. These analysts represent some of the most significant thinkers and practitioners in this field. Some locate themselves within a classic psychoanalytic tradition, while others adopt contemporary and intersubjective psychoanalytic perspectives. All agreed to be interviewed knowing in advance that I was a minister of religion, as well as a psychodynamic therapist. Working within a qualitative research domain, interviews were identified as the most appropriate tool that fitted with the one-to-one paradigm of psychoanalytic practice. The interviews took place in the location where most analysts conducted their psychoanalytic practice, as I sought to give opportunity for the presence of unconscious dynamics alongside the research tasks. The interviews were used intentionally, balancing a need for a fact-finding stance with a reflexive stance. This reflexive approach encouraged an exploration of ideas, thoughts, ontologies, emotions, unconscious dynamics and spiritual presence in both the interviewer and interviewee.

The first research method developed was a psychoanalytic intersubjective interview methodology. This methodological approach synthesizes ontological assumptions, conscious encounter, unconscious encounter and intersubjective presence developed into a specific narrative. I locate myself within the interview process consciously aware of my own experience of this process, which recognizes my presence and experience as a minister of religion alert to spiritual dimensions. I also locate myself within the interview aware of unconscious processes, identified by awareness of transferential and counter-transferential phenomena, as well as the use of metaphors and dreams drawing on my practice as a psychodynamic therapist. While such phenomena could be found in all the interviews, I selected six for discussion on the basis of the quality of the encounter and reflexive resonance.² I advance this as a new form of qualitative method that takes further the importance of utilizing unconscious processes (Hollway and Jefferson 2000).

The second research methodology, a thematic narrative analysis, allowed me to stand to one side of, rather than be central to, the research process. By locating myself at the edge of the research data, this allowed themes to emerge from within the interview transcripts that were made sense of through a narrative process utilizing hermeneutic principles (evolved historically within biblical studies) for interpreting texts. Both methodologies were tested through a specially convened group of academics, researchers and therapists gathered for a qualitative research day. The knowledge that emerged from both research methodologies is presented in support of the central thesis on the presence and importance of a sacred psychoanalysis.

² The interpretative process in psychoanalysis can be endlessly reflexive and no doubt there are unconscious reasons why I did not choose other interviews for discussion for reasons as yet unknown to me. See (Brown 2006).

PART D: Chapters 25-30

This concluding part of the thesis critically builds on and engages with the material outlined in parts A, B and C. Here I identify the specific features that form what I have categorized as sacred psychoanalysis. Sacred psychoanalysis takes two particular, but linked, forms. In brief summary this is first, a framework that crystallizes theoretical and clinical understanding drawn from religion, spirituality and psychoanalysis. Second, a hermeneutic understanding expressed as translation, transition, and transformation combining intersubjective presence and spiritual/sacred encounter. A final section outlines the research limitations and the research conclusions that substantiate the interpretation offered by this thesis for the concept of sacred psychoanalysis.

One implication of this detailed examination of such a complex area is a very full thesis of 84,000 words, but which remains within the acceptable parameters of the permitted word length. To capture the richness of the material that emerged in my research I have made use of extensive footnotes, appendices and research interviews (the latter contained in an accompanying CD). I decided to use a list of references, as these are sufficiently extensive and exhaustive, rather than a bibliography. These are produced using the Chicago 15B format, which offers a cleaner style and less clumsy footnotes. I have not been able to resolve the generic problem found in Microsoft Word, of the occasional footnote running over onto the following page. This thesis is produced initially in two volumes due to the limitations of the temporary binding.

PART A. THE CONTEXT, DEFINITION AND HISTORY OF RELIGION, SPIRITUALITY AND THE SACRED IN CONTEMPORARY PSYCHOANALYSIS

CHAPTER ONE. PSYCHOANALYTIC, PERSONAL AND METHODOLOGICAL CONTEXTS

No qualitative research involving the experience of the researcher emerges out of a vacuum (Denzin and Lincoln 2005). As stated in the introduction, this research has a personal motivation that is utilized as a tool with which to engage the complex areas of religion, spirituality, psychoanalysis and the sacred.

1. Psychoanalytic context

There is a long-held and dominant view in psychoanalysis that Freud and religion do not mix. Writing in 1961 Rieff commented ‘It is on the subject of religion that the judicious clinician grows vehement and disputatious. Against no other strong-point of the repressive culture are the reductive weapons of psycho-analysis deployed in such open hostility’ (Quoted in Earle 1997: 220). Writing in 2009 Akhtar added ‘Sigmund Freud’s ... unease about the transcendent “oceanic feeling” ... led to a long chain of subservient psychoanalytic thinking which took Freud’s atheism at face value and regarded psychoanalysis and religion (and mysticism and spirituality) as antagonistic’ (Akhtar 2009: 269), although the situation has begun to change. Any shift requires a reappraisal of Freud’s views on religion balancing his theoretical accounts of the subject (Freud 1907, 1913, 1927, 1928, 1930, 1933a, 1933c, 1939) alongside his much more complex and paradoxical stance to it when linked to, and interpreted by his autobiography and his correspondence (de Mijolla 1996; Mahony, Bonomi, and Stensson 1997).

Reading the Freud-Pfister correspondence was one of the first tasks I did in immersing myself in the literature of religion and psychoanalysis.³ This stimulated my thinking that Freud's views on religion were more complex and less certain, when addressing a person by letter, than when addressing an audience in a lecture, which subsequently formed the basis of his books.⁴ Paradoxically, Freud maintains his atheistic stance as a 'godless Jew', while applauding Pfister's insights, including religious comments, into both himself and psychoanalysis (Freud and Meng 1963). Through a critical reading of Ernst and Anna Freud's introductions, I noted not all Freud and Pfister's correspondence had been published, and some letters edited. My initial thought was Freud had said things to Pfister that contradicted the orthodox view of religion enshrined in the psychoanalytic heritage.⁵ The personal nature of Freud's relationship with Pfister, as a pastoral theologian, religious educator and minister of religion, intrigued me and revealed Freud in a different light.⁶ In an unpublished letter Freud writes to Pfister during his summer break in 1910, when he

³ I had been aware of Pfister since the early 1980s when obtaining a first edition of *The Psychoanalytic Method* (Pfister 1917) but had not read his correspondence with Freud. It was recalling a comment by Isbister, that Freud was more readily understood as a person through his letters than his writings, that pointed me in this direction (Isbister 1985). Further information of Pfister can be found in appendix three.

⁴ Grubrich-Simitis, in examining the existing drafts and manuscripts of Freud's writing, noted that on numerous occasions Freud was still making up his mind. The directness of the final text suggested a more strident view than that found earlier, a problem exacerbated in the English language translation by Strachey (Grubrich-Simitis 1993), an issue helpfully discussed by Likierman (Likierman 1990). The best example of this is a paper 'Death and Us' given to the Jewish group that Freud belonged to from 1897, the Vienna lodge of the International Order of the B'nai B'rith (the Sons of the Covenant). Later, published with a different title, it is the only full manuscript that exists in two different forms - 'the first for oral presentation, to a lay, almost exclusively Jewish audience ... for which Freud felt considerable personal affection', the second 'rewritten as an essay, expressly for printed publication, in a specialist journal, with a predominantly psychoanalytical readership' (Solms 1993: 5). He removes all Jewish references, jokes and anecdotes thus losing the 'immediacy and directness of contact' with the audience (Solms 1993: 7). The lecture is more tentative and sympathetic than the essay, Freud being very sensitive to the feelings of his audience. The lecture uses everyday language rather than technical terms so instead of psychoanalysis being about unconscious processes he talks about it as 'a sort of under-water psychology' (Solms 1993: 8). Historically the account of Freud's ideas have been drawn from his essays and case-studies, yet vital as these are they can lose something of his humanness and sensitivity, accommodating as with Pfister, the religious sensibilities of others.

⁵ Gay believes that access to the Freud Archive has been limited to scholars and important material suppressed, edited or severely restricted (Gay 1988).

⁶ I am aware that such a background also fits very closely with my own.

travelled with Ferenczi to explore ancient monuments in Sicily, including ruined temples at Selinunt and the well-preserved fifth century BC Doric temple at Segesta. The letter reads,

Selinunt 4.9.10.

The temple may be that of Segesta, where we performed our devotions yesterday, but you'll certainly be pleased that we are religious even to this extent.

Yours

Freud Ferenczi⁷

Freud reveals a playful sense of humour, not lost on Pfister, and in a subsequent letter describing some of the tensions inside and outside the psychoanalytic world, Freud makes reference to another temple: 'Building the temple with one hand and with the other wielding weapons against those who would destroy it - strikes me as reminiscence from Jewish history' (Freud and Meng 1963: 45f.).⁸ The details of this initial research can be found in appendix three.

While other discoveries were to be made in the Freud-Pfister correspondence, a review point in research supervision clarified that the sweep of the thesis was too broad and I made the decision to limit the study to examining religion, spirituality and the sacred in contemporary psychoanalysis from the 1970s onwards. However this initial research highlighted the importance of a biographical approach, where two narrative voices can be clearly heard. The faintest and subordinate voice is of Freud's life-long fascination with the puzzle of religion influenced by: his birth into a culturally Jewish but non-practising household (Rainey 1975)⁹; the psychological influence of a Roman Catholic nanny (Grigg

⁷ Freud-Pfister 27R.

⁸ Dated 10th October 1910. This is a quotation from the book of Nehemiah, chapter 4.

⁹ See chapter eleven.

1973)¹⁰; the anti-Semitism of bourgeois Vienna (Schorske 1981; Frosh 2004); his marriage to Martha (from an orthodox and religiously observant Jewish household) (Behling 2006); his avid collection of religious, pagan and mythological antiquities (Gamwell and Wells 1989; Armstrong 2005; Burke 2006); his visits to Rome, the Acropolis and other sites of religious importance (Breger 2000); his writings covering a wide range of religious topics, demonstrating Freud's knowledge of the Bible and use of biblical allusions, metaphors, and illustrations (Rainey 1975);¹¹ his life-long friendship and correspondence with Pfister as a Protestant minister of religion (Johannaber 1953; Irwin 1968, 1973a, 1973b; Brown 1981; Lee 2005); his early fascination with occultism (Reik 1921; Ansell 1966; Cornell 1990); and his final major book *Moses and Monotheism* (1939).¹² From the start of Freud's life to the very end, religious issues were vitally important and a puzzle he never solved, with his later writings focusing on issues beyond the purely clinical domain. Freud always saw psychoanalysis moving beyond scientific and medical disciplines 'since it touches on other spheres of knowledge and reveals unexpected relations between them' (Freud 1913: 165). He established *Imago* in 1921¹³ as a journal to engage in dialogue with disciplines such as anthropology, philosophy, literature, theology, and linguistics.¹⁴

¹⁰ This features significantly in accounts of the Christian influences found in Freud's thought (Vitz 1988; Rizzuto 1998).

¹¹ Although not part of this thesis, in my immersion into the subject I read all twenty-four volumes of Freud's *Standard Edition* and produced a commentary of his religious reference, metaphors, and allusions.

¹² Also discussed in chapter eleven.

¹³ This lasted until 1937. A different journal *American Imago* was founded by Freud and Hanns Sachs in 1939, subtitled 'Psychoanalysis and the Human Sciences'.

¹⁴ Anna Freud continued with this vision. Kohut quotes from a letter by Anna Freud in reply to a question sent by the son of an analytic colleague asking about the essential qualities of an analyst. 'If you want to be a real psychoanalyst you have to have a great love of the truth, scientific truth as well as personal truth, and you have to place this appreciation of truth higher than any discomfort at meeting unpleasant facts, whether they belong to the world outside or to your inner world. Further, I think that a psychoanalyst should have ... interests ... beyond the limits of the medical world ... in facts that belong to sociology, religion, literature, [and] history, ... [otherwise] his outlook on ... his patient will remain too narrow' (Kohut 1968: 553).

Despite this inclusive vision a clinical approach prevailed within psychoanalysis ‘because in the early years a single psychoanalytic “mastertext” (Schafer 1990) was still possible’ (Bateman and Holmes 1995: vii). For Blum this poses a difficulty, ‘As is true of any revolutionary thinker, some of Freud’s propositions are no longer regarded as compelling or correct’ (Blum 1999: 1033) and such an approach fails to take into account that psychoanalysis has profoundly changed to a degree which ‘Freud would hardly recognize’ (Blum 1999: 1031). There are those who wish in an ideal world to return to Freud, who still desire a mastertext and who do this by revisioning classic Freudian theory allied to clinical practice (Perelberg 2005a; Chessick 2007).¹⁵ Tuckett sees this as problematic, focusing on the past rather than facing the future.¹⁶

The loudest and dominant voice is of Freud the atheist¹⁷: unstinting in his criticism of the Roman Catholic Church; profoundly and proudly atheistic allied to a Modernist scientific paradigm; dismissive of any form of spirituality, tainted by connection or association with Jung; consistent in his belief that any form of religious belief or experience could be accounted for in evolutionary and cultural terms; certain that religion was evidence of

¹⁵ A growing trend in psychoanalytic writing is a re-focusing on Freud’s original clinical case material now more easily accessible though the increased availability of the Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud (SE) edited by Strachey and published in a paperback format from 2000. A Penguin Freud Series has been available in paperback format since 1980, which excluded papers on technique and much of Strachey’s additional material. These are now being re-translated and published under the editorship of Adam Phillips. Solms is editing a long-awaited *Revised Standard Edition* due for publication in late 2011. Freud’s original cases are being re-examined with an awareness of different interpretative strands and revisions (Budd and Rusbridger 2005; Perelberg 2005a).

¹⁶ ‘Our psychoanalytic thinking and work may enrich other disciplines and settings. In so far as we have tended to close our borders or not to treat with merit the work of those that attempt to work across disciplines or settings (indeed often seeking to settle questions raised using ostracism, *diktat* or rhetoric), I think our field has reaped disastrous consequences, particularly in the intellectual world. In a highly pluralistic situation in which we find ourselves we are not going to solve the questions we have about our discipline by fiat ... it is no credit to us that over a hundred years since Freud founded the discipline we are still bickering about this in largely ideological terms’ (Tuckett 2001: 430).

¹⁷ Loewenberg makes an interesting case that Freud was a pagan, understood in a religious sense (Loewenberg 1992).

psychological immaturity or pathology. Freud dispensed with religion as a source of truth and values, but recognized it as a cultural remnant from the past. Freud's vision for psychoanalysis offered a worldview that more fully accounted for the whole range and diversity of human experience (due to its inclusion of an unconscious dimension) than any that had gone before.¹⁸

Of these two narratives it is the latter that came to dominate the way religion and religious or spiritual experiences were viewed in psychoanalysis. Bion observed, 'Psychoanalysts have been peculiarly blind to this topic of religion. Anyone, recalling what they know about the history of the human race, can recognize the activities which can be called religion are at least as obtrusive as activities which can be called sexual' (Bion quoted in Franco 1998: 113). Psychoanalysts neglected other perspectives that saw religion and spirituality forming intrinsic aspects of human personhood and worthy of psychoanalytic exploration.¹⁹ Yet contemporary psychoanalysts find themselves in a discipline whose identity is changing with crosscurrents of cooperative and competing paradigms. The debate about the 'one psychoanalysis or many', initiated by Wallerstein has dominated recent psychoanalytic debates about the nature of truth, authority, identity, goal and vision – focused on the issue of pluralism that Mitchell saw as the future of psychoanalysis (Wallerstein 1988, 1992; Mitchell 1999).²⁰ Contemporary psychoanalysis is 'beginning to integrate some of the insights of its own fragmented history, and to seek strength in cooperation rather than in

¹⁸ This is contested by religious and spiritual accounts of human nature examined in detail in part B.

¹⁹ Theological responses to Freud and psychoanalysis were similarly rejecting. 'Freud does not allow for any progress in religion ... Our own consideration of faith as "acceptance and commitment in the face of Being" cannot be fitted into the Freudian scheme ... we cannot think of the father-image as just a projection' (Macquarrie 1966: 140). For a discussion of the Christian response to the 'new psychology', a popularisation of Freud's ideas, see (Ross 1993).

²⁰ White argues that there is an urgent need for 'constructive cross-paradigmatic discussion' to avoid the dangers of eclecticism (White 2008).

exclusivity' (Richards 1999: 1024). A key feature is adoption of a paradigm of multiple and fragmentary engagement with other disciplines, including religion and spirituality.²¹

Freud's notion of 'unexpected relations' has come into being in contemporary psychoanalysis. Stein and Stein asked a range of analysts the question 'Is it possible for religious thinking and psychoanalytic thinking to coexist?' (Stein and Stein 2000) and obtained very diverse conclusions, but identified important issues that run throughout this thesis.²²

2. Personal context

The genesis of this research dates from 1989 when I attended lectures organized by the Institute of Psychoanalysis (London) introducing the work of Donald Winnicott, Anna Freud, and Melanie Klein. At that time my focus was on the relationship between theology, psychiatry and psychoanalysis in Clinical Theology (Ross 1993). At lunch I bumped into Bridget²³, a consultant psychiatrist I had previously worked with when I was attached to the chaplains' department at Claybury psychiatric hospital in Essex (Martin 1962). Bridget was Irish and came from a Roman Catholic culture and a religiously devout family.²⁴ She rebelled against this background, which had occasioned great debates in our previous meetings, yet neither knew of our respective interests in psychoanalysis.²⁵ Bridget asserted I could not possibly understand psychoanalysis because I hadn't experienced it as a

²¹ The development of spirituality can be seen as a zeitgeist within contemporary culture (Lynch 2002; Tisdell 2003; Orsi 2004; Heelas and Woodhead 2005; Holmes 2005; Lynch 2005).

²² Detailed responses can be found in appendix eight.

²³ Name changed for reasons of confidentiality.

²⁴ For the influence of Catholicism in Irish culture see (Cleary and Connolly 2005).

²⁵ My post-ministerial probationary studies resulted in a 10,000 word dissertation on 'A Christian evaluation of Sigmund Freud' which led to the research degree I was then completing.

patient.²⁶ I suggested she was swapping one form of religion for another, though from our previous conversations I acknowledged her experience of religion was more toxic than mine. I was left with the paradox of two people united in a passion about helping others, yet unable to fully understand each other. My question became ‘How might we meet, theoretically and experientially, to bring mutual illumination from profoundly different paradigms?’²⁷ Subsequent theological and therapeutic reflection on this juxtaposition led to this research (Ross 1993, 1997, 1999, 2003, 2006) which examines these ‘unexpected relations’ between religion, spirituality and psychoanalysis and the connections between the inner and outer worlds of psyche and soul, other/Other, and I/Thou within the psychoanalytic cultures of the UK and the USA.²⁸

As I started to write a definitive account of this subject area, it did not take long to realise that the meandering stream of books and articles on this subject had become an overwhelming torrent (Beit-Hallahmi 1978, 1996; Simmonds 2003, 2006) that shows no

²⁶ Bollas acknowledges that certain understandings of psychoanalysis can be acquired but there is a different level of knowing in the actual experience of analysis (Bollas 1999).

²⁷ Rizzuto illustrates that the Christian desire for purity of heart expressed in worship is aided by psychoanalysis. ‘The condition for this exploration is suggested by the analytic method: that nothing be left unexplored, nothing considered unthinkable, because what is sought is to achieve an honest knowledge of oneself. Such an approach stops at nothing. Religious beliefs and attitudes, the bargains we strike with God in our unavoidable ambivalence towards Him, the ways we cheat as believers, the lies we tell ourselves so as not to confront our unbelief - all can and should be subjects of our exploration. A person who truly means to worship “in spirit and truth” can only deepen his or her religious experience, perhaps not without suffering, by exploring the inner sources of religious convictions, behaviours, hopes, and fears. As psychotherapy carried out with such a freedom of spirit contributes to a religion that can be truly honest to God, to a religion that can afford to believe that God does not need our lies, pharisaical performance of rituals without the recognition of our motives. I am talking here about assuming full responsibility for our belief and religious practices by bringing to light the private, hidden motives in our personal religion. The surfacing of hitherto unknown intentions and wishes may bring about an internal illumination, a clarity of self-perception, that adds richness and a deeper texture to our belief’ (Rizzuto 1996: 56f.). Northcut offers a similarly constructive engagement of religion and spirituality in psychodynamic practice (Northcut 2000).

²⁸ The term other/Other is used to refer to an external agency beyond the self, defined in Christian or religious terms as god/godess/God/Goddess/Ultimate Being. It is not used in the sense developed by Benjamin to refer to that which is ‘not me’ with issues of power and domination in her engagement of intersubjectivity in feminist and psychoanalytic thought (Frosh 2002). Frosh also addresses wider social and cultural meanings of Other in relation to psychoanalysis

signs of abating. Despite the sheer volume of material, it also became clear that it was a narrative that had not yet been told. This therefore became an important and central feature of my research, as a critical, contextual account and analysis of key people and publications on religious, spiritual and sacred engagement with contemporary psychoanalysis.²⁹

However, in and of itself this was not sufficient as it only established one voice and one narrative. In reading the Freud-Pfister letters, I saw a relational encounter and dialogue with Freud that embraced religious and spiritual discussion and difference. Such themes eluded many of the biographies on Freud (Jones 1953, 1957, 1958; Clarke 1980; Isbister 1985; Gay 1988; Breger 2000); the accounts of Freud's theories and techniques; and psychoanalytic histories (Hale 1995a, 1995b; Schwartz 1999; Makari 2008), with a few notable exceptions (Gay 1987; Vitz 1988; Palmer 1997; Rizzuto 1998). Such discoveries shaped my methodology.

3. Methodological context

A reflexive methodology is adopted which combines concepts drawn from ontological, epistemological and intersubjective perspectives. These are best suited for examining religion, spirituality and contemporary psychoanalysis for three reasons. Firstly, if psychoanalysis is an epistemological tool that allows us 'to confront the most difficult of human problems of human experience' and 'unrivalled in the depth of its questioning of human motivation' (Fonagy in Perelberg 2005a: vii)³⁰ it needs to address issues of religion and spirituality (Field 2005; Black 2006; Ross 2006) and this opens the realm of ontological

²⁹ Its purpose is more significant, in terms of critical engagement, than a literature review commonly found in theses and dissertations.

³⁰ This is debatable and demonstrates a lack of awareness about intellectual discourse on theological and spiritual issues as found in the work of Ford (Ford 1992, 1997, 1998; Ford and Muers 2005), Pattison (Pattison 1994, 1997, 2000, 2001, 2007) and Fiddes (Fiddes 2000a, 2000b).

assumptions that underpin epistemologies (Grix 2002; Denzin and Lincoln 2005). A reflexive examining of my personal ontology locates me within the research and influences my subsequent engagement with psychoanalysts, consciously and unconsciously. Secondly, a critical engagement with the person-to-text voice in contemporary psychoanalysis through the published literature (part B) grounds me in wider ideas and debates that have shaped my understanding of the psychoanalysts I was to interview (part C). Thirdly, a critical engagement with the person-to-person voice in contemporary psychoanalysis through interviews allows the lived and voiced experience of psychoanalysts to be heard and to inform the psychoanalytic world.

Within this methodological synthesis use is made of key terms including: paradigm, reflexivity, ontological, epistemological, contemporary psychoanalysis, religion, spirituality and sacred. These terms require further clarification.

Old Weltanschauung wine in new paradigmatic bottles

Weltanschauung is a German word used by Freud for theoretical and philosophical reflections on differing world-views.³¹ Freud challenged the *Weltanschauung* he identified as religion, philosophy, and Marxism on the basis that they provide illusory ‘ideal wishes’ for the person so ‘one can feel secure in life ... know what to strive for and how one can deal most expediently with one’s emotions and interests’ (Freud 1933b: 158). Turning to psychoanalysis, ‘as a specialist science ... or psychology of the unconscious-it is quite unfit to construct a *Weltanschauung* of its own: it must accept the scientific one ... Psychoanalysis has a special right to speak for the scientific *Weltanschauung* at this point’ (Freud

³¹ Strachey adds a footnote that this word means ‘a view of the Universe’ but chooses to retain *Weltanschauung* as it was used over thirty times by Freud in this one lecture (Freud 1933b: 158).

1933b: 158f.). Freud vigorously refuted that psychoanalysis was a *Weltanschauung*,³² offered a critique of religion as the dominant *Weltanschauung*,³³ content that psychoanalysis, as part of a scientific *Weltanschauung* required no other validation. ‘Without recognising it, Freud adopted his own *Weltanschauung*, which was colored by his own stoic ethics’ (Kirsner 2006).

Despite Freud’s denial, his claim to ‘special right’ resulted in psychoanalysis acting as if it were a *Weltanschauung*, or since Kuhn, a paradigm (Kuhn 1970).³⁴ Focused on science, Kuhn’s concept of paradigm examines how we select, know and validate knowledge that shapes how we see the self, the world, problems and solutions. Paradigms ‘are held with surprising tenacity, sometimes even in the face of seemingly devastating contrary evidence, until overthrown by some more successful paradigm’ (Ratzsch 1995: 762). Psychoanalysis evolved variously as a *Weltanschauung*, a worldview or a paradigm that excluded God, denied religion as truth bearing and relegated religious or spiritual experience to the realm of psychopathology. Contemporary psychoanalysis offers a parallel paradigm where pluralistic theoretical foundations allow for engagement with religion and spirituality in non-pathologizing ways. This change can be dated from the mid-1980s, a period when psychoanalysis was re-visiting its identity and when ‘spirituality’ became increasingly used in psychoanalytic journals and allied disciplines (Wallerstein 1988, 1992; Rubin 1996,

³² ‘An intellectual construction which solves all problems of our existence uniformly on the basis of one overriding hypothesis, which accordingly, leaves no questions unanswered and in which everything that interests us finds its fixed place’ (Freud 1933b: 158).

³³ This betrays Freud’s limited understanding of religion (Meissner 1984a) and the complex theological debates that challenge each aspect of his definition of a *Weltanschauung* (Macquarrie 1966).

³⁴ ‘The net that contains the researcher’s epistemological, ontological, and methodological premises may be termed a *paradigm*, or an interpretative framework, a “basic set of beliefs that guides action” (Guba, p. 17). All research is interpretative ... each interpretative paradigm makes particular demands on the researcher, including the questions the researcher asks and the interpretations he or she brings to them’ (Denzin and Lincoln 2005: 22).

2006; Cook 2004; Blass 2006). However its origins lie earlier, particularly in the work of Winnicott and Bion, who provided the theoretical foundations for the evolution of new forms of engagement examined in chapter six.

A reflexive methodology

The genesis of this research was a conversation that led to further conversations offering critical and contextual knowledge, autobiographical insight and reflexive engagement.³⁵

These conversations encompass the intellect, the emotion, the spirit and the unconscious as a way of discovering who I am in the company of others as a form of intersubjectivity.

Intersubjective approaches utilize reflexivity as a key aspect of contemporary psychoanalysis (Elliott 2004). Although Freud justified the development of psychoanalysis through his own self-analysis (Anzieu 1986), reflexivity requires a step further by moving outside particular philosophical and cultural contexts.³⁶ Such a reflexive methodology ‘can take various forms, including “counter-histories” of psychoanalysis that offer alternatives to conventional narratives about the psychoanalytic past or critical accounts of received theories or practices’ (Rubin 1999b: 68) thus challenging what psychoanalysis formerly deemed taboo.³⁷

Reflexivity has become a preoccupying theme in social sciences as part of the maturing of qualitative research methodologies (Holland 1999; May 1999). Among the disciplines it has

³⁵ I am indebted to former theological colleague, the Rev. Dr. Kenneth Wilson who helped me more fully understand theology as conversation. The metaphor of ‘conversation’ in theology has found increasing acceptance and heuristic value (Haers and De May 2003) and is being developed further by Pattison.

³⁶ ‘Because blindness constitutes our very historical being, the crucial challenge for psychoanalysis and psychoanalysts is not how to eliminate self-blindness, which is impossible, but how to cultivate greater self-reflexivity. We have to pursue knowledge of the human condition while retaining an awareness of both its complexity and its inevitable incompleteness’ (Rubin 1999b: 68).

³⁷ An example of this that covers wider areas than religion and spirituality is to be found in *Taboo or Not Taboo?* (Willock, Curtis, and Bohm 2009).

embraced that relate to this thesis are: sociology (Mauthner and Doucet 2003), religion and culture (Lynch 2007a, 2007b), psychotherapy and counselling (Etherington 2004; Jenkins 2006; Hedges 2010), and psychoanalysis (Elliott 2004). More recently reflexivity has been advocated as a highly creative and ‘cutting edge’ development of thinking and research in these disciplines (Macbeth 2001; Lynch 2007a), while needing to avoid the dangers of narcissistic self-indulgence (Lynch 2005) or becoming so generalized that the concept has little substantial meaning (Beaudoin 2007). Yet reflexivity in some limited form, and despite positivist counter-tendencies, has always been central to Freud’s attempt to understand his dreams and central to the whole psychoanalytic enterprise.³⁸

My starting point, like Freud’s, is that I am no disinterested observer looking for objective knowledge as I am entwined with conscious and unconscious threads woven through my life intellectually, experientially and aesthetically (Sullivan Kruger, Harrison, and Young 2008). My personal story significantly shapes the therapeutic stories and research narratives I hear and share in (Hedges 2010). These first came together in *Evangelicals in exile: Wrestling with theology and the unconscious* (Ross 1997) that became a reflexive account of my life rather than a conventional autobiography. Consequently ‘In this way, the personal narrative as an exemplar and contributing model of self-storying is a reflection of an individual’s critical excavation of lived experience and categorising of cultural meaning. This is then shared within a public domain to provide the audience with a meaningful articulation of human experience’ (Alexander 2005: 423). The choice of Monet’s ‘The Church at Varengeville’ (1882) for the front cover of my book was highly symbolic.

³⁸ Freud wrote to Fliess on November 14th. 1897 ‘I told you that the most important patient for me was myself; and then ... my self analysis, of which there was at that time no sign, suddenly started ... My self-analysis remains interrupted. I have realised why I can analyze myself only with the help of knowledge obtained objectively (like an outsider). True self-analysis is impossible’ (Masson 1985: 279f.).



The full glory of the picture is difficult to reproduce but striking in the original displayed at the Barber Institute of Fine Art, Birmingham.³⁹

³⁹ Assistant curator Kathryn Murray writes ‘This glowing landscape breathtakingly evokes the last haunting minutes of sunset on a hazy summer’s evening and illustrates Monet’s Impressionist techniques with its painterly immediacy and juxtaposition of complementary colours. The artist’s vibrant palette sets the foreground foliage ablaze with the sinking sunlight in a rush of fiery oranges, reds and yellows. Looser strokes of cool greens, lilacs and blues describe the shady vista behind and sweep upwards to the misty hilltop, which is swathed in gilded pinks and warm ochres. Here, the silhouetted organic form of Varengueville church dissolves into the gentle mauve contours of the surrounding cliffs. Beyond, a calm ocean of dappled pastel blue, minty green and violet melts into a golden apricot sky, where a few wandering clouds float silently past ... This instils in the viewer the authentic experience and ephemeral beauty of the original scene — one can hear the seagulls wheeling overhead, smell the heady salty air and feel the warm breeze of summer dusk. A chromatic feast for the eyes, the colours shimmering and dancing over the canvas, this masterpiece must be seen in reality to experience its power fully’ (Accessed 15/07/08 <http://www.barber.org.uk/pommonet.html>).

The twin trees symbolized my personal rootedness in being a dizygotic twin, while the church in the background represents the lofty, fading but ever-present spiritual presence of God. The tangled, colourful, vibrant undergrowth corresponds to my unconscious becoming conscious through a new quality of seeing.⁴⁰ I cannot fully unravel these threads but I can now more clearly identify them so they are not unspoken or unknown assumptions woven into my research in the tangled skein of psychoanalysis and the sacred. Like Beckford,

Reflexivity has been my starting point for making connections between my story and the ‘generalised other’ in my work. In my published books, an auto/ethnography moves beyond the stilted subjectivity vs. objectivity debate and affirms intersubjectivity as a means of determining knowledge ... the boundaries between, art, life and ethics is dissolved by personal narrative (Beckford 2007: 111).

Ontological dimensions

A philosophical grounding in ontology, epistemology and questions of methodology are essential for research that engages with contemporary social sciences (Denzin and Lincoln 1994, 2005; Blaikie 2000; Grix 2001, 2002) and the contemporary human condition (McLeod 1994, 2001). Determining a clear ontological perspective is an important task but one in which terms are ‘commonly misunderstood’ (Grix 2001: 26). Ontology is an examination of the metaphysical nature of Being and forms a crucial role in establishing the paradigm/s that research is based on (Denzin and Lincoln 1994: 107f.). While ontology and metaphysics were central to medieval philosophy they were superseded by the philosophical debates emerging from the Enlightenment, which had a significant impact on theology, psychiatry, psychology and psychoanalysis (Gay 1969; Ellenberger 1970; Sulloway 1979). Enlightenment thought formed the dominant discourse that became a ‘paradigm’ for

⁴⁰ See Elkins on art as unconscious religion (Elkins 2004).

psychoanalysis.⁴¹ Psychological research reflected this, dominated by quantitative and statistical methodologies, although this is challenged through ‘the eight moments of qualitative research’ (Denzin and Lincoln 2005: 14f.).⁴² It has also seen the resurrection of ontology as a subject in philosophical, methodological and qualitative research discourses (Kincheloe and McLaren 2005). Kuhn’s ‘paradigms’ drew attention to assumptions that are implicit but often lie behind knowledge generation, the limits of objectivity and the fragile nature of truth claims. Holland uses paradigms as a way of understanding the various forms of ontology that have emerged in the last decade related to reflexivity (Holland 1999).

Historically the subject of ontology has been dominated by philosophical concepts developed by Plato and Aristotle, focused on ‘universals’ and ‘particulars’, however the relationship between the two has always been problematic (Denzin and Lincoln 1994). One solution is to adopt Hegel’s dialectical process expressed as ‘concrete universals’ where there is possibility of ‘some transition in between’ (Honderich 1995: 146).⁴³ As ontology moved into the twentieth century it took a new turn through Heidegger, and the evolution of phenomenology further developed by Merleau-Ponty, who specifically addressed psychoanalysis (Romanyshyn 1977). Critical engagement came from Adorno and others in the Frankfurt School (Loewenthal and Snell 2003; Adorno 2007) and more recently through Habermas and Ricoeur whose ideas have found a ‘being’ of their own in postmodern and

⁴¹ Kuhn used the word to specify how scientific ideas change (Kuhn 1970), but it has become understood more generally as a way of seeing the world based on various philosophical assumptions that direct thinking, action and research (Protter 1985).

⁴² In a previous edition (1994) they record ‘five moments’, material that was still being used in McLeod’s application of qualitative research to counselling and psychotherapy in 2001. This illustrates the rapid growth of qualitative research and the increasing sophistication of its subject matter. The subject demonstrates its desire to offer reflexive knowing that is willing to revise and adapt to new movements.

⁴³ Hegel’s thinking is complex and rarely studied in depth although Rowan Williams provides a very clear overview in relation to Hegel and theology (Williams 1998). Hegel’s thinking underpins the constructive theology developed by Hodgson (Hodgson 1994, 1997).

post-critical thought. These complex developments formed the philosophical and ontological backgrounds to the hermeneutic and intersubjective approaches in contemporary psychoanalysis (Stolorow, Brandchaft, and Atwood 1987; Stolorow, Atwood, and Brandchaft 1994; Gomez 2005; Stolorow 2006).⁴⁴

Buber who combined ontological and existential dimensions in an epistemology of encounter and revelation offered a parallel but unique development (Katz 1978).⁴⁵ A contemporary of Freud, Buber retained his Hassidic Judaism and allied this to his emerging philosophy that drew in part on Kierkegaard. Buber's central focus was on relatedness as the essential aspect of humanity, a relatedness expressed in nature, with other men, women, and spiritual beings.⁴⁶ Relatedness takes the twin forms of I-It and I-Thou encounters, where life is a balance of both, but it is the I-Thou that links us to the eternal through love. Buber therefore offered a way of relating to the eternal that was not encumbered with ritual or doctrine and kept the eternal dimension as an essential part of true humanity, finding expression through love and mutuality.⁴⁷ Buber particularly influenced Eigen⁴⁸ and his

⁴⁴ A parallel development can be discerned in the twentieth century theological discourse. Tillich's theology represented both the nature of being and the ground of Being as discourse and experience – philosophical and phenomenological. Tillich never loses sight of the activity of being human – best represented in his collections of sermons and dialogues with students (Tillich 1952, 1955, 1965) rather than his systematic theology (Tillich 1951).

⁴⁵ Katz offers a helpful overview of Buber but is critical of the adequacy of his account of revelation. A detailed evaluation is beyond this thesis, however Buber offers a philosophical and existential analysis that corresponds to the complexity and elusiveness of our understanding of the unconscious.

⁴⁶ 'In every sphere in its own way, through each process of becoming that is present to us we look out towards the fringe of the eternal *Thou*; in each we are aware of a breath from the eternal *Thou*; in each *Thou* we address the eternal *Thou*' (Buber 1987: 19).

⁴⁷ 'The description of God as a Person is indispensable for everyone who like myself means by 'God' not a principle (although mystics like Eckhart sometimes identify him with 'Being') and like myself by 'God' not an idea (although philosophers like Plato at times could hold that he was this): but who rather means by 'God,' as I do, him who - whatever else he may be - enters into a direct relation with us men in creative, revealing and redeeming acts, and thus makes it possible for us to enter into a direct relation with him. This ground and meaning of our existence constitutes a mutuality, arising again and again, such as can subsist only between persons' (Buber 1987: 168).

⁴⁸ Eigen is an influential psychoanalyst based in New York, whose many books return to the notion of encounter. See appendix seven, 'Meeting Mike Eigen – a Psychoanalytic Mystic'.

ideas anticipated many aspects of the underlying ontology of contemporary psychoanalysis (Jones 1996).⁴⁹

Implicit in this research is an understanding of ontology that views human personhood through ‘being’, ‘being in relation to’, and ‘other/Other’, connecting metaphysics, philosophy, psychoanalysis, theology and the sacred. Being is experienced in a dialectic or dialogic form of reflection, that connects the self with Other, where Other precedes the other/object involved in conversation. The very transcendence of Other, experienced as apartness from the other/object, adds a different dimension to any dialogue. It became important in this research to identify the components of my ontology and these can be found in appendix four. In summary these statements form a personal reflexivity based on ontology of connection that comes via dialectic revelation: the unconscious and the conscious; the past and the present; the present and the future; the inner and outer; immanence and transcendence; self and other/Other/God; psyche and sacred; and word/conversation and seeing/vision. This in turn shapes the epistemological form of enquiry to that of relational and reflexive seeing/revealing. This awareness allowed me to engage more fully with the interviewees, my analysis of their interviews and the reflexive impact on me seen in part C.

⁴⁹ One problematic use of Buber that appears in contemporary counselling and psychotherapy literature is a false dichotomy between I-It and I-Thou, where the I-Thou appears to exclude the many I-It encounters understood solely through the understanding of relationship. ‘To deal with God from a nonrelational, detached or invulnerable position is to relate not to God at all but only to an idol, a finite thing put in place of God - a concept, an abstract principle, a transitory feeling. Thus philosophy and theology, no matter how pious, become for Buber the first step toward atheism, for they approach God as idea or concept rather than as a personal presence who can be encountered only relationally’ (Jones 1996: 73). Buber believed psychoanalysis ‘oversteps its limits and overestimates its strength ... which fragment an individual into a plurality of interacting systems ... one does not “meet” the other, one cannot change or be changed by the encounter’ (Burston 2000: 556f.).

Epistemological context

While I have identified ontology of connection and posited an epistemology of relational seeing/revealing, psychoanalysis has existing epistemologies of its own. Grix argues, 'epistemology ... is concerned with developing new models of theories that are better than competing models and feelings, knowledge, and the ways of discovering it, are not static, but forever changing' (Grix 2001: 27). Marcus and Rosenberg asked psychoanalysts to answer the following questions:

- What is your version of the world, your conception of the human condition? What are the central problematics that the individual struggles with within his larger social context?
- In the light of your conception of the human condition, how is individual psychopathology understood?
- How does this conception of the human condition inform your type of clinical psychoanalysis as it attempts to alleviate individual psychopathology? (Marcus and Rosenberg 1998: 6)

The nature of 'ontological being' - 'your version of the world', links with epistemology 'how is individual psychopathology understood?' and influences clinical practice. The epistemology of contemporary psychoanalysis can be globally summarized as a two-person, object model that focuses on interpersonal as well as intrapsychic experience. The external relational context and its mutual influence on the internal context led to new developments in psychoanalysis through the object relations theories of the British 'Independent' tradition, and the ego-psychology and interpersonal forms of psychoanalysis in America (Person, Cooper, and Gabbard 2005; Cooper 2006). This builds on rational and scientific methodologies with a renewed emphasis on hermeneutics (Gomez 2005). Winnicott's theoretical constructs of transitional space and phenomena, and Bion's O, while arising out of a complex inner object world, lead to new possibilities of knowing and being known. The analyst moves from a position of being the 'knower – the bearer of knowledge' through

objective interpretation, to being used by the patient in the analytic process as an internalized good object and a container and detoxifier of bad objects through an illusory and transitional process that enables the patient to know who they are. Relationality and interpretation of the meaning of relationship are allied to a hermeneutic epistemology rooted in Ricoeur (Ricoeur 1970).⁵⁰ Thus, the inner and outer worlds create shared knowing and meaning, an ‘I-Thou (empathic identification)’ (Modell 1981: 400).⁵¹

Contemporary psychoanalysis embraces the evolution from interpersonal strands of psychoanalysis and the continuing influence of Winnicott (Coburn 1999) and Bion, where the ‘intersubjective’ shifts ‘knowing’ from the sphere of the overlap created by two persons in analytic relationship. In contemporary psychoanalytic epistemology, the ‘knowing’ becomes the creation of an intersubjective relational field as a ‘continual flow of reciprocal mutual influence’ (Stolorow and Atwood quoted in Frie and Reis 2001: 319) marked by the ‘capacity to share, know, understand, empathize with, feel, participate in, resonate with, and enter into the lived subjective experience of another’ (Stern 2005: 78) and the ‘co-creative interplay of the two subjectivities’ (Stern 2005: 85). Influential theorists from different psychoanalytic backgrounds have developed concepts to embrace this radical ‘other’, including: Ogden’s ‘analytic third’ (Ogden 1994, 2006; Frie and Reis 2001), Bollas’ ‘unthought known’ (Bollas 1987, 1992, 1996, 1999, 2007), Grotstein’s ‘transcendent position’ (Grotstein 2000, 2001, 2007), and Black’s ‘contemplative’ position (Black 2006). Yet alongside this knowing there is also a not-knowing, as intersubjective epistemology emphasizes ‘open-ended forms of knowledge and of experience. Indeed the capacity to

⁵⁰ Stern notes the burgeoning interest in hermeneutic epistemology from the early 1980s (Stern 1991).

⁵¹ This is only one part of Modell’s argument as he also sees there being a place for an I-It (naturalist-observer) event that does not reduce psychoanalysis to one epistemology.

tolerate periods of “not-knowing”, at both subjective and theoretical levels, is positively valued in some contemporary forms of psychoanalysis’ (Elliott and Spezzano 1996: 75). This epistemology radically opens the psychoanalytic process to the ontological dimension and to including religious and spiritual dimensions (Spezzano 1996).

The shape of my reflexive ontology and epistemology focuses on generation of meaning related to ‘being’, through critical reflection and through conversation and dialogue, which offers potential for revealing or seeing aspects of the sacred. Qualitative research and contemporary psychoanalysis focus not just on what we know and how we know, but what we do with what we know, including critically reflexive approaches to truth and values (Wallwork 2005). Religion and spirituality embrace ultimate concerns, values, moral and ethical stances, which connect us to that which is Thou and other/Other. Therefore an emerging stance in qualitative research and psychoanalysis is the re-emergence of a sacred paradigm as an essential part of humanness, where the psyche/spirit/soul connects with the self and beyond the self (Sheldrake 2005). This in turn requires further clarification and definition outlined in chapter two.

CHAPTER TWO. LOCATING AND DEFINING CONTEMPORARY PSYCHOANALYSIS, RELIGION, SPIRITUALITY AND THE SACRED

Consensus around language, words, metaphors, and meaning is required for communication to take place as ‘language bestows intimacy and relatedness, connecting different subjective worlds in a common symbolic system’ (Hamburger 2006: 287).⁵² Definitions offer clarity about the nature of common symbolic systems, without seeing these as definitive and unchangeable (Geivett 2006) but are still transitory, contextual and difficult to achieve (Laplanche and Pontalis 1973). Given debates about the nature of language involving Foucault, Derrida, Lyotard, Lacan and Kristeva (Loewenthal and Snell 2003) definitions assume an importance in determining where one is starting from and where one is located within a cultural, social and psychological landscape.

1. Locating contemporary psychoanalysis

The precise nature and definition of psychoanalysis has been elusive, disputed (Moore and Fine 1990: xixf.) and a preoccupation throughout its history (Sandler 1989: 238f.). One man’s self-analysis of dreams has become a hydra-like body of theory, technique, individuals and institutions found throughout the world.⁵³ Such definitions are important because they have an impact on the way psychoanalysts engage with religion and spirituality. Psychoanalysts defining themselves specifically in terms of clinical

⁵² ‘Psychoanalysis can never say more than language does’ (Phillips 1995: 8). ‘Language is arguably omnipresent in psychoanalysis, if for no other reason than that it is the essential tool of analytic treatment’ (Lanteri-Laura 2005: 942). McGinn quotes Wittgenstein, ‘If language is to be a means of communication there must be agreement not only in definitions but also ... in judgements’, and comments ‘that is to say our *use* of words’ (McGinn 1997: 110). Gargiulo helpfully discusses ontology and metaphor in relation to psychoanalysts understanding of the unconscious (Gargiulo 2006).

⁵³ For example this even includes China in the last decade despite a history of ruthless control of external ideas and influences (Yuan 2002; Kadyrov 2002). Hamilton identified twenty distinct theoretical orientations of psychoanalysis including an options for ‘other’ providing even more definitions of psychoanalysis (Hamilton 1996: 8).

engagement see little relevance for Freud's later more speculative writings, viewing only his central theories as those essential for the clinical task (Perelberg 2005a), and claim 'Like its founder most psychoanalysts are not religious' (Budd and Rusbridger 2005: 2). By contrast psychoanalysts adopting relational or intersubjective perspectives see issues of religion and spirituality playing an important role (Eagle 1984; Rubin 1998, 2004; Eigen 2001b, 2004; Rabate 2003). Psychoanalysis then is an evolving term that cannot be captured by one specific definition but an important reflexive question remains 'How do I define contemporary psychoanalysis?'

Psychoanalysis is not a definitive body of knowledge that attains the status of truth as Freud hoped.⁵⁴ Yet its central concepts and practices are truth-and-meaning-bearing and this enables a truer knowledge to be discerned and experienced. Neither is psychoanalysis simply functional, focused on particular aspects of training and practice. It is rather a relational encounter between two people, one of whom has been trained to examine the unconscious, theirs and others, adhering to a body of knowledge originating in Freud and accommodating contemporary understandings of the self in relation to self, community, culture and the Other. This two-person relationship generates an intersubjective 'space', consciously and unconsciously peopled by internal objects/inner presences, where one can rediscover the narratives of the human spirit/soul. This psychoanalytic 'space' has the potential to facilitate or create transcendent encounter that finds parallels in the language and experience of mysticism, but is not mysticism. Such encounter points beyond the self while being experienced within the self. The key tool in this process is the free association of ideas, feelings, memories, and events that can be inhibited by dominant discourses and

⁵⁴ Phillips recognizes that there are 'those of us who do not want the sadomasochistic fantasy of truth in scientific psychoanalysis - truth, that is, as something to which we are obliged to submit' (Phillips 1993: xvi).

figures that exclude or fail to sufficiently validate areas of human spirit/soul. The key relationship in this process is one that allows sufficient structure to evoke psychological holding and trust. It also needs to be sufficiently flexible to recognize the emergence of something outside the experience of the analyst, yet available to the mutuality of relational encounter between two unique people.

2. Locating religion, spirituality and the sacred

Traditionally psychoanalysis has engaged with religion rather than spirituality. Religion has a definite identity and status which often attracts stereotypical and pathological responses in culture (Orsi 2004) and psychoanalysis (Black 2006). Spirituality by contrast has an indeterminate identity and status which has become an all-encompassing and elusive term deemed to be important in contemporary culture (Lynch 2007a, 2007b). Spirituality has touched almost every aspect of culture⁵⁵ yet in psychoanalysis writings on spirituality ‘are

⁵⁵ An indicative list that outlines something of the breadth and depth of this development could include the following:

Psychology of religion (Wulff 1997; Hill et al. 2000; Paloutzian and Park 2005; Helminiak 2006)
 Addictions (Cook 2004; Carrico, Gifford, and Moos 2007)
 Nursing and Health Care (Martsolf and Mickley 1998; Orchard 2001; Gilliat-Ray 2003) including palliative care (Walter 2002; Wright 2004) and maternity care (Hall 2003)
 Work and Management (Pattison 1997; Ottaway 2003; Bell and Taylor 2004)
 Mental health (Foskett 1999b; Swinton 2001; Foskett, Marriott, and Wilson-Rudd 2004; Coyte, Gilbert, and Nicholls 2007; Koenig 2010)
 Education and Religious studies (Beck 1986; Wright 2000; Hull 2002; Shajahan 2004)
 Consumerism/marketing (Beaudoin 2003; Carrette and King 2005)
 Social sciences, especially sociology (Hill et al. 2000; Flanagan and Jupp 2007)
 Social work (Epple 2003; Gilligan and Furlong 2006; Leitz, Langer, and Furman 2006)
 Psychology and Clinical Psychology (Watts, Nye, and Savage 2002; Fontana 2003; Pargement and Saunders 2007)
 Psychiatry (Cook, Powell, and Sims 2009)
 Contemporary culture, including football, clubbing, outdoor pursuits, New Age, self-help, and shopping (Van Ness 1996; Sutcliffe and Bowman 2000; Lynch 2002, 2005)
 Practical and pastoral theology (Slee 2004a; Lynch 2005)
 Feminism and Feminist theology (Woodhead 1997; Zwissler 2007)
 Counselling and Psychotherapy (Bergin and Richards 1997; West 2000, 2004; Ross 2006)
 Ministerial formation (Watts, Nye, and Savage 2002; Goodliff 2005b)
 Art (Knowles 2002; Mooney and Timmins 2007)
 Philosophy of Science (Hay and Socha 2005; Shelton 2010)

more like stray notes than a central motif' (Rubin 2006: 132) suggesting that this is still an important area of investigation. The complexities around defining psychoanalysis apply equally to religion and spirituality, yet the following working definitions are adopted to capture these vital areas of human thought, experience and being.

Defining religion

Religion can be understood in devotional, theistic/theological, sociological/cultural, historical, cognitive, phenomenological and functional ways (Ross 1999; Lynch 2005). This is a complex theoretical debate that has dominated the history of religions (Orsi 2004), and the psychology of religion (Wulff 1997) but those detailed discussions lie beyond this research (Lynch 2007a). Religion at its simplest and most inclusive is 'the story of the human encounter with the Sacred - a universal phenomenon made evident in myriad ways' (Eliade 1987: xi) which in a Western tradition draws primarily from Christian and Jewish theistic traditions emphasizing belief in a supreme Being.⁵⁶ King develops this by identifying eight aspects of a religion as: traditionalism; religious experience (psychological experience in a religious context or frame); myth and symbol; concepts of salvation; sacred places and objects; sacred actions or rituals; sacred writings; and sacred community (King 1987: 282f.). Functional, descriptive and inclusive approaches to religion are adopted in this research as they establish common ground for engagement with spirituality and psychoanalysis. Historically, psychoanalysis engaged with theistic religions, in Freud's case primarily Roman Catholicism (rather than with Pfister's liberal Protestantism), and

⁵⁶ Bergin and Richards' important summary of research on religion and spirituality in relation to counselling and psychotherapy based primarily in a North American context defines religion as 'theistic beliefs, practices, and feelings that are often, but not always, expressed institutionally and denominationally as well as personally' (Bergin and Richards 1997: 13).

Judaism - despite Freud's non-observance as 'a godless Jew' (Freud and Meng 1963) his knowledge of Judaism is more considerable than he acknowledged.⁵⁷

Defining spirituality

This is a complex, disputed, contradictory, elusive and ambiguous yet essential task as spirituality apart from religion is a pervasive cultural phenomenon (Hull 1996; Hill et al. 2000; Carrette and King 2005; Gilligan and Furlong 2006), a consequence of social, cultural and philosophical and psychological changes of the twentieth century. The evolution of the 'self'⁵⁸, the emergence of secularization⁵⁹, the parallel development of sacralization⁶⁰, postmodern critiques of Modernity⁶¹ and the increasing dominance of consumerism as a

⁵⁷ This is a theme dealt with in various chapters in section B, but a particular focus of chapter eleven.

⁵⁸ The twentieth century saw the flowering of central Modernist ideas that relocated the self as an independent entity evolving in opposition to a reified socially structured and religiously ordered world. Human self-consciousness came to be located as the centre of the Universe and the source of authority, a move from the metaphysical to the metapsychological. The primacy of individual experience has been built on in spiritual practices advocated by the emergence of quasi-religious and spiritual ideas and movements that developed from the 1960s onwards outside of established religions. In such new religious movements/cults, the New-Age movement, and religious progressive organizations the self is viewed as Divine, absolutely independent and radically inter-dependent (Heelas 1996; Bruce 2000b; Lynch 2007b).

⁵⁹ A second and parallel development was that of secularization as a descriptive category of social change and an underpinning principle in social thinking. This is another complex area that has dominated the sociology of religion for the last 40 years (Davie 1994; Bruce 1996; Brown 2001). Every decade has seen the emergence of new writers entering the debate and existing writers returning to the debate, either to substantiate, enlarge or refute their earlier thinking (Martin 2005). The consensus of views on secularization was that it provided a key tool in understanding significant change in society creating an exciting advent in sociological theory, even if this is now seen by some as a myth (Lyon 1985: 4f.).

⁶⁰ Yet alongside this there has been the emergence of sacralization as an alternative paradigm (Woodhead and Heelas 2000; Heelas and Woodhead 2005). Secularization finds itself unable to address the generic growth of spirituality; the persistence of 'cults'; and the emergence of fundamentalism (Bruce 2000a; Ruthven 2004, 2007). As an overall thesis it has significant failings in addressing the social world as it is, as evidenced in Heelas and Woodhead's recent work, rather than the world that is theorized to be within a particular academic discipline.

⁶¹ The secular landscape is a part of the Modernist landscape and subject to the same failings of Modernity as outlined by Giddens and others (Giddens 1991; Loewenthal and Snell 2003). In response the postmodern perspective challenges all meta-narratives, not just religion, including secularization and psychoanalysis (Loewenthal and Snell 2003; Elliott 2004). As a consequence the secular landscape is highly changeable depending on where one starts from. If that starting point contains a notion of spiritual and religious experience, 'believing not belonging' or the reverse 'belonging but not believing' there is no authority to declaim this experience. What is clearer is evidence of a separation between formal, public religion and private religion and spirituality. The development of spirituality as a form of private, self-focused experience that functions like a religion is an important aspect of the wider secularization thesis (Lynch 2005).

social and philosophical force (Beaudoin 2003)⁶² all contribute to the contemporary meaning of spirituality. The impact of these trends can be seen in six overlapping constructs that form a complex patchwork that locates spirituality.

1. The emphasis on the individual, the self and the self-experience in isolation from religious beliefs and institutions led to cultural definitions of spirituality emphasizing the nature of lived self-experience, where the language of spirituality and therapy overlap (West 2000, 2001, 2004). Spirituality is seen as a distinct entity apart from religion, even if as in New-Age or psychological self-help movements, they draw on concepts, beliefs and values formerly part of religious systems (West and McLeod 2003).

2. The emerging schism between religion and spirituality is so profound that there is no connection or creative interface between the two. Religion and religious institutions are seen to be dominated by issues of power expressed in the non-inclusion of certain groups, the protection of existing privilege, and post 9/11, fundamentalism and violence (Schulman 2004; Giordan 2007).

3. At the opposite end of the spectrum there is a focus on the interrelationship of spirituality with religion, either as an adjunct of religion (Hill et al. 2000) or an integral part of religion

⁶² Carrette and King argue persuasively that spirituality has become a tool for the rebranding and reselling of religion (Carrette and King 2005). They see this as a crucial factor in the broadening use of the term spirituality in contemporary culture dominated as it is by consumerism. The term is used because it sells anything and everything wrapped up in a generic but appealing package that offers something that apparently we all want. A central aspect of this is choice (Bruce 2000b) as spirituality is viewed as an eclectic form of self-expression and does not have to conform to religious traditions, patterns or rituals and avoids the demands of living in community (Holmes 2005). Designer religion is at the heart of spirituality, just as designer labels are at the heart of contemporary society (Hollander 2002; Griffin et al. 2005).

and faith (Schneiders 2000; Hull 2002) because there are still significant numbers of people who embrace religious and spiritual beliefs and activities (Orsi 2004).

4. The idea that religion is a historic movement dominated by a Judeo-Christian tradition as found in a Western European context. This secularized view does not deny the presence of religion, but sees it as privatized, with little public value (Brown 2001; Luckmann 2003).

The term spirituality equates to privatized forms of religion.⁶³

5. Religion and spirituality are used interchangeably, with no consensus of meaning, each use being determined by the context: therefore spirituality is socially constructed with no universal commonality of meaning (Pattison 2001). Consequently some psychoanalytic writers prefer the term religion as this is a known entity (Black 2006).⁶⁴

6. The demise of religion has left an ethical and values-based vacuum in society that early Modernist movements, such as Marxism, and late Modernist influences, such as consumerism, cannot satisfy. The alienation experienced within contemporary culture leaves unfilled vital aspects of the person most often related to health and wholeness and finds expression in the terms 'spirituality' and 'soul'.⁶⁵

⁶³ This is challenged by a range of thinkers, including Besecke (Besecke 2005).

⁶⁴ Worthington and Sandage offer a review of the empirical research on religion and spirituality and identify a potential mismatch between the understandings held by the client and the therapist. More clients assume spirituality within a religious framework, while more therapists assume a spirituality apart from religion (Worthington and Sandage 2001).

⁶⁵ An example of this is the huge interest in spirituality found in the nursing profession and evidenced in a considerable level of current research. A critique of this development however could add that as nursing has evolved into a professional profession, rather than just a caring profession, it has claimed the holistic aspect of the patient as an area of particular expertise, so the drive to establish spirituality as a specifically nursing remit fuels other more pragmatic ends (Gilliat-Ray 2003).

One solution is to identify parameters that locate a ‘working concept’ - broad enough to be inclusive and yet focused enough to be meaningful - situated within a particular context such as the therapeutic.⁶⁶ A therapeutic paradigm offers a six-part taxonomy:

- Meaning - the ontological significance of life; making sense of life situations; deriving purpose from existence
- Value - beliefs and standards that are cherished; having to do with the truth, beauty, worth of a thought, object or behaviour; often discussed as ‘ultimate values’
- Transcendence - experience and appreciation of a dimension beyond the self; expanding self-boundaries
- Connecting - relationships with self, others, God/higher power, and the environment
- Becoming - an unfolding of life that elicits reflection and experience, including a sense of oneness and knowing (Martsolf and Mickley 1998: 294)
- Loving - the ‘forgotten dimension’ identified by Swinton (Swinton 2001, 2002) implicit in other definitions.⁶⁷

Drawing on these contextual and phenomenological approaches a working definition is offered by Cook:

Spirituality is a distinctive, potentially creative and universal dimension of human experience arising both within the inner subjective awareness of individuals and within communities, social groups and transitions. It may be experienced as relationship with that which is ultimately ‘inner’, imminent and personal, in the self and others, and/or as relationship with that which is wholly ‘other’, transcendent and beyond the self. It is experienced as being of fundamental or ultimate importance

⁶⁶ Research on spirituality from: transpersonal and humanistic psychology and psychotherapy (Elkins et al. 1988; Vaughan 1991); education (Beck 1986; Wright 2000); nursing, including palliative care and midwifery (Martsolf and Mickley 1998; Hall 2003; Wright 2004); learning disabilities (Swinton 2001, 2002); addictions (Cook 2004); and counselling and psychotherapy (Ross 2003, 2006) forms the basis of this taxonomy.

⁶⁷ They also reach consensus on the fruit of spirituality described by clusters of ideas, feelings, states including authenticity, letting go of the past, facing our fear, insight and forgiveness, compassion, awareness, peace, liberation, wonder, gratitude, hope, courage, energy, detachment and gentleness.

and is concerned with matters of meaning and purpose in life, truth and values (Cook 2004: 548f.)

With the addition of love - a category identified by Swinton (reference above) and Sayers (Sayers 2003) - this definition offers a way of understanding common ground for engagement between psychoanalysis, religion and spirituality. Yet even in defining spirituality something of its meaning becomes lost, limited by the words used. Spirituality also speaks to nothingness, and absences in personal and social contexts (Pattison 2009). A definition that keeps open other possibilities is spirituality as an encounter of being and non-being, inside and outside the self, through relationship to an other/Other with the potential for transformation. These are captured by the use of the term sacred.

Defining the sacred

Offering 'working definitions' of religion or spirituality in terms of common attributes and functions has value in conveying meaning across academic disciplines, and for facilitating communication. However something gets lost in translation that is recovered through the use of the term 'sacred'. Coming from the Latin 'sacrum' related to holy, the word 'sacred' retains this 'set apart for' dimension that spirituality has lost. Its meaning is to be set apart for a holy purpose in relationship to God/Divinity/Being/Other/Thou and human engagement with such. It is a term that has been applied to people, buildings, objects, time, places, food, and music, but in the twentieth century has broadened to include aspects of society/culture through Durkheim's famous dichotomy 'sacred and profane' and Berger's 'sacred canopy' (Berger 1967).⁶⁸

⁶⁸ Jones offers a critique of Durkheim in relation to religion and psychoanalysis (Jones 2002a).

The sacred was given a unique focus through Otto's influential work *The idea of the holy* (1917) defined as a 'wholly other' experience, understood phenomenologically and based on an extension of Schleiermacher's theology, examining '*feeling* which remains when the *concept* fails' (Otto 1917: 13). A failing of nineteenth century German theology was the dominance of rational categories where 'religion' and 'holy' were reduced to ethical categories of 'good'. This lost the uniqueness of the religious life that mystics and the 'ineffable' points to – the holy/sacred (Otto 1917: 19). Otto wanted to recover the 'real innermost core' (Otto 1917: 20) through the numinous experienced within the person, and also felt as objective and outside the self in what he terms the *mysterium tremendum*.⁶⁹ This consists of: awefulness; overpoweringness; energy/urgency; fascination; the 'Wholly Other'; that goes beyond mystical 'nothingness', void, and emptiness (found in Christianity and Buddhism) where 'God is not *merely* the ground and superlative of all that can be thought; He is in Himself a subject of His own account and in Himself' (Otto 1917: 53). Otto offers a dichotomous Wholly Other, aweful and alluring, experienced through a sacred numinous that was both in the self and beyond the self that could never be fully captured. He saw this as an inborn capacity evoked through voice, sound, music, silence, art, architecture, emptiness/distance, contemplation and relationship (Wulff 1997: 531). Otto's concept of the numinous was taken up by Jung who added archetypal dreams, visions and synchronicities as evocations of the numinous, thus adding a psychological means of

⁶⁹ 'The feeling of it may at times come sweeping like a gentle tide, pervading the mind with a tranquil mood of deepest worship. It may pass over into a more set and lasting attitude of the soul, continuing, as it were, thrillingly vibrant and resonant, until at last it dies away and the soul resumes its 'profane', non-religious mood of everyday experience. It may burst into sudden eruption, up from the depths of the soul with spasms and convulsions, or lead to the strangest excitements, to intoxicated frenzy, to transport, and to ecstasy. It has its wild and demonic forms and can sink to an almost grisly horror and shuddering. It has its crude, barbaric antecedents and early manifestations, and again it may be developed into something beautiful and pure and glorious. It may become the hushed, trembling, and speechless humility of the creature in the presence of – whom or what? In the presence of that which is a *mystery* inexpressible and above all creatures (Otto 1917: 26f.).

apprehending the Wholly Other (Corbett 2007).⁷⁰ Jung in turn influenced Eliade (Cox 2006), a pioneering historian of religion who promoted a universal concept of religion where the basic orientation of being human is to the sacred, in contrast to the profane (Eliade 1957).⁷¹

Lynch, while acknowledging the importance of Eliade's and Otto's ideas as theological projects, rejects the application of these concepts to social and cultural engagement as they are based on: a universalization of the sacred; a 'binary opposition ... between the sacred and the profane' (Lynch 2007a: 135)⁷²; an inability to address competing notions of the sacred; and their focus on the sacred as an internalized private encounter. 'The sacred is encountered in and through culture, not in some privatized, mystical space that is separate from it' (Lynch 2007a: 137) including psychoanalysis. Psychoanalysis offers an object-relational world that holds together the inner private world with engagement in a wider personal world – one coheres with, rather than dichotomizes the other.⁷³ This is implicit in Lynch's definition of the sacred.

The sacred is an object defined by a particular quality of human thought, feeling and behaviour, in which it is regarded as a grounding or ultimate source of power, identity, meaning and truth. This quality of human attention to the sacred object is constructed and mediated through particular social relations, and cultural practices and resources. Religions are social and cultural systems which are orientated towards sacred objects (Lynch 2007a: 138).

⁷⁰ A helpful discussion of Jung's ideas on the ego, self, *imago Dei*, Divinity and the *numinosum* can be found in Stein (Stein 2008).

⁷¹ These ideas are taken up and developed further by another influential philosopher of religion, Ninian Smart (Smart 1996). A critical discussion of the nature of the sacred in Eliade is found in Studstill (Studstill 2000).

⁷² A similar critique is offered by Jones (Jones 2002a).

⁷³ Jones draws on the work of Kohut to describe a psychoanalytic process. 'These dualistic definitions of sacredness should be complemented by theorizing which stresses the continuity between the psychological processes underlying religion and those common in other human domains as well as between objects denoted as sacred and other objects' (Jones 2002a: 61).

Before Lynch's working definition is fully adopted it needs to add the experiential dimension offered by Otto that finds expression through relationship.⁷⁴ The sacred always implies a connection, a way of being, such as relational being that forms the heart of healthy psychoanalytic engagement. It also requires an aesthetic dimension, so that sacred is not just a way of being, it is also a way of seeing. It becomes an aesthetic vision and seeing of the world, past and present, inside and outside as one becomes set apart in the aesthetic experience (Elkins 2004; Orsi 2004). At times such a way of being and seeing will not be reducible to words or images: thus, it will retain something of the numinous quality offered by Otto. The term sacred is able to convey dimensions of religion and spirituality, and offers opportunities for further discovery that can be found in psychoanalysis.⁷⁵

⁷⁴ Jones links Otto's work to that of Winnicott, Loewald and Bollas (Jones 2002b).

⁷⁵ Given Freud's views on religion, it is interesting to see how he uses the term 'sacred' in his writings. Firstly, Freud uses it as a response to works of art. On viewing the *Maddona and child* by Raphael, he detects a 'sacred humility' resorting to religious language to capture the power of this aesthetic encounter. Freud goes on 'but the picture that really captivated me was the *'Maundy Money'* by Titian ... this head of Christ, my darling, is the only one that enables even people like ourselves to imagine that such a person did exist. Indeed, it seemed that I was compelled to believe in the eminence of this man because the figure is so convincingly presented. And nothing divine about it, just a noble human countenance, far from beautiful, yet full of seriousness, intensity, profound thought, and deep inner passion ... I would love to have gone away with it' (Freud 1960: 82). On a later visit to Rome, Freud was also moved by Titian's *Sacred and Profane Love*. 'The title doesn't make any sense; what the painting actually means is not known; that it is very beautiful is quite enough' (Freud 1960: 259). Secondly, Freud used sacred in a general sense. In stating he 'regarded nothing as sacred' he meant nothing is beyond analysis or interpretation or the tendency to make someone or something special through using the term sacred (Freud 1900: 206). Thirdly, Freud uses the term in a general discussion on religious faith, cure, pilgrimage, and holy places. He later refers to the commandments given to Moses and written on stone tablets as sacred objects, Jewish law as a sacred ordinance, and the evolution of the ideas of the Church fathers as sacred history. Fourthly, Freud links sacred acts and religious rituals to the evolution of obsessional actions and taboos, with by far the greatest number of references to the sacred is found in his *Totem and Taboo*, though several are also found in *The Future of an Illusion*. Freud argues that guilt forms the 'sacred cement' that holds society together. Later he sees neurotic disturbance in the sacred beliefs, stories, narratives, symbols or figures of a child patient that he links to a repressed sexuality. Fifthly, Freud further links the sacred to the sexual. He describes the love and intimacy between lovers in terms of 'a sense of awe' or 'some sacred act' (Freud 1907: 88), yet also saw the root of impotence as a psychical split where love was drawn to the sacred and the profane. Finally, in advocating ideas about the Oedipal complex, Freud recognized that he has 'hurt the most sacred feelings of humanity' (Freud 1926: 213). Freud's use of the term sacred does reveal an awareness of aesthetic and universal feelings that go beyond a general or technical use of the word.

CHAPTER THREE. PSYCHOANALYSIS IN RELIGIOUS AND SPIRITUAL CONTEXTS

Despite Freud's apparent dogmatic atheism, some psychoanalysts have retained religious or spiritual beliefs or engaged with religion creatively rather than reductively. Before examining the psychoanalytic world from the late 1970s, when a new era of religious and spiritual engagement began,⁷⁶ the responses from psychoanalysts to religion and spirituality up to that point took three distinct forms.⁷⁷

Firstly, some valued religion and spirituality as part of a broader understanding of being human examined by psychoanalysis, without advocating specific religious or spiritual belief. A summary, but not exhaustive list includes Jung (Bair 2004), Andreas-Salome (Andreas-Salome 1964), Binswanger (Binswanger 1957; Schmindl 1959), Horney (Quinn 1987; Paris 1994), Erikson (Capps 1997; Wallerstein and Goldberger 1998), Fromm-Riechmann (Hornstein 2000), Fromm (Cortina and Maccoby 1996), Brierley (Brierley 1947, 1951),⁷⁸ Miller (Goldman 1997) Kohut (Strozier 1997) and Lacan (Earle 1997; Raschke 1997).

Secondly, some analysts were influenced by their religious upbringing, positively or negatively, without necessarily advocating adult belief. This list includes such figures as

⁷⁶ Simmonds identifies this as a 'third wave' (Simmonds 2003).

⁷⁷ Although lists of psychoanalysts are mentioned, this information is accessed through publications. As in all histories there are many unnamed people who contributed to developments but who rarely get acknowledged. For example, I met with Ronald Markillie in 1990 to interview him about a former supervisee and student, Frank Lake (Ross 1993). I became aware of his involvement in religious and spiritual engagement within psychoanalysis, but this would have been difficult to establish from his few published writings.

⁷⁸ Brierley was influential in the British context, caught up in the 'controversial discussions', as well as the author of articles relating Christianity to psychoanalysis.

Klein (Grotstein 1982),⁷⁹ Winnicott (Rodman 2003), Khan (Willoughby 2004), Kristeva (Kristeva 1987a),⁸⁰ Fairbairn (Sutherland 1989), the Robertsons,⁸¹ Gillespie (Sinason 1995) and Suttie (Suttie 1988).

Thirdly, there were a number of psychoanalytic practitioners who valued religious beliefs and spiritual practices as part of their adult life and therapeutic practice: notably, Freud's correspondent Pfister (Freud and Meng 1963), alongside Zilboorg (Fountain 1960), Semrad (Rako, Mazer, and Semrad 1980), Hanaghan (Skelton 2006), Rickman (Rickman 1957; Fairbairn 1959),⁸² Menninger (Hall 1960; Friedman 1990), Lee (Lee 1948, 1955),⁸³ Guntrip (Hazell 1996; Markillie 1996; Dobbs 2007), Markillie (Dabbs 1997), Pruyser (Maloney and Spilka 1991), Laing (Miller 2004)⁸⁴ and Jacobs (Jacobs 2000).⁸⁵ For those in the psychoanalytic community, Pfister was the earliest pioneer of holding psychoanalysis and faith together in order to enhance each other (Pfister 1917, 1948; Freud and Meng 1963; Pfister 1993).

⁷⁹ 'Segal gives us an interesting glimpse into Klein's religious feelings. Meltzer, another of her analysands, also has commented recently on the religious nature of Kleinian metapsychology. Klein herself, although Jewish by birth and rearing, was, as a child, powerfully attracted to Catholicism. In her later life she became agnostic and was critical of parents who hypocritically offered religious education to their children although they themselves do not believe in it. Klein arranged her own funeral, stipulating that it be a nonreligious one' (Grotstein 1982: 152).

⁸⁰ A case could be made for Kristeva to appear in all three categories.

⁸¹ Highly influential in the development of child-care through a series of films produced in the 1950s that demonstrated Bowlby's emerging theories on attachment.

⁸² Rickman had presented a paper to the British Psychoanalytic Society in 1936 on Quaker beliefs, which he also delivered at the IPA Congress in Marienbad, Czecho-Slovakia.

⁸³ For an intriguing review of Lee's work see (Jones 1955).

⁸⁴ Miller focuses on Scottish analysts including Laing, Fairbairn, Suttie, and Sutherland, and well as psychiatrists such as Maxwell Jones, and Esterson. He examines the influences in Scottish culture of the rite of communion, and the philosopher John Macmurray (Miller 2008).

⁸⁵ Of the people mentioned, Jung split with Freud and left the psychoanalytic community while Hanaghan, though influential in Ireland, was never formally recognized as an analyst, denying psychoanalysis there the value of wider theoretical, philosophical and theological engagement. Guntrip, while playing an important part in psychoanalytic history, never formally trained as an analyst and, with Markillie, was geographically isolated in Yorkshire, limiting their impact within the analytic world. Laing's maverick character was highly creative but controversial, drawing very mixed responses from the psychoanalytic world.

Despite these forms of engagement, the overall psychoanalytic responses to religion were, at best, an ambivalent tolerance (Herold 1952; Black 2000a, 2006), at worst, incredulity and hostility (Paul 1995; Aron 2004), and generally, an ‘ignorance of psychoanalysts on matters of religion ... only equalled by the ignorance of psychoanalysis on the part of the faithful’ (Leavy 1993b: 488). This pattern has changed in recent decades in some contexts, with an increasing interest in spirituality, Buddhism and mystical experience (Rubin 1985, 1991; Stein 1999; Black 2006; Epstein 2007). Such responses to religion and spirituality have also been shaped by the institutional structures of psychoanalysis and where psychoanalysts locate their sense of community and belonging (Kirsner 2000, 2001; Davies 2009).

The evolution of psychoanalysis in the UK and the USA took different institutional forms influencing the ways ‘official’ psychoanalysis responded to new developments, theoretically and clinically, and new applications to other disciplines. Britain retained a single psychoanalytic society, the British Psychoanalytical Society (BP-AS)⁸⁶, while in the USA, the American Psychoanalytic Association (APsaA) required a medical qualification followed by training and membership of an individual geographically-based society. All ‘societies’ were members of the International Psychoanalytical Association (IPA) who maintained standards for training and retained the power to include or exclude individual psychoanalytic societies. The BP-AS held together different theoretical strands and personalities in an uneasy alliance accommodating Anna Freud, Melanie Klein and the Middle, later to become the Independent group adopting Winnicottian and object relations

⁸⁶ Also referred to as the British Psycho-Analytical Society. Most psychoanalytic organisations exist as a society and a training institute, performing two separate but closely-linked functions. For clarity I shall refer to the ‘society’ or use an acronym to refer to both psychoanalytic institutional and training functions.

theories.⁸⁷ The prevailing ethos within the BP-AS Scientific meetings that formed a central part of psychoanalytic institutional life was to link back directly to Freud, a psychoanalytic form of apostolic succession⁸⁸, a state of affairs still prevalent until the late 1970s, where ‘there was no means of challenging what was outmoded or wrong’ (Arden 1998: 2).

The pattern in the USA differed. Each ‘society’ had their own form of ‘apostolic succession’ related to the founding fathers of the individual society (Kirsner 2000) and departure from ‘orthodox psychoanalysis’ led to expulsion or non-recognition by the APsaA as an official psychoanalytic society. Early psychoanalytic heretics from the 1940s included Sullivan, Thompson, Horney and Fromm.⁸⁹ Two significant changes occurred in the 1980s that altered the shape of psychoanalysis. One was the emergence within psychoanalytic institutions of new generations of psychoanalysts who were no longer part of some ‘quasi-apostolic succession’ and who were therefore able to envision psychoanalysis differently, leading to recognition of a pluralistic approach within psychoanalysis by the late 1980s (Gedo 1991).⁹⁰ The other was a legal challenge in the mid-1980s, when the requirement of a medical qualification for analysts was dropped opening psychoanalytic training to associated disciplines.⁹¹

⁸⁷ Winnicott and Balint refused to be identified with any one group. The Middle group started simply as a number of people who refused to identify with Anna Freud or Melanie Klein in the ‘controversial discussions’, rather than as a defined group.

⁸⁸ Balint was the first analyst to use this term in 1948 in his review of psychoanalytic training (Balint 1948, 1954).

⁸⁹ Horney and Fromm later related psychoanalysis to Zen Buddhism, although this was not the reason for their expulsion. It could be argued that by being freed from the restricted confines of the psychoanalytic society they were able to give freer reign to their thinking that encompassed religious perspectives. An overview of this period is found in Schwartz’s chapter ‘New theory, new splits: Psychoanalysis in the United States II’ (Schwartz 1999), although the most detailed account is found in Hale (Hale 1995b). When Grotstein and others began to adopt Kleinian and Bionian concepts in Los Angeles in the late 1960s, they were also threatened with expulsion from the APsaA (Grotstein 2009c).

⁹⁰ Gedo dates this to around 1980.

⁹¹ Other suitably qualified professionals, such as clinical psychologists, were now able to train as analysts.

A picture of two distinct psychoanalytic cultures emerges. In Britain it became a paradigm of accommodation, although psychoanalytic identity was established by belonging to a specific training group. In the USA it became a paradigm of conformity and exclusion, leading to a focus on technical and clinical innovation within existing psychoanalytic societies or splitting to establish new psychoanalytic trainings accommodating new ideas, but these did not always achieve recognition by the APsaA.⁹² These distinctive psychoanalytic cultures made it difficult for religious or spiritual engagement due to the need to belong to a group whose identity was shaped by an implicit atheism.⁹³ Freud's question 'Why believe in God?' addressed in *The Future of an Illusion* had become 'Why are you asking that question at all?' (Aron 2004).

⁹² Some psychoanalytic societies, initially excluded, have over time become recognized by the APsaA.

⁹³ This arose from Freud and Klein's explicit atheism and the prevailing influence of Modernism allied to the scientific enterprise. This is not just a historic practice, as seen in the work of Arnold Cooper (Cooper 2005, 2006, 2009).

CHAPTER FOUR. RELIGIOUS AND SPIRITUAL ENGAGEMENT IN BRITISH PSYCHOANALYSIS – AN OVERVIEW⁹⁴

Identifying how religion and spirituality became an openly addressed subject in the British psychoanalytic world requires piecing together fragmentary narratives of psychoanalytic colleagues, friends and analysands - some working together, others pursuing a lone path, with points of cross-over, divergence and contradiction. Recent origins are often dated to Symington's *Emotion and Spirit* (1994)⁹⁵ but stem from influences two decades earlier. Symington was an analysand of Klauber, who stated 'The psychical roots of Christianity ... Freud virtually ignored ... most psychoanalysts have done the same' (Klauber 1974: 249).⁹⁶

Klauber's thinking stemmed from a patient whose religious upbringing had been disastrous, leading him to offer an account of religion fitting 'post-Christian man ... more dependent on psychoanalysis than on religion' (Klauber 1974: 250). Religion, despite being 'highly improbable' and transcending reason, offers symbolic representation of early internal experiences lying beyond consciousness. Klauber adopts the term 'keeping faith in' with its literal and spiritual meaning and was one of the first writers utilizing Winnicott's recently developed ideas,⁹⁷ focusing on religion.⁹⁸ He noted the struggles psychoanalysts faced in

⁹⁴ This chapter is more detailed than the following chapter on the USA due to the location and existing knowledge of the researcher.

⁹⁵ Sub-titled 'Questioning the claims of psychoanalysis and religion'.

⁹⁶ 'Notes on the psychical roots of religion, with particular reference to the development of Western Christianity' (Klauber 1974).

⁹⁷ *Playing and Reality* was only published in 1971, although Winnicott had been presenting his ideas in piecemeal fashion throughout the 1960s.

⁹⁸ We keep faith in 'the indestructibility of good internalized objects ... Religion, Winnicott (1971) said, is one of the transitional phenomena in the potential space between mother and infant. Perhaps this accounts for the fact which puzzled Freud, that the first deities were the great mother goddesses. Religious belief proclaims the infant's knowledge that, come what may, 'the everlasting arms' of the mother will be there' (Klauber 1974: 249f.). This biblical phrase is taken from Deuteronomy 33:27, when Moses, close to death, blesses each tribe of Israel. The full verse reads 'The eternal God is your refuge and underneath are the everlasting arms'.

developing an identity as ‘it is very important to consider how the atmosphere of psychoanalytic training and the organisation of a psychoanalytical society could foster it or diminish it’ (Klauber 1986),⁹⁹ as in Issroff’s account. ‘I attended all seminars - Kleinian, Anna Freudian ... The then prevailing psychoanalytic ethos was generally a conformity-demanding atheism and anti-religious attitude’ (Issroff 1999: 101).¹⁰⁰ Symington acknowledges his debt to Klauber and from 1980 explored psychoanalytic and religious themes (Symington 2004a, 2007), encouraged by Coltart, Wittenberg, and Black.¹⁰¹ Two colleagues of Klauber’s, Nina Coltart and Margaret Arden, also addressed religious issues.

Coltart offered a holistic vision for psychoanalysis.¹⁰² She went beyond the limits of clinical encounter and integrated Buddhist values within her person (Coltart 1986; Arden 1998).¹⁰³ Coltart elaborated her connections between psychoanalysis and Buddhism, finding Winnicott’s true and false self concepts as an analytic equivalent of Buddhist teaching, leading through illusion of a self to a no-self position. She identified the illusions and hindrances encountered on the path to development through sustained attention by meditation and contemplation, Buddhist and psychoanalytic. It is this reflective process, a middle way, that gives meaning and depth to life and death (Coltart 1993b, 1993c, 1996;

Suspicious of external religion, Klauber saw the importance of analysts developing an inner light (a Quaker term), resonating with spiritual experience (Symington 2007).

⁹⁹ Klauber encouraged individual analysts to find their identity, despite the pressures to conform. Klauber himself adopted techniques from another psychoanalytic non-conformist, Ferenczi (Symington 1986).

¹⁰⁰ This was in the late 1960s when Klauber was part of the Independent group.

¹⁰¹ A longer list of people who supported Symington can be found in *Emotion and Spirit* (Symington 1994: xvf.). Wittenberg offered ‘information on Judaism but more particularly for participating in many discussions about the relation between psychoanalysis and religion and for her conviction that psychoanalysis lacked a dimension which only religion could provide’ (Symington 1994: xv).

¹⁰² Regarded as ‘one of the great training analysts, supervisors, teachers, and administrators at the Institute of Psycho-Analysis from the early 1970s through the mid-1990s’ (Bollas in Foreword Coltart 1996: xvii)

¹⁰³ Coltart qualified as an analyst in 1964. From the early 1980s Coltart engaged in religious and psychoanalytic discussion through her influential paper *Slouching towards Bethlehem* (Coltart 1986). Like Symington, she gave public lectures at the Tavistock Clinic. ‘Sin and the Super-Ego’ drew insights from Christian theology and psychoanalysis on the common goal of alleviating human suffering and the offer of hope (Coltart 1993c).

Molino 1997). While Coltart combined Buddhism and psychoanalysis, she did not believe it easily fitted within the analytic space.¹⁰⁴

Margaret Arden pursued a holistic vision for psychoanalysis, seeking truth and enlightenment, combining psychoanalysis, Eastern religion and Christian mysticism, finding support from Coltart, Parsons and Bollas. Arden identified Winnicott as ‘the most important holistic thinker’ (Arden 1998: 78). She was a member of the British Psycho-Analytic Society from 1964 and also a member of the London Bi-logic group led by Rayner. Arden produced an eclectic combination of papers spanning 1980-1997, with ideas from Goethe, Matte-Blanco, Rupert Sheldrake, Jung, Bohm, and others were published as *Midwifery of the Soul* (1998). ‘The ideas that came into her mind – uninvited, as she says – in psychoanalytic sessions were ... the ideas of Christianity she had been immersed in’ (Spillius in Foreword Arden 1998: ix). One review of her work avoided any mention of a holistic or spiritual perspective (Robinson 1999), whilst another identified the shared goal of psychoanalysis, religion and spirituality to attend to the soul and the striving to be part of a whole (Ulman 1998).

Michael Parsons added an Eastern dimension comparing psychoanalytic waiting with aspects of Zen Buddhism found in martial arts, later advocating the paradox of the analyst’s non-attachment drawing on Zen, the Bhagavad Gita, Tao Te Ching, Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Bion’s K and O, as well as Matte-Blanco’s Bi-logic (Parsons 1984, 1986). Parsons found parallels in psychoanalysis with universal spiritual truths, but believed that few analysts, other than Eigen, were willing to explore these. His later work focused on

¹⁰⁴ Religion was not ‘technically or ethically a part of any analytic therapy ... if it is not raised by the patient, and even if it is, teaching or conversion is contraindicated’ (Coltart 1996: 138).

paradox, creativity and wisdom in the analytic relationship that enters into a unique dialogue with religious and spiritual dimensions (Parsons 2000, 2006).¹⁰⁵

Christopher Bollas' seminal *The Shadow of the Object* (Bollas 1987) took Winnicott's ideas further when he developed the 'transformational object' as a concept to account for the psychic world and its development, providing important links with religious and spiritual experience. Similarly, Black critiques Freud's focus on religious origins at the expense of religious experience, and advocated object relations as a more creative form of engagement (Black 1993a). Further impetus was provided by the Freud Museum's publishing of *Is psychoanalysis another religion?* (Ward 1993) drawing together Black, Symington¹⁰⁶, Coltart, Kristeva, and Stadlen.¹⁰⁷ Symington advocates psychoanalysis as spirituality in the world, and the small number of psychoanalysts who struggled to reconcile their faith tradition and psychoanalytic practice valued this inclusive focus.¹⁰⁸ Symington's work shaped subsequent British engagements with religion and spirituality and the positive

¹⁰⁵ Parsons uses the metaphor of the dove, taken from the biblical account of Noah found in Genesis chapter 4, to form the opening page of his first book published in 2000. He argues that psychoanalysts need to draw on technique and personal being in order to offer the reparative and healing resources to those in need.

¹⁰⁶ Symington's chapter mentions a forthcoming book *Religion, psychoanalysis and the modern world*, though the published title became a more inclusive *Emotion and Spirit: Questioning the claims of psychoanalysis and religion* (Symington 1994).

¹⁰⁷ This title arose out of questions schoolchildren asked when on educational visits and Ward was 'surprised' that so many wanted to contribute to issues he believed had been resolved by Freud long ago.

¹⁰⁸ 'A child psychotherapist ... when he heard that my father had been a rabbi and I had been brought up in a rabbinical household, he said, "Well, I suppose psychotherapy is that modern priesthood." When I studied psychoanalysis here, it didn't quite seem like that. It seemed much more that the tradition of Freud was rather hostile to religion and the religious outlook; it was seen as something rather ill, neurotic and illusory, and, of course, it involved a personal struggle for me. How could I take up this work and think about the spiritual dimension? So, of course, this is what attracted me particularly to Neville's book *Emotion and Spirit*, in which he tackles, in a very new, original way, what is a religious philosophy that does fit in with psychoanalysis' (Introductory remarks in Symington 2001: 2).

response gave Symington the impetus to develop his work further, dealt with in detail in chapter nine.¹⁰⁹

The positive response to the Freud Museum publication led to the 1996¹¹⁰ conference ‘Psychoanalysis and Religion’ and this growing interest is further evidenced by Black and Symington contributing autobiographical perspectives on psychotherapy and religion (Stein 1999)¹¹¹. Symington was also the focus of a featured article in a broadsheet newspaper early in 1998, ‘God goes into therapy’, as the growing engagement within psychoanalysis spilled out into the broader public sphere. That same year Britton, writing from a Kleinian perspective, explored belief and imagination through advocating a ‘third position’, a triangular psychic space where the subjective self relates to an idea, as a belief rather than a fact, and illustrated this through the Romantic poets (Britton 1998).¹¹² This concept of a ‘third position’ has some correspondence with Black’s ‘contemplative position’ (Black 2006) and also links to ideas by Ogden and Grotstein (in an American context) also examined in the next section.

¹⁰⁹ The book was reprinted in 1998 when Symington added a preface commenting that a significant number of people had written to him to say that it had had a transforming effect on their lives (Symington 1998).

¹¹⁰ The following report was written by Ivan Ward and appeared on the Freud Museum website www.freud.org.uk, but is not currently posted there. Religion and Psychoanalysis, 1 June 1996. Following the publication of *Is Psychoanalysis Another Religion?* (Freud Museum Publications, 1994) a conference was held in 1996 on a similar theme. In setting the intellectual scene in his introduction, our chairman David Black commented that such openness to religion from the side of psychoanalysis would have been unthinkable only a few short years before.

Three themes reverberated throughout the day. Firstly the concept of ‘spiritual journey’; secondly the recognition of a human desire to go beyond the boundaries of the ego; and thirdly the quest for a sophisticated conception of ‘God’ which transcended the notion of a concrete ‘personality’ ... The conference ended with a long plenary session and discussion, expertly chaired by David Black. His essay ‘What sort of thing is a religion?’ is published in the *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis*, Vol. 74, Part 3.

¹¹¹ ‘What an interesting idea to set psychotherapists on the trail of the spiritual’ (Hinshelwood 1999: xv). The contributors were drawn from a range of psychoanalysts, psychotherapists and psychiatrists.

¹¹² Traditional Kleinian thinking is based on a two position theory (Hinshelwood 1989).

The trickle of interest in religion and spirituality had by the early 2000s become a steady stream of articles, books and conferences hosted by psychoanalytic organisations - an unthinkable development even a decade before. Black's influential presence in British psychoanalysis developed further when in 2001 he was asked to edit a book on psychoanalysis and religion and the BP-AS ran a conference *Psychoanalysis and Religion in the 21st Century: Competitors or Collaborators* in 2003. The keynote speakers' texts (Black, Blass, Britton, Epstein and Parsons) formed the basis of Black's book of the same title. A unique aspect was Black's ability to gather together distinguished analytic contributors from around the world, offering the most comprehensive engagement between religion, spirituality and psychoanalysis to date.¹¹³ Yet British psychoanalysis has not apparently changed as a result. Black continues to run seminars on psychoanalysis, religion and spirituality, although they are not generally well attended by his psychoanalytic colleagues (personal communication Black).¹¹⁴

Reflections by British analysts on training in the 1950s and 1960s reveals a significant dynamic dominating British psychoanalysis. They reveal a world of simmering tensions, rivalries, pressures to conform and strong personalities located within a small geographically based society. In this context issues of religion and spirituality were inconsequential. As a Society the so-called controversial discussions 'cast a very long shadow ... after major trauma it takes three generations for a culture to fully recover' where the difficulty of 'sustaining a real interchange between the different viewpoints ... has come at a cost' (Parsons 2009: 245). If there is little dialogue over the philosophical foundations,

¹¹³ Two other texts challenging for this status include *Psychoanalysis and Religion* (Smith and Handelman 1990) and *Soul on the Couch* (Spezzano and Gargiulo 1997).

¹¹⁴ A seminar series run by the British Psycho-Analytic Society in the Spring of 2008.

analytic theory, and clinical techniques that are at the core of the psychoanalytic enterprise, the capacity to sustain dialogue in other areas, including the more controversial areas of religion and spirituality, is severely limited and not just because of the implicit and explicit atheism of Freud and Klein. This is most clearly seen in the little discussed place of Judaism within British psychoanalysis,¹¹⁵ and the fact that no British analyst has engaged in a dialogue between Judaism and psychoanalysis.¹¹⁶ Most engagement has happened on the fringes of the psychoanalytic world¹¹⁷ or within the academic community.¹¹⁸

Parsons, Spillius, and Johns identify another distinctive aspect of British psychoanalysis, where the focus is on becoming an analyst. After the training is completed, the task is to enter into the ‘being’ of being an analyst, a process that takes between a decade and a lifetime. How this occurs is either a self-reflective drawing on the past of an ontological analytic identity as seen in Rayner or Symington, or adopting a new psychoanalytic identity dominated by a new-found focus on accessing and utilizing their internal world. Here the person’s past and external world appears to have little impact. The first approach has a capacity to incorporate religious and spiritual dimensions much more so than the other, as seen in Symington. What Parsons also identifies is the place within the BP-AS of an analyst becoming influential through the sheer force of their personality. For example, the uneasy

¹¹⁵ Another ‘long shadow’ is the unanswered question of anti-Semitism, which surfaced in the events around Masud Khan. A highly controversial and colourful figure in BP-AS and the international psychoanalytic community, Khan’s long-standing unethical behaviour led to removal of training analyst status in 1977 and finally expulsion from the BP-AS in 1988 for his anti-Semitic comments in *When Spring Comes* (Khan 1988). Hopkins’ research for a biography on Khan details a belief that anti-Semitism was a part of the BP-AS that was never addressed (Hopkins 2006).

¹¹⁶ Issroff details her Jewish background but offers no form of engagement (Issroff 1999), while Stein describes his move away from Jewish religion to spirituality (Stein 1999). Parsons was most surprised by my assertion in a recent discussion, but on reflection he could not think of any British analyst who had explored this area.

¹¹⁷ Stadlen’s writing as the Freud Museum Fellow, though not a psychoanalyst, argues that recognising Freud’s Judaism is essential for understanding psychoanalysis, but the two are not the same so it is important for Judaism and psychoanalysis to retain their distinctiveness (Ward 1993).

¹¹⁸ As seen in the work of Stephen Frosh (Frosh 2006).

alliance within the BP-AS from the 1940s was an accommodation of two massive egos, Freud's trans-generational ego in Anna Freud, and her rival Melanie Klein who dominated British psychoanalysis. In a very different vein, Symington had established a wide range of contacts through his teaching seminars at the Tavistock Clinic (1978-1985).¹¹⁹ This foundation gave Symington an acceptable persona of psychoanalytic orthodoxy from which he explored his prior theological training as a Roman Catholic priest resulting in his pivotal text (Symington 1994), yet most of Symington's writings on religion appeared after he had left the United Kingdom for Australia, where he was able to develop an independence of mind in his psychoanalytic pilgrimage (Symington 2007).

The role of the Tavistock is vital as psychoanalytic ideas interacted with psychiatry, clinical psychology, infant observation, child, adolescent and group psychotherapies, organisational consultancy, couple and family therapies and clinical research, providing a public platform for dissemination to a wider professional audience.¹²⁰ The Tavistock environment potentially offered a context less affected by the tensions and rivalries in the British psychoanalytic world, allowing broader conceptions of psychoanalysis to be expressed, as seen in the work of Coltart and Symington (Symington 1986; Coltart 1993c; Symington 2001).

¹¹⁹ These formed the basis of his highly regarded book *The analytic experience* (Symington 1986).

¹²⁰ The Tavistock Clinic was founded in 1920, offering the first outpatient psychotherapy clinic in the United Kingdom. Now the Tavistock and Portman NHS Foundation Trust, its history includes many notable and pioneering psychoanalysts, and its current building in Swiss Cottage is presided over by a brooding statue of Freud. For more details follow the link to http://www.tavi-port.org/sites/default/files/Our%20history_0.pdf.

CHAPTER FIVE. RELIGIOUS AND SPIRITUAL ENGAGEMENT IN AMERICAN PSYCHOANALYSIS – AN OVERVIEW

Unlike the geographically confined British Isles with its one psychoanalytic society, American psychoanalysis has established psychoanalytic societies in most of its major cities, with each society possessing a distinctive identity related to its history, theoretical stance and the significant figures that often dominated psychoanalytic politics, locally and nationally. Boston, New England and New York spawned emerging forms of religious and spiritual engagement, though in Boston and New York this was external to the established psychoanalytic societies.

Boston was the location of Elvin Semrad, a psychoanalyst whose clinical and teaching acumen were renowned. He was a dominant figure in the Boston Psychoanalytic Society and Institute (BPSI) and the psychiatric world from the 1950s until his death in 1976.

Semrad's life-long Catholicism rarely appears in his work, yet was known within the Boston analytic world and Schwaber recalls being sent to Semrad as a training analyst as he would understand her religious commitment (Schwaber 2002). It did set a context in which others were to follow, notably William Meissner and Ana-Maria Rizzuto.

Though dealt with in detail in chapter seven, Meissner, a Jesuit priest based in Boston from the 1960s engaged theology, psychology, psychiatry and psychoanalysis in critical dialogue. Meissner remained in Boston for the rest of his career, becoming Professor of Psychoanalysis at Boston College,¹²¹ and a training and supervising analyst at BPSI.¹²²

¹²¹ A renowned Jesuit-based University.

¹²² One of the first psychoanalytic institutes in the USA (Hale 1995b).

Meissner's long and distinguished psychoanalytic career produced a wide range of highly regarded psychoanalytic papers and books (Meissner 1966, 1968a, 1968b, 1970a, 1970b, 1971a, 1971b, 1972, 1973a, 1974, 1976a, 1976b, 1976c, 1976d, 1976e, 1977a, 1977b, 1978b, 1978c, 1979a, 1979b, 1979c, 1979d, 1979e, 1979f, 1980a, 1980b, 1981a, 1981b, 1981c, 1981d, 1981e, 1982, 1983a, 1983b, 1984b, 1993, 2000) alongside his important and best known work on religious experience (Meissner 1978a, 1984a), the first in a series of books and articles examining this theme from different perspectives (Meissner 1987, 1988, 1994, 1995, 2001, 2005, 2006a, 2006b, 2009; Meissner and Schlauch 2003). Meissner's work provided the first major theological and psychoanalytic engagement in the USA and is seen as seminal.

Ana-Maria Rizzuto moved to Boston in 1966, did her analytic training at BPSI,¹²³ and wrote her ground-breaking study which was published in 1979. Her subsequent research and prolific series of publications are highly regarded in the analytic world.¹²⁴ Rizzuto's history of philosophical, theological and psychoanalytic engagement has gained her a reputation as a 'Catholic analyst' and 'a defender of faith in psychoanalysis' (Malone 2005: 27).¹²⁵ During this period BPSI split and the Psychoanalytic Institute of New England (PINE) came into being. Meissner remained with BPSI whereas Rizzuto moved to PINE: however their professional relationship existed outside these analytic organizations in small groups that

¹²³ She was interviewed by three analysts, one Jewish, one Catholic and one who 'didn't know what he was'. Her training analyst, while not religious, did not view faith as pathological, allowing himself to learn from her (Malone 2005: 28).

¹²⁴ A literature search using PEP v.1.7 (including most of the major psychoanalytic journals up to 2005) lists 35 single authored and 8 co-authored articles by Rizzuto.

¹²⁵ A colleague of Meissner, Rizzuto reflected that Meissner was always getting difficult religious patients because of being a Jesuit, and while she was seeing members of Opus Dei, her patients were rarely religious.

produced further discussion and publications on religious and psychoanalytic issues (Malone 2005).

Midway between Boston and New York, New Haven in New England is the location of the Western New England Psychoanalytic Institute and Society, and home to Hans Loewald and Stanley Leavy.¹²⁶ Loewald is increasingly recognized as a psychoanalytic pioneer, whose ideas predated postmodern approaches and a pluralist vision (Mitchell 1998; Teicholz 1999; Chodorow 2003; Balsam 2008).¹²⁷ Clinically, Loewald linked the pre-Oedipal and Oedipal phases through focusing on unitary processes that exist in the infant before objectivity and subjectivity emerge. Such unitary processes find symbolic expression in, and can be accessed through, art and religion. His understanding of developmental processes can be synthesized with healthy and mature religious processes leading to a psychological unity and transformation through ‘redemption (or self-responsibility) and atonement (reconciliation, the restoration of unity)’ (Niels 2003: 712f.). Loewald also focused on the being of the analyst who is ‘potentially limited by time, place, culture or neurosis. However, by exercising intellectual, honest, compassion, and an openness to art, a life rich in creative instability and spiritual growth could be achieved’ (Downey 1994: 841). Late in

¹²⁶ Leavy trained at the New York Psychoanalytic Institute where ‘Naturally my faith has always been looked on as odd. In the NY Institute, I found out that there had been some hesitation about admitting me because I was a believer and a Christian convert. This was looked upon by some as being impossible to tolerate, since believers were crazy, and converts --! They let me enter, I’m not sure why. True, there were a few Catholics around who were admitted to institutes with condescending tolerance as indication of broadmindedness. In our institute and society I have never met with unfriendliness in this regard’ (Leavy 2005b).

¹²⁷ Many of Loewald’s papers (spanning 1951-1979) were published as a book making his work more accessible and providing a development and contextual framework of his ideas (Loewald 1980). Whitebook examines how Loewald revised classical theory and laid foundations for later postmodern approaches, though did not advocate such developments (Whitebook 2004). Teicholz argues Loewald and Kohut represent a development towards postmodern approaches to psychoanalysis (Teicholz 1999). Kaywin states Loewald ‘distinguishes himself as someone who manages to give fresh meaning to classical psychoanalytic ideas by integrating them with object relations and developmental perspectives, thereby transforming a polemic into a higher level of synthesis. His contribution to psychoanalysis, itself a beautiful example of internalization and sublimation, mirrors his ideas about individual potential and the analytic process’ (Kaywin 1993: 113).

his career Loewald expressed his regret that he had not explored religion further: however, he discussed this with a psychoanalytic colleague resulting in an important multi-disciplinary text *Psychoanalysis and Religion* (Smith and Handelman 1990)¹²⁸ whose contributors,

declare, explicitly or implicitly, that unless a thinker can conceive of God as real or, at a minimum, conceive that another can nondefensively conceive of God as real, he or she is significantly barred from understanding religious texts or religious belief. Psychoanalysts, by and large, are to be counted on the positive or negative side of this minimum provision (Smith and Handelman 1990: xi).

Loewald was the first psychoanalytic supervisor of Stanley Leavy. Maintaining a Christian faith with his analytic thinking, Leavy drew on Romantic literature, Loewald, Lacan, Buber and Ricoeur to offer a hermeneutic of interpretative dialogue that valued religious beliefs, described by Meissner as ‘eloquent and profoundly meaningful’ (Leavy 1988).¹²⁹ Leavy offered a different theological perspective to those adopted by Meissner and Rizzuto, where Leavy sees psychoanalysis becoming a new form of revealing, that enhances the creative actions of God in each person. Leavy was one of the few psychoanalysts engaging with religion that recognized its vital community dimension, taking it outside the internal psychoanalytic realm or limits of religious experience. Religion becomes ‘the recognition by a community of a real being or beings transcending sense experience, with whom the members of the community exist in a mutual relationship’ (Smith and Handelman 1990: xi). Another was James Jones an Episcopal priest, philosopher of religion, clinical psychologist and psychoanalytic practitioner. He utilizes Winnicott, Stern, Kohut, Meissner, Rizzuto, Loewald and Leavy’s ideas bringing them into dialogue with Otto, Tillich, Buber and Bollas on the subject of the sacred. Jones’ creativity and desire for dialogue offered a theological

¹²⁸ This included contributions from Meissner and Leavy. Loewald and Meissner had previously co-written a report on metapsychology, but this makes no reference to religion (Loewald and Meissner 1976).

¹²⁹ These ideas combined to become *In the image of God: A psychoanalyst’s view* (Leavy 1988).

vision for psychoanalysis and he forged links to Mitchell and other key figures in New York (Jones 1991).

Leavy's analytic training was at the conservative New York Psychoanalytic Institute, which exercised power through a defining of orthodoxy and expulsion of non-conformists.¹³⁰ New York was often the first port of call for psychoanalysts arriving from Europe during the 1930s. Theodore Reik, emigrated from Germany in the late 1930s but found it impossible to gain a psychoanalytic position and was refused membership of the New York Psychoanalytic Institute.¹³¹ He founded a group advocating training for non-medical analysts, which evolved into the National Psychological Association for Psychoanalysis (NPAP) which avoided the hegemony of the New York Psychoanalytic Institute by becoming a New York State approved training institute. Such institutes offered a more integrative stance towards psychoanalytic training and practice. This was to become essential for the development of relational and intersubjective approaches in contemporary psychoanalysis and encouraged a greater openness to engage with religion and spirituality.

The key exponent of religious and spiritual practices allied to psychoanalysis was Michael Eigen. Influenced initially by Fromm and Buber, he explored 'areas of faith' in the work of Winnicott, Lacan and Bion (Eigen 1981a) revealing an eclectic combination of the mystical, Bion's O, Lacan's Imaginary and Symbolic, and object-relational theories utilizing

¹³⁰ 'One analyst recalled complaining to his training analyst that he was treating Freud like the Bible. The training analyst replied "It is not *like* the Bible. It *is* the Bible."' (Kirsner 2000: 28).

¹³¹ Reik was an early follower of Freud in Vienna, who contributed one of the earliest critiques of religion in psychoanalysis (Reik 1921) which was part of a life-long interest. He did not have a medical training that had been established as a requirement for psychoanalytic training in the APsA in the late 1920s.

transitional concepts in the pursuit of wholeness and truth.¹³² Having trained with NPAP, Eigen became editor of the Association's journal, *Psychoanalytic Review* and became involved in other innovative psychoanalytic trainings.¹³³ This journal has regularly published articles and reviewed books that speak to issues of religious and spiritual engagement within psychoanalysis. Since the 1980s, Eigen has become a central figure advocating an intersubjective form of psychoanalysis that acknowledges spiritual and mystical dimensions (Eigen 2009).¹³⁴

Paralleling Eigen's developing spiritual interest that was in part shaped by a re-engagement with his Jewish faith background, there evolved in New York a growing engagement between Judaism and psychoanalysis represented by Mortimer Ostow (Ostow 1982/1997). Ostow recalls 'When I was a student at the New York Psychoanalytic Institute soon after World War II, expression of interest in religion, and especially participation in any religious observance, was taken as a sign of either weakmindedness or less than full commitment to the discipline of psychoanalysis' (Ostow 2007: x). He worked to change this, avoiding Bakan's approach seeing psychoanalysis as a derivative of mystical Judaism (Bakan 1958), by rehabilitating the distinctiveness of Freud's Jewish origins and the importance of this for psychoanalysis (Yerushalmi 1991). Writing as an Orthodox Jew and psychoanalytic

¹³² Eigen did his doctoral studies on depth psychologies, Gestalt psychology and phenomenology. Joyce describes how working with Eigen made a significant difference to her work based on faith in her ability to not know (Joyce 2005).

¹³³ Eigen was an original member and a director of Education and Training in the Institute for Expressive Analysis, and has taught at the New Hope Guild - a psychoanalytic training institute and clinic, as well as the New York Centre for Psychoanalytic training. He is currently Associate Clinical Professor of Psychology in the Post Doctoral Program in Psychotherapy and Psychoanalysis at New York University.

¹³⁴ See appendix seven. This 2009 paper is a representative example of Eigen's style that combines Winnicott, Bion, Milner, Buddhist and Hindu thought, and the Kabbalah. Cooper writes of the influence of Eigen on his personal development and his desire to integrate Buddhist and psychoanalytic insights. 'Eigen perhaps more than any other contemporary psychoanalyst, speaks of the mystical aspects of the therapeutic relationship in a clear, concise, heartfelt, and personal way. His writings, teachings and ongoing conversations with me continually serve as a wellspring of strength, courage, and insight' (Cooper 2005: 39).

psychotherapist with important connections to the psychoanalytic community,¹³⁵ Spero's work sets out to integrate object relations theories, Judaism and psychoanalysis through a specific Halakhic metapsychology combining internal and external representations of God. This work will be examined later in chapter nine, but the 1990s saw a growing interest in Jewish identity and psychoanalytic dialogue.

The uniqueness of the New York State accreditation of psychoanalytic training fostered training groups that embraced new developments in psychoanalysis and culture. Two key areas that proved to be of great significance were the relational and intersubjective perspectives (Benjamin 1988, 1990; Mitchell 1988), as well as a growing interest in Buddhism (Epstein 1990/1998, 1995; Rubin 1991, 1992, 1993, 1996, 1997). These developments took place outside the orthodox psychoanalytic societies that controlled access to the International Psychoanalytical Association and wider psychoanalytic acknowledgment. They contributed to the pluralism that characterized psychoanalysis from the late 1980s and still shapes it today (Wallerstein 1988, 1992; Cooper 2006). These brief historical accounts reveal the differing psychoanalytic contexts of the UK and the USA, and how these influenced the identity of religious and spiritual emergence in contemporary psychoanalysis. These engagements drew on theoretical developments located in the work of Winnicott and Bion, which will now be explored in chapter six.

¹³⁵ Spero names the psychoanalytic communities in Michigan and Cleveland 'within which I have found so many important teachers' (Spero 1992: xi).

CHAPTER SIX. NEW FOUNDATIONS: WINNICOTT AND BION'S THEORETICAL DEVELOPMENTS FOR RELIGION, SPIRITUALITY AND THE SACRED

The developing histories of psychoanalysis in relation to religion and spirituality were linked to clinical theory developed by Donald Winnicott and Wilfred Bion that offered new forms of theoretical correspondence.¹³⁶ Though not writing as 'religious' persons or with this intent, Winnicott and Bion advocated ideas that went beyond traditional psychoanalytic understanding, and which were to become highly influential in the evolution of religious and spiritual engagement.

Winnicott and the origins of a transitional paradigm

Winnicott was the key architect in the development of transitional forms of engagement in psychoanalysis.¹³⁷ For Winnicott the development of being is interpersonal, a mother/baby always relating to the other, within and without the psyche. This radical departure had origins in aspects of Klein, Fairbairn, Guntrip, Balint, and Bowlby's thinking (Greenberg and Mitchell 1983; Hughes 1989; Gomez 1996) but reached its apotheosis in Winnicott.

¹³⁶ Another psychoanalytic writer who engaged with issues of religion was Harry Guntrip. Although he never formally trained as a psychoanalyst, Guntrip is known within the psychoanalytic world for his elaboration of Fairbairn's concepts allied to his own ideas on schizoid phenomena (Guntrip 1968), and his detailed accounts of analyses with Fairbairn and Winnicott (Guntrip 1975). Many of his ideas find parallels in Winnicott and 'his work provides a bridge between that of his two analysts, and also between object relations theory and the self psychology of Kohut' (Hazell 2006). Less well known is his contribution to the development of pastoral theology and pastoral counselling (Guntrip 1949, 1956, 1964), especially his influence on Frank Lake (Lake 1966; Ross 1993) drawing on his earlier philosophical and theological training (Dobbs 2007). Guntrip's work that spanned the pastoral and the psychoanalytic is yet to be fully explored. Unpublished letters by Guntrip are the subject of a forthcoming article, currently in draft.

¹³⁷ Winnicott offered a different conception of being from Freud. Freud saw the development of being as intrapersonal through a closed drive system and while he evolved other theories of mind he retained his intrapersonal focus on the embodied evolution of the psyche through psychosexual stages. His topographical model of the mind did allow for some external engagement: however this was always interpreted through the internal focus utilizing the unconscious.

Winnicott is arguably the most influential British psychoanalyst of the twentieth century: idolized (Jacobs 1995); mercurial and paradoxical (Gomez 1996); flawed (Willoughby 2004; Hopkins 2006); creative (Eigen 1981); inventive (Ulanov 2001); innovative and poetic (Greenberg and Mitchell 1983; Hughes 1989);¹³⁸ ‘enormously endearing’ (Sayers 2003: 197);¹³⁹ and visionary (Rodman 2003).¹⁴⁰ His highly original ideas have been adopted across the psychoanalytic world particularly in the UK, Europe and Israel,¹⁴¹ though not without question.¹⁴² Winnicott’s reception in America was initially hostile,¹⁴³ but gained acceptance in contemporary and relational psychoanalytic circles.¹⁴⁴ Winnicott’s contribution, viewed analytically, is outlined by Green, ‘Freud discovered the unconscious mental functioning in the primary process – but in my opinion it was Winnicott who has recreated the language of the unconscious: paradoxes and ambiguities: neither beliefs nor dogmas’ (Green 1975: 364). Winnicott’s contribution viewed outside analytic terms

¹³⁸ Winnicott ‘has been accused by many within psychoanalysis of being too poetic’ (Grolnick 1985: 655).

¹³⁹ Sayers adds ‘Too endearing, some might say ... he seems to have found it hard to address the destructiveness of his patients’ (Sayers 2003: 197f.).

¹⁴⁰ Some argue that Jones was more influential in terms of psychoanalytic politics (Maddox 2006). Jones did have an important role in psychoanalytic politics, especially in Britain, and through his irreplaceable if hagiographic three-volume biography of Freud. Jones also orchestrated Freud’s move from Vienna to London, however he left little of ongoing clinical value. By contrast Fairbairn’s contribution was purely theoretical and his contribution to object relations theory is often under-acknowledged. His work was promoted initially by Guntrip and latterly by the Scharffs and Grotstein. Fairbairn is now seen as a precursor to relational, self-psychology and intersubjective schools of psychoanalysis (Hoffman 2004; Scharff and Scharff 2005; Grotstein 2005). Bion’s contribution is dealt with in the main text (Grotstein 2007). Bion has been enormously influential for some but divides opinions and his later work regarded as overly-complex. Winnicott’s work is also complex but the germ of his ideas is often found in popular form as he spoke to many non-psychoanalytic audiences.

¹⁴¹ ‘Some time ago I was asked who is the most influential theoretician in the psychoanalytic committee in my country, Israel. It occurred to me that a simple way to find out would be to check the references in the case studies submitted by all the graduates of the Israel Psychoanalytic Institute. I went over the case reports of the last dozen years; D.W. Winnicott was quoted much more than Freud or any other author’ (Berman 1996: 158).

¹⁴² ‘Everybody agreed his stories were fascinating, but quite a few colleagues whispered that “it was not really analysis”’ (Brafman 1997: 773).

¹⁴³ Although Anna Freud wrote, ‘I think that your “transitional object” has conquered the analytic world’ (Quoted in Rodman 2003: 323) Winnicott received a hostile reception at the New York Psychoanalytic Institute described as ‘the bastion of ego psychology ... rigid, doctrinaire, and insufficiently open to new ideas’ (Rodman 2003: 323).

¹⁴⁴ Winnicott’s ideas have become more influential through promotion by Grolnick, Grotstein, Rodman, Ulanov, Bollas (Jacobs 1995) and others. Winnicott’s ideas have also been adopted by such American feminist social theorists and psychoanalysts as Chodorow and Benjamin (Alford 1990; Burack 1993).

includes religion as his ‘fundamental question - How do people acquire a sense of self – is profoundly religious’ (Gay 1983: 371).¹⁴⁵

Winnicott’s contribution to psychoanalysis is his synthesizing of concepts from Freud¹⁴⁶ and Klein, interpreted by a vast clinical experience of mothers and babies and evolving a creative form of object relations’ theory,¹⁴⁷ that finds parallels in intersubjective approaches (Sayers 2005). Winnicott focused on the central ontological question of being – how a person develops out of/from a dependent, unintegrated unit into an independent, integrated self capable of intrapersonal, interpersonal and extrapersonal ‘ongoing-in-being’ and ‘being-at-one-with’ (Winnicott 1971: 80). Creative being is central to being human even if this is ‘hidden away’ as ‘a secret life’ (Winnicott 1971: 68) which people need to search for (Winnicott 1971: 29, 56-64). A key aspect of early relationships and ‘good enough’ mothering is to enable the discovery of ‘a sense of self ... on the basis of this relating in this sense of BEING’ (Winnicott 1971: 80). Winnicott concludes ‘after being – doing and being done to. But first, being’ (Winnicott 1971: 85).

Ogden values Winnicott’s contribution as a ‘dialectician ... Many of Winnicott’s most valuable clinical and theoretical contributions are in the form of paradoxes that he asks us to accept without resolving, for the truth of the paradox lies in neither of its poles, but the space between them’ (Ogden 1985: 346). Winnicott’s unique form of object relations

¹⁴⁵ A theme examined in detail by Ulanov (Ulanov 2001).

¹⁴⁶ Winnicott while acknowledging the importance of Freud’s ideas, is regarded as so altering their meaning and context, that they bear little relation to the drive theories advocated by Freud (Fulgencio 2007). Girard argues the converse is true (Girard 2010).

¹⁴⁷ It is estimated that in Winnicott’s 40 year career as a paediatrician at Paddington Green Children’s Hospital, London, he had 60,000 consultations with mothers and babies (Ramzy 1980: xii). However one of Winnicott’s limitations was the limited role he gave to fathers (Elmhirst 1996).

theory includes developmental, transitional and creative aspects underpinned by a reality that is knowable.¹⁴⁸ A neglected aspect of Winnicott is how his writing communicates with other disciplines in a way that people instinctively connect with (Grolnick, Barkin, and Muensterberger 1978) and his speaking, captured in his radio broadcasts, demonstrates an ability to communicate complex ideas in a way readily understood by a popular audience.¹⁴⁹ Winnicott went on to posit a dimension of psychological functioning that is ‘sacred’ (Winnicott 1971: 103) and Gargiulo concludes Winnicott ‘was essentially a profoundly spiritual man’ (Gargiulo 1998: 154).¹⁵⁰ How this came about requires an examination of Winnicott’s life and thought.

Winnicott and religion

Donald Winnicott grew up in a devout Wesleyan Methodist family and although he never embraced Christianity as a personal faith¹⁵¹ (despite ‘conversion’ to the Anglican Church in his twenties), he was influenced by nonconformist religion declaring himself ‘a natural

¹⁴⁸ ‘Winnicott stands in the philosophical tradition that presumes that human beings make contact and interact with the objective communal world: that is, what we are capable of knowing is reality itself, that which stands in the shadow of interpersonal phantasy, so to speak, but which is knowable as objective. Such reality is usually encountered, developmentally, in the mothering person, the mother as existing in the outside world ... Object relations, as applicable to Winnicott, is not a special brand of intra-psyche discourse (not a descriptive term for internal images), but rather an obvious statement about man’s essential communal makeup. Our “selves” are formed by everything that comes to pass between us, everything that constitutes our personal and/or social history. Human beings, consequently, do not have relationships; they are relationships. No meaningful analytic work can be done without that awareness’ (Gargiulo 1998: 142f.).

¹⁴⁹ Some of Winnicott’s earliest publications were on these radio talks, published in two books in 1957, then combined in 1967 (Winnicott 1967).

¹⁵⁰ Winnicott ‘was not interested, however, in polemics about religion. Anyone familiar with Zen thought or Vedantic Hinduism, will hear echoes while reading him; particularly, for example, in his understanding of the role of breathing in establishing a personal soma’ although ‘he was not an advocate for missionaries of any sort – religious, political, or psychoanalytic’ (Gargiulo 1998:154). Gargiulo also writes about aloneness drawing on Winnicott. ‘That alone space has to be visited, figuratively speaking, in order to grasp any meaningful relationship between spirituality and psychoanalysis. The capacity to be alone, in the presence of the other, is, as we know, basic to feeling alive as well as experiencing the world as emotionally significant’ (Gargiulo 2004b).

¹⁵¹ Rodman quotes Winnicott writing briefly about his experience of evangelical religion at public school (Rodman 2003: 73).

Lollard'¹⁵² and refusing to join the rival 'psychoanalytic religions' led by Anna Freud and Melanie Klein. Methodism developed as a reaction against the established Church of England, promoting new thinking, personal expression of ideas and an experiential/emotional dimension (represented symbolically by hymn singing) so in this sense Winnicott was always a Methodist non-conformist. He promoted new thinking within psychoanalysis by focusing on the actual experience of the mother and baby, and the nature of the transitions that take place as a baby separates from mother to become itself. Winnicott, like Wesley, was very enthusiastic in promoting his ideas to wider audiences, including religious groups, not necessarily on the subject of religion as he viewed himself as a 'believing skeptic' (Rudnytsky 1989: 332) with a 'benevolent attitude towards religion ... and assertions of the existence of a transcendental God' (Rudnytsky 1989: 333). Hoffman locates Winnicott's religious influences in the cultural context of the Enlightenment in Britain that retained a moral dimension in which religion continued to play a vital part. This she argues convincingly, had a profound impact on Winnicott's ideas and the evolution of interpersonal psychoanalysis (Hoffman 2004, 2008).

Winnicott, like his historic theological counterpart Wesley, did not construct a systematic body of ideas, rather he gathered together a collection of overlapping concepts that were to be highly influential within and without the psychoanalytic world. These concepts have

¹⁵² Quoted in Hoffman (Hoffman 2004: 776). The Lollards were a predominantly English nonconformist religious movement in the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries. Viewed as a sect they were declared heretical by the Church. While they supported Wycliffe in translating the Bible into vernacular language, they were a diverse collection of individuals with no organisation and no central beliefs - though strongly anti-clerical - scattered through England. They were precursors to the later Protestant Reformation in England. The history of Winnicott's comment can be found in Hoffman (Hoffman 2004). A sympathetic and insightful account to Winnicott's overall views on religion can be found in Ulanov (Ulanov 2001).

particular significance for the nature of religious and spiritual engagement and have become pivotal for subsequent writers in this area who feature in subsequent chapters.¹⁵³

Firstly, Winnicott introduced the concepts of transitional phenomena, transitional objects, and transitional space as ‘a hypothetical area that exists (but cannot exist) between the baby and the object’ (Winnicott 1971: 107). This allows the baby to separate, play and create both physically and psychically in their inner and outer worlds. The capacity to recall transitional experience finds expression in art and religion often focused around a symbol or an ‘object’, in essence a relationship. Object-use for Winnicott was the holding of both internal meaning and significance, and external engagement with another in mutual subjectivity. A mother exists within the psyche of the infant and is subject to the infant’s omnipotent control whilst also an external person with his or her own autonomy. This concept allows belief in a god/God that is internal and a god/God that is external without a false dichotomy although Winnicott never used his ideas to suggest this. For Winnicott ‘the place where we live’ is an ‘intermediate zone ... a potential space ... a third area of human living, one neither inside the individual nor outside the world of shared reality’ (Winnicott 1971: 110). Based on the quality of early relationships and the support of an external environment, play and creativity are able to emerge. The focus of mysticism on the inner world, ‘the centre of the self’, is balanced by the outer world of infinity ‘reaching out

¹⁵³ A brief but helpful overview that puts Winnicott in a biographical frame and examines key ideas on religion can be found in Sayers (Sayers 2003). Rodman provides the most detailed biography on Winnicott (Rodman 2003) although other helpful texts are found in (Jacobs 1995; Kahr 1996; Phillips 2007). Hoffman offers the best account in part because she parallels Winnicott with Fairbairn (Hoffman 2004, 2008).

beyond the moon to the stars and to the beginning and end of time, time that has neither an end nor a beginning' (Winnicott 1971: 105).¹⁵⁴

Secondly, Winnicott's concept of illusion. A baby's experience is of an idealized mother created through their illusion of omnipotence, being replaced through disillusionment by a good-enough mother. This leads to a capacity in the baby to be alone, both in the presence and absence of a mother, and thus able to create and play. This renewed capacity to use illusion as a creative aspect of being finds echoes in myth, art and religion. Access to this early mother-baby experience can be found through the experience of psychoanalysis and also through the ontological transitions revealed in mythic and religious symbols (Almansi 1983), rituals, beliefs and practices (Jacobs 2000). When this process fails, the baby experiences intolerable anxiety and evolves a false self to protect the inner core of being that Winnicott called the 'true self'.¹⁵⁵ Recovery of the 'true self' with a capacity to create and play through use of illusion was vitally important for Winnicott and these ideas have been taken further by Bollas.¹⁵⁶

Thirdly, Winnicott added the capacity to believe. His father, a distant figure in Winnicott's upbringing, encouraged him to believe for himself on the basis of having read the Bible. Although biblically literate, Winnicott found his vocation through reading Darwin and the later experience of psychoanalysis that dealt with the guilt that plagued him for the first two

¹⁵⁴ Winnicott adopts the language of the mystic focusing on the inner world, which is a route to the beyond, beyond words and time.

¹⁵⁵ Eigen describes this. 'The true self feeling involves a sense of all-out personal aliveness ... it includes an awareness of being or feeling *real*. It thus requires a lived recognition of being the self one is, that this felt presence is one's true being. This connects with Bion's insistence that truth is necessary for wholeness and emotional growth' (Eigen 1993: 128).

¹⁵⁶ Bollas views connecting the true self as a vital therapeutic task as the true self 'may be frozen at a time when self experience was traumatically arrested' (Bollas 1987: 112).

decades of his life.¹⁵⁷ Religion for Winnicott was an intrinsic part of human nature based on the capacity to trust, believe, understand right and wrong, and have faith – even if that faith were not in God, miracles or the afterlife. Winnicott was neutral towards religion, respected the religious beliefs of others (Rodman 1987: xxvi) but could not have an ‘absolute belief in’ anything whether fundamental religion, Freud or Klein.¹⁵⁸

In his twenties Winnicott left the Methodist Church and became an Anglican (Rodman 1987: xiii; 2003: 54) symbolizing a break from his father and, while little is known about this, Winnicott adopted a theologically liberal view of Christianity. He focused on human potential and creativity, where Jesus becomes the first true psychotherapist (Rodman 1987: 3). Winnicott sought to free people from dogma and fundamentalism (biblical or psychoanalytic) as this robbed people of their innate creativity (Rodman 2003: 276). Each person needs to discover things for themselves, with God as an internalized source of inspiration (Rodman 1987: 88).¹⁵⁹ This capacity to believe linked the person with another through an act of faith, as Winnicott was always thinking about an other: ‘there is no such thing as a baby (without the mother)’ (Winnicott 1958/1975: 99).¹⁶⁰ The notion of the ‘other’ features in most of his writing (though the term is not frequently used) and this has a rich connection with the religious dimension of being, the ‘Object beyond Objects’ (Reiland

¹⁵⁷ A common issue in religiously devout family backgrounds added to ‘survivor’ guilt over comrades killed in World War I. For a detailed discussion of the life-long influence of these events on Winnicott see Reeves (Reeves 2005).

¹⁵⁸ Winnicott saw absolute belief as a defensive denial of the human capacity for faith (Rodman 1987: xxv, 72, 193).

¹⁵⁹ A contemporary expression of this can be found in Buckley’s *Where the waters meet. Convergence and complementarity in therapy and theology* (Buckley 2008).

¹⁶⁰ Merleau-Ponty also emphasized being as an embodied phenomenological dialectic in a form of existential psychoanalysis (Lanteri-Laura 2005).

2004). It was also an important feature of his personal life that significantly influenced his theories.¹⁶¹

Fourthly, stemming from Winnicott's interest in religion, his ideas resonate with the potential for re-birth and resurrection (Hopkins 1989; Ulanov 2001; Hoffman 2004).

Winnicott's concepts provide a foundation for the psychological re-birth of an infant, particularly where there has been failure in the maternal environment as can be seen in his treatment. In his clinical work with a little girl called the 'Piggle' and who intriguingly asked Winnicott if he went to church¹⁶², Winnicott concluded that by allowing her to both destroy and create him symbolically through a pipe-cleaner man she was enabled to discover herself (Winnicott 1991). His concept of transitional space can also be seen as transcendent space where a person transcends the limitations of the early environment to become what they potentially could be, a being. Winnicott experienced this profoundly in his own life when falling in love with Clare Britton and subsequently divorcing his first wife in what had been a troubled marriage (Kahr 1996; Rodman 2003). An important outcome for Winnicott was a highly creative decade of writing, so Clare's comment 'you would have

¹⁶¹ 'Winnicott never courted students and declined the many invitations to form a group or school that would study, teach and elaborate his ideas. He did, however, accept his own need for at least one person to accompany the place of *the other*, and so, throughout his marriage to Clare, and his complex relation to an analysand, Masud Khan, and more subtly, yet as influentially, with Marion Milner, he tested his thinking and used criticism. Winnicott's style cannot be understood, in my view, unless the place of the impishly critical *other* is understood, a psychic location that certainly reflected a part of his personality, but one which a few close friends occupied throughout life' (Bollas quoted in Rodman 2003: 212).

¹⁶² 'She had now practically finished with the toys and said to me: "Do you go to church?" I didn't know how to answer.

Me: Well, sometimes. Do you?

Gabrielle: I would like to go, but mummy and daddy would not like to. I don't know why.

Me: Why do people go to church?

Gabrielle: I don't know.

Me: is it something to do with God?

Gabrielle: No.' (Ramzy 1980: 182).

made a *lovely* missionary' (quoted in Rodman 2003: 91) did come true though the mission field was the inner world of the psyche.

Winnicott's expression of 'being' can be seen in his moving poem *The Tree* (1963) regarded as profoundly autobiographical (Rodman 2003: 284). It can also be understood psychoanalytically. Winnicott needed to meet his mother's needs and resurrect her from her depression leading to his life-long desire to resurrect the baby caught in maternal failure. While Winnicott wished to distance himself from messiahs, psychoanalytic and religious, (Rudnytsky 2005: 419)¹⁶³ he was fascinated with Jesus as a symbol of suffering, healing and resurrection.¹⁶⁴ Winnicott also alluded to an inner transforming experience of connection to others beyond the self. Recollecting those who died in World War I, Winnicott writes 'my being alive is a facet of some one thing of which their deaths can be seen as other facets: some huge crystal, a body with integrity and shape intrinsic in it' (Quoted in Reeves 2005: 427). Winnicott speaks of a life and death struggle of 'being alive' and belonging to something beyond that contains an eternal dimension.¹⁶⁵

Winnicott was once described as a 'twirling firework that throws sparks in all directions, this captures his dazzling play of thought, fantasy, and speculation, his capacity to envision what no one had previously seen' (Rodman 2003: 10). However this fails to capture the unconscious dimension of Winnicott's religious and spiritual background (examined earlier in this section) that so resonated with later writers. Unlike so many analytic predecessors

¹⁶³ 'Archetypal roles and scenarios (hero, messiah, scapegoat, etc.) with which the infant/child feels compelled to comply ... is the development of what Winnicott (1960) called the false self' (Grotstein 1994: 586).

¹⁶⁴ Hoffman identifies key Gospel texts that link each stanza to the ministry of Jesus (Hoffman 2004).

¹⁶⁵ Winnicott was 'hinting at a new "realization" still only dimly perceived ... an over-insistence on the personal and private nature of integrity can blind one to an equally important aspect of human existence, namely one's attachment to, involvement in, a commonweal of being' (Reeves 2005: 452).

Winnicott had experienced a ‘good enough’ experience of religion that enabled him to allow it a place, psychologically and philosophically. His concepts maintain a balance between uncritical acceptance and dogmatic rejection. Winnicott allowed a potential space for religion and spirituality to emerge in ways he could never have imagined but was central to later forms of engagement taken up by others.¹⁶⁶ Winnicott’s space for potential opened up the psyche for play, creativity, the aesthetic, being real, and the potential for I-Thou encounter.¹⁶⁷

Bion and the origins of a transformational paradigm

Bion was born in India in 1897, educated in Britain, and served as an officer in the First World War where the carnage he witnessed had an emotional impact on the rest of his life.¹⁶⁸ Bion’s interests in history, philosophy, art and literature led him to study at Oxford University and Poitiers University (France), before settling to do medicine at University College Hospital (London), where he developed his life-long interest in psychiatry and psychoanalysis.¹⁶⁹ This pattern of holding together, in his being, diverse worlds, cultures and concepts is one that runs throughout his life and work.

¹⁶⁶ Reeves quotes Winnicott to elaborate on this. ‘I have gradually come to an unexpected need for something corresponding to the cultural experience but located inside instead of outside ... In the previous paper I stated that there is a need for some potential space for the location of playing and cultural experience in general ... This potential space if it existed would be outside the line that divides the inner from the outer. I now want to refer to a potential space that is on the inside of this line. (1976b, 200-1)’ (Reeves 2005: 448).

¹⁶⁷ Schlauch takes up Winnicott’s concepts of being, being real, and transitional space, as well as Kohut and being empathic, relating these to wider philosophical, religious, theological concepts (Schlauch 2006, 2007a, 2007b).

¹⁶⁸ Bion’s recollections of this period are contained in *The Long-Weekend 1897-1919: Part of a life* (Bion 1982).

¹⁶⁹ His daughter interprets the significance of this history. ‘Bion came from a Protestant missionary family, Swiss-Calvinist of Huguenot origins on his father’s side and Anglo-Indian on his mother’s. This religious background, combined with the fact that the family was isolated from other Europeans for extended periods, meant that the small boy was in close contact with two very different cultures. Experiences of contrast and oppositions, but also of mediation and love between the two worlds formed a background to, and a basis for, Bion’s later theories’ (Bion Talamo 2005: 183). Sayers offers a different perspective, that Bion was dismissive of religion: however at a philosophical level there were important correspondences (Sayers 2003).

Bion gained encouragement for his emerging psychodynamic ideas from Hadfield,¹⁷⁰ joined the Tavistock Clinic as a psychiatrist in 1932, and began analysis with Rickman in 1938.¹⁷¹ Psychoanalytic training was interrupted by the Second World War when Bion became an army psychiatrist working with Rickman,¹⁷² evolving new group analytic approaches at the Northfield Military Hospital.¹⁷³ In 1945 he resumed his analytic training with Klein, going on to become one of her protégés.¹⁷⁴

Bion began working with schizophrenic patients examining how the inner psychic world of a baby becomes adult psychopathology through disturbances of symbolic thought.¹⁷⁵ The baby communicates to the mother its primitive fears, anxieties and dreads that the mother then contains, transforming what Bion called ‘beta-elements’ to ‘alpha-elements’. These become accessible for the baby to use in later processes of symbolization, and form the heart of the analytic work with psychotic patients that Bion applied to all. What is too awful to be experienced is projected into another (usually the mother/care-giver) where it is contained and transformed before being received back by the infant/patient for future

¹⁷⁰ Hadfield was also Bion’s therapist though this did not constitute an analytic training. He was one of a group of pioneering psychoanalysts whose work grew out of the First World War. A post at the Tavistock led to Hadfield influencing a new generation of psychiatrists/psychoanalysts including Dicks and Suttie. In his preface to Suttie’s work, Hadfield links psychoanalysis with a relational perspective, later evolving into object relations, with a driving force of love that he advocates as the love of, and by, God.

¹⁷¹ Bion continued his analytic education through lectures at the Tavistock including some given by Jung in the autumn of 1935 on literary creativity. Bion attended these with Samuel Beckett who had been his patient from 1934-1935. Bion’s literary and creative aspirations were at an embryonic stage at this point.

¹⁷² Bion had been in analysis with Rickman from 1938-1939. Rickman was a distinguished member of the British Psycho-Analytical Society having seen Freud in Vienna, been in analysis with Ferenczi in Budapest and later with Klein. Though an advocate of Kleinian ideas, if not always of Klein as a person, he bridged the different strands that emerged in the British Psycho-Analytical Society (Rickman 1957).

¹⁷³ Other pioneering developments included the leaderless group project that shaped the formation of group analysis in GB (Harrison 2000).

¹⁷⁴ There is dispute concerning the length of Bion’s analysis. Some writers have 1946-1950, others 1945-1952 or 1945-1953. The confusion might be that Bion qualified as an associate member of the British Psychoanalytical Society in 1950 and a false assumption drawn that he finished his analysis with Klein at this point. The latter dates are more likely.

¹⁷⁵ Grotstein believes this phase of Bion’s work was very influential for his later ideas (Grotstein 1981).

psychic health and development (Di Ceglie 2005). Bion offered a more empathic form of projective identification than Klein, which was of significant clinical value, emphasizing a greater relational dimension involving intra- and inter-psychic processes (Bateman and Holmes 1995). While initially rooted in Kleinian concepts, Bion developed a language to convey the terror and depth of psychic experiences and evolved a unique psychoanalytic epistemology. The formless disturbing aspects of being are brought into psychoanalysis where they can be known and contained through conscious and unconscious processes. Bion believed a thing can be known through a mathematical/philosophically-based 'Grid' using symbols rather than phantasies. This enables greater comprehension of analytic/psychic/psychotic encounters beyond the limitations of words (Bion 1963). Sayers equates this transforming process to that found in religious and mystical forms of atonement and at-one-ment, though Bion developed his own language of O or ultimate reality to describe this (Sayers 2003).

Bion's work is complex and technically demanding utilizing philosophical and mathematical concepts. Hume's constant conjunction, Plato's Ideal Forms, and Kant's noumenal thing-in-itself are synthesized into a meta-psychology¹⁷⁶ that underpins all Bion's work (Marcus and Rosenberg 1998; Lopez-Corvo 2003). Bion believed that in reading his work something is evoked in the reader, elucidating an internal response that utilizes unconscious pre-existing forms. This directs us to the one theme that links all Bion's work, transformation (Bion 1965). Whether through his unique concepts of: projective mechanisms of the container and contained; the alpha-elements/function and beta-

¹⁷⁶ Hume's concept where a pattern can be found where 'two objects or thoughts become thought of as belonging together' (Grotstein 2007: 65f.). Bion also utilizes Hume's theory of causation 'that an idea owes its genesis to a sense impression' (Bion 1965: 66).

elements/function; or phenomena and noumena experienced as O; all required transformation, and faith in the possibility of transformation to occur. An analyst requires '*Faith in the creative responses of his own unconscious*'. It was also the hallmark of his ultimate ontological epistemology, transformations in, from, and to "O", the Absolute Truth about an infinite impersonal, and ineffable Ultimate Reality' (Grotstein 2007: 2).¹⁷⁷

Bion uses a landscape analogy to illustrate the forms of transformation that psychoanalysis offered. A landscape gardener 'works to transform the landscape itself' while the painter 'transforms the landscape into a painting' (Bion 1965: 25). There is a correspondence between what is experienced and seen in actuality and what is seen on canvas, '*something* has remained unaltered and on this *something* recognition depends' (Bion 1965: 1) which Bion sees as a 'representation of O' (Bion 1965: 25).

Bion, O and the mystical

Bion's concept of O divided psychoanalytic opinions, especially the British Kleinian world of which he was part. While value was seen in his early work, his later philosophically and mystically orientated ideas were rejected. By contrast his work was enthusiastically taken up in Brazil and Los Angeles, where he lived for a period, vitally influencing Grotstein.¹⁷⁸

Bion's concept of O is central to his later thinking and influenced psychoanalysts exploring the religious and mystical dimensions of the unconscious, notably Eigen, Symington and

¹⁷⁷ Similar statements are to be found in Eigen's *The psychoanalytic mystic* (Eigen 1998). Safran adds 'In an evocative paper, Coltart (1992) builds upon Bion to argue for the fundamental ineffability of the analytic process, and the role that the analyst's faith must play in the face of this ineffability' (Safran 1999: 5).

¹⁷⁸ Grotstein was part of a small group of analysts, including James Gooch, who developed new psychoanalytic ideas combining aspects of Klein and Bion that were resisted by the APsaA (Grotstein 2002a). While in Los Angeles to interview Grotstein I also interviewed Gooch, who like Grotstein had been in analysis with Bion. Gooch went on to make significant contributions to the APsaA and the IPA, as well as founding the Psychoanalytic Center of California in 1983. Unfortunately the recording of the interview failed.

Grotstein.¹⁷⁹ The symbol O stands for ‘Origin’ with its roots in Platonic ideal forms that offer an ontological dimension shaping the practice of psychoanalysis.¹⁸⁰ O can never be attained or captured in words or images, yet is central to both being human and belonging in the Cosmos, linking O to Godhead, ultimate reality, truth and ‘spiritual substance, so elemental that we can say nothing about it’ (Bion 1965: 139).¹⁸¹

Bion illustrates his work from the Christian mysticism of St. John of the Cross and Meister Eckhart paralleling the mystic encounter with the void and formless infinite also possible in the psychoanalytic encounter. Yet Bion’s understanding of mysticism is not that found in conventional religious contexts. The mystic in Bion’s writing serves a vital function in groups and societies by introducing new ideas or patterns, often in the face of hostility from established groups. While the mystic claims direct contact with or being-at-one with God/O in a form of transformation, they also evolve the ‘messianic idea’, which exists independently of O. In Christian terms the mystic captures their experience in words of an encounter with God (by presence or absence), yet for Bion the thought O, and the thinker, are always separate. The thought O exists without the necessity of a thinker to think it, ‘God in the Godhead is spiritual substance, so elemental that we can say nothing about it’ (Bion 1965: 139) so Bion evolved a ‘thoughts without the thinker’ explanation for the

¹⁷⁹ Symington equates God with O, understood in a universal sense, where ‘the spiritual is woven then into the very fabric of what we do as psycho-analysts’ when accompanied by a generosity of spirit (Symington 2008).

¹⁸⁰ The role of the analyst is to ‘focus his attention on O, the unknown and unknowable ... in so far as the analyst becomes O he is able to know the events that are *evolutions* of O ... the interpretation is an actual event in an evolution of O that is common to the analyst and the analysand’ (Bion 1970: 27).

¹⁸¹ ‘I shall use the sign O to denote that which is the ultimate reality represented by terms such as ultimate reality, absolute truth, the godhead, the infinite, the thing-in-itself. O does not fall in the domain of knowledge or learning save incidentally; it can be “become”, but it cannot be “known”. It is darkness and formless but it enters the domain K when it has evolved to a point where it can be known, through knowledge gained by experience, and formulated in terms derived from sensuous experience; its existence is conjectured phenomenologically’ (Bion 1970: 26).

inherent human knowing of infinity and oceanic feeling.¹⁸² Grotstein argues Bion was ‘one of the rare mystics of our time’ if the mystic is the one closest to O and transmits from O to K (Grotstein 1983).

Bion identified areas of connection and potential transformations encountered inside and outside of the psychoanalytic realm in the pursuit of truth and eternity (Grotstein 1983). His ideas offered new ways of thinking that went beyond psychoanalysis, as it had been formulated until then. Bion opened up the potential for the unconscious to being beyond the individual self – another dimension where O takes form, yet is intrinsically linked to the self. The unconscious comes alive in relational encounter, within self and beyond self, defined by the words and symbols - O/Other/god/God/Gods. His ideas were taken up and allied to religious and spiritual engagement through Eigen (Eigen 1981a, 1998, 2005), while Lopez-Corvo notes a possible link in O as Origins as found in Zen Buddhism (Lopez-Corvo 2003). Black sees a parallel in the Hindu upanishadic concept of maya (Black 2006), while Rubin and Epstein find links with Buddhism (Epstein 1995, 2007).

Grotstein, who more than any other psychoanalyst adopts and adapts Bion’s thinking, links O to forty-four aspects of Bion’s work (Grotstein 1983, 2000, 2007). Grotstein, utilizing ideas from Bomford and Matte Blanco, also offers insights from Christianity (Grotstein 1997d) and Christian Science perspectives and like Bion was concerned that institutions (psychoanalytic or religious) try to control the mystic experience of making ‘direct contact with, or is “at one” with, God’ (Bion 1970: 111). Bion’s ideas, arising out of his early clinical work on psychotic states, pointed to a transformation of being that like the mystics,

¹⁸² “Thoughts without a thinker” became the title of Epstein’s popular and influential work on relating psychoanalysis to Buddhism (Epstein 1995).

goes beyond words and full comprehension. The potential for religious and spiritual engagement of such a transformational paradigm is an important focus and how contemporary psychoanalysts have engaged with issues of religion, spirituality and the sacred is the subject of the next section.

PART B. THE ENGAGEMENT OF RELIGION, SPIRITUALITY AND THE SACRED IN CONTEMPORARY PSYCHOANALYSIS

Part A identified the personal, conceptual, methodological and reflexive contexts of the researcher. This in turn led to a discussion of issues of definition raised by the terms religious, spiritual, sacred and contemporary psychoanalysis. The recent place of religion and spirituality in psychoanalysis was then outlined, with a particular focus on the differing psychoanalytic cultures found in the UK and the USA. A final section identified the significant theoretical contributions made by Bion and Winnicott as the foundations they laid for the inter-relationship of religion, spirituality and psychoanalysis. Here in part B I take a detailed look at how religion and spirituality emerged in contemporary psychoanalysis from the 1970s, the date when two crucial writers emerged, detailed in the next chapter. The following chapters then examine creative forms of theoretical engagement understood from the following perspectives:

- Christian
- Natural Religion
- Maternal
- Jewish
- Buddhist
- Hindu
- Muslim
- Mystical
- Intersubjective

This history of religion, spirituality and psychoanalysis is a new narrative that offers revealing insights into the crucial developments that shaped ‘sacred psychoanalysis’.

CHAPTER SEVEN. PATTERNS OF ENGAGEMENT – CONFESSIONAL/CREDAL

Thirty years on it requires a purposeful stepping back into another time and culture, a re-contextualization, in order to understand how difficult it was to challenge orthodox psychoanalytic beliefs. Freud's dominance was still a central part of psychoanalytic belief and culture. The initiators of what was to become a new phase of development for religion and spirituality in psychoanalysis were Meissner and Rizzuto, building on their commitment to a Roman Catholic faith tradition prior to psychoanalytic training. Rizzuto and Meissner's critical engagement with Freud focused on: Freud's 'religious' behaviours; his correspondence with Pfister; his denial of the feminine in psychoanalysis and faith; and the limitation of his understanding of religion and spirituality based on expressions of pathology rather than illustrations of human growth and development. The validity of these critiques have stood the test of time and been incorporated into most subsequent critical evaluations of Freud.¹⁸³

The second strand to their thinking was the sharing of a symmetrical ontology that held on the one hand an orthodox, credal religious belief (Catholicism) as the source of Truth revealed by God and external to human selfhood. On the other hand they acknowledged localized truth generated by psychoanalytic insight into human selfhood, as lived out through religious and spiritual experience.

¹⁸³ There is a qualitative difference in the quality of the engagement found in Meissner and Rizzuto's work compared to that found in Wolman's edited text aimed at Catholic and psychoanalytic dialogue (Wolman 1976). The Roman Catholic theologian Hans Kung did produce a helpful critique of Freud, however it lacks the psychoanalytic insights offered by Meissner and Rizzuto. It deals with Freud solely in terms of his ideas rather than any clinical application (Kung 1979). Rempel offers a helpful critique of both Meissner and Kung arguing that they overlook Freud's willingness to revise his ideas, including his approach to religion (Rempel 1997).

The third strand was the use of Winnicott's theories in two different forms. Meissner uses 'transitional space' to accommodate mature and healthy religious, spiritual and mystical experiences that inform and enable human personhood. He also utilized traditional psychoanalytic theories for dealing with pathological developments in human personhood. Holding both together allows for an understanding of personhood through concepts of the psyche and grace in overlapping theoretical systems represented by psychoanalysis and theology.¹⁸⁴

Rizzuto focuses on a specific kind of transitional object that emerges out of the creativity of the mother/baby dyad, as the baby evolves a sense of self through transitional processes. This special object representation Rizzuto terms a god-representation, which precedes orthodox psychoanalytic development of the Oedipal phase, and remains throughout the life of the person. Rizzuto is careful to say that such god-representations do not necessarily equate with adult religious belief, though in Freud's case it does offer a plausible account for his unbelief (Rizzuto 1998).

Peter Gay adopted a similarly credal approach in response to Meissner: however, it was a credal atheism where he disputes any attempt to offer creative engagement with religion. Meissner, Rizzuto and Gay's work can now be examined in more detail.

Parallel Lines - Meissner's contribution

Meissner was the first to advocate the idea that psychoanalysis, religion and spirituality are best understood as parallel systems focused on a common goal of freeing human

¹⁸⁴ Meissner expresses both in his insightful psycho-biography of Ignatius of Loyola (Meissner 1994).

personhood.¹⁸⁵ While psychoanalysis cannot speak with authority about ‘ultimate issues’ (Brierley 1947)¹⁸⁶ it can speak with authority about the psyche coexisting as ‘respective conceptual systems ... (I)ntrepid souls might even be found who could embrace psychoanalysis as a conceptual framework and as a therapeutic technique without finding themselves compelled to surrender their religious orientations and convictions’ (Meissner 1984a: 4). Meissner entered into,

the difficult and often contentious dialogue ... my interest was drawn to the study of psychoanalytic aspects of religious experience. But what I found was disappointing and disillusioning. I saw clearly the limitations, interpretative and historical misapprehensions, and fallacious reasoning in Freud's view of religion ... I gathered enough courage to attempt a book about this problem (Meissner 1984a) in which I tried to set the Freudian argument in perspective and suggest that the argument had outrun its usefulness (Meissner 2001: 77f.).

Meissner brought a new level of analytic and theological rigour, expressed in *Psychoanalytic Aspects of Religious Experience* (Meissner 1978a) where he explored being created in the image of God and ‘the image of man as advanced by psychoanalysis’ (Meissner 1978a: 107). Meissner sets up a dialectic framework of: conscious v. unconscious; freedom v. determinism; teleological v. causal; epigenetic v. reductionist; moral v. instinctual; and supernatural v. natural. Adopting Ricoeur’s notion of

¹⁸⁵ Meissner, a Roman Catholic priest trained within the Jesuit tradition, began his writings on theological, religious and psychoanalytic engagement in the late 1950s. Meissner produced a highly regarded annotated bibliography that brought together religion, psychoanalysis and psychology in 1961 (Beit-Hallahmi 1996). Having qualified with a medical degree from Harvard in 1967, he began medical practice in 1968 while part of the religious community in John La Farge House, Cambridge, Massachusetts. Meissner’s ideas had been published from 1960 and he subsequently produced a rich and consistent stream of psychoanalytic books and articles.

¹⁸⁶ Marjorie Brierley was a British psychoanalyst and a member of the British Psycho-Analytical Society since 1930, having trained with Edward Glover. Brierley played a conciliatory role during the ‘controversial discussions’ and throughout her analytic career produced a wide range of thoughtful reviews and critical papers, some drawing on a good working knowledge of the Christian tradition. Many of her papers were published together in *Trends in Psychoanalysis* (Brierley 1951).

psychoanalysis¹⁸⁷ Meissner articulated ‘areas of problematic divergence’ and provided an ‘over-all matrix’ within which psychoanalysis and religion co-exist. (Meissner 1978a: 114).

He returns to these themes in *Psychoanalysis and Religious Experience* (1984) engaging a much wider audience,¹⁸⁸ where he offers: an exposition and critique of Freud’s understanding of religion; a psychoanalytic developmental view of religious experience; an examination of the illusory and transitional nature of religious experience; and a theological critique of human nature and personal freedom.¹⁸⁹ ‘If the dialectic between religion and psychoanalysis is to have any meaning at all, we cannot afford to retreat from that vital and sensitive frontier’ (Meissner 1984a: viii).¹⁹⁰ Meissner identifies external forms of religious activity alongside private devotion and mystical aspects that are difficult to define¹⁹¹ but which are also suitable subjects for analysis.¹⁹² Theology is enriched if it is able to move to a more sophisticated anthropology utilizing psychoanalytic insights,¹⁹³ balancing a

¹⁸⁷ ‘Psychoanalysis is necessarily iconoclastic, regardless of the faith or non-faith of the psychoanalyst ... Psychoanalysis as such cannot go beyond the necessity of iconoclasm. This necessity is open to a double possibility, that of faith and that of non-faith, but the decision about these two possibilities does not rest with psychoanalysis’ (Ricoeur quoted in Meissner 1978a: 114).

¹⁸⁸ There would always be a limited readership of a psychoanalytic journal where Meissner’s previous work on religious experience had been published.

¹⁸⁹ Though published as one book, the uneven four-part nature of the structure reveals that these were written for different audiences and at different times.

¹⁹⁰ The term ‘dialectic’, which runs through all Meissner’s work (1976-2003), was first used discussing Schafer and internalization (Schafer 1972). Meissner recognizes Schafer’s ‘dialectical antithesis to prevailing psychoanalytic views’ (Meissner 1976a: 374) and uses this to examine how outer and inner worlds relate through metaphor, as Schafer suggests, or as a process involving self-objects and self-representations as Meissner suggests. As religious experience brings together outer and inner worlds, Meissner offers religion and psychoanalysis a strategy of engaging in dialectic discourse, where each discipline poses critical insight into the other without confusing or conflating the two into a merged synthesis of which distinctiveness is a casualty.

¹⁹¹ ‘We are left with a subject that is extremely complex, ephemeral, difficult to elicit and to study, and yet of the most profound significance to man’s existential reality’ (Meissner 1984a: 8).

¹⁹² ‘It was Freud who originally pointed out that the believer’s attitude toward God may contain resonances and residues of earlier attitudes toward parental figures’ (Meissner 1984a: 11).

¹⁹³ ‘Contemporary theological reflection, however, is considerably more self-conscious and inclined to include reflection on one’s subjective experience among the creative roots of theology ... the psychoanalytic psychology of religious experience becomes a basic science to which theological reflection must turn in order

psychoanalytically informed developmental understanding of religious experience¹⁹⁴ with a theologically informed view of human nature.

Meissner argues that Freud's understanding of human nature is in direct opposition to the Christian view of human nature as made in the image of God and uniquely set apart from Creation. Freud saw this as a 'narcissistic posture' and drawing on Enlightenment thought advocated the creaturely and evolving existence of the human species so 'it is hardly surprising, then, that Freud laid his analytic axe to the root of the religious tree' (Meissner 1984a: 189). Meissner retains the concept of human nature as made in the image of God, even if that image does need psychoanalytic examination. Meissner offers a view of human nature that includes a moral dimension involving the intellect and capacity to reason uniting body, mind and soul in a way that psychoanalysis couldn't achieve. A fully religious and theological person acts as an expression of, and participation in, the grace of God with 'intentionality, and responsibility' in contrast to Freud's 'mechanistic psychic life ... in which the human being plays no significant contributing or determining role. Man in this view is essentially mechanical and robot-like' (Meissner 1984a: 190f.). Freud utilizes Hermholtzian closed system concepts that Meissner replaces with an open system, concluding that a theology of grace works on multiple levels, not just the psychological.

In the dialectic created between divergent and convergent systems Meissner utilizes transitional and hermeneutic concepts. Meissner offers an overview of the transitional nature of religious experience based on his earlier work (Meissner 1969, 1978a) and the

to explore one source of its own vitality ... to enrich the experienced life of faith by giving it form, shape, and substance' (Meissner 1984a: 12).

¹⁹⁴ Meissner adopted Erikson's ideas (Erikson 1959, 1962) and the newly emerging paradigmatic ideas of Rizzuto (Rizzuto 1979).

work of Winnicott (Winnicott 1965, 1971) and crucially Rizzuto (Rizzuto 1979) who attributed a positive role to a transitional god-representation.¹⁹⁵ Meissner introduces the work of Schafer to develop a new meta-psychology that overcomes the limitations of a static scientific model. Meissner does not adopt Schafer's personal language and meaning model (Richards 1992), but accepts Schafer's critiques of Freudian metapsychology. In adopting hermeneutic approaches,¹⁹⁶ Meissner sees a creative possibility for understanding the underlying philosophies of human nature that allow religious experience. He concludes that the inherent tensions between the psychoanalytic and religious understanding of human nature are not easily resolvable. A dialectical approach requires movement and development on both sides in order to fulfil a greater vision going beyond that offered by psychoanalysis which,

does not seek merely to liberate man from the chains of his inhibitions, compulsions, doubts, and erotic self-importance. Rather, it seeks to liberate man for the purpose of becoming something greater - more dynamic, more creative, more a force in the world - in order to realise not only his own potential but the betterment of all mankind (Meissner 1984a: 222f.).¹⁹⁷

¹⁹⁵ Meissner draws on Vergote (Vergote 1969), Gedo and Goldberg (Gedo and Goldberg 1973) and Fowler (Fowler 1974) to support his ideas. 'Consequently, the institutionalization of the divine figure, proposer and guarantor of the moral order, can be seen as a creative effort to reinforce and sustain the more highly organized and integrated adaptational concerns ... the religious enterprise, then, must be seen in its existential and adaptive context. From the point of view of intrapsychic dynamics, authentic religious inspiration serves a uniquely integrative function ... the god of the ancient Hebrews must be seen, as a projection of the maternal as well as the paternal image. He was not only a god of power and majesty, punishing those who disobey his law, but also a loving god, protecting and caring for his people, feeding and guiding them. He is a jealous god, but slow to anger and merciful' (Meissner 1984a: 131).

¹⁹⁶ Based on Ricoeur and Schafer.

¹⁹⁷ 'Therapy is a process of coming to grips in terms of stark existential reality and human concreteness with the forces of psychic determinism and personal responsibility ... the psychoanalytic view of man is limited freedom in the same sense a realistic constraint on the extent to which the theological vision of the meaning of freedom can be realised in the actual human condition ... Christian theology asserts the basic postulate that man's nature does not in itself possess the potentiality to overcome its intrinsic limitation and defect. The power of God through grace is required ... insight into the human conditions of freedom is the preserve of psychoanalysis and its related disciplines. In essence, then, theological reflection cannot take place in a vacuum, as it too often has done in the past. It necessarily involves a theological anthropology that cannot sustain itself without psychoanalytic input' (Meissner 1984a: 239f.). Meissner returned to this theological and psychoanalytic task in *Life and Faith* (Meissner 1987) to address more specifically theological questions on the nature of grace, a theology and psychology of hope, faith and psychological development, and the emergence of religious values using his theological and psychoanalytic insights.

Meissner's distinctive contribution was a psychoanalytically and theologically informed critique of Freud, religion and psychoanalytic practice that established substantial foundations for subsequent religious, spiritual and analytic engagements.¹⁹⁸ He offered a new appreciation of Winnicott who,

spawned a revolution in psychoanalytic thinking ... One of the most important areas in which Winnicott's ideas have taken root and undergone significant evolution is in the psychoanalytic understanding of religious phenomena. In that particular area of applied psychoanalysis, his ideas regarding transitional experience and the area of illusion have found their most meaningful extension (Meissner 1995: 319).¹⁹⁹

Meissner uses Winnicott's transitional and illusory concepts,

to construct a conceptual bridge over this chasm between religious and psychoanalytic thinking ... toward a useful and potential conceptual space that provided a medium for a dialectical resolution of these tensions between the subjective and objective ... open simultaneously to both subjective and objective poles of meaning without violation or exclusion of either (Meissner 1995: 326).

Meissner's thinking has evolved since his first explorations in 1984, offering a transitional space that allows the intersubjective to account for religious and spiritual experiences, in a 'space' existing between the parallel systems of theology and psychoanalysis.²⁰⁰ Meissner focuses on 'the interaction and integration of psychoanalytic perspectives with religious forms' (Meissner 2001: 78), engaging in a dialogue,²⁰¹ where psychoanalysis takes seriously 'belief in God's presence and actions in human affairs - including doctrines

¹⁹⁸ 'Psychoanalytic method has nothing in its conceptual toolkit to enable it to render judgement on the truth-value of religious beliefs ... In its extreme forms, the psychoanalytic perspective has led many analysts to go beyond the limited purview of the intrapsychic to assert on the basis of psychoanalytic arguments that the existence of a God and, indeed, with him all the panoply of religious processes, entities and realities must be cast into doubt, or at least left in the realm of agnostic obscurity. In this perspective, then, the entire spectrum of religiously endorsed and theologically elaborated conceptualizations is put under attack ... this was Freud's error, which has become part of the heritage of psychoanalytic thinking in this area' (Meissner 1995: 326).

¹⁹⁹ Meissner also acknowledges that Pruyser's work has been important in developing Winnicott's concepts in religious spheres beyond the psychoanalytic (Pruyser 1974, 1983, 1991a, 1991b).

²⁰⁰ Meissner also recognizes the pioneering role of Rizzuto's 'groundbreaking study' (Meissner 2001: 78) focusing in detail on god-representations in the psychoanalytic process.

²⁰¹ He recognized the problem of 'an inherent and pervasive difficulty that continues to haunt that dialogue: the participants attach different connotations to many of the same terms' (Meissner 2001: 81)

pertaining to grace, providence, and salvation - I can envision a new era in ... the dialogue between psychoanalysis and religion' (Meissner 2001: 125), a theme he returns to again in considering the future of psychoanalysis for the twenty-first century (Meissner 2006b).²⁰²

Running throughout Meissner's work is the paradox offered by St. Ignatius, 'Pray as though everything depended on God, but act as though everything depended on you' (Meissner 2001: 111). Meissner's understanding of religious and spiritual engagement with psychoanalysis as that of parallel systems is a clear and consistent theme adopted by other psychoanalysts, including Grotstein.

Religion and psychoanalysis are parallel disciplines that have been examining the same truths and realities from differing vertices. They converge in philosophy. Religion, particularly in its spiritual dimension, is more psychoanalytic than it ever suspected, and conversely psychoanalysis is more spiritual than it (particularly ego psychology) has yet recognized (Grotstein 2001: 325).

Meissner's work elicited a critical response from the psychoanalytic historian, Peter Gay. Adopting Freud's view that 'every scientific investigation of religious belief has unbelief as its presupposition' (Gay 1987: 112) Gay responded to Meissner's desire for a dialogue between psychoanalysis and religion.²⁰³ Gay, a historian of the Enlightenment and biographer of Freud (Gay 1967, 1969, 1988) produced *A Godless Jew* (Gay 1987)²⁰⁴ to resolve questions about Freud's atheism, and the religious and Jewish nature of psychoanalysis. Freud was part of a scientific Enlightenment tradition where his

²⁰² Reflecting on his career as an analyst Meissner writes, 'I ... do my best as an analyst, and believing as I do in God and his grace, leaving those effects and the patient's responsiveness to grace between that patient and his God ... Religious questions and feelings in this context come up, but only when the patient brings them up. My responses are calculated to be exploratory of the patient's beliefs and religious attitudes, and I try - with some exceptions ... almost never to introduce my own religious views ... I have ... at times quoted religious elements ... but the focus and purpose has been, I hope and trust, always analytic' (Meissner 2001: 111).

²⁰³ 'The most ingenious scholarship or most embracing pacifism could not, and should not, erase the enmity between science and theology, psychoanalysis and religion' (Gay 1987: 112).

²⁰⁴ This term was used by Freud of himself in a letter to Pfister 9/10/1918 (Freud and Meng 1963: 63).

consistently proclaimed atheism forms the hermeneutic principle with which Gay understands all Freud's writings. Gay sets his discussion in the context of debates between science and religion, agreeing with Freud that religious answers were no longer "'credible" to the twentieth-century mind' (Gay 1987: 4). Science no longer needed the metaphors of 'faith' or 'belief' to sustain its presence and impact in the world. He concludes 'if Freud had been a believer ... he would not have developed psychoanalysis' (Gay 1987: 31) and while it 'is possible to be devout and a disciple of Freud at the same time' that was not the case for Freud (Gay 1987: 34), 'Freud became a psychoanalyst in large part *because* he was an atheist' (Gay 1987: 41). Gay then turns to discuss Freud as 'godless' through examining his correspondence with Pfister²⁰⁵ and later Christian and Jewish writers, particularly Meissner. In the search for a dialogue between psychoanalysis and religion,²⁰⁶ Gay concludes 'the common ground that some have discovered between psychoanalysis and faith was a swampy, treacherous bog in which both must sink' (Gay 1987: 111). Gay then turns to the Jewish nature of psychoanalysis, as in keeping with his atheist paradigm Freud could not be a religious Jew. Freud stated 'I am as remote from Jewish religion as from all others' (Gay 1987: 122) yet acknowledged his cultural identity: 'we carried that marvellous thing in common, which – inaccessible to any analysis so far – makes the Jew' (Gay 1987: 132f.). Gay surveys Jewish attempts to claim Freud as a religious Jew and psychoanalysis as a Jewish science (a phrase used by Anna Freud) before concluding it 'proved without foundation' (Gay 1987: 147).

²⁰⁵ Gay makes use of sources only available in the Freud archive held in the Library of Congress. In my search of the Library's Freud holdings I have not been able to trace these but they may be held with a time embargo that Gay may have been able to overcome.

²⁰⁶ This list includes Tillich, Brierley, Lee, Zilboorg, Meissner, Katz, Liebman, and Fromm. While these are the key figures mentioned in the text, there are others, and Gay offers a detailed briefly-annotated bibliography, which shows he has widely surveyed the subject area.

Gay's work is less than convincing in places. First, he fails to address the limitation of Freud's understanding of religion and remains within a Modernist reductive paradigm. Gay thought Freud's understanding of religion was correct therefore he saw no need to engage with the nature of religious and spiritual experience and 'treats religion as a caricature of what it is' (Ostow 1989: 119), continuing 'a reductionist attitude to spiritual matters within the discipline' (Simmonds 2004: 953). Secondly, there is considerable variation in what Freud said about religion, especially his early Jewish origins that are not as easily dismissed as Gay suggests (Ostow 1989). This subject has been explored in detail from both Christian and Jewish perspectives (Yerushalmi 1991; Rizzuto 1998; Halpern 1999).²⁰⁷ Fine and Collins (Fine and Collins 1991), reviewing Gay's acclaimed biography of Freud, demonstrate that Gay's views in *A Godless Jew* are at variance with this later work.²⁰⁸ Thirdly, following Freud, Gay's rejection of religion on the basis of it being an illusion fails to account for the vital role illusion plays in psychic development. Gay fails to acknowledge or make reference to Winnicott (or Bion) despite citing Rizzuto and Meissner in whose work Winnicott plays a crucial role.²⁰⁹

The significance of Gay's work is that it suggests that psychoanalysis in the mid to late 1980s had still not fully embraced concepts by Winnicott and Bion, which were to form the backbone of the engagement between religion, spirituality and psychoanalysis.²¹⁰ Meissner

²⁰⁷ Loewenberg's review of Yerushalmi's work is perceptive, suggesting that he so wishes to persuade us of Freud's Jewish identity at the other extreme from Gay, that he misses key references. He suggests most scholars are found within the spectrum established by Gay and Yerushalmi. 'The truth is that we need and use ... the multiple Jewish and not-so-Jewish secular Freud' (Loewenberg 1992: 511).

²⁰⁸ 'How and why did a Godless Jew discover psychoanalysis? Perhaps the answer concerns his marginality – a Jew examining his inner and outer being during the declining Hapsburg Empire ... that had repression at its core, hypocrisy at its roots, and anti-Semitism as its perverse élan vital' (Fine and Collins 1991: 363).

²⁰⁹ Another critical review was produced by Roazen (Roazen 1989).

²¹⁰ Rizzuto offered a generous review concluding, 'As a historian, Gay has presented the analytic community with a much-needed survey of Freud's relation to religion and to his Jewishness. As Freud's partisan and

had taken up this challenges and he was joined by Rizzuto from a Christian perspective (Rizzuto 1979, 1998) and Spero from a Jewish perspective (Spero 1992).

*God-representations – a new analytic concept*²¹¹

In 1979 Ana-Maria Rizzuto, an Argentinean psychiatrist and psychoanalyst practising in Boston, produced her foundational text, *Birth of the Living God* (Rizzuto 1979). Having researched ‘the psychological foundations of belief and pastoral care’ in 1963 for the Pontifical Seminary in Cordoba (Rizzuto 1979: viii), Rizzuto moved to the USA and trained as a psychoanalyst.²¹² Although her Roman Catholic beliefs were not generally shared by the analytic community, she did find support from Semrad (Rizzuto 1979).²¹³ Rizzuto

fellow believer in the war between psychoanalysis and religion, he offers a challenge to those who do not agree with him. They will have to come up with fine and well-articulated arguments to show how, in the vast universe of knowledge and in the *hearts* of some analysts, patients, and theologians, the so-called enemies can live together at relative peace’ (Rizzuto 1989: 497f.).

²¹¹ The principles on which Rizzuto bases her concept of god-representations are to be found in appendix five.

²¹² Rizzuto originally studied medicine and philosophy in the University of Cordoba, later teaching child and adolescent development also at Cordoba. While in Cordoba, Rizzuto was involved in a lay education reform movement within Catholicism which features in her text ‘madurez y laicado’ literally the ‘maturing of the laity’ (Rizzuto 2000).

²¹³ Semrad was a highly influential figure in Boston psychoanalysis from the early 1950s and ‘probably the single most important educational influence on several generations of psychotherapists in Boston’ (Smith 2001: 493). Semrad was recalled as ‘one of those much-admired teachers who published very little & left no archival papers or correspondence’ (Gifford 2010). While Semrad did publish a great deal in conjunction with others, he never produced a seminal text on theory or practice but put his energies into training. Yet very little is said about his religious background. Rizzuto writes he ‘was very interested in religion and agreed to talk to me whenever I requested it’ (Rizzuto 2007: 27).

Evelyne Schwaber, a former analysand was asked in an interview ‘I wonder if your religious background and your interest in religion may have influenced your thinking and way of working as an analyst. Being religious and an analyst are often viewed as incompatible positions. How have you been able to reconcile them?’

Schwaber replied ‘It is very likely that my spiritual leanings have influenced my analytic thinking. I believe they affect my understanding of the significance of fantasy, metaphor, and psychic play, as examples. They have lent to my effort to search for the inherent legitimacy in another's way of thinking or feeling, (and of course, this is to be differentiated from how one puts this into action, from one's behaviour in the world, or from what is objectively measurable), to seeing possibility in perspectives that might alternatively be dismissed as simply “magical thinking,” or otherwise irrational. They help me to be less certain, while at the same time, to recognize that the uncertainty is not bottomless. You ask about being religious, which I see as reflecting a way of feeling, an inward state, that may coincide with a sense of spirituality. It is different from being observant, which has to do with how one practices one's religious beliefs. One can be religious without necessarily being observant by the standards of organized religion. In my own Jewish practice, I am moderately or flexibly observant by Orthodox standards, though to others, I may seem rather strict about it. There was a time when being religiously observant was considered at odds with being an analyst; I personally

became Clinical Professor of Psychiatry at Tufts Medical School, where she ran a year-long seminar on pastoral care for pastors located in South Boston, as well as becoming a training and supervising analyst at the Psychoanalytic Institute of New England, East (PINE).²¹⁴ Rizzuto received the 1996 William C. Bier Award of the American Psychological Association and the 1997 Pfister Award of the American Psychiatric Association for her contributions to the study of religion. Rizzuto continues to be active and highly regarded in the wider psychoanalytic world, the Roman Catholic faith tradition, and the psychology of religion, through training, teaching, lecturing, publication and personal contacts (Rizzuto 2005).

Rizzuto's *Birth of the Living God* was: 'an original contribution to psychoanalysis' (McDargh 1983: 146); 'groundbreaking' (Bingaman 2003a: 75; Sorenson 1994: 636); 'pioneering' (Palmer 1997: 73); a new research paradigm (McDargh 1997: 181) and adding to 'revisionist psychoanalysis' (Jonte-Pace in Bingaman 2003a: x). It provided a brilliant summary and a detailed critique of Freud's understanding of religion,²¹⁵ Rizzuto locating

suffered from that prejudice, as I was nearly turned down from seeking analytic training because of it. When, after apparently a fair amount of debate about this I was finally accepted, friends advised me to go to Semrad for a training analysis; he was a practising Catholic and highly regarded clinician. He was very respectful of my religious choices and did not immediately assume these were neurotically based. As we know, other of the earlier assumptions in our field, as, for example, some of our views on female sexuality or sexual preference, have been seen in retrospect to have arisen out of societal prejudices—lifted in keeping with shifting cultural awareness and values—rather than based on science or observation (though, of course, science and observation themselves are culturally influenced)' (Schwaber 2002: 71f.).

By contrast another long-standing psychoanalytic colleague of Semrad's added 'Personally, I never thought of him as particularly "spiritual." Though he was known as a conventional Roman Catholic, in keeping with his Czech immigrant background, he made occasional jokes at the expense of the church' (Gifford 2010).

²¹⁴ PINE emerged from within the Boston Psychoanalytic Society as a separate training institute in 1974. 'The BPSI-PINE result was finally positive for both institutes and brought about a greater pluralism in the Boston area' (Kirsner 2000: 89). Meissner remained in the Boston Psychoanalytic Society and while Rizzuto was part of PINE, she remained in contact and they collaborated on a number of projects.

²¹⁵ 'The theoretical section is a must for any student of classical psychoanalysis' (Beit-Hallahmi 1996: 153). Previous attempts are found in *Psychoanalysis and religion* (Fromm 1950), *Freud and religion* (Zilboorg 1958), *Psychoanalysis and religion* (Zilboorg 1962).

her work in a fresh reading of Freud for both academic and psychoanalytic audiences.²¹⁶

Rizzuto breaks new theoretical ground by developing the concept of god-representations, a clinical study of the ‘possible origins of the individual’s private representations of God’ (Rizzuto 1979: 3) presented through twenty cases studies.²¹⁷ Rizzuto is clear that her work is not on religion, philosophy or theology, rather ‘exclusively a clinical, psychoanalytical study of “postulated superhuman beings” as experienced by those who do and do not believe in them’ (Rizzuto 1979: 3), later adding ‘God’s help cannot bypass the psychodynamic laws that govern the functioning of the psyche’ (Rizzuto 2001: 23).

Rizzuto bases her work on several foundations. Firstly, the use of interviews, questionnaires and drawings to link information about early life, understood psychoanalytically in terms of psychological objects and object loss, with later religious belief or unbelief. Secondly, the assumption that ‘most western people either believe in, or have at least heard of, a personal God’ (Rizzuto 1979: 8). While this was true when Rizzuto was writing, it reflected her background of Roman Catholicism in Argentina, and both Protestantism and Catholicism in Boston. Later Rizzuto notes ‘for a given individual the word *God* does not refer directly and specifically to an existing superior being - as

²¹⁶ Rizzuto had already published key articles working towards this text for both an academic and psychoanalytic audience (Rizzuto 1974, 1976).

²¹⁷ The subject of god-representations had been pioneered by Antione Vergote in *The religious man: a psychological study of religious attitudes* (Vergote 1969) and ‘Concepts of God and parental images’ where he concludes, ‘In comparing the results of our research with the Freudian theory about the father, we may acknowledge an extraordinary analogy between the Oedipus structure and the structuring of the religious attitude. But there is also a great difference in so far as Freud stresses the neurotic nature of the religion of the father. The sole fact of the presence of the polarity father-mother in the divine image shows that, beyond the conflict introduced by certain parental connotations, the faithful tend to find in God also reconciliation and pacification’ (Vergote et al. 1969: 87). Vergote combined an academic career (he founded the Centre of Religious Psychology at the University of Louvain) alongside a psychoanalytic practice. He had trained in Paris at the French Psychoanalytic Society run by Lagache and Lacan, and later co-founded the Ecole Belge de Psychanalyse in 1965 (Alsteens 2005). Vergote and Tamayo were to develop these ideas further in their *The Parental Figures and Representation of God* (Vergote and Tamayo 1981). He contributed to the first international conference on moral and religious development held in the USA in 1979, as did Rizzuto, and their respective contributions were subsequently published.

postulated by theologians and philosophers - but the private creation of that individual' (Rizzuto 1979: 221). Thirdly, she addresses the origins of religious experience and belief in the psyche, not objective belief in God. While this may have reassured her psychoanalytic and scientifically biased audience (Rizzuto 1979: 84, 211) it limits Rizzuto's work to a 'parallel line' engagement as seen in Meissner.

From these foundations Rizzuto begins by identifying the complex heritage Freud had given to psychoanalysis and religion. He helpfully recognized the link between parental figures and the idea of God, but his illusionary view of God that became orthodox belief in psychoanalysis resulted in,

generations of psychoanalysts who ... dropped whatever religion they had at the doors of their institutes. If they refused to do so, they managed to disassociate their beliefs from analytic training and practice, with the sad effect of having an important area of their own lives untouched by their training. If they dealt with religion during their own analyses, that was the beginning and the end of it (Rizzuto 1979: 4).

Paradoxically Freud was baffled 'with the problem of human religiosity and belief in the Divinity' (Rizzuto 1979: 11). Rizzuto focuses on Freud's statement 'all of the child's later choices of friendship and love follow upon the basis of the memory-traces left behind by these first prototypes' (Rizzuto 1979: 6f.).²¹⁸ Rizzuto establishes that Freud postulated an early form of object relations theory,²¹⁹ then utilizing current psychoanalytic theory,²²⁰ answers the question 'why do early imagos evolve into a God?'

²¹⁸ Found in Freud (1914) 'Some reflections on schoolboy psychology' SE 13.

²¹⁹ Later developed in Britain by Fairbairn, Guntrip, the Balints and especially Winnicott, as well as ego and self-psychology developed by Hartmann, Jacobson, Mahler, Kernberg and Kohut. The history of the development of object relations theory can be found in Greenberg and Mitchell from an American perspective (Greenberg and Mitchell 1983) and Gomez from a British perspective (Gomez 1996). Kernberg offers an overview of both traditions (Kernberg 2005).

²²⁰ Image formation, symbolization, internal objects, primary process thinking and the emergence of self-embracing object relations theorists, developmental theorists, ego-psychology theorists and self psychology theorists.

Rizzuto critiques Freud's early object representations focused on the father-son relationship and the development of the Oedipus complex, which 'excludes other possible early object relations: son-mother, daughter-father, daughter-mother' (1979: 15), thus limiting the psychic impact of early relationships central for the formation of god-representations. Rizzuto rectifies Freud's 'oedipal bound' limitations by offering a new theoretical understanding of object representations through ten concepts supported by four detailed case studies illustrating the development of god-representations in early life leading to adult belief and disbelief.²²¹

Rizzuto concluded,

This is not a book on religion. It is a book on object relations. Indeed, a book about one object relation: that of man with a special object he calls God. God, psychologically speaking, is an illusory transitional object ... transitional space (Winnicott, 1953) is the locus where God comes to existence (Rizzuto 1979: 177).

Rizzuto sees a positive value in illusion, where god-representations and transitional objects combine and 'God, like all transitional objects (Winnicott, 1953), is located *simultaneously* "outside, inside and at the border"... God is a special transitional object, because unlike teddy bears ... he is created from ... representations of primary objects ... he does not follow the course of other transitional objects' (Rizzuto 1979: 178). Rizzuto's god-representation as a form of transitional object, gets caught up in the oedipal dynamics and may 'lose meaning ... [be] rejected, ignored, suppressed, or found temporarily unnecessary ... as is true of all other objects, God cannot be fully repressed. As a traditional object representation he is always potentially available for further acceptance or further rejection' (Rizzuto 1979: 178f.). Rizzuto adds 'this personalised representational transitional object never ceases in the course of human life. It is a developmental process that covers the entire

²²¹ A summary of Rizzuto's concepts of god object representations can be found in appendix five.

life cycle from birth to death' (Rizzuto 1979: 179). Rizzuto expands how god-representations engage with the wider philosophical and religious experiences in a desire to be real and discover a true self.²²²

Rizzuto suggest this 'silent communication with transitional objects, God or others, will continue parallel to the analytic process' (Rizzuto 1979: 205) where analysis helps clarify the nature of God-representations, but not replace them. Rizzuto concludes that Winnicott offers a more creative theory by locating religion and god/God in transitional space, adding 'I have arrived at the point where my departure from Freud is inevitable ... reality and illusion are not contradictory terms ... to ask a man to renounce a God he believes in may be ... cruel and ... meaningless' (Rizzuto 1979: 209).

In the end I had to disagree with Freud - but not totally: only with one Freud, the one of science, intellect, and reality, the Freud, who said: "No, our science is no illusion" ... I follow the other Freud ... the Freud of object relations ... until through my research I arrive at one of his own conclusions about some individuals in the Western world: "The idea of a single great god - an idea which must be recognized as a completely justified memory, ... has a compulsive character: it *must* be believed" (Freud, 1939, p. 130) (Rizzuto 1979: 212).

Only one review of her work was published in a psychoanalytic journal and while it admired the 'masterful review of the psychoanalytic literature on religion' (Stein 1981: 125) concluded dismissively 'Object relations theory is thus used as a crypto-Jungian basis for a psychoanalytic theology' (Stein 1981: 126). Rizzuto dared to challenge psychoanalytic

²²² 'God may or may not be the official God of the child's religion. But as a personal companion ... he belongs to the "ineffably private" side of human experience where we are irredeemably alone. A convincing sense of being alive, connected, in communion with ourselves, others, the universe, and God himself may occur when, in the profoundest privacy of the self, "an identity of experience" takes place between vital components of our God-representations, our sense of self, and some reality in the world ... The histories of religious conversion and mystical experience provide endless examples. Winnicott (1965) speaks about this area of private communication as indispensable for a sense of being real, ... what he calls a true self ... I agree with Winnicott and propose that the private God of each man has the potential to provide "silent communication", thus increasing our sense of being real. Those who do not find their God representation subjectively meaningful need other subjective objects and transitional realities to encounter themselves' (Rizzuto 1979: 204f.).

orthodoxy, and while not expelled was ignored within the wider analytic world.²²³ Her work was given less critical recognition than it deserved at the time: however, over the last 30 years it has been widely assimilated into a range of psychoanalytic debates.

Rizzuto has contributed to ‘an increasingly interesting and sophisticated dialogue between psychoanalysis and theology’ (Carveth 1992) and god-image research (Rector 1996). She has joined a small but influential group of psychoanalysts engaging with religion including such figures as Zilboorg, Guntrip, Fromm, Erikson, Pruyser, Menninger, Meissner, Kakar and Kristeva (Laor 1986; Wallace 1996; Capps 1997; Carveth 1998; Rubin 1999a; Ross 2001; Brickman 2002). Rizzuto has supplied the theoretical tools to examine the processes of: religious belief and unbelief (Bernstein and Severino 1986; Stern 1996; Franco 1998; Schwaber 1999); religious conversion (Cohen 2002); religious experience (Kleiger 1990); religious identification (Eber and Marcovici 1984); religious development (Spero 1986; Rizzuto 2001); and faith development (Rizzuto 2001; McDargh 2001). Rizzuto has also been used to develop object relations and self psychology perspectives through the formation of: a cohesive self (Horton 1984); self integration (Rubin 1999a); self-image and shame (Rizzuto 1991); self-image and language (Rizzuto 1993); while further advocating Winnicott’s intermediate area of experience (Jacobson 1997), transitional objects (Laor 1989) and illusion (Richardson 1992). Rizzuto’s work has also been used to examine: Freud’s loss of his father (Halpern 1999); the importance of a mother imago in the development of a god-representation (Randour and Bondanza 1987); and the metaphor of divine space (Spero 1998).

²²³ Rizzuto’s work on god representations has been taken up outside the psychoanalytic community, in the fields of Christian spirituality (Holder 2005), religious studies (Bingaman 2003b) the psychology of religion (Belzen 1997; Wulff 1997; Loewenthal 2000; Kim 2006) and pastoral counselling (Wicks and Parsons 1985).

Rizzuto's major contribution was to offer a new clinical theory that demonstrated the implications of Winnicott and object relations theories for psychoanalytic thinking and practice and that accepted religious and spiritual experience through god-representation as a normal part of psychic development (Finn and Gartner 1992). Religious and spiritual beliefs and experiences form an integral part of what it is to be human and Rizzuto championed a unique psychoanalytic understanding of this. This trend of an object representation of god/God in psychoanalytic perspective, with particular use of Winnicott's concepts (McDargh 1986), came to be a central strand in the emergence of religion and spirituality in contemporary psychoanalysis and is based on the substantial foundations established by Meissner and Rizzuto.²²⁴

²²⁴ Meissner and Rizzuto are still actively contributing to the engagement between religion and psychoanalysis. Rizzuto has written a chapter 'One hundred years after Freud declared that religion was a universal obsessional neurosis' and Meissner 'Religious conflicts in psychoanalysis – a case study' both published in Belzen's edited book (Belzen 2009).

CHAPTER EIGHT. PATTERNS OF ENGAGEMENT – INCARNATIONAL/TRANSFERENTIAL

Meissner and Rizzuto's ground-breaking work of establishing a credible dialogue and new psychoanalytic theory related to transitional and representational aspects of human development were taken further and in a different direction by Leavy and Jones. Firstly, they evolved distinct but linked theoretical stances of involving a belief in God and an experience of the sacred within the psychoanalytic dialogue, accessible through transference. They offer much less focus on Freud and a much greater focus on contemporary psychoanalytic developments. Leavy also draws on linguistic and hermeneutic developments within psychoanalysis adopting ideas from Lacan, Ricoeur and Schafer.

Secondly Leavy and Jones also share the symmetrical ontology found in Meissner and Rizzuto, though in this case holding together orthodox, credal religious belief (Episcopal) as the source of revealing/revelation that allows a transcendent God to be experienced within human selfhood. Psychoanalysis has a vital part to play in facilitating ongoing creative processes lived out through psychoanalytic, religious and spiritual experience. These have the potential to lead towards, rather than away from, a discovery or re-discovery of God. Psychoanalysis understood in this theological context, offers a richer understanding of the truth of human personhood and has the potential to facilitate I-Thou encounter. Where Leavy and Jones go beyond Rizzuto and Meissner is through their focus on the objective truth of God and the sacred, not just religious experience as the source of engagement.

Thirdly both use the work of Hans Loewald in two different ways. Leavy adopts Loewald's emphasis on the mother-child matrix where there is a unique experience of timelessness and unity within the psyche that Leavy relates to that found in the nature and being of God, as well as in mystical experiences. Jones rather than developing new theory offers a synthesis that includes Loewald and Winnicott where timeless space or transitional space incorporate mature and healthy religious, spiritual and mystical experiences.

Leavy's psychoanalytic image of God

Leavy's ideas about psychoanalysis were wide ranging, rooted in literature, language and translation (Leavy 1990, 2005a).²²⁵ He was also interested in philosophy, narrative, and hermeneutics, drawing on Lacan (Seidenberg 1971; Shapiro and Leavy 1978; Leavy 1983; Esman 1984; Olinick 1984; Morris 1993; Thompson 2001; Leavy 2005a). Leavy challenged the status quo, wanting people to question, and included work on Jung²²⁶ (Leavy 1964, 1988), Fromm (Grey 1994; Leavy 1994), a psycho-biographical reflection on Hitler (Leavy 1985), a demythologizing of the Oedipus complex (Leavy 1985), Loewald (Leavy 1988), free association (Leavy 1993a) and psychoanalytic training and self-disclosure (Leavy 1999). He was one of the earliest psychoanalysts to examine homosexuality in a non-pathologizing way (Isay and Friedman 1986; Leavy 2005a). However, it was Leavy's integration of Christian faith²²⁷ with psychoanalysis that is the focus of this chapter. Leavy

²²⁵ Leavy translated Andreas-Salome's *Freud Journal*, making her work available through 'an outstanding, scholarly, careful, and loving, even though sketchy, portrayal of her' that included her interest in spirituality (Grotjahn 1965: 274).

²²⁶ Leavy's first psychoanalytic contribution was in response to a passage in Jung's *Memories, Dreams and Reflections* (1964) where the figure of Elijah appears in a dream. He offers an interpretation that Freud is Elijah, who is understood in a Christian context as a prophet from a previous age that prepares the people to meet their God. Given the Advent timing of the dreams, Leavy sees this as Jung's unconscious positioning Jung as the Messiah, the Christ, who replaces all previous prophets.

²²⁷ Leavy grew up in a Jewish home, survived the death of his mother aged five and went on to train as a doctor (graduating in 1940), then a psychiatrist where he discovered Freud. This led Leavy to train as a

examined psychoanalysis and religion through his understanding of the image of God (Leavy 1988: xii),²²⁸ building on *The Psychoanalytic Dialogue* (Leavy 1980) where he adopts narrative and hermeneutic approaches. Drawing on linguists, philosophers and analysts (de Saussure, Heidegger, Buber and Ricoeur, Schafer and Lacan), Leavy argues that psychoanalysis is a dialogue between two people connected via language forms allowing a revelation of hidden aspects of the other.²²⁹ ‘The analytic process is a dyadic exchange, a mutual fructification of one unconscious to another. The patient speaks to an “other,” not in the sense of the “object” of Freudian psychoanalysis but in the spirit of the “thou” of Martin Buber’ (Rangell 1982: 128). Psychoanalytic hermeneutics reveal ‘the ambiguities of speech that the psychoanalytic situation evokes’ (Leavy 2005a: 156) taking the form of transference. When applied to religious language, the same dialectical process takes place, so clients being analyzed do not lose faith or gain faith, rather they learn to ask questions of that faith that fits with their earliest history.²³⁰ However Leavy also maintained

psychoanalyst from the late 1940s, graduating from the New York Psychoanalytic Institute in 1953. Leavy is described as ‘deeply religious, having converted from Judaism to Christianity in early adulthood’ (Leavy 2005b). Leavy and his wife were originally Quakers but later became part of the Anglo Catholic tradition in the Episcopal Church.

²²⁸ Described by Meissner as ‘refreshing and thought-provoking’ (Meissner 1991: 288), ‘eloquent and profoundly meaningful’ (Quoted in Leavy 1988: back-cover).

²²⁹ ‘The two parties to the psychoanalytic dialogue are not impersonal prospectors for some elusive ore hidden in the unconscious mines of the patient, they are two people talking to each other, and their words will “historicize” ... the unconscious, making the invisible transference visible through the facilitating agency of language. For Leavy this dialogue is everything: two people making history with words, a new history that *corresponds* ... to the prehistoric, pre-verbal and early verbal past, but *is* not the past’ (Mahon 1987: 436).

²³⁰ ‘A religion that may be qualified with the term “existential” can speak to the analyzing person, confronts him with the claim of God’s existence, the announcement of God’s concern for men and women, and of God’s mercy, love, and justice. It aims to excite faith and to promote practice. It insists on the relevance of God’s existence to human action. The response of the individual - as always - will depend on what I have called the amplitude and the fit of the religious claim, with regard to this individual life, its history, its bondage and its freedom (Leavy 2005a: 160). ‘The God-claims of religion ... must be offered to our psychoanalytically orientated world ... but the response of psychoanalytic man, his or her ability to say “yes, I believe” will have a particular importance to Biblical religion, because it will be another step in the liberation of faith from its constraints. Faith can never be absolute, because it cannot be delivered without the mediation of words - if we except the actual experiences of the mystics ... in the last analysis, so to speak, assent to the claims of faith *is* a submission to authority. The claims are presented by the tradition of a community. They are not of our making. Our assent need not be a sacrifice of the intellect ... We recognize in the claims of faith an authoritative interpretation of our life as we know it from within; it is this to which we give our assent. The

a form of dualism that despite these points of encounter, religion was transcendent from psychoanalysis and not changed by psychoanalysis (Jones 1991).

The theme of dialogue was a metaphor Leavy used consistently, at heart psychoanalysis is a special form of encounter (Leavy 2005a, 2005b), as is religion. Psychoanalysis is an examination of psychic reality and solitude which promotes a private self, uniquely reached by psychoanalysis and religion (Fabricius 1996). Yet religion for Leavy was always community.

I define religion as the recognition by a community of a real being, how with or of beings transcending sense experience, with whom the members of the community exist in a mutual relationship ... personal religious commitment finds a symbolic language as it has originated in and has been transmitted by a community ... the religious essential of relationship with a transcendent being (Leavy 1990: 47).

What distinguished Leavy from Meissner or Rizzuto is the focus on the reality and truth of God, rather than on religious experience. 'That God exists is the heart of religious belief of any sort we are likely to encounter in psychoanalytic work' (Leavy 1990: 49) yet this poses a problem as 'the non-existence of God may be built into analysts' deepest convictions' (Leavy 1990: 49). Leavy challenges this, using the work of Loewald on the psychoanalytic concept of internalization, applying it to the central truth of the Christian faith, the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. He then addresses issues of the Christian faith as illustrative of all beliefs,²³¹ before concluding that analysts need an openness to see new meaning and engage with the dialogue of belief.

leap of faith is made with eyes wide open. The questioning goes on' (Leavy 2005a: 162f.). Originally published in 1982, this was the conclusion of Leavy's address honouring the work of biblical theologian Hans Frei (they were colleagues at Yale) who was a significant figure in the evolution of narrative theology (Fodor 2005). Like Frei, Leavy saw a parallel in their questioning of traditional interpretation and authority.

²³¹ In Christianity, Jesus Christ is 'the centre of religious experience. Christ is not only the ultimate love object, which the believer loses as an external object and regains by identification with him as ego ideal. He

Leavy's theological ideas begin with a developmental reflection on the *Imago Dei* understood theologically, philosophically and analytically with chapters on: psychoanalyzing; becoming; loving and hating; concealing; suffering; believing; ending; and reflecting (Leavy 1988: x). 'Human nature leads towards and not away from faith in God' (Leavy 1988: xi) as people become like God in true humanity by 'transcending ourselves and extending our consciousness beyond' (Leavy 1988: xi). The purpose of humanity is to look for meaning, to be creative, and to express love where 'these actions correspond with the picture of God that has been revealed to us' (Leavy 1988: xii) expressed in the worship of God and although 'the *imago dei* may never be realizable as such, but as a symbol of the implicit human life-project, it holds out hope' (Leavy 1988: x). The psychoanalyst's role is to help a person discover what the image of God is like, an early object representation as in Rizzuto²³², but unlike Meissner and Rizzuto, Leavy relates this to transcendent reality. Underpinning all his work, Leavy argues that the religious and analytic task require that 'to accomplish our desires, we need to love and be loved' (Leavy 1988: 20). Leavy offers four ways in which the *imago dei* is experienced. Firstly, by accepting the concept of revelation as understood in religious tradition and transmitted through memory held by religious communities. Secondly, by recognizing that psychoanalytic insight and faith insight are complementary and can enhance each other. Thirdly, through mystical experience that goes beyond the ability of language to fully describe, replete with

is, in his passion and sacrificial death, the exemplification of complete internalization and sublimation of all earthly relationships and needs' (Loewald quoted in Leavy 1990: 56). Leavy also includes other theistic religions, Judaism and Islam.

²³² 'Just as it is obligatory for the analyst, who is a believer in a religion to be open to the reality maintained by other kinds of believers, and nonbelievers, and always to be able to distinguish what I have called the waking reality of belief from the dream world, so the agnostic analyst needs to do the same in his or her own way, leaving open the possibility that the transcendent otherness that religious persons claim to approach is as real as they claim it to be, as real as chairs and tables and families, as well a science and arts. Which comes down to recognizing once again that there are more things in heaven and earth than are dreamt of in our philosophy' (Leavy 1990: 58).

experiential moments of timelessness, unity, sudden moments of compassion and intuition, and hearing the still small voice of God. Fourthly, through a religious conversion experience. These experiences lead to a disclosure of the *imago dei* in a person experienced as love, where psychoanalysis and divine self-disclosure cohere. The role of religion and psychoanalysis is to question. 'If psychoanalysis had theological pretensions, one of them might well be the claim that questioning authority is a God-given function of the human soul' (Leavy 1990: 105). This questioning leads to new disclosure,

the most essential hypothesis of psychoanalysis is that we lead a life that is largely hidden from ourselves ... the daily experience in psychoanalysis, where the acute listening of both doctor and patient is designed to permit unexpressed feelings, unformulated ideas, disregarded or lost memories, unaccepted or abandoned desires, to be spoken to speak themselves ... is both liberating and invigorating, and therefore creating. When we become conscious of the previously hidden ways of our minds, something new comes into being. In other words, unconcealment is also creation. Just as God's work of creation and redemption is an unconcealment. Analysing, both as doctor and patient, is acting in the image of God (Leavy 1988: 106f.).

Leavy's work represents a Protestant contribution to the engagement of psychoanalysis and religion²³³ affirming transcendent reality (Rizzuto 1990; Jones 1991; Meissner 1991).

Meissner compares Leavy with Pfister where Leavy 'finds no contradiction between analysis and faith, and in fact sees them as congruent paths leading in the direction of the divine' (Meissner 1991: 290). Leavy's work has been criticized for its Christian focus that equates religious belief with a personal God (Symington 1994) and an exclusion of Judaism (Spero 1992).²³⁴ Leavy offers incarnational forms of psychoanalytic and religious engagement through: a unifying view of human nature; the struggle for and importance of love; engagement with suffering; and the offer of hope. Allied to this is a shared analytic

²³³ Previous contributions were made by Tillich (Jones 1991; Sorenson 2004) and Pruyser (Sorenson 2004).

²³⁴ While Spero's critique also applies to Meissner and Rizzuto, Leavy does use Jewish texts and interpretations but locates itself within a specifically Christian tradition and does not attempt to claim superiority for this. He does claim that it is his own tradition that he speaks about with his own authority.

and theological task of uncovering the essential private self through creating a shared dialogue in which neither voice is dominant and neither ignored.²³⁵

Jones' transference and transcendence

James Jones, an Episcopal priest, clinical psychologist, philosopher of religion and psychoanalytic psychotherapist, brings together theology and psychoanalysis (Jones 1991) and builds on Leavy's linguistic transforming encounter based on spoken dialogue between analyst and patient. Following Loewald, Jones sees this as the unspoken discovery of re-creative primary processes. Jones focuses on transference as the defining psychoanalytic paradigm for understanding religion, moving away from Freud's view that childhood fears resulted in a pathological transference to an illusory God, and advocates transference as an empathic intersubjective encounter. Jones applauds and critiques the transitional approaches of Meissner, Rizzuto, Winnicott, Loewald and Leavy and develops a transferential understanding drawn from intersubjective and self-psychologies.²³⁶ Jones goes on to develop a psychoanalysis of the sacred drawing from Otto, Bollas, Kohut, Loewald, Tillich and Buber. Jones advocates a synthesis of human and divine transforming encounters where human experience of the sacred is derived through transferential dynamics found in psychoanalytic, religious and spiritual contexts (Jones 1996, 1997, 1999, 2001, 2002a, 2002b, 2003, 2006, 2008).²³⁷ A vital implication of this approach is that it puts the religious and spiritual dynamic more clearly in the analytic space so that they can be

²³⁵ There are times when Leavy represents his ideas in a dualistic way, in part contradicting his unifying stance (Jones 1991).

²³⁶ 'The ways in which a person's relationship with ... sacred or ultimate serves as the transferential ground of the self' (Jones 1991: 64). He asks the question 'What relationships within the inner object world are made conscious by the language of the sacred as void and abyss' and arguing 'Embracing a relational model ... entails listening for the echoes of past interpersonal patterns and their affective tones in present relationships, including relationship with the sacred' (Jones 1991: 64f.).

²³⁷ Jones has also done pioneering work on offering psychoanalytic insight into terrorism and religious fundamentalism.

accessed in more immediate ways. Many of these ideas are discussed and developed by Sorenson's highly rated *Minding Spirituality*²³⁸ which concludes,

Philosopher Paul Ricoeur (1970) suggested that if psychoanalysis is the hermeneutics of suspicion, it would benefit from dialectical interplay with its hermeneutical counterpart, a hermeneutics of faith-not the faith of an unexamined life, but a post-critical faith that generates what Ricoeur called a "second naiveté" (p. 28). This makes for a dialogical hermeneutic of unmasking and demystification alongside another hermeneutic that recollects or restores meaning (in the root sense of religion: *religare*, to gather together) (Sorenson 2004: 167).

Leavy, Jones and Sorenson represent the link between knowing, believing, acting and living so that incarnation is an actual experience, lived out with an inner awareness of the self in relation to an external reality, called God, which finds expression through spiritual practices (Jones 2003).

²³⁸ See comments by Aron, 'he wrote a brilliant article ... it was a really important book' (Safran 2009: 115). Reference was made to the importance of Sorenson's work and his tragic early death in interviews I conducted with James Jones and Charles Spezzano.

CHAPTER NINE. PATTERNS OF ENGAGEMENT – NATURAL RELIGION

Spero, Symington and Kristeva believe that psychoanalysis has something to gain by being seen as a mature or natural religion. A natural religion that includes an objective God as the source of Truth (Spero), a natural religion that rejects an objective God but embraces a truthful moral dimension (Symington), and a natural religion that locates objectivity in tradition, embodiment and language (Kristeva).

Psychoanalysis – a monotheistic natural religion

Moshe Spero, an observant Jew and psychoanalytic practitioner, offers a unique account of psychoanalysis as an expression of deeper underlying religious dimensions found in human personhood.²³⁹ Spero focuses specifically on object relations (with reference to Freud), adding Jewish perspectives previously neglected. He adopts orthodox, religious belief as the source of revealing that allows a creator God to be experienced within human selfhood. Such ontology is rooted in the past and the role of psychoanalysis is to point to deeper religious strivings and aid their development. Spero finds accord with Eigen, ‘God is ... *a relational being in the depths of His own nature*, a dynamic movement that supports our openness to revelation and response, and requires us to live on the cutting edge of faith’ (Eigen quoted in Spero 1992: 80).

He reverses the traditional reductive psychoanalytic engagement with religion and offers instead a model of how religious-based psychology, in his case Halakhic metapsychology,

²³⁹ Spero has lived and practised in the USA and Israel and when in the USA was associated with the Michigan and Cleveland psychoanalytic communities.

refines psychoanalytic insights.²⁴⁰ Spero states there is an objective God that all human persons engage with, and this is included in the transference relationship that arises out of the object world of each person. Spero's model incorporates human objects, objective God objects, and projected god objects, all located in an external world. This corresponds to object, endopsychic and god representations in an internal world, with transitional object representations hovering between the two. While drawing on Pruyser, Oden, Fowler, Jung, Meissner, Rizzuto, McDargh, Leavy and Winnicott, Spero critiques their limited ability to represent the whole object constellation. Spero sees human personhood developing in relationship to one another – anthropocentric, in parallel with human personhood developing in relationship with God – deocentric. Following Bion, Spero sees one as containing the other and allows the presence of objects, including the religious, to be given life (Spero 1992: 177f.). Spero concludes his work by re-visiting Freud and finding in his early work reference to communication that allows connection to something other, that precedes infantile belief as part of psychical development. Black values the profound questions Spero raises, without being convinced of his argument (Black 1993), yet Spero remains one of the first psychoanalytic practitioners to hold to the objective truth of God, while creatively engaging with psychoanalysis.²⁴¹

²⁴⁰ '*Halakhah* is the Jewish law, not only the Torah ... It is a deep-rooted Jewish belief that in following the *halakhah* human beings come to resemble God, for in its inmost reality *halakhah* represents the law by which God acted when he created the universe ... The ontological underpinning of psychoanalysis is the ontological structure affirmed by the *halakhah*' (Black 1993: 1086).

²⁴¹ Cohen offers a perceptive analysis of Spero's work. 'His assertion that the reality of God must be acknowledged in clinical psychoanalytic work with religious patients has led to a critique of Lacanian thinking and the formation of a psychoanalytic epistemology in which divinity, in whose image humanity is created, becomes the "ground" for representation and interpersonal communication' (Cohen 2008: 13).

Neville Symington was brought up as a Roman Catholic, trained for the priesthood in the late 1950s but left to pursue a career in psychology and later psychoanalysis.²⁴³ While Symington left behind orthodox religion, a story told in his autobiographical novel (Symington 2004b), his thinking is steeped in theology and philosophy, especially Aquinas and Macmurray. His published work synthesizes complex ideas: analytic, theological, and philosophical (Symington 1986, 1994). This includes narcissism (Symington 1993b, 2002), Bion (Symington and Symington 1996) an enduring interest in religion (Symington 1993a, 1994, 1998, 1999, 2001, 2004a, 2008) and the moral dimension of psychoanalysis (Symington 1997) alongside a critical and reflective self-awareness in his later work (Symington 2006b, 2007).²⁴⁴ Symington records the influence of his first analyst, Klauber (Symington 2007)²⁴⁵ and his brief supervision with Bion. In his psychoanalytic training

²⁴² Symington produced a paper with the title ‘The spirituality of natural religion’ in 2004 (Symington 2004c). He adopts a universal approach drawing on the core ideas of religious and spiritual traditions. Marcus takes this idea further devoting a book to ancient religious wisdom found in Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, Taoism, Stoicism, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, then applying their insights to psychoanalysis. Marcus believes that psychoanalysis can be enriched through this and ‘become a more compelling, relevant, and appealing life-and-identity-defining narrative of the human condition and mode of self-transformation’ (Marcus 2003: 177).

²⁴³ Symington was educated at Ampleforth College, Britain’s leading Independent Catholic School, part of a Benedictine monastic community.

²⁴⁴ Symington has been published in psychoanalytic journals since 1980 and his later books are collections of various articles primarily on psychoanalysis (Symington 2007) and religion (Symington 2004a).

²⁴⁵ Symington fails to mention Klauber’s 1974 paper ‘Notes on the psychical roots of religion, with particular reference to the development of Western Christianity’ (Klauber 1974) later published in a collection of papers (Klauber 1986) that Symington does quote from (Symington 2007). Klauber was a well-known member of the Independent group that formed a crucial part of the British psychoanalytic world, and later became President of the British Psychoanalytical Society and helped develop psychoanalysis in Europe after the Second World War. He had been appointed the Freud Memorial Visiting Professor of Psychoanalysis at University College London but died before able to take up this post. Gillespie’s obituary records, ‘In his latter years John Klauber became increasingly concerned with the phenomenon that he called “illusion”, a term he may well have borrowed from Freud’s “Future of an illusion”. He defined it tentatively as “a false belief causing uncertainty as to whether it should be given credence”. His most interesting development of this theme concerns the relation and contrast between religion and psychoanalysis. The essence of religion is indeed an illusion in that it consists in the assertion of the truth of things that are incredible (*credo quia absurdum*). But our experiences as infants are indeed incredible, yet also true. Psychoanalytic therapy is likewise based on the illusory element of the transference, and its effectiveness depends on the coming together of this illusion with the truth, an amalgamation of id with ego. What would distinguish psychoanalysis from religion is a readiness to believe that we may be mistaken (and one is reminded of Oliver Cromwell’s famous recommendation to the Scottish

Symington recalls that he had had enough of fanaticism²⁴⁶ and so opted for the Independent training route rather than following Anna Freud or Melanie Klein (Symington 2007: xviii). Symington's interest in theology persisted and he discussed philosophy, theology, psychology and psychoanalysis with friends and later with his analyst, Klauber.²⁴⁷

Symington begins with Freud, interpreted by his understanding of religion, in primitive and mature forms. Symington accepts Freud's *Future of an Illusion* (Freud 1927) as a sustainable analysis of primitive religion, but which has little to say concerning the mature or natural forms of religion. Symington's ontology looks to the future as a moral, evolving universe where universal truths can be found in all religions and spirituality, which includes psychoanalysis. What makes psychoanalysis more revolutionary is its ability to offer self-knowledge 'through an interpersonal encounter of great intimacy' (Symington 1998: 153). Symington also draws on object relations' theory, as it is the form of psychoanalysis that offers a moral dimension, which unites it in a common goal with mature religion.

Symington's first published account of religion was a critical review of Kristeva's *In the beginning was love* (Kristeva 1987a; Symington 1991) where he argues Kristeva's theological naivety overwhelms the creative points she makes. In particular Symington highlights that Kristeva's attempt to understand Christianity through the Nicene Creed crucially neglects 'the living presence of Christ in the hearts of the believers which is at the

theologians). We must try to avoid dogmatism; and we should not, as analysts, endeavour to conceal or suppress our human qualities' (Gillespie 1982: 84f.). Klauber's later reflections on religion have been compared with that of Loewald, both reflecting on vital issues that they had not addressed earlier in their analytic careers (Rangell 1983).

²⁴⁶ Allusion to his previous training as a Roman Catholic priest.

²⁴⁷ Symington recalls that understanding Aquinas' whole *Summa Theologica* was easier than understanding Freud, partly because there is an underlying principle in Aquinas whereas in Freud there are two contradictory principles (Symington 2007: xx).

very centre of Christian teaching' and 'is not explicitly mentioned in the early credal formulae' (Symington 1991: 465). Symington also believed 'many analysts are not very competent at analyzing religious people. Some analysts leave the patient's religion entirely out of the analysis, as in the case of someone I met who had been in analysis for over seven years yet whose devout Catholic upbringing was never mentioned' (Symington 1991: 464f.). He rectified this by developing a synthesis of psychoanalysis and religion in *Emotion and Spirit* (Symington 1994, 1998) and his later work with his wife Joan Symington on Bion, including his view of O (Symington and Symington 1996). Symington rejects primitive religion based on revelation and a transcendent Other/God and redefines religion as the desire for a morality of freedom and responsibility.

The analytic encounter, while drawing on wisdom potentially found in all religions enables 'the transformation of narcissism into concern for others' (Blass 2006: 27). Psychoanalysis becomes 'the pinnacle of mature religiosity and a much-needed substitute for the failed primitive religions' (Blass 2006: 27). It was in his later work *The Spirit of Sanity* (Symington 2001) that he develops most fully his distinctive vision of psychoanalysis as a natural religion,²⁴⁸ a text neglected by the psychoanalytic community as a whole.²⁴⁹

²⁴⁸ Symington first used this term in his contribution to an edited work in 1993 (Ward 1993), much more fully in *Emotion and Spirit* (Symington 1994), again in another edited work in 1999 (Stein 1999), as well as in his later work (Symington 2004a, 2007).

²⁴⁹ It could be argued that this text is less accessible because it requires a working knowledge of Symington's previous work and he sees no need to repeat himself. No reviews of this text have been published in the major psychoanalytic journals as found in PEP 1.7, although it was reviewed in the *British Journal of Psychotherapy*. This book was based on a series of talks Symington gave at a conference held under the auspices of the Tavistock Clinic, London – long regarded as the centre of excellence for psychoanalytic work in a public health-care setting and constituted as an NHS health care trust. It is not a psychoanalytic institute and the audience consisted of a wider range of health professionals, including psychologists and psychotherapists, than would normally be found in an analytic institute, whose scientific meetings are not open to the public. Symington had long been employed and linked with the Tavistock Clinic before his move to Australia. Despite Symington's expertise in the area of religion he only addressed this in lecture form with the British Psycho-Analytic Society on two occasions.

Symington's contribution includes his creative ideas and his person as an icon of non-conformist psychoanalytic spirituality. Firstly, Symington comprehensively rejects orthodox religious beliefs that posit an external God or deity made known through revelation. Like the autobiographical priest (Symington 2004b) Symington needs to leave the Roman Catholic Church (representative of all religions) in order to find an emotional life. Secondly, he locates the religious dimension as a desire for meaning that is discovered within, through ancient wisdom enshrined in all religions, most often discovered by the mystics. Thirdly, there is an emotional wisdom to be experienced through the agency of a relational other, which analysts are best equipped to engage with.

It is evident from the questions and debate that Symington's meditations provoked that he has enabled the voice of analysts and psychotherapists to speak on issues of religion that had rarely been heard. Symington's authenticity arises from: a personal history as part of a religious tradition; his rigorous theological training with an emphasis on philosophical theology; his ongoing interest in the philosophical issues, religious and psychoanalytic; and an engagement with emotional experience that crosses boundaries corresponding with the mystical and the analytic, especially in Bion.

Symington plays a representative or priestly role in upholding the vital importance of the religious, spiritual, and mystical dimensions of personhood within psychoanalysis. He offers a paradoxical approach which locates mature religion in the theological developments of the 1960s, post-Vatican II reforms and the 'death of God' theology (Symington 2004b) allied to the postmodern re-discovery of the self in relation to other/Other through the

unconscious. He also offers a ‘prophetic’ function of declaring new ways and future paths for psychoanalysis to take (Symington 2007: 345f.).

*Psychoanalysis - a maternal and mystical natural religion*²⁵⁰

Kristeva has been regarded as an non-conformist, an outsider, someone who crosses boundaries, a ‘metaphysical rebel’ (Elliott 2003). Born in Bulgaria, her father’s work as an accountant for the Orthodox Church in a Communist society meant Kristeva was denied the educational privileges of others and eventually she escaped to Paris in the 1960s. Through her doctoral studies with Barthes she became part of a post-structural intellectual movement drawing on the work of Levi-Strauss, Lacan, Foucault, and Derrida. Kristeva turned to psychoanalysis in the 1970s exploring ‘the only continent we have never left: internal experience’ (Kristeva quoted in McAfee 2004: 8).²⁵¹ The result was a unique form of subjectivity and engagement of analytic insight where Kristeva adopts an ecumenical view of the unconscious combining Freud, Klein, Lacan, Winnicott and Green,²⁵² with an appreciation of religious history, female mysticism, theological reflection, and feminist thought. Kristeva summarizes her work through the word ‘love’ and a paradoxical capacity to embrace atheistic sacredness and the mystical.²⁵³ Kristeva relates almost exclusively to the Christian theological tradition as it engages with a desire for unity and ‘fusion with an omnipotent father figure’ (Bradley 2008: 280) expressed as God. Kristeva rejects Freud’s view that religion is based on illusion and psychoanalysis on reason, arguing that both are

²⁵⁰ Although there is later chapter on mysticism, to locate Kristeva in that context would be too limiting, however she defies easy categorization and is therefore included in the broader context of natural religion.

²⁵¹ More biographical details of this development can be found in the Gubermans interview with Kristeva (Guberman and Guberman 1996) summarized in Capps (Capps 2001: 305).

²⁵² Kristeva also refers to Abraham, Jacobson, Gillespie, Glover, MacDougall, Heinmann, Deutsch, Balint, Segal and Mahler.

²⁵³ There is something untranslatable about Kristeva’s work and a vital experience it contains.

based on illusion. Whereas religion ‘dogmatizes and mythologizes’ this loving/uniting/fusing process, psychoanalysis seeks to understand what lies behind this process by going beyond religion. Yet Kristeva does not dismiss this Christian vision but engages with Christianity, especially through its symbols. Kristeva discusses: the soul; mysticism, especially Guyon, and an ongoing interest in Teresa of Avila (Midttun 2006); the Bible both as a sacred and literary text; the doctrine of the Trinity; the Virgin Mary, the Eucharist; and key theologians including Augustine, Anselm, Aquinas, Bernard of Clairvaux, Luther, Calvin, and Zwingli (Kristeva 1987a, 1987b, 1995). Kristeva finds in female mystics (with their embodiment and maternal vision) a transition beyond religion that addresses the modern situation with its ‘psychological poverty ... artificial soul’, ‘amputated subjectivity’ (Kristeva 1995: 7) and ‘abolition of psychic space’ (Kristeva 1987b: 373). This leads to a renewed interest in religion and more importantly for Kristeva a renewed subject for psychoanalytic engagement. Psychoanalysis brings new life to the psyche by uncovering new maladies of the soul unique to the human condition. Kristeva uses the metaphor of fire to illustrate this. The Bible has a capacity to promote places of fire – the burning bush and Moses, the experience of Isaiah in the Temple, the Pentecostal blaze – and psychoanalysis also has the capacity to ‘set ablaze’. ‘The experience of psychoanalysis results in a sort of combustion’ where meaning, emptiness and healing are encountered in an indefinable fire of tongues as a form of transformation or epiphany (Kristeva 1995: 134). The language of mysticism pervades Kristeva’s speech.²⁵⁴

²⁵⁴ Bradley explores this further. ‘Christian mysticism represents a key moment in the historical transition from the epoch of theology to that of psychoanalysis: Teresa of Avila ... and other female mystics progressively affirm the other *within* the subject as opposed to the divine other that supposedly lies outside it. If Christianity seeks to transcendentalize immanent drives ... Kristeva’s work relocates the transcendent firmly within the body: mysticism ... turned inside out’ (Bradley 2008: 280).

Kristeva understands psychoanalysis to be: a demythologized religion; a secular mysticism; and a mystic atheism that offers a transitional and sacred space between theology's transcendentalism and Freud, Marx and Nietzsche's reductive scientific materialism. Kristeva's atheism is radically different from that enshrined in Communist orthodoxy. Kristeva has a profound understanding of the religious influences in Russian and Eastern European literature and the wider intellectual and cultural history of Europe. Latterly Kristeva has regained an appreciation of the liturgy of the Orthodox Church, 'All my childhood was bathed in this' (Sutherland 2006) and she experienced a profound grief that the Bulgarian authorities denied her devout Orthodox father a funeral and any religious rites (Midttun 2006).²⁵⁵

Kristeva believes that religion offers a vital but illusory and incomplete hermeneutic that becomes most effective through its female mystical tradition. Psychoanalysis as a secular mysticism, in Kristeva's mind, offers an experience of Other but needs to avoid 'a certain fideism, or even degraded forms of spiritualism' finding their way into 'psychoanalysis ideology'. Psychoanalysis' purpose is 'not to prepare the other for some sort of transcendent existence but rather to open up as yet undefined possibilities in this world' (Kristeva 1987a: 26f.). Kristeva's impact in the wider cultural world of psychoanalysis and in the feminist understanding of psychoanalysis has been enormous (Elliott 2003), but impact in terms of the clinical practice of psychoanalysis, while noted by Kernberg, is much more difficult to assess. The very complexity of her thinking and her advocacy of a pluralist

²⁵⁵ In an interview Kristeva comments, 'I am not a believer, I believe in words. There is only one resurrection for me - and that is in words ... I'm not Catholic by background. My father was a very great believer, but in the Orthodox Church, in Bulgaria. As a young woman my Oedipus conflict was in a perpetual fight with that. Afterwards I tried to understand what Christianity is and my approach became more intellectual. On the one side, I'm very much interested in religion. On the other hand, I don't make any kind of spiritual - how shall I say - extrapolation or message' (Sutherland 2006).

approach to psychoanalysis has meant the analytic world, with a few exceptions (Sayers 2003) has failed to sufficiently benefit from her unique advocacy of the religious and the mystical as normative, meaning-bearing, imaginative, and creative.²⁵⁶

Spero, Symington and Kristeva share a vision that psychoanalysis, as a system, is incomplete. For Spero the central task is a re-discovery of the truths of human personhood founded upon the created and creative acts of God into which psychoanalysis is invited as a co-operative partner. Symington views psychoanalysis as a system that can evolve to possess moral authority based on soul-searching truthfulness, whilst aware of the human capacity to deceive itself. Kristeva offers a breadth and depth of approach, which goes beyond the limited confines of psychoanalysis, in a holistic vision that includes religious and mystical dimensions.

Psychoanalysis connects persons socially, through common values of love and hope, and spiritually to something that is other/Other, though never fully defined. Spero, Symington and Kristeva can be viewed in Buber's terms as searching after an I-Thou encounter, making space for the sacred within and without the psyche, where traditional psychoanalytic language and insight fails. This idea is returned to in the concluding chapter of the thesis.

²⁵⁶ Kristeva is also aware that there can still be religious pathology in her patients.

CHAPTER TEN. PATTERNS OF ENGAGEMENT –THE RETURN OF THE MOTHER

The 1980s saw a marked impact by feminist thought on psychoanalysis, which was to have strategic importance for the evolution of religious and spiritual approaches. Feminism demonstrated the dominant place of unquestioned assumptions by those in power, with the ability to exclude or control. Feminist critiques questioned all assumptions and offered academic, political, social, philosophical and cultural challenges to psychoanalysis.

Psychoanalysis needed to respond to these challenges if it were to retain legitimacy as a means of discourse pronouncing on human personhood. This led to a re-reading of Freud and psychoanalytic theory in which: the maternal was given prominence; the interactions between mother/baby were seen very differently; new links were made to existing psychoanalytic theory; new theories were developed by Chodorow (Chodorow 2005), Benjamin and others; and there was a re-discovery or new awareness of the symbolic.

Freud's writings on female sexuality (1931 SE 21) and femininity (1933 SE 22) examined the idea 'that for the little girl the mother as dispenser of the earliest bodily care is the object of a particularly intense and long-lasting archaic cathexis' (Kristeva 2005: 571).²⁵⁷

However he interpreted this discovery through a male-orientated genital perspective (Chodorow 1991),²⁵⁸ leading to a critical evaluation of Freud's 'inherent denial of the power and fear of women, unthinking patriarchy and a narcissistic over-evaluation of the penis' (Barossa 2006). As early as 1922 Karen Horney challenged Freud's understanding of

²⁵⁷ Cathexis is the English translation adopted by Strachey for Freud's German term 'besetzung'. 'Cathexis refers to the process that attaches psychic energy, essentially libido, to an object, body part, or psychic element' (Denis 2005b: 259).

²⁵⁸ 'A Jew himself, Freud was following a long Hebraic tradition already familiar to us from the Old Testament, *Genesis* in particular. Man came first, then women' (Figs quoted in Mitchell 1974: 328f.).

penis envy, as well as the nature and development of femininity, themes she continued to develop throughout her life. Suttie writing in 1935 and pre-dating later object relations and attachment theorists, believed dismissal of the maternal and denial of relationship-seeking led to a distorted understanding of both personhood and religion (Suttie 1935, 1988).²⁵⁹ In part, this also accounts for the limited impact of psychoanalysis in non-European cultures where existing religious traditions emphasize the maternal, such as Hinduism (Kakar 1978, 1991, 2005, 2006).²⁶⁰ Feminist engagement with psychoanalysis has its recent origins in the re-discovery of Horney,²⁶¹ and through Juliet Mitchell (Mitchell 1974) at a time when Freud received a highly critical reception in feminist thought. Mitchell placed Freud within a context, suggesting that feminists need to understand Freud in order to understand patriarchy. She saw psychoanalysis offering ongoing insight, if suitably contextualized and re-interpreted once the influence of a dominant patriarchy has been identified.²⁶²

Chodorow adopted a different theoretical perspective drawn from object relations, utilizing concepts from Horney, Klein, Fairbairn, Guntrip and Winnicott, and focused on the emergence of self (Chodorow 1978).²⁶³ The pre-Oedipal relationship with the mother plays the central role in this: Chodorow emphasized the importance of the mother (Benjamin 1982), and Benjamin the importance of the father (Benjamin 1988). As each person becomes a “self in relation” (or denial of relation) ... this view radically breaks with an

²⁵⁹ Mitchell quotes Greer who found support from Suttie for her critique of Freud (Mitchell 1974). Wright acknowledges Suttie’s importance for re-stating the maternal (Wright 2006).

²⁶⁰ For a more detailed discussion of Hinduism, see chapter thirteen.

²⁶¹ ‘Horney’s early essays were largely ignored until they were published in *Feminine Psychology* in 1967. Since then there has been a growing recognition that Karen Horney was the first great psychoanalytic feminist’ (Paris 2005: 759). See also Sayers’s work on other influential psychoanalytic women (Sayers 1991).

²⁶² For example, drawing on Lacanian insights, Mitchell challenged the central role castration played in Freud’s understanding of sexual difference.

²⁶³ Chodorow was, she believes, one of the first American analysts to make object relations a central aspect of her theory, dating from 1974 (Chodorow 2004, 2005).

essentialist view of gender and perceives masculinity and femininity in a contingent, relationally constructed context' (Perelberg 2005b: 577). Chodorow has continued this focus of her work, which has provided ongoing stimulus to psychoanalysis and feminism in an American context (Chodorow 1994, 2000, 2005).²⁶⁴ Given the emphasis on object relations theory in a British context, concepts from Klein, Bion and Winnicott have led to a significant engagement with feminism found in the work of many contemporary writers including Sayers, Burgner, Laufer, Edcumbe, Pines, Breen, Rapael-Leff and Perelberg (Sayers 1999; Budd and Rusbridger 2005; Perelberg 2005b).

Van Herik is unusual in combining feminist and religious approaches arguing it is impossible to understand Freud's views on religion without understanding his views on femininity (Van Herik 1982). 'The projective, irrationalist faith of the religious believer (male or female), she argues, and the psychology of women are, in the Freudian scheme of things, inextricably linked together through related inner meanings' (Bingaman 2003b: 51). She offers a critical re-reading of Freud's texts, particularly *Moses and Monotheism* where Freud evolves a 'hierarchical topography of psychical positions towards the divine father' which 'correspond to his schema of gender attitudes towards the mental father, ... femininity, ordinary masculinity and ideal masculinity' (Van Herik 1982: 193). To desire a mother and to desire God are not pathological. Neither are failures to advance beyond femininity and attain the heights of ideal masculinity advocated by Freud: rather they are the universal privilege of all people. Van Herik's work has been adopted by Jones, Wulff and Bingaman who advocate sophisticated approaches to psychoanalysis and religion that

²⁶⁴ A helpful account of the place of Kohut and Loewald in establishing psychoanalytic foundations that encouraged feminist engagement in relation to self-psychology can be found in Teicholz (Teicholz 1999).

transcend the limitations established by Freud's patriarchy (Jones 1996; Wulff 1997; Bingaman 2003a, 2003b).

The resurgence of the early mothering and the elevation of the maternal that feminist engagement with psychoanalysis has brought about, allowed Winnicott's ideas on the internal object world and the external maternal environment to impact religion. This has provided a rich context for understanding religion in new ways, particularly in the work of Jones, rooted in theology and the philosophy of religion, and Wright rooted in psychoanalysis, aesthetics and literature (Wright 1991, 2006, 2009). Jones engages with feminist theology arguing that 'a divine person whose primary mode of being is mutual relationship and connection sounds more like the image of Goddess' and while Jones sees this as problematic he wishes to affirm 'different images of relationship: monistic images of fusion, dualistic images of distance, pluralistic images of interaction, patriarchal images of domination, maternal images of nurturance' (Jones 1996: 87f.). Yet all are encountered in psychoanalysis and religion, through transitional and transcendent I-Thou space. Wright believes pre-verbal experiences of the sacred are retained within the unconscious, but find expression in psychoanalytic, mystical and poetic literature, which represent the quality of maternal containment and the maternal gaze. Wright examines these developments within psychoanalysis through the dichotomies of: revealed religion v. natural religion (with reference to Symington); objective truth v. subjective truth; libidinal love v. agape love; individual experience v. institutional experience; and paternal religion focused on law v. maternal religion focused on love. By adopting ideas from Suttie, Winnicott, Bowlby, Stern and Bollas, Wright 'makes it plausible to link religion with the attachment/relational axis of human development ... at the centre of spiritual longing ... religion, like art and

psychotherapy, creates new possibilities of redemption by providing self-containing forms' (Wright 2006: 188).

It was this re-discovery of the symbolic in maternal and cultural forms that opened new avenues for religion and spirituality, seen in the work of Kristeva. Kristeva's work is too complex for brief summary but she has consistently wrestled with issues of gender, culture, language, religion and psychoanalysis and evolved her own distinctive conceptual framework.²⁶⁵ Jonte-Pace believes Kristeva finds 'a solution to the problem of our "discontent" in exile, otherness ... [that] we encounter in our own unconscious. "Eternal exile" (1977:8-9) becomes Kristeva's vantage point for a new hermeneutic of religion and a new formulation of ethics, politics and psychoanalysis' (Jonte-Pace 1997: 264).²⁶⁶

Feminist thought has exposed Freud's limited understanding of religion related to his exclusive focus on a masculine god and patriarchal religion. A symbolic, feminine view of spiritual experience fitted with developments in feminist theology (Slee 2004a, 2004b) and within psychoanalytic theory. Wright's application and extension of Winnicott's work demonstrates new possibilities for developing a sacred dimension that authenticates expression of spirituality, gendered being and psychoanalytic encounter (Wright 2009). This largely under-developed area offers potential for further engagement and could provide new opportunities for Hindu religious ideas in which the goddess plays a crucial role.²⁶⁷

²⁶⁵ See the discussion of some of Kristeva's ideas in the previous chapter.

²⁶⁶ The importance of a hermeneutic understanding of religious, spiritual and psychoanalytic engagement is dealt with in chapter twenty-five.

²⁶⁷ See chapter thirteen. Symington was one of the few psychoanalysts whose all-encompassing view of mature religion incorporated Hinduism, though he still makes little reference to the maternal dimension (Symington 1998).

In a parallel development Chodorow's later work focuses on the development of meaning and draws particularly on the work of Loewald (Chodorow 2003).²⁶⁸ Chodorow advocates the vital connection between the inner and the outer, as well as the psychoanalytic realm and cultural or social contexts. These combine to form meaning and although she does not explicitly address religion or spirituality, reference is made to Kakar and Akhtar and the place of religion in culture. The recognition of other/Other, the inner and outer, through which our narratives of being are discovered and their story told, is of crucial importance for future developments in psychoanalytic, religious and spiritual engagement.

²⁶⁸ Chodorow also refers to Erikson, Klein, object relations theorists and views herself as 'a theoretical synthesizer' drawing on people that 'are usually seen to be incompatible, and I do not take a strong stand for or against one-person or two-person psychologies' (Chodorow 1999: 3).

CHAPTER ELEVEN. PATTERNS OF ENGAGEMENT– JEWISH PERSPECTIVES

The relationship between Judaism and psychoanalysis has always been complex and profound (Geller 2006). The reasons for this can be found in the sheer complexity of the debates, the difficulty in separating out what is not Jewish in psychoanalysis (Frosh 2005) and the varying acknowledgments, denials and ambivalences concerning anti-Semitism within psychoanalysis (Frosh 2004). Jewish identity is profoundly shaped by religion, yet it can be lived as a secular, ethnic, cultural, philosophical and political identity without orthodox or liberal religious belief (Meghnagi 1993; Oppenheim 2006).²⁶⁹ Early attempts to engage psychoanalysis with Judaism either adopted a specifically religious approach with particular appeal for the mystical (Bakan 1958; Ostow 1995), or saw, in *Moses and Monotheism*, Freud's adoption of a new Oedipal identity that transcended his Jewish and Austrian/German backgrounds (Robert 1977). However neither approach was fully convincing or accepted in wider religious and psychoanalytic contexts (Gay 1987; Bernstein 1998). Of particular importance in facilitating new developments was a research group on the psychoanalytic study of anti-Semitism established by Ostow in 1980, based in New York. This brought together fifteen psychoanalysts and from 1981, a historian, Yosef Yerushalmi, who was to later produce an authoritative and acclaimed work on Freud's *Moses and Monotheism*. Yerushalmi argues that Freud's vision of human nature intertwines Jewish and psychological dimensions, which mutually enrich each other (Yerushalmi 1991).

²⁶⁹ Zaretsky offers a different perspective in examining how the history of the Jews has been shaped by psychoanalysis (Zaretsky 2006).

Cohen and Gereboff provide a detailed overview of the tensions raised by Orthodox Judaism to psychoanalysis, before assessing the contributions of Rabinowitz and Spero that offer a way forward through dialogue and reconciliation (Cohen and Gereboff 2004).

Other creative forms of engaging psychoanalysis and Judaism in conversation have been developed. Merkur suggests that Hasidic influences can clearly be seen in psychoanalysis through the influence of Jacob Freud on his son. He does not however claim that psychoanalysis is a special form of Jewish religion (Merkur 1997).²⁷⁰ Bakan's more recent work focuses on the links between Maimonides and Freud, finding analogous discourses (Bakan 1997) helpfully examined by Frosh (Frosh 2006). Along with Aron, they see a vital part of Freud's Jewish legacy is found in the central role played by interpretation (Aron 2004). Ostow offers a reflective stance that finds parallels between psychoanalysis emerging out of a Jewish cultic context from its early days, into a world-view that embraces all through the use of interpretation, the place of marginality, and its location at the interface of disciplines and cultures (Ostow 1982/1997). In his last work Ostow synthesizes Jewish and Christian religious traditions, psychoanalytic developmental theory, mystical and spiritual experiences and neuroscience, indicating that all have a valid role in understanding and helping the human condition. This includes an insightful examination of demonic spirituality, a demonic God and fundamentalism (Ostow 2007).

Cushman combines a new interpretation of Midrash texts, hermeneutics and relational psychoanalytic perspectives to engage with issues of fundamentalism (Cushman 2007).

²⁷⁰ 'In Hasidism the accidental happenings of everyday life may be treated as miracles whose symbolic interpretations disclose divine revelations' (Merkur 1997: 17). Hasidic Judaism is an important influence for Eigen.

These all reflect the creativity to be found in bringing Jewish religious beliefs and practices together with those forms of psychoanalysis open to dialogue (Aron and Henik 2009). In turn psychoanalysis has its own unique insights to offer on Jewish religion (Frosh 2005), though like approaches taken to Christian religion, often reductively (Arlow 1982/1997). Adopting a critical social perspective Frosh identifies the shared concerns of psychoanalysis and Judaism as: ‘depth interpretation ... seeing ‘beyond’ or ‘beneath’ ... and ... the bounding of desire by law’ (Frosh 2006: 206).

Spero’s work adopted object relations theory, rather than Freud, as a source of insight into the divine, focused on God as Creator and experienced in moral imperatives evoked by Jewish laws. While highly creative, Spero’s work has had little impact on the wider psychoanalytic world beyond Israel and the challenge he posited of an objective God discovered through psychoanalysis still waits to be fully addressed.²⁷¹ However this is the subject of a forthcoming doctoral thesis on ‘The encounter between psychoanalysis and Judaism in written texts and within the identity of religious therapists’ (Novis-Deutsch 2010a, 2010b).²⁷² Building on object relations theories, amongst others, and working from an intersubjective perspective Aron advocates parallels based on relationality. ‘The Jewish tradition, as I understand it, is radically relational in its assumption of a mutual and intersubjective relationship between God and humanity’ (Aron 2004: 445). This intersubjective relationship between psychoanalysis, religion and spirituality is still being worked out, but draws on Jewish foundations implicit in psychoanalysis itself and is a

²⁷¹ There is only one reference to Spero in Black’s important text (Black 2006). Similar attempts from a Christian perspective, such as Sorenson (Sorenson 2004) evoked a similar response and there is only one reference in Black.

²⁷² While the PhD thesis is in Hebrew the author has communicated an 8-page abstract of her work in English.

feature of the work of Eigen who ‘drawing on his own study of Judaism and Kabbalah, described psychoanalysis as a form of prayer’ (Aron 2004: 450).²⁷³

An area little explored is the monotheistic imperative in Freud’s work, as a secular monotheism, where Freud in the guise of Moses, becomes the revealer of the psychical law that governs all human action.²⁷⁴ Yerushalmi concludes his work with a personal letter to Freud.

To you, Professor Freud, I confess to a thought that I have withheld all along because I cannot substantiate it. I have tried to understand your *Moses* within its stated framework of the history of religion, of Judaism, and of Jewish identity without reading it as an allegory of psychoanalysis ... But I carry within me a pent-up feeling, an intuition, that you yourself implied something more, something that you felt deeply but would never dare to say. So I will take the risk of saying it. I think that in your innermost heart you believed that psychoanalysis is itself a further, if not final, metamorphosed extension of Judaism, divested of its illusory religious forms but retaining its essential monotheistic characteristics, at least as you understood and described them. In short, I think you believed that just as you are a godless Jew, psychoanalysis is a godless Judaism (Yerushalmi 1991: 99).

This is most clearly expressed in Freud’s choosing of the representative deities that consumed his working space, physically and psychically (Gamwell and Wells 1989; Yerushalmi 1991; Burke 2006).²⁷⁵ This area has been partially addressed by a renewed examination of *Moses and Monotheism* that establishes a new truth-seeking dialogue that is

²⁷³ Farhi provides a clinical account of working with a patient that included utilizing the kabbalah as a form of mutual engagement in her inner world (Farhi 2008).

²⁷⁴ Schwarz offers a postmodern view of ‘Freud’s God’ writing, ‘Freud concluded his life’s work by rewriting psychoanalysis as religious myth. And *Moses and Monotheism* was the final instalment in Freud’s Bible ... Simply put, in *Moses and Monotheism* Freud does not psychoanalyse the Bible, he rewrites it ... he comes to see our psychic life as having its very source in religion ... the Egyptian god, the first monotheistic deity, was not a god of one people, but a universal god – “a single goal to embraces the whole world, one as all-loving as he is all-powerful, who averse [sic.] to all ceremonial and magic, set for humanity as its highest aim a life of truth and justice.” [*Moses and Monotheism* p. 61] This is the God that Freud the persecuted Jew longed for, wishing that this deity of justice would be everyone’s ancestor so justice could reign’ (Schwartz 1998: 291f.).

²⁷⁵ The cover of Yerushalmi’s book is taken from Rembrandt’s *Moses breaks the tablets of the Law* (1659). Freud had an engraving by Kruger (1770) based on this picture in his collection of antiquities and is reproduced in the book itself (Yerushalmi 1991: 83). This engraving is hung in the hall of the Freud Museum, London. Martin explores Freud’s clinical use of these sculptures (Martin 2008).

at the heart of human experience as understood by psychoanalysis and religion (Bernstein 1998; DiCenso 1999; Spero 2001; Blass 2003, 2006). These reveal Freud in a more nuanced and paradoxical light, which parallels the experience of other religious traditions engaging with contemporary psychoanalysis. It is clear therefore that there are multiple forms of engagement between Jewish culture, identity and religion with psychoanalysis (Novis-Deutsch 2010b). Yet because of profoundly Jewish origins (Frosh 2008), psychoanalysis, as it has evolved in different national and cultural contexts, still needs to engage with anti-Semitism (Frosh 2006) because Freud was Jewish to the core. This is seen in the letter he wrote in reply to the Chief Rabbi of Vienna's letter in 1931 which stated "the author of *Future of an Illusion* is closer to me than he believes". Freud replied with warmth, pride and candour:

Your words aroused a special echo in me ... In some place in my soul, in a very hidden corner, I am a fanatical Jew. I am very much astonished to discover myself as such in spite of all efforts to be unprejudiced and impartial. What can I do against it at my age? (Quoted in Gresser 1991: 237).

Freud's fascination, ambivalence, denial and unanswered questions concerning Judaism, have led to multiple and conflicting interpretations yet form another dimension that shapes sacred psychoanalysis.

CHAPTER TWELVE. PATTERNS OF ENGAGEMENT – BUDDHIST PERSPECTIVES

This chapter on Buddhism begins with one word of caution. ‘Buddhism’ does not possess one monolithic definition and comes in multiple forms therefore this chapter focuses on how psychoanalytic practitioners have used Buddhist ideas, each reflecting different Buddhist and psychoanalytic traditions where they need to translate one term into another. A scholar of Buddhist religion may well disagree with the way ideas are used in relation to psychoanalysis.²⁷⁶ However the psychoanalytic engagement with Buddhism has two clear advantages in terms of historic debates about religion. It allowed the debate to become wider than just the Judaeo-Christian tradition, which fitted with the evolution of postmodern approaches to religion and the independent emergence of spirituality as a smorgasbord of beliefs and practices detached from specific religious traditions (Lyon 2000; Flanagan and Jupp 2007).

In a similar vein Finn argues that transpersonal psychology ‘has rescued spirituality and religion from reductionist contempt’ (Finn 2003: 103).²⁷⁷ It also allowed religion without God. ‘Buddhism is of special interest to psychoanalysts because it allows us to have a spiritual life and seemingly sidesteps the traditionally embarrassing question of belief in God’ (Finn 2003: 103), which is of considerable cultural relevance in the USA (Sorenson 2004: 16). Leavy noted that alongside a rejection of traditional religion, there was the emergence of non-theistic spiritualities, including Buddhism (Leavy 1988).

²⁷⁶ This point came out in my interview with James Jones.

²⁷⁷ For example, Epstein’s first contribution was in the *Journal of Transpersonal Psychology* (Epstein 1989).

Buddhism and psychoanalysis have sporadically encountered one another over the last century, a situation brought about by: the paucity of Buddhist texts; Freud's split with Jung, who adopted ideas from Eastern religions (Bion quoted in Young-Eisendrath and Muramoto 2002: 4); Freud's reductionist reading of oceanic feeling and mysticism (Parsons 1999); the dominance of Freud's views as orthodoxy (Akhtar 2009); and the trauma caused by World War Two, with a distrust between East and West.²⁷⁸ Buddhism impacted on psychoanalysis in Britain and the USA differently, where the latter had particular affinities to Zen Buddhism (Safran 2003; Weiner, Cooper, and Barbre 2005).²⁷⁹ Suler combines Eastern thinking with Western ideas in a 'collage' of Taoism, Zen and Buddhism to transform psychoanalysis and allows for a greater engagement of ideas and practices.

As the royal roads of psychoanalysis and the ancient ways of the East converge, the ultimate goal for each will be the same: To understand fully in all dimensions the self and no-self. On this path, the Eastern and Western disciplines will be complementary explorers of human nature and complementary healers of human suffering (Suler 1993: 263).

Psychoanalytic and Buddhist engagement in Britain

Buddhism in Britain is based on traditional Theravadian and Mahayanian forms and was primarily taken up in the humanistic, transpersonal and body therapies that evolved in the 1980s.²⁸⁰ In psychoanalysis the most significant figure to engage with Buddhism was Nina

²⁷⁸ The early engagement began with the Mahayana tradition of Buddhism (Tom Son 1924; Alexander 1931), yet within Japan Marui Kiyoyasa started the Tohoku school in the 1920s, gaining Freud's approval to form the first Japanese centre for the International Psychoanalytic Association, developed after World War Two by Kosawa Heisaku and the Kosawa school. Unique Japanese psychoanalytic concepts: 'amae'; the 'ajase' complex; and the 'Don't Look' prohibition all have Buddhist and Taoist elements and are still relatively unknown in the West (Kawada 1977; Alvis 2003). Zen Buddhism as a new development was discussed at the Japanese Psychoanalytical Society 1958-1959 (King 1960).

²⁷⁹ While I have focused on the UK and the USA, new forms of engagement are being found in many contexts, including Japan (Shingu and Funaki 2008).

²⁸⁰ The Sills established the Karuna Institute in 1982 offering the first accredited and academic course using a core model drawn from Buddhist concepts and this has played a significant role in developing Buddhist ideas in psychotherapy, establishing an international reputation. David Brazier combines Gestalt and Person-Centred ideas with Buddhist concepts, although his understanding of object relations is a Buddhist concept rather than a psychoanalytic understanding (Brazier 1995).

Coltart, and later, David Black.²⁸¹ Coltart until her death in 1997 was a very significant figure in British psychoanalysis (Bollas 1996; Abram 1998; Gabbard 1998).²⁸² During Coltart's training Bion made a huge impression and from his mystical genius Coltart adopted the term 'faith' as 'the most highly desirable stance of the psychoanalyst' (Coltart 1993c: 4) not as a religious term but that of willed creativity, 'faith that there is an ultimate reality and truth – the unknown, unknowable, "formless infinite"' (Bion quoted in Coltart 1993c: 4). Bion adds 'Zen Buddhism helps the spirit, or soul ... to continue ... we help the soul or psyche to be born, and even help it to continue to develop *after* it is born' (Quoted in Coltart 1993c: 11).

Part of the Independent tradition (Kohon 1986; Bass 1998), Coltart's influence within the British Psychoanalytical Society was crucially important, both personally as seen in a letter from Masud Khan (Hopkins 2006), and institutionally as Director of the London Clinic of Psycho-Analysis and Vice-President of the British Psychoanalytical Society. Coltart tells her story of her 'journey from literature, via medicine, to a meditative view of life, heavily influenced by Buddhism ... to show the impact these influences have had on her view and practice of psychoanalysis' (Rose 1997: 617). This can be clearly seen in her first book *Slouching towards Bethlehem* (1993) followed by *The Baby and the Bathwater* (1997) described as 'provocative, clinically useful, and extraordinarily moving' (Gabbard 1998)

²⁸¹ Symington does include a brief chapter on traditional forms of Buddhism that is highly regarded by Coltart, but concludes, 'I believe that Buddhism has a religious philosophy close to the value system of psychoanalysis. However it is a traditional religion and ... fails to meet modern man in the emotional locus where he lives' (Symington 1998: 35).

²⁸² Coltart developed a distinct voice as an analyst and was admired for the clarity of her writing and her ability to talk about what was actually happening in the consulting room (Denford 1986; Freke 1999). Influence also came through a diverse range of widely scattered articles, friendships and contacts (Molino 1997: 184). For example Coltart was appreciative of the work of R. D. Laing in making sense of very disturbed patients and of the work of Joseph and the Arbours Association (Coltart 1993c; Molino 1997: 206; Lucas 1998).

and her revealing interview with Anthony Molino (Molino 1997). The fundamental theme in all her work is the importance of being a good human being supported by faith, ‘a developed faith in the therapeutic process, in one self as a therapist, and religious faith’ (Arundale 1995: 213) while recognising that at the heart of the analytic encounter is mystery (Kohon 1986: 186). Coltart’s seminal paper ‘Slouching towards Bethlehem’ (Coltart 1993a)²⁸³ begins with Yeats ‘The Second Coming’ but makes clear that her focus is not on religion, messianic dogma or Christian symbolism, rather ‘the anarchic depths of the unconscious’ (Coltart 1993c: 2), the mystery of being an analyst and the mystery of being a person (Coltart 1993c: 14).²⁸⁴

Talking generally about religion and psychoanalysis Coltart believed that she had always had a religious temperament and had been a devout member of the Church of England until a loss of faith in God led to a spiritual search arriving at Buddhism (Coltart 1993c: 164f.; Molino 1997: 179, 200f.).²⁸⁵ Coltart viewed her desire to be an analyst as a vocation and an expression of her religious beliefs, although other analysts might prefer the term ‘living out one’s true destiny’ (Bollas quoted in Coltart 1993c: 115; Molino 1997: 181); yet her experience of analysis was that while it dealt with her depression, it did not help with her anxiety. Meditation within a Theravadian tradition did (Coltart 1993c: 164f.; Molino 1997: 201). Coltart believes that psychoanalysis started a healing process that Buddhism completed (Molino 1997: 192).²⁸⁶ Coltart found that Buddhism and psychoanalysis were

²⁸³ First presented as a paper in 1982, it was later published in (Kohon 1986) and (Coltart 1993c).

²⁸⁴ ‘But in all of us there are some things that will never be within our reach; there is always a mystery at the heart of every person, and therefore in our job as analysts’ (Coltart 1993c: 14)

²⁸⁵ Coltart’s writings show a good theological and biblical understanding of the Christian and Jewish traditions. For example see ‘Sin and the superego: Man and his conscience in society’ (Coltart 1993c).

²⁸⁶ A key factor was a growing ability to enter into the depths of a meditative process than Coltart describes as a twelve-year apprenticeship.

never in conflict and had the potential to strengthen each other especially at the early stages (Coltart 1993c; Molino 1997: 202). The first four steps in common are: recognising an anguished state of mind; looking at how the past has shaped the present; the use of free association to explore this; and the recognition of the inherent morality of a therapeutic or spiritual relationship. Coltart believed that religious beliefs and values retained in the unconscious both shape and change the analyst, allowing these to shape and change client work, without imposing a morality on the patient.

Coltart saw Buddhism enhancing psychoanalytic skills in three ways: firstly, to pay more attention to clients' inner worlds almost as a form of meditation, 'With my thought processes in suspension, moving towards what Bion called "O": a state which I see as being "unthought out," involving a quality of intuitive apperception of another person's evolving truth' (Molino 1997: 204). Secondly, to clarify her counter-transference 'from the insidiousness of projective identification' (Molino 1997: 204). Thirdly, to open 'up the space for something which the patient is busily trying to lodge into you' (Molino 1997: 204). By adopting samatha meditation the mind can become quietened and by utilizing vispanna meditation, a form of internal detachment, the layers of thought can be examined. Coltart believed that despite Symington's 'immensely readable and thought-provoking book' (Symington 1994),

I have no doubt at all that the whole notion of spirituality, anything tainted with the very word *religion* creeping in under the cracks of the door of psychoanalysis, is still very much a taboo subject. I would certainly say that in the British Society, you do get islands of interest ... odd people here and there, who obviously have religious temperaments, or an interest in some form of spirituality ... One or two ... have also gone deeply into Judaism and its practice. I certainly know of at least one practising

Christian psychoanalyst ... there's still a lot of foreclosure in the field-at-large (Molino 1997: 205f.).²⁸⁷

Coltart offered a personal integration and engagement between psychoanalysis and Buddhism, utilizing aspects of one to enhance the other in a reflective balance described as 'an emancipatory amalgam'.²⁸⁸

Black sees Buddhism as a means of creating a space for reflection, and develops the concept of a 'contemplative' position.²⁸⁹ Like Coltart, part of the Independent tradition, Black in his earliest psychoanalytic articles focuses on the religious dimension of object relations theory (Black 1993a, 1993b, 1993). Black examines Freud's relationship with Rolland and his dissatisfaction with Freud's account of religion in *The Future of an Illusion* (Freud 1927), that explores the term 'oceanic feeling' (Parsons 2000).²⁹⁰ He offers a different account using Winnicottian and Buddhist ideas,²⁹¹ making comparison between 'religious objects' and 'internal objects' which although different, serve the same purpose in making

²⁸⁷ Coltart can think of only one person who identifies their Christian belief as a psychoanalyst out of a membership of around three hundred psychoanalysts in the British Society. This fits with Coltart's earlier comment, 'it is rare to encounter an analyst who actually believes in God, or practises a theistic religion' (Coltart 1993c: 115).

²⁸⁸ 'At the level of metapsychology Nina provides a philosophical bridge which renders the concept of *anatta* more manageable to the psychoanalytic mind ... She worked in the Western tradition but *lived* according to Eastern philosophical and religious teaching ... Her response was, characteristically, to appropriate the therapeutic virtues of both in an emancipatory amalgam of her own' (Coltart 1993b; Williams 1998: 527f.).

²⁸⁹ Having studied comparative religions, particularly Hinduism and Buddhism (Stein 1999), Black continued in the same comparative vein in training as a Jungian analyst before training to be a psychoanalyst (Black 1997). Much of Black's early work was with the Westminster Pastoral Foundation (WPF) that grew out of a Christian foundation offering psychotherapy and training, as well as attracting therapists and clients sympathetic to this religious tradition (Black 1991).

²⁹⁰ 'Freud sent psychoanalysis on a false trail in relation to religion' with the 'general assumption ... that psychoanalysis was by its very nature antithetical to religious belief' (Black 1993a: 614). 'Analysts such as Ernest Jones and Melanie Klein prided themselves on their repudiation of religion' as 'to be religious in any way was tantamount to being neurotic in public' (Black 1993a: 615). Kovel offers a perceptive critique of Freud's *The Future of an Illusion* and his limited understanding of 'oceanic feeling', referring to further insights to be found in Buddhism (Kovel 1990).

²⁹¹ Black also makes reference to Hinduism and the Judaeo-Christian tradition.

sense of who we are and what we do.²⁹² Black illustrates this from the Buddhist concept of *trikaya* ('three-body') which 'offers three ways of relating to the essential notion of Buddhahood, each reflective of the psychological development of the practitioner, culminating in the proper experience of Buddhahood as ultimate reality itself, empty of any dualities' (Prebish and Keown 2006: 110).²⁹³ 'The *trikaya* is not a relationship of 'persons' like the Christian Trinity, but a powerful intellectual structure for making comprehensible, and promoting, a certain range of experiences. These experiences, in particular, are those encountered in meditation' (Black 1993a: 621). It offers a move from the physical and the embodied, to the transitional held through theoretical constructs, to the transcendent. Black suggests that this doctrine emerged out of the felt need for an internal object containing all psychic states, projective identifications, and inward experiences. While Black finds correspondence between object relations theory and Buddhism, he suggests there is a fundamental difference related to truth as the 'crunch question for religion in response to the psychoanalytic challenge' (Black 1993a: 622).

Psychoanalytic concepts are heuristic devices which do not claim, as religious statements do, to be objective and ultimate truth. For example there is a concept of an 'internal mother' but there is no actual 'internal mother'. The presence of internal and external objects sets up a tension between internal and external reality first identified by Winnicott (Winnicott 1935/1958). So a Buddhist internal object is an internalization of external Buddhist truths, morality and values brought about through meditation. There are positive aspects to this

²⁹² Rizzuto's unique contribution was to suggest that religious objects and representations belonged in the same category as internal object representations, although Black seems unaware of her work at the time of writing this article.

²⁹³ These include the 'apparitional body (*nirmanakaya*), enjoyment body (*sambhogakaya*) and the essence body (*dharmakaya*)' (Prebish and Keown 2006: 286).

process which Buddhism acknowledges; less acknowledged are the negative aspects where psychopathology hides beneath a religious veneer as a psychological defence (Ross 2003).²⁹⁴ One service psychoanalysis can do for all religions is to enable this to be acknowledged and dealt with (Ross 2006).²⁹⁵ A balance can be found as just as a person is part of 'a matrix of human relationships. This is rightly the province of psychoanalysis' (Black 1993a: 623) they are also part of an evolving cosmos so 'to fully get one's bearings in life the larger picture also needs to be entertained' (Black 1993a: 623). For Black this is through engagement with science but not simply at an intellectual level. Each person needs to sense the presence that flows though him of,

the atoms in his body built in the depths of long-exploded stars ... Religion, which turns the universe from It to Thou (in Buber's profound and simple phrase), may therefore be truth-telling in a way that science cannot ... an attempt is being made to conceptualize the unconceptualizeable, and therefore the concepts of religion can never "fit" exactly. But they do a job nothing else does' (Black 1993a: 623).

Black constructs his own trikaya which serves as a model for his later thinking where knowing comes through the three-fold engagement of psychoanalysis, science and religion. Rather than Buddhist meditation, Black offers a reflective/contemplative space that is more accessible than the mystical oceanic feeling that both attracted and repelled Freud in Rolland's thinking. Freud recognized that Rolland could speak of something 'other' that Freud knew was there, but could not speak of. Black maintains the difficult balance of giving due recognition to both psychoanalysis and religion, despite aspirations from both sides to be the 'dominating vertex, through offering a new understanding of transcendence' (Black 2006: 63). Drawing on the philosophy of language, contemporary psychoanalysis and neuroscience Black suggests that human beings experience different kinds of

²⁹⁴ This issue was raised in an interview with Joe Bobrow included in the thematic analysis.

²⁹⁵ Schulman offers insightful clinical vignettes of her work with fundamentalist religious patients (Schulman 2004). All systems of belief, including psychoanalysis, can be used defensively and pathologically.

consciousness. Some would describe this as a particular kind of electro-chemical activity in the brain that forms neuronal pathways and others as mystical union, Buddhist enlightenment or divine revelation. A crucial transition is the move from the non-verbal to the verbal and what is gained for the child is the ‘capacity to unite parts into wholes, parts of the self as well as parts of the object’ (Black 1993a: 71). What can be lost is the ‘uninhibited vividness of this present-tense experience’ and the ‘chaotic turmoil of “deep unconscious phantasy”’ that form elements of Klein’s paranoid-schizoid position (Black 1993a: 71f.).²⁹⁶

Black draws on Loewald’s concept of ‘eternity’, experienced by mystics as a sense of timeless moment and links this to psychoanalytic thought.

It becomes possible to conceive a further layer, a contemplative layer or ‘contemplative’ position is one from which the experience of being alive in the world can be perceived ... A developmental and neurological origin for this contemplative position can be glimpsed in times of tranquillity with the mother in the earliest phases of babyhood, which has then been inscribed in implicit form in the nonverbal structures of the right hemisphere’ (Black 2006: 75).

This state can be replicated through meditation, such as Buddhist vipassana mindfulness meditation, and ‘it is possible that this state also gives access to a more accurate or far-reaching ontological perception ... in terms of the Buddhist no-self doctrine’ (Black 2006: 76). Black’s contemplative position offers a two-fold contribution. Firstly, a new understanding of transcendence as a capacity to go beyond ordinary pleasure-seeking, pain avoidance motivations and narcissistic longings, to embrace reflection, understanding,

²⁹⁶ Black suggests that ‘past experience of the species, the convictions carried by religions, etc, may depend on vividly experienced episodes in the protoverbal stage ... not remembered in verbalizable form ... stored in implicit memory in the structures of the right brain ... certain sorts of later experience can make a bridge between protoverbal and verbal consciousness. To establish a unity between the two ... has perhaps a very special power, felt to be “significant”’ (Black 2006: 73f.).

sympathy, justice and compassion. Secondly a balancing of the hemispheres of the brain that allows a better fit between the verbal and non-verbal aspects of awareness and being. Transcendence is not access to a higher reality or ultimate truth as understood in religious terms, though Black does make room for the phenomena of the numinous and faith.

Buddhism and psychoanalysis in Britain find two expressions through Coltart and Black: one offering a form of integration through clinical practice and the person of the analyst; the other offering integration through a new theoretical construct that has its origins in Buddhist concepts but is able to embrace other religious traditions. Both forms of engagement fit best when working with religious experience although as Black recognizes it still leaves the difficult, if not irreconcilable issues of the nature of ultimate truth.

Psychoanalytic and Buddhist engagement in the USA

In the USA the major influences have been Zen and Tibetan forms of Buddhism.²⁹⁷ In terms of historical impact, Zen Buddhism was explored by Horney (Quinn 1987; De

²⁹⁷ A helpful overview of Buddhism is found in (Prebish and Keown 2006). Buddhism is variously: a set of non-theistic religious truths that offers wisdom for all; forms of meditative practice refined over centuries; and various understandings of the nature of the universe, self and enlightenment. Early in its history Buddhism split into two main paths about how each of these beliefs and values were to be pursued. The Theravada tradition - literally 'Those who hold to the doctrine of the elders' – embraced a strict practice and conservative tradition, geographically focused in Sri Lanka, before spreading to south east Asia. The Mahayana tradition was a reaction to the 'highly ecclesiastical, somewhat pedantic' expression of Buddhism and offered 'a liberating vehicle for the masses of Buddhist practitioners' (Prebish and Keown 2006: 94). This became the dominant form of Buddhism found in India, China, Korea and Japan, although each country often developed its own form within the overall tradition. Zen Buddhism emerged from Japan through a variety of schools but 'they all emphasize Zen as a teaching that does not depend on sacred texts, that provides the potential for a direct realization, that the realization attained is none other than the Buddha nature possessed by each sentient being, and that transmission occurs outside the teaching ... Soto utilizes a practice known as *shikantaza* or 'just sitting'. It presumes that sitting in meditation itself ... is an expression of Buddha nature. Rinzai combined sitting meditation, with the use of *koans*, enigmatic, riddle-like 'public cases' designed to dramatically push the mind beyond conceptual thought patterns, fostering sudden illumination (Prebish and Keown 2006: 172). Tibetan Buddhism, has four main schools all within the Mahayana tradition, that have adopted 'exoteric and esoteric Buddhist traditions' that include reincarnation, most popularly known through the Dalai Lama (Prebish and Keown 2006: 181). Finn makes particular application of Tibetan Buddhism to object relations theory (Finn 1992, 2003; Finn and Gartner 1992).

Martino 1991; Rubin 1992; Westkott 1997), Kondo (De Martino 1991; Kondo 1958/1998)²⁹⁸ and others but it was the publication of Fromm, Suzuki and de Martino's *Zen Buddhism and Psychoanalysis* (Suzuki, Fromm, and DeMartino 1960) that announced the start of a detailed engagement between the two (Chessick 2000a; Safran 2003), closely followed by Kelman (Kelman 1960/1998)²⁹⁹ and Watts (Watts 1961/1998). The early adoption of Zen Buddhism was loosely linked to the radical counter-culture movement of this period in which Watts was a leading figure (Gold 1999). Despite this early interest it went underground with no major resurgence until the mid-1990s (Safran 2003: 1).³⁰⁰ As Buddhism emerged into the small but rapidly expanding world of psychoanalysis and Buddhism, two significant figures were Mark Epstein (Epstein 1990/1998, 1995) and Jeffrey Rubin (Rubin 1985, 1991, 1992, 1993, 1996).³⁰¹ Rubin's work covers: a historical overview of psychoanalysis and religion; a rationale on psychoanalysis' rejection of religion and spirituality; an apologetic for a positive role for religion; and a critique of Buddhist and

²⁹⁸ Akihisa Kondo was a Japanese psychiatrist who had trained in the 1950s at the Horney Institute.

²⁹⁹ Kelman, an associate of Horney, was a respected figure in one tradition of psychoanalysis, being past president of the American Academy of Psychoanalysis and editor of the *American Journal of Psychoanalysis* (Rubin 1992).

³⁰⁰ This was predated by a 1987 conference of the American Psychological Association (held in New York) with contributions from Finn and Rubin leading to later publication (Finn and Gartner 1992). However Smith and Handelman's review of psychoanalysis and religion contains no reference to Buddhism (Smith and Handelman 1990). Finn records that although important texts on Buddhism and meditation already existed, more connection was being made between meditation, psychotherapy and psychoanalysis as seen in Engler 1983, Aronson 1985, Kurt et. al 1985, Rubin 1985 and Epstein 1988 (Finn 1992).

³⁰¹ They 'speak from a deep experiential knowledge of both disciplines, and write with important authority and reflectiveness' (Black 2000b: 834). DeMartino explored historic developments (De Martino 1991), and influenced Molino who, in turn, produced an edited volume that brought together people and texts demonstrating the importance of Buddhism in psychoanalysis (Molino 1998), a theme he had already explored in a collection of interviews (Molino 1997). Another author writing later than Rubin and Epstein but who has developed this engagement between psychoanalysis and Buddhism is Paul Cooper who as well as founding a group to explore psychoanalysis and Buddhism has published a wide range of books and articles (Molino 1998; Cooper 2010). He also offers an insightful autobiographical account found in (Weiner, Cooper, and Barbre 2005). Jeremy Safran assembled contributions from a distinguished range of psychoanalytic practitioners, many associated with the relational school, in his edited text that focused on the unfolding dialogue between psychoanalysis and Buddhism (Safran 2003). Similarly Joe Bobrow contributes reflective work on this engagement drawing on Winnicott, Grotstein and Symington and the Diamond Sangha tradition of Zen established by Robert Aitken Roshi. Bobrow has also established the Deep Streams Zen Institute in San Francisco. Epstein, Rubin and Bobrow continue to make important contributions to Buddhist/psychoanalytic engagement (Bobrow 2003, 2004, 2010).

psychoanalytic engagement adopting an integrative approach focused in three areas (Rubin 1985, 1991, 1992, 1993). Epstein's work was similarly wide-ranging but popularized the subject through his best-selling *Thoughts without a thinker: Buddhism and psychotherapy* (Epstein 1995).

1) Psychoanalysis and the rejection of religion and spirituality.

Rubin offers three reasons why psychoanalysis pathologizes religion. Religion often fails to deliver what it promises according to its own beliefs and principles.³⁰² Secondly, spiritual experiences 'stir up various internal and interpersonal anxieties and dangers, including fears of engulfment and self-loss' which psychoanalysis cannot deal with (Rubin 1997: 84).

Thirdly, Freud was right to identify religion as a defence, escape or self-deception from unpleasant experiences or reality, although Rubin recognizes that psychoanalysis is subject to the same critique. A foundation for integration is accepting these experiences as religious, spiritual and psychological realities to be worked with in determining the contours of human personhood.

2) The positive roles of religion and spirituality.

Religion and spirituality have important roles in challenging the 'essentially "tragic" worldview (Schafer, 1976)' of psychoanalysis with 'its recognition of the inescapable mysteries, dilemmas, and afflictions pervading human existence' (Rubin 1997: 84).

Drawing on: Winnicott; Kohut; Atwood, Stolorow and Schafer; and various Buddhist ideas Rubin argues psychoanalysis and religion have multiple meanings and functions including constructive, self-protective and defensive components. This list has parallels with the

³⁰² Rubin even-handedly applies the same criteria to psychoanalytic culture (Rubin 1997).

components of spirituality identified in chapter one.³⁰³ Rubin later addresses the individualistic nature of psychoanalysis, where Buddhism and religions add another dimension. ‘Seeing oneself in a more expansive and interconnected yet differentiated way - as a self-in-community, instead of a selfless spiritual self or an isolated, imperial psychological self - might foster both connectedness to the polis and self-enrichment, thus decreasing alienation and anomie’ (Rubin 1997: 105).

3) Buddhist and psychoanalytic engagement.

Rubin characterizes the existing approaches to psychoanalytic and Buddhist engagement as: incompatible worldviews; a dominant paradigm approach; and a respect for and valuing of difference, but no real engagement (Rubin 1996). Rubin addresses these failings by offering an integration based on the two-stage dialectic process developed by MacIntyre (MacIntyre 1988). Stage one is a radical critique of a discipline applying its own rules of interpretation for developing knowledge, truth and meaning, which Rubin argues psychoanalysis has failed to do until recently. Stage two follows where in this case psychoanalysis or Buddhism has,

found it difficult to develop its enquiries beyond a certain point, or has produced in some areas insoluble antinomies, ask whether the alternative and rival tradition may not be able to provide resources to characterize and explain the failings and defects

³⁰³ Rubin identifies the following components of a spiritual-psychoanalytic method.

1. cultivate enhanced self-observational capacities and thus heighten self-awareness
2. express urgent wishes and aspirations
3. offer guidelines for morally acceptable behaviour, provide a rationale for self-punishment, and reduce self-recriminative tendencies
4. enhance one's effort to cope with difficulties or crises
5. protect, repair, or restore self-representations ... enduring images of self, which had been threatened or damaged
6. facilitate self-demarcation and enhance affect regulation and tolerance
7. impede awareness of disturbing thoughts, feelings, or fantasies
8. foster “de-automatization” of thought and action (Rubin 1992: 94)

of their own tradition more adequately than they, using the resources of that tradition, have been able to do (MacIntyre 1988: 167).

Rubin believes a scandal in Zen Buddhism in the 1980s could have been avoided if this two-stage dialectic engagement had taken place, and where issues of enlightenment and selflessness could have been informed by psychoanalytic understandings of both unconscious personality traits and transference issues. The common ground for dialogue between psychoanalysis and Buddhism finds particular expression in object relations' theory allied to transitional space and meditation (Finn and Gartner 1992). Rubin also focuses on goals and techniques through promoting positive change, relieving suffering, the moment-to-moment flux as a form of 'evenly hovering attention' (Rubin 1985), and learning from teacher/master/analyst/training analyst through transference and counter-transference. Both disciplines could develop a 'non-self centred subjectivity' that allows equal and unique insights into each other (Rubin 1997). Subsequent writing on Buddhism and psychoanalysis has focused on details of the debate that Rubin outlined (Safran 2003).

Rubin's model of dialectic engagement does not deal with objective truth and the notion of deity, in the same way Black does not deal with objective truth by focusing on religious and psychoanalytic experience. Coltart sees truth as part of a human search aided by Buddhism and psychoanalysis, but rejects objective truth and deity. Bobrow relates truth to Zen enlightenment as moments of truth but again does not engage with objective truth.³⁰⁴

Consequently psychoanalysis finds itself freed from a long-held reductionist view of religion and deity that therefore gives the opportunity for new forms of relating,

³⁰⁴ Bobrow offers a paradoxical Zen tradition, which engages with truth more specifically. 'Enlightenment and truth ... begin with the awareness of ... unconscious and emotional activity. Insight, conscience, atonement, and compassion develop in concert. None of us is exempted. Each new self-representational structure is both a discovery and may become the next blind spot' (Bobrow 1997: 136; 2003).

engagement, unfolding dialogue and as partners in liberation or transformation (Bobrow 2010). Common ground can be found personally, clinically and theoretically, though the particular areas of shared insight differ between the UK and the USA, where the latter has seen significant and sustained growth (Magid 2002; Safran 2003; Epstein 2007).

CHAPTER THIRTEEN. PATTERNS OF ENGAGEMENT– HINDU PERSPECTIVES

Nothing quite reveals the failure of psychoanalysis to engage with religion, spirituality and the sacred than its relationship with Hinduism. While Hinduism extends beyond the geographical boundaries of India, and India is not exclusively Hindu, it does provide a clear focus for the study of psychoanalytic engagement. India, a society and culture steeped in mythology with its multiplicity of gods and goddesses, has proved to be barren soil for psychoanalysis, as ‘psychoanalysis in India is virtually stagnant’ (Mehta 1997: 459).

Reviews of the history of psychoanalysis in India provided by Akhtar (Akhtar and Parens 2001; Akhtar 2005; Akhtar and Tummala-Narra 2005; Akhtar 2008), Hartnack (Hartnack 1990, 2001, 2003), Kakar (Kakar 1978, 2005), and Mehta (Mehta 1997) highlight reasons for this, further contextualized by histories of psychotherapy and mental health (Neki 1975; Agarwal 2004).³⁰⁵ Biswas helpfully explores the noted Hindu philosopher, poet and mystic,

³⁰⁵ Psychoanalysis had an early and promising start in India when the first Psychoanalytic Society was established in 1921 (recognized by the IPA in 1922) by Girindrasekhar Bose, a medical doctor in Calcutta, becoming the first non-Western analytic society and was dominated by Bose until his death in 1953. As a celebration of Freud’s 75th birthday (in 1931) Bose sent an ivory figure of Vishnu, the Hindu god - creator, preserver, restorer, healer and life-giver - that Freud gave an honoured place on his desk. Yet in 1930 Freud confessed to Rolland ‘I shall now try with your guidance to penetrate into the Indian jungle which until now, an uncertain blending of Hellenic love of proportion, Jewish sobriety and Philistine timidity have kept me away’ (quoted in Burke 2006: 297). Despite Freud’s literary and cultural awareness of some aspects of Hinduism he came up against the insurmountable obstacles of religion, mythology and the goddess in multiple forms and resisted Bose’s attempts to integrate the mythological dimensions of Indian culture with psychoanalysis. A Kleinian influenced training was established in Bombay by Servadio in 1945 and these two centres have shaped psychoanalysis in India, where there are still less than 40 psychoanalysts. To put this in a context, the UK with a population of 61 million has 300 psychoanalysts, a ratio of 1 in 200,000 per head of population. India has a population of 1.1 billion with 40 psychoanalysts, a ratio of 1 in 28,000,000 per head of population.

Neki, a Sikh scholar and poet, regarded as a leading psychiatrist in India, has integrated religious beliefs and practices with psychiatry and places psychoanalysis within this wider context offering a two-fold classification of psychotherapy. There are the ‘Mystico-metaphysical traditions’ composed of Buddhist traditions, Yogic traditions and Bhakti (devotional) traditions, alongside ‘Medical traditions’ composed of the Hindu tradition represented by Ayurvedic principles, and the Unani tradition which deals with emotions, mental states and their effects on the body and their applications. In addition there was the ‘British tradition’ that introduced a western system of medicine to India and psychoanalytic forms of psychotherapy. Neki sees a decline in psychoanalytic psychotherapies that dominated from 1920-1965, and the emergence of Indian psychotherapies

Rabindrath Tagore's move from a severe criticism of Freud, towards an appreciation of psychoanalysis, especially when applied to literature³⁰⁶ but reveals the underlying tensions and clashes of culture (Biswas 2003).

Distinctive trends in psychoanalysis and psychotherapy

Firstly, in the early days of psychoanalysis there was an uncritical acceptance of psychoanalytic theory as the dominant discourse that interpreted cultural, social, religious and mythological understanding. Any references to religion or mythology in clinical cases were viewed as defensive, adaptive or pathological.

Secondly, psychoanalysis when viewed from another cultural context reveals itself to be steeped in concepts from the Judaeo-Christian tradition and European patterns of family life. Kakar writes a 'monotheistic tradition with its emphasis on a father-god, had little relevance for the Indian religious tradition of polytheism where mother-goddesses often constituted the deepest sub-stratum of Indian religiosity' (Kakar 2005: 808).

Thirdly, understanding India's history and identity requires engaging with the complex issues of colonialism. Psychoanalysis came to be seen 'as a vehicle of cultural prejudice and oppression' allied to 'racist counter-transference' (Akhtar and Tummala-Narra 2005: 11, 13). In the context of being a colonized people Kakar argues that Indian intellectuals

that have modified concepts from other psychotherapeutic approaches from 1960 onwards (Neki 1967, 1975, 1981). See Nagaraja Rao's Presidential Address to the Indian Psychiatric Society in 1998 'Psychotherapy - Choices in the Indian Context' <http://priory.com/psych/psychind.htm> accessed 15/2/09.

³⁰⁶ They met once in Vienna in 1926 at the Hotel Imperial. Freud wrote 'He is a wonderful sight, he really looks like we imagined the Lord God looks, but only about 10,000 years older than the way Michelangelo painted him in the Sistine'. The 'we' may refer to Anna and Martha Freud who accompanied him (Biswas 2003).

needed to establish a distinctive Indian identity. ‘The Indian concern for the “self”, its psycho-philosophical schools of “self-realization”, often appearing under the label of Indian metaphysics or “spirituality”, has become one of the primary ways of salvaging self-respect’ (Kakar 2005). Psychoanalysis was seen as offering a divergent path that offered a psychological form of colonization that did not fit the emerging and independent Indian psyche.

Fourthly, as psychiatry has evolved in India, it has adopted biologically driven models that exclude psychoanalysis, and ‘many leading contemporary Indian psychiatrists who most vehemently reject psychoanalysis are involved in Indian spiritual practices’ (Akhtar and Tummala-Narra 2005: 16). Given the limited scale of psychiatry (there are no more than 3,500 psychiatrists) as a single factor this would not be significant. However allied to: the rejection of colonialism; the analytic rejection of religion and mythology that permeates Indian culture; Eurocentric and patriarchal foci failing to engage with the collective dimensions of belonging; the result is the isolation of psychoanalysis as a social, cultural or clinical force.

Fifthly, there has been some development in psychoanalysis with the evolution of Kleinian ideas, ‘perhaps the most universalistic of the many relational theories’ (Kakar 2006: 234), using concepts of good/bad and breasts/penis which has helped psychoanalysis engage more fully with Indian culture. This is allied to the increasing number of psychologists and psychiatrists trained in Western countries (where they have also acquired contemporary psychoanalytic theory). Consequently they were able to ‘understand the Indian psyche

in its own right, and modify modes of psychoanalytic therapy to help Indian patients' (Akhtar and Tummala-Narra 2005: 19).

Contemporary overview – psychoanalysis

Contemporary psychoanalysis since the mid 1990s, primarily through the influence of Kakar and Akhtar, has begun to engage more creatively with Hinduism.³⁰⁷ This movement requires 'a genuine respect for intracultural viewpoints and interdisciplinary input' (Akhtar 2005: xix) in order to prevent an ongoing pathologizing of each other. This has resulted in new forms of theoretical and cultural engagement (Kakar 2009).

Firstly, there has been a trend of comparative engagement, where psychoanalytic concepts and Hindu ideas can be seen as offering 'parallel truths'. Freud's 'Nirvana principle' allied to his death instinct resonates with the concept of Nirvana in Hinduism (Akhtar 2005),³⁰⁸ although the term is more commonly used in relation to Buddhism. Freud's 'oceanic feeling' arose out of conversations with Rolland, influenced by the Bengali mystic and Vedantic Hindu teacher Sri Ramakrishna, leading Akhtar to conclude 'the Indian mystical tradition was a background conceptual source for Freud's death instinct. This may have been part of why the concept appeared alien to Western minds' (Akhtar 2005: xviii).³⁰⁹ Kapadia uses the story of Trishanku found in the *Bhagwat Puran* to illustrate the dilemma's experienced by borderline personalities (Kapadia 1998). Reddy finds similar

³⁰⁷ Homans identified the importance of Kakar's ideas as early as 1984, applying religious and psychoanalytic insights from the East and the West (Homans 1984).

³⁰⁸ This is disputed by Cordess who sees these terms having different meaning when placed in their respective contexts. 'The conjunction of concepts is speculative and stimulating but has not helped to engage the sympathies of those of a more empirical and pragmatic turn of mind' (Cordess 2006).

³⁰⁹ 'Other writers remain extremely sceptical with regard to the interest of the concept, judging it to be too speculative and a source of confusion' (Widlocher and Bernstein 2006).

psychoanalytic parallels in the *Bhagavad Gita* (Reddy 2001) and Rao's discussion of this concludes, we are 'likely to unearth psychoanalytic truths in unexpected places, and at the same time enliven our clinical understanding by challenging the existential limit we set on our basic assumptions' (Rao 2001: 194).

Secondly, an evolution of a 'parallel truths' approach is the offering of different languages to describe the same experience. Here the experience becomes more important than the descriptive language from either psychoanalysis or Hinduism. There is a unity of pluralistic experience. An early paper by Fingarette uses religious and psychoanalytic language to define the mystical experience, including reference to the *Bhagavad Gita*, so there was some awareness of the value of both (Fingarette 1958). Neki compares the Sikh belief in *asuar*, (*kairos*, the right time or moment), as a vital practice in psychotherapy and 'as such, psychotherapy is a co-partner of spiritual therapy' (Neki 1981: 437). Parsons compares psychoanalytic concerns with those found in various religious traditions, including the *Katha Upanishad*, that focus on transcendence and immanence and finds they are attempting to describe 'dimensions of experience ... a process of internal evolution' (Parsons 2006: 122). This is also seen, Grier suggests, in the experience of adoration, found in the early gaze of the baby to the mother and in many religious traditions, including Hinduism. Grier quotes key Hindu sacred texts and poetry from Ramana Maharishi, Tukaram, Mirabai and Tagore concluding 'Hinduism seems to express the fluid and infinite varieties of unconscious human relating, i.e. the transference, much more fully than any of the other principal world religions' (Grier 2006: 170). Symington identifies the core aspects of all religions as a discovery of 'oneness' and 'love' that find parallel expression, though using different terms, in psychoanalysis (Symington 2006a).

A third theoretical approach involves going beyond convergence around core concepts or experiences and sees each discipline contributing to the development of the other in critical interface. Such an approach requires the willingness to engage with the other as a valid partner or horizon in this hermeneutic enterprise – still an issue of contention for many. Akhtar is a prominent figure in this development engaging with Christianity (Akhtar and Parens 2001), Hinduism (Akhtar 2005) and Islam (Akhtar 2008). Roland has approached this area from both cultural and psychoanalytic perspectives, finding the confluence of the two highly creative (Roland 1988, 1996, 2005). Kurtz examines Hindu religious beliefs within a family context and explores how psychoanalysis can be modified in order to engage with these traditions, rather than historically it being the other way around (Kurtz 1992).³¹⁰ Cunningham also engages with the Christian tradition, Yoga, and Vedanta, one of the six systems of Hindu philosophy. As the ‘most central tenet of Vedanta is the supremacy of individual experience as the final arbiter of spiritual truth, with the inner realization of truth being the culmination of Vedanta’ (Cunningham 2006: 234), psychoanalysis can be seen as a spiritual practice. The result is a complementarity where a psychological equilibrium brought about through psychoanalysis is a ‘prerequisite to receptivity to spiritual experience. In turn spiritual experience provides perspective that decreases vulnerability ... and supports psychological balance’ (Cunningham 2006: 234). Cunningham concludes that what psychoanalysis and Hinduism as a form of spirituality have in common transcends differences and enhances each other.

A fourth approach is to see psychoanalysis as an expression of universal religious truths enshrined within aspects of Hinduism. Kripal argues that despite obvious differences

³¹⁰ For a perceptive but critical review see (Lidz 1993).

psychoanalysis can be seen as a Western Tantra, combining meditations on religion, sexuality, the body, life and death enshrined in rituals. The training by analysts of analysands in the private but shared analytic space leads to personal jnana (path of right knowledge). Kripal acknowledged that too much could be made of this analogy but that it still offered an opportunity of how to think about both psychoanalysis and Hindu mysticism (Kripal 2003). This inclusive approach offers further engagement with contemporary psychoanalysis as an evolving field. Brar however goes further. In his comparison of Yoga and psychoanalysis he builds on universal truths enshrined in both but concludes ‘in recognizing a spiritual plane of existence, Yoga transcends the limitations of psychoanalysis’ (Brar 1970: 206) thus adding a new role for Hindu religion and mythology based on spiritual practices – in much the same way as has been seen in Buddhism’s relationship with psychoanalysis.

Cultural engagement has evolved through the increasing acceptance of alternative viewpoints in contemporary psychoanalysis, which sees it as part of wider philosophical, social, cultural, religious and global contexts. This offers a dialectical engagement, which has generated new opportunities in an Indian context. Akhtar’s edited work demonstrates the emerging range of engagement with wider cultural concerns. It includes: a Kohutian analysis of Gandhi; a literary and analytic analysis of the poet Tagore; an examination of gender in the capacity of Indian women to have multiple selves, including a spiritual self and the impact of this for psychoanalysis; new forms of developmental theory arising from within the Indian experience; the unconscious in Bollywood; the application of psychoanalytic ideas to the complex religious, social, political relations between Hindus and Muslims; a critical examination of sexuality in the light of Indian traditions; the place of

transference and multiple gods; and the discovery of psychoanalytic ideas in sacred history and texts. Akhtar demonstrates that contemporary psychoanalysis can establish a dialogue with Indian traditions, religions and culture that enhances both through a rich diversity and creativity (Akhtar 2005).

Hinduism has contributed to psychoanalysis beyond the Indian sub-continent, clinically, theoretically and practically. Clinically there has been the development of ways in which to work with clients from an Indian and possibly Hindu background. Recognition has been made of the vital impact within India of psychiatrists, psychologists, psychotherapists and psychoanalysts – notably Kakar – who trained in the West but returned to practise in India (Kakar 1978, 1991, 2005, 2006, 2009). Yet many Indians live in the West and consideration has been given by psychoanalysts to working with this particular client group who inhabit both worlds. Mehta, writing in 1997, names the five Indian psychoanalysts working in the USA and applauds the increasing willingness of psychoanalysis to embrace different ethnic groups as part of the survival of psychoanalysis itself. Clinically Mehta identifies particular approaches to working with patients who are first-generation immigrants, second-generation immigrant children concluding ‘the problem of first-generation immigrants in this country is the *healing* of split-self representations, whereas the problem of second-generation immigrants is an attempt to *integrate* two cultures’ (Mehta 1997: 469). Ullrich in her work with a Hindu patient found that her own religious understanding from a different tradition was vitally important and enabled her to work creatively concluding ‘a therapist who understands the impact of Hinduism on an individual's behaviour will find that knowledge invaluable in the treatment of a Hindu patient’ (Ullrich 1997: 504).

Theoretically Hindu ideas have influenced several key psychoanalysts. There is a more unconscious influence of Hinduism in the life of Bion. Bion has played a vital role in the development of psychoanalysis, primarily through his ideas, though he brought into being a distinctive group in Los Angeles whose most notable and influential analyst is Grotstein (Grotstein 2007). Bion spent the first eight years of his life in India, which had a vital influence on him, and he refers in his writing to the *Bhagavad Gita* (Bion 1967; Anderson 1997). Bion developed complex philosophical ideas about unknowable ultimate reality, which he described through the symbol O. ‘The Hindu upanishadic notion of *maya*, a world that is illusory but not exactly unreal, perhaps resonates with the relativized world of truth that Bion’s O leaves us inhabiting’ (Black 2006: 11). Grotstein takes Bion’s work and applies it to his own wide-ranging psychoanalytic, mystical, biblical, theological, philosophical and neuroscientific thinking which includes references to the *Bhagavad Gita*, particularly ‘In his sleep, Vishnu dreamed the dream of the Universe’ (Grotstein 1979, 1997c). Practically, an amalgamation of philosophical ideas impacted Emmanuel Ghent, the founding figure in the development of the highly influential and creative relational track of psychoanalytic training at New York University (NYU) that both Benjamin and Eigen are a part of. Ghent in turn influenced Mark Epstein who went on, along with Rubin, to pioneer the engagement of Buddhism with psychoanalysis (Epstein 2005, 2007).³¹¹

³¹¹ Ghent, Epstein writes, ‘had been touched by India and could see the possibilities of integrating psychoanalysis and Indian thought ... In Indian mythology, the intermingling of the lower and higher, sensual and spiritual, self and other, and erotic and enlightened ... this perspective secretly permeates his work ... it is also the key to understanding Mannie’s interpretation of Winnicott, and his orientation to psychoanalysis ... We developed the idea that meditation, like psychoanalysis, is another way to evoke Winnicott’s transitional space in the mind ... Whereas Freud viewed our struggle as being with the unacceptable impulses, Mannie inspired a more spiritual view of the struggle of the psyche, as a confrontation with the unintelligible aspects of our sensual, emotional and spiritual lives’ (Epstein 2005: 130).

Despite these recent developments overall Hinduism is still a remarkably absent partner in theoretical dialogue with psychoanalysis. Spezzano and Gargiulo's examination of spirituality and religion in contemporary psychoanalysis while having chapters from Christian, Jewish, Buddhist and Zen Buddhist perspectives, relegates Hinduism to two passing references allied to Buddhism in one chapter (Spezzano and Gargiulo 1997). Freud's early knowledge of the *Bhagavad Gita* was filtered through a Eurocentric paternal colonialism that has remained in the psychoanalytic world until recent times. Only as contemporary psychoanalysis has adopted pluralistic approaches, informed by wider social, cultural and global issues, has Hinduism come to offer to psychoanalysis some of its mythological richness. As Symington concludes,

Each culture, each religion, each nation has a facet of the truth ... and when I say "truth", I mean practical wisdom as a guiding light in our dark and complex world ... Hinduism has endowed the world with a contemplative understanding of the unifying nature of the world, yet it failed in the field of practical action (Symington 2004a: 208f.).

Psychoanalysis allied to religious tradition and spiritual practice offers a partnership in Kakar's vision of mutual engagement. 'The "spirit" in this book is not the "luminous cloud" of the mystic that floats ethereally in mysterious regions of human stratosphere but one that swirls among the crags of human passions-above all, desire and narcissism, which line our depths' (Kakar 2009: 6).

CHAPTER FOURTEEN. PATTERNS OF ENGAGEMENT – MUSLIM PERSPECTIVES

Until the last decade most psychoanalytic engagement with Islam focused on the area of the mystical and the ideas and practices of Sufism, a spiritual tradition within Islam itself. This is only one aspect of Islam, as psychoanalysis finds it is easier to engage with religious experience than religious belief. Yet Islam has historically rejected psychoanalysis on the basis of: its Jewish origins; its atheism; the equation of God as an idealized father-figure; and the embrace of Modernity, rejecting past traditions (Keller 2006). Some connections have been made. Shafii related psychoanalysis to meditation, drawing on Zen, Sufi and Jewish mystical traditions, and makes a creative theoretical link to Balint. Balint advocated three areas or levels of psychic development that exist concomitantly, the oedipal three-person stage, the basic fault two-person stage, and the creation one-person stage where the person creates something from within the self, analogous to artistic creation (Balint 1958). Shafii situates meditation in this third creation level (Shafii 1973).³¹² Further psychoanalytic reflections on meditation drawing on Eastern religious traditions have continued (Kakar 2003), although this area has been most fully developed in reference to Buddhist thought and practice (see previous chapter).

In one specific sense, a positive outcome of the atrocities and traumas of the 9/11 terrorist attacks in the USA has been a focus on the nature of Islamic thoughts and practices from a psychoanalytic perspective. This is very much in an initial phase as the ‘past rigid stances of psychoanalysis had made it unpopular in the Muslim world as a form of psychological

³¹² Another early attempt is found in Nurbakhsh’s comparison of Sufism and psychoanalysis that finds parallels in the unconscious and transference. He draws on two single texts by Freud and Racker and is essentially a text about Sufism (Nurbakhsh 1978a, 1978b).

treatment' (Ad-Bab'bagh 2001: 283). Ad-Bad'bagh argues that some integration may be possible on the basis of the quality of the therapeutic relationship rather than any psychoanalytic interpretation. Etezady develops this idea arguing that Muslim patients, just like other religiously devout patients may be helped at an intra-psychic level in removing 'obstacles from access to their own personal truth and ultimate judgement' (Etezady 2001: 318). Religious belief can therefore be refined from problematic object relations that adhere to it, but not ultimately replaced by psychoanalysis. Fayek highlights the textual nature of Islam and psychoanalysis arguing for a hermeneutic approach that engages with issues of ethnic identity and narcissism. He identifies issues in Islam that can benefit from psychoanalysis, but sees that despite tensions existing between the two they can add to each other (Fayek 2004). Pfunder writing from a Sufi tradition adopts an inclusive, experiential approach. 'Eigen, Winnicott, Bion, and Kristeva, and the alchemical writer Schwartz-Salant, dance together with Sufi writers like Hafiz, Corbin, Sells, and Schimmel ... where many visions orbit in shifting constellations around the unknowable mystery of mysteries' (Pfunder 2005: 134).

A key figure in developing Muslim and psychoanalytic relationships is Salman Akhtar, whose edited texts (including those quoted above) culminated in *The Crescent and the Couch: Cross-currents between Islam and Psychoanalysis* (Akhtar 2008). This multi-disciplinary text is hard to summarize but Brenner describes this as 'a work of vision, brilliance, persistence and courage' (Brenner 2009: 228) concluding,

Akhtar says, in his Introduction, that this book is his attempt 'to bring the awesome history and rich, cultural traditions of Islam to enter into a dialectic exchange with multilayered conceptualizations of psychoanalysis' and that the contributors' voices create 'an intelligent symphony of insight where Islamic history and thought meet psychoanalysis'. I would say he and his contributors have met that goal beautifully and exceeded it. It is truly a unique contribution at the most timely point in our

history as a must-read for clinicians who are working with Muslim patients or anyone interested in a psychoanalytically-informed perspective of these ‘people of the book’ (Brenner 2009: 231).

Akhtar’s work in the USA finds a parallel in Europe through the work of Fethi Benslama. He is a psychoanalyst and a Professor of Psychopathology at the University of Jussieu, Paris VII who engages psychoanalysis with religion, culture, and ethnicity both as an academic and clinician. Benslama was also founding editor of *Cahiers Intersignes*, a French-language review on psychoanalysis and culture, especially Islam and Europe (1990-2003), and whose ideas have been made more accessible in a book recently translated into English, *Psychoanalysis and the challenge of Islam* (Benslama 2009). As a secular thinker who identifies with Muslim culture, Benslama subjects Islamic history and religious beliefs to a psychoanalytic hermeneutic interpretation drawing on insights from Lacan. He adopts a ‘critical subjectivity’ drawn from psychoanalysis to negotiate the polarities of ‘differentialist essentialism’ and ‘abstract universalism’. He wishes to dissolve such structures held in Islamic thought in order to examine ‘the architecture of mythotheologic structures ... used to comprehend the workings of their invisible foundations and to discover ... the kernel of the impossible around which language forms an imaginary shell, a projection of the psyche towards the external world’ (Benslama 2009: ix). His work establishes important areas for future scholars, Muslim and otherwise, to debate and future psychoanalysts to examine.

There is in Islam a prohibition against approaching God from the perspective of paternity. It leaves man to confront a genealogical desert between himself and god - a desert that is impossible to cross, not because it cannot be crossed but because beyond it lies the impossible. However, this objection, whose provenance I have examined with respect to Judaism and Christianity, is transported de facto into psychoanalysis, where the god-father relationship lies at the heart of constructions relative to the fields of symbolism, ideality, and spirituality through their hold on the subject. How can we integrate the Islamic objection into the theoretical complexity of psychoanalysis, which is already considerable? Perhaps we should consider the theory of god-the-father by examining the genealogical desert. Life in the desert exposes men to wandering; it forces them to remain united and to take care of the

oases where they find refuge, so they do not dry up. In other words, the desert between god and the father is the site where politics is instituted. This could be one of the guiding questions for psychoanalysis: to conceptualise a space between god and the father, not only in terms of murder, of the symbolic, or the name, of the void, and so on - all these modalities being obviously relevant - but also, and more resolutely, in terms of the aridity in which the construction of politics takes place. The threat that haunts men in the desert is either the “There is nothing” of nihilism or the abundance of the totalitarian mirage (Benslama 2009: 216).

Benslama shows there is the potential for psychoanalysis to develop further a co-relation of psychoanalytic and Islamic insights focusing on the metaphor of space, here described as the desert.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN. PATTERNS OF ENGAGEMENT – MYSTICAL PERSPECTIVES

Of all religious experiences or states, the mystical is the most complex and intriguing found throughout the history of religions (McGinn 2005). The same paradox appears in psychoanalysis where despite ‘any sustained interdisciplinary dialogue’ (Parsons 1999: 3) mysticism continually reappears in various guises (Merkur 2009). It can be: inclusive using abstract, generic terms to encompass the experience; exclusive as ‘historical and religious phenomena that cannot be defined without recourse to a total religious matrix’ (Parsons 1999: 5); unifying, where the experience of the transcendent finds different expression in different religious traditions;³¹³ distinctive, where the identity is unique to a specific religious tradition; spontaneous, where it is not an experience that is sought but is rather an ‘episodic, ecstatic, intuitive encounter with the divine’ (Parsons 1999: 7);³¹⁴ and searched for in processes related to acquiring mystical experience through rituals, prayer, meditation, drugs, breathing and altered states of consciousness. In many religions this has become formalized as in the Christian mystical tradition that offers a developmental process moving from the purgative way, through the illuminative way to the final unitive way, following a pattern taken from St. John of the Cross.³¹⁵ Each strand is held in tension by a ‘dialectical interplay’³¹⁶ offering: experience and process; knowing and unknowing; spontaneity and

³¹³ This allows for both a commonality of mystical experience that links religious traditions (Suzuki 1957; Merton 1967).

³¹⁴ As advocated by Otto’s influential work (Otto 1917) and in contemporary liturgical context (Ross 2008) reflecting my personal experience. Otto used the term numinous to convey the ‘nonrational manifestations of the sacred’ (Agnel 2005) which included: a sense of creatureliness (for a theological discussion of this concept see Macquarrie 1966); ‘mystical awe (*tremendum*), a presentiment of divine power (*majestas*), amazement in the face of the “completely other” (*mysterium*), demonical energy, and paradox’ (Agnel 2005).

³¹⁵ St. John of the Cross is only one example of an enormously wide range of Christian mystics. See McGinn’s series (1990-2006) *On the presence of God: a history of Western Christian mysticism*, volumes 1-4.

³¹⁶ This term was first used by Khan in a review of Milner’s *Not being able to paint* (1950) and taken up by Milner and used in her later works *Hands of the living God* (1969) and *The suppressed madness of sane men* (1987). Milner’s contribution on mysticism and psychoanalysis is part of a later section of this chapter. The

searching; isolation and involvement; and idiosyncrasy and tradition. Mysticism offers a known and felt sense of connection to transcendent Other, transcending time and possessing inherent incommunicability. The challenges mysticism faces in the ‘future landscape’ of ‘our postmodern world with its developing spiritualities’ (Perrin 2005: 453) finds parallels in psychoanalysis.³¹⁷ Macquarrie makes a distinction between mystical tendencies and full blown mysticism, where one aspect is a noetic quality, a special form of knowing, that corresponds to knowing a person rather than a fact (Macquarrie 2004). In this sense there can be a unique overlap with psychoanalysis, so Eigen whose writing represents a highly creative form of contemporary psychoanalysis is attuned to the ecstatic and the mystical leaving the possibility for such in each therapeutic encounter (Eigen 1998).

*Key figures*³¹⁸

Freud variously understood mysticism as: a remnant of his Jewish tradition that he was aware of but was inaccessible to him; a pantheistic connection with Nature as in the Romantic tradition; an undefined aspect of dreaming and the unconscious; a derogatory term used to ridicule Jung; an idea belonging to the past replaced by science; and in discussion with Rolland a ‘primary ego feeling’ that formed an ‘intimate bond between the ego and the world around it’ as a sense of the infinite encapsulated in the term ‘oceanic feeling’. Freud’s theoretical engagement with mysticism is linked to primary narcissistic union between a baby and mother that became the orthodox view within psychoanalysis.

term acquired a more technical significance when adopted by Ogden in the 1980s to combine Kleinian concepts, intersubjectivity and his own concept of the ‘analytic third’.

³¹⁷ Perrin identifies these as: radical embodiment; prophetic nature; chosen subservience; departure from dualisms; language; ineffability; Theocentrism v. Christocentrism; and fragments (Perrin 2005: 453f.).

³¹⁸ Aspects of Jewish engagement with mysticism and psychoanalysis are dealt with in an earlier chapter. Eigen makes a good case for Bion and Matte-Blanco to be regarded as mystics (Eigen 2001c), although they are interpreted by Eigen’s synthesizing hermeneutic.

This reductive view is challenged by Parsons who looks in detail at Freud's relationship and correspondence with Rolland (Parsons 1999)³¹⁹ who saw the 'oceanic feeling' not as regressive psychopathology but as formative dimensions of personhood. Three key figures stand out in advancing an explicit mystical dimension to psychoanalysis: Milner, Eigen and Grotstein.³²⁰

Marion Milner took a developmental and formative view of the mystical. Milner was a member of the Independent tradition whose aesthetic writing (and drawing) expanded psychoanalytic concepts into work with children and art therapy. Known primarily through her association with Winnicott, Milner's work focused on 'the potential for health and creativity in undoing the obstacles to mystical oneness with what she sometimes referred to as God, the unconscious or the id' (Sayers 2002: 105) and her work has been re-introduced to psychoanalytic circles by Parsons (Parsons 1990, 2001), Eigen (Eigen 1998, 2001c)³²¹ and Sayers (Sayers 2002, 2003). Milner's use of her self-experience within a psychoanalytic frame predated the development of intersubjectivity and brings together religious experience for Eastern and Western traditions (Goldman 1997; Raab 2000).³²²

³¹⁹ Black also discusses Freud's engagement with Rolland in a wider discussion on Hinduism (Black 1993a).

³²⁰ Merkur identifies 'psychoanalytic mystics' as Rank, Fromm, Milner, Winnicott, Kohut, Loewald, Bion, Grotstein, Symington and Eigen. However only Milner, Grotstein, Symington and Eigen 'openly called themselves mystics' (Merkur 2009: 112).

³²¹ Eigen's work is erudite, elusive and enigmatic offering a unique combination of theorists alongside his clinical practice that defies simple categorization.

³²² A better-known and more influential contemporary of Milner, who also addressed mysticism, though rather more obliquely, was Winnicott. A contemporary of Bion and Milner, Winnicott balanced the politics and personalities of Anna Freud and Klein to pursue his unique psychoanalytic vision (Rodman 2003). He developed an original view of the 'transitional' nature of early psychological development and subsequent psychoanalytic engagement. In his earliest psychoanalytic publication in 1934 Winnicott acknowledged the value of patients' religious experiences that could not be dismissed as illusion or fantasy (Sayers 2003: 187). Winnicott later recognized the value of mystical experience where withdrawal to an inner world, rather than being pathological, was a resource enabling the person to become real (Winnicott 1965: 185f.). Concepts from Milner, Bion and Winnicott influenced subsequent engagement between mystical experiences and psychoanalysis as seen in the work of Eigen who offers an intersubjective form of I-Thou encounter.

The work of Eigen is a unique synthesis of Jewish mystical experience, Lacan, Bion, Buber, Winnicott, Milner, Matte-Blanco, O and intersubjectivity in an ecumenical vision of the psychoanalytic experience. Eigen brings these together in *The Psychoanalytic Mystic* (Eigen 1998) where he refers to psychoanalysis as a form of holiness and prayer with mystical and sacred dimensions, themes also found in other writings (Eigen 1993, 2001a, 2001b, 2001c).³²³ Blass comments critically ‘Never really defining what holiness, mysticism, sacredness and prayer are ... he is using these terms to refer to a general and vague kind of openness to experiencing’ (Blass 2006: 27). Eigen offers his own vision for contemporary psychoanalysis that is ecstatic, blissful and poetic in character aimed at the process of psychic aliveness.³²⁴

The complexity and subtlety of Grotstein’s thought has yet to be expounded and defies simple summary.³²⁵ Building on concepts of resonance from Klein, Bion, Lacan, Ricoeur, Plato, Heidegger and Matte Blanco, Grotstein’s *Who is the dreamer who dreams the dream?* (Grotstein 2000) is his most explicitly religious and spiritual work. He examines the unconscious as experienced numinous subjectivity encompassing a transcendent position. This reveals and disguises O in moments of encounter within the sacred architecture of the psyche expressed in the language of mysticism. Grotstein concludes that in psychoanalysis

³²³ See appendix seven, ‘Meeting Mike Eigen – a psychoanalytic mystic’.

³²⁴ Eigen is not unique in this. Julia Kristeva brings psychoanalysis into dialogue with her unique version of post-structuralism allied to an awareness of religion influenced by Russian Orthodoxy. A recent overview of Kristeva’s ideas can be found in McAfee (McAfee 2004): however she fails to deal sufficiently with Kristeva’s religious background and ideas which are addressed in (Jonte-Pace 1997) and (Sayers 2003). Building on Lacan, Winnicott and Green, Kristeva sees ‘transitions’ as uniquely important. A person inhabits an embodied subjectivity replete with a desire for fusion with a transcendental other (as understood in Christian theology) which for Kristeva has become a maternal sacred space (Fiddes 2000a; Clement and Kristeva 2001). A vital aspect of this is the experience of the mystical, Kristeva advocating a ‘mystic atheism’ (Bradley 2008). Psychoanalysis replaces illusions deemed to be wholly truthful, for illusions known to be partly truthful that enhance creativity and the capacity for love (Kristeva 1987a, 1987b, 1995).

³²⁵ A brief summary can be found in (Skelton 2006). A detailed discussion of *Who is the dreamer who dreams the dream?* is found in (Gordon 2004) and a critically helpful review in (Malin 2002).

‘we can never meet the Godhead, but we can feel its shadow by our intuition of its presence as the Unconscious, which ... is as close to God and Godliness as we are ever likely to reach’ (Grotstein 2000: 276).

Key ideas and developments

All mystical experiences can be understood as a psychological defence against overwhelming external or internal realities (Meissner 1984a). The classic psychoanalytic understanding of mystics, such as St Teresa Avila, often focused on eroticism as a sublimated interpretation excluding all others. In contemporary psychoanalysis a broader view of the mystical has emerged.

Firstly, the psyche can adopt adaptive and healthy defences as found in forms of grief (Aberbach 1987) or psychic wounding (Masson and Masson 1978). By activating regressive infantile experiences the person is defended against ego disintegration, which as a temporary stage facilitates survival. This regressive experience can also be valuable in working through aspects of narcissism that hinder adult functioning (Ross 1975). Yet mysticism like all religious experiences can be used to avoid psychic pain and be an expression of narcissism that in extreme form is a personality disorder. Symington distinguishes between true mystics (of which Jesus is an example) that leads to mature religion and false mystics that cloak their narcissism in primitive religion (Symington 1998: 18f.).

Secondly, mysticism is viewed as a unifying experience that allows psychoanalytic and religious engagement without the complications of religious belief. *Eigenwelt* was a term

developed by Heidegger and used by Binswanger to describe being-in-the-world, a private world of self-awareness and individual experience that had been neglected by classic psychoanalysis (Lopez-Corvo 1999).

Thirdly, mysticism is viewed as a natural secular religion that involves the experiential freed from the dogma of traditional religions (Hinshelwood 1999). Symington argues for a mature or natural religion based on core religious ideas of meaning and value lived out through the emotional life and relationships that embrace the psychic and the mystical, and where psychoanalysis uniquely develops a spirituality of the world (Symington 1998). Thus the 'ideal religion becomes more of a personal, self-determined mysticism, devoid of history, ritual, obligation, and mediation, a kind of westernized Buddhism' (Blass 2006: 29). Blass argues this understanding of religion fails to meet the lived experience of many traditional believers and avoids the ultimate question of transcendent reality (Blass 2006: 33).³²⁶ In essence psychoanalysis overwrites the religious dimension of mysticism, which can now be encountered as mystical experiences as part of contemporary psychoanalysis.

Fourthly, mysticism and psychoanalysis offer different but complementary understandings of human nature that enhance each other where Loewald is recognized for his 'attunement to the wisdom in each' (Smith and Handelman 1990: x). Loewald reformulated Freud's thinking on the pre-Oedipal stage of psychological development, drawing on Heidegger. Loewald believed the 'integrative experiences' between mother and baby, replayed by the analyst and patient, offered the foundation of psychic development and therapeutic change (Chodorow 2003). Primitive ego and mature ego modes of experience, 'mentation', offer

³²⁶ Orsi also deals with the persistence of lived religious experience that is often overlooked in wider social and cultural contexts (Orsi 2004).

integration and the re-experience of unity and timelessness akin to Rolland's 'oceanic feeling' and found in mysticism. It was only in the late 1970s that he fully addressed religion commenting 'some of these things I have discussed I have wanted to say for a long time' (Loewald 1978) and Black notes the importance of this in terms of the timing and the stature of the speaker, 'in this courageous lecture we glimpse the oppressiveness of the conformist culture of psychoanalysis which at last was lifting' (Black 2006: 13). Loewald succeeded in offering a place for the religious and the psychoanalytic experience to engage with each other creatively as religion 'can serve to keep us open to ways of knowing and being that are rooted in the primary process with its unitary and timeless sensibility' (Jones 1991: 54). Meissner offers a similarly positive and balanced account of mysticism in psychoanalysis (Meissner 1984a: 150f.). A detailed examination of mysticism facilitates 'a theology of grace and mystical prayer that is more open to the perspective of psychic variables and psychoanalytic understanding' (Meissner 2005: 556). This encounter can also be paradoxical experience of the self and God understood in object relations terms following Winnicott. Davids links psychoanalysis with the Sufi mystical tradition where the mystic transforms the unconscious, illusory and phantasy image of God formed in early experience into a real relationship with the God who really is, as found in their inner world (Davids 2006).

Fifthly, Bomford and Grotstein view the mystical as the route into the deepest unconscious.³²⁷ Bomford makes a distinction between the mythic and the mystic, where the

³²⁷ An Anglican priest and theologian, though not a psychoanalyst, Bomford has written primarily about God, religious truth and Matte Blanco (Bomford 1990, 1999, 2004, 2006). Matte Blanco was a Chilean psychoanalyst and psychiatrist who did his analytic training in Britain supervised by Anna Freud and James Strachey. He went on to pioneer the development of psychoanalysis in Chile. He used mathematics and philosophy to revise Kleinian theory and used mathematics to view the unconscious as infinite sets. Primary

mystical journey can be seen as an attempt of the conscious to enter the unconscious and in Blanco's terms experience 'emotion, a mode of pure being from which unfolds the creative imagination ... true psychical reality ... mute silence ... and deep peace' (Bomford 2006: 256).³²⁸ Theologians and psychoanalysts uninterested in the mystical will not find such arguments compelling yet there is a possibility of creative parallels for those who do (Bomford 2006). The importance of the mystical is that it confronts recipients with an experience that illuminates or exposes prior ontological choice that is paradoxically both comforting and challenging.

Sixthly, psychoanalytic critics raised significant concerns. Some see mysticism as a distinct religious experience that does not fit within psychoanalysis as they are two different categories of thinking, experiencing with differing ontological and epistemological concerns, particularly if a classical definition of psychoanalysis is adopted (Frosh 2006). Similarly mysticism can be seen as a particular form of discourse that is not the sum total of religious experience, just as psychoanalysis is another form of discourse (Bomford 2006). While there may be apparent similarities they are two differing thought forms and languages. While they invite comparison they can only be linked at the most general and superficial level (Frosh 2006). Psychoanalysis can offer insights into mysticism but it can never explain it without reducing it to a list of concepts that fail to capture the essential experience apart from its religious context (Ostow 1995). Forms of mystical and

and secondary psychological processes are linked to symmetrical and asymmetrical thinking leading to bi-logic 'a logic for bi-modal reality. This blends two logical strands of thinking: symmetric (dissolving differences) and asymmetric (promoting differences), both of which can be observed in emotional experiencing such as dreaming and everyday life' (Ginzberg 2006: 301). This allowed the possibility of both believing and unbelieving in God, not in contradiction nor in opposition to analytic thought. Matte Blanco also saw a place for the mystical dimension, though Matte Blanco's 'deeply held Catholic beliefs' find little place in analytic writing and 'must have been frowned upon in the psychoanalytic movement at certain times' (Jordan-Moore 1995: 1036).

³²⁸ Matte Blanco is described by Gordon as the 'Chilean mystic' (Gordon 2004: 31).

psychoanalytic engagement can be seen as a new form of Gnosticism (Ostow 1982/1997) that is enlightening (Gordon 2004) or problematic (Ostow 1995).

The re-emergence of mysticism in contemporary psychoanalysis parallels the emergence of a pluralistic culture within psychoanalysis that embraces levels of subjectivity and intersubjectivity that specifically include mystical tendencies, best exemplified by Eigen. Parsons connects these to transformational approaches in psychoanalysis, drawn from object relations and self-psychology perspectives, as well as transpersonal developments in the wider psychotherapeutic world (Parsons 1999).³²⁹ Discussion of mysticism in psychoanalysis is primarily within a universal or experiential framework focused on mystical tendencies evolving out of relational encounter in the analytic space. However the language used to try and capture mystical experience is often beyond psychoanalysis and held within religious traditions. Grotstein's work offers a more profound level of mystical engagement with the unconscious as his work spans the universal, the particular, process and experience.

I have found it useful to add spiritual, ontological and mystical perspectives to my thinking. By spiritual I mean those aspects of the ultrasensual, yet still experiential dimension that merit psychoanalytic study, and ... includes the unconscious capacity for prescience or premonition ... the mystic is also able to see the mysterious that is embedded in the ordinary. The mystic does not mystify but detects and clarifies. The analyst, without realizing it, is a practising mystic ... The mystical and spiritual perspectives are older ways of describing our attempts to 'divine' the ultrasensual ... I end this preface with the question I asked at the beginning: Who is the unconscious? (Grotstein 2000: xxviii f.).

³²⁹ This links to parallel and inclusive developments discussed in the defining of spirituality in chapter two. MacKenna offers a Christian based reflection. 'If we are allowed to settle down and be still, and contemplate ... as an analyst might her patient, or a mystic settling into a time of prayer, or an artist contemplating his subject; then we find ourselves connecting with them in unexpected ways and, in that connection itself, discovering ... their meaning? Our meaning? Or is it rather the ineffable experience of being in communion with that which or, as I would prefer to say, the One who, simply, IS?' (MacKenna 2008: 485f.).

Grotstein uniquely sees psychoanalysis not as a psychological repository of mystical tendencies but as a form of mysticism in its own right.³³⁰

³³⁰ These ideas are synchronous with Kristeva's where, 'The Christian desire for loving, ecstatic fusion with the transcendental other reflects the semiotic drive for unity with the immanent other who is not simply within the world but within ourselves' (Bradley 2008: 281).

CHAPTER SIXTEEN. PATTERNS OF ENGAGEMENT – SELF-PSYCHOLOGY, INTERPERSONAL, INTERSUBJECTIVE AND RELATIONAL PERSPECTIVES

In the last thirty years the most important change influencing psychoanalysis has been the impact of approaches that identified the objective and subjective relationship between the analyst and patient as forming a new intersubjective encounter at the heart of analytic work. Kohut's self-psychology moved away from classical psychoanalytic theory and became an important strand in the evolution of contemporary psychoanalysis, focusing on the formation of the self and how the self becomes restored through intersubjective encounter (Stolorow, Atwood, and Brandchaft 1994; Mollon 2001). Ghent saw psychoanalysis as a place where there is mutuality (after Buber) and the experience of the transcendent which requires a clear identification of what one believes and why (Ghent 1989).³³¹ Mitchell emphasized the relational dimension, building bridges between American theorists and object relations, later emphasizing intersubjective approaches (Greenberg and Mitchell 1983; Mitchell 2000). Ogden identified an 'analytic Third' that has intersubjective clinical implications (Ogden 1994, 2006).³³² Stolorow, Atwood, Orange, Brandchaft and others evolved intersubjective systems theory with philosophical implications (Stolorow 2006; Stolorow, Atwood, and Brandchaft 1994; Stolorow, Brandchaft, and Atwood 1987). Lacan focused on the intersubjective subject where the unconscious engages with the Other, ideas taken up by Eigen.³³³ Mitchell and Eigen viewed psychoanalysis as an intersubjective space

³³¹ Ghent examines how he evolved his personal psychoanalytic beliefs system through a critical reflection of the importance of the key figures in the evolution of interpersonal and relational psychoanalysis, object relations and self-psychology.

³³² Ogden limits his work to a specific clinical state, remaining theoretically within a Kleinian and post-Kleinian tradition, although his concept of the analytic Third is taken up more broadly as a metaphor of psychoanalytic engagement.

³³³ Lacan's ideas are influential in France, Europe, Ireland and the UK but less so in the USA although they are found in Eigen. His complex evolution of Freud requires further research in its own right and the approach

that has multiple dimensions including the mystical (Eigen 1992, 1993, 1998, 2001a, 2001b, 2004). Within each strand there is an acceptance of paradox, a desire to experience rather than explain, although theory is not ignored, rather it takes on a more creative dimension (Benjamin 2005a).

Within other chapters in this section of the thesis there have been implicit connections with self-psychology, interpersonal, intersubjective and relational forms of psychoanalysis as they form a complex tapestry of contemporary engagement. This has led to an inclusive stance, vital for further engagement with the wider social, cultural, intellectual, philosophical and psychological approaches. Despite early and evolving engagement with Buddhism, specifically religious engagement with psychoanalysis is still embryonic as an unfolding dialogue (Safran 2003). Lewis Aron, an influential figure in relational psychoanalysis, found opposition to bringing religion and psychoanalysis together.³³⁴ Influenced by Buber, Aron argued that analysts' religious and spiritual beliefs are both underplayed and vital for real intersubjective encounter. Examining his own Jewish faith, Aron finds covenant at its core expressed through mutuality between God and people. This requires the analyst to encounter his own mutuality in relation to God and in doing so allows this as a potential intersubjective dimension to the analytic relationship.³³⁵

taken in this thesis, as with Jung, is to note the importance of his work but not deal with it in detail (Nobus 2000; Bailly 2009).

³³⁴ Lewis Aron is the Director of the New York University, Postdoctoral Program in Psychotherapy and Psychoanalysis, a group that also includes Benjamin and Eigen. He was the founding president of the International Association for Relational Psychoanalysis and Psychotherapy (whose members also include Benjamin, Eigen, Jones, Philips, and Rubin) and was formerly President of the Division of Psychoanalysis (39) of the American Psychological Association. It was at a Division 39 conference in 2003 that Aron expressed his ideas which were met with 'outrage. "Why are you bringing God into a professional meeting? If I want to hear about God I can go to my church or synagogue: why bring God into a psychoanalytic forum?"' (Aron 2004: 443).

³³⁵ Aron writes about Jonah and finds a universal application of this biblical narrative about how, and who, we dialogue with (Aron 2008).

Aron concluded,

Analysts have too often played God. We have acted as if we were omnipotent and all knowing ... my belief [is] that being deeply engaged with God, imitating God's ways, may paradoxically keep us from playing God. Michael Eigen (1998),³³⁶ drawing on his own study of Judaism and Kabbalah, described psychoanalysis as a form of prayer. Indeed psychoanalysis may be envisioned as a religious practice, a form of worship, in which contact is made with the Almighty through immersion in the richness and depth of the inner life in communion with the Other (Aron 2004: 449f.).

Self-Psychology, interpersonal, intersubjective and relational forms of psychoanalysis has a yet untapped potential for further religious and spiritual engagement as will become clear in the next part of the thesis, focusing on the lived experience of interviews with psychoanalysts.³³⁷

³³⁶ This is reference to his *The Psychoanalytic Mystic* (Eigen 1998).

³³⁷ Weiner, Cooper and Barbre's edited text *Psychotherapy and Religion. Many Paths, One Journey* (Weiner, Cooper, and Barbre 2005) brings together ten contributors who draw on self-psychology and relate this to Tibetan and Zen Buddhism, Christianity, Sufism, Jewish mysticism and Native American religious and spiritual beliefs and practices. Authors begin with their autobiographical journey, linking this to their theoretical understanding, and with illustrations from their clinical practice. This gives greater insight into how religious, spiritual and psychoanalytic engagement takes place that was to be a feature of the interviews that follow in the next chapters.

PART C. METHODOLOGICAL CONCERNS, INTERVIEWS AND THEMATIC ANALYSIS

A central feature of this thesis is a critical examination of religion, spirituality and the sacred in the lived experience and understanding of psychoanalysts, framed by their clinical practice within contemporary psychoanalysis. While psychoanalytic societies and training have been scrutinized sociologically and anthropologically (Kirsner 2000; Davies 2009) little research has focused on the lived experience of psychoanalysts, especially in the area of religion and spirituality.³³⁸ The subject of part B, the engagement between religion, spirituality and the sacred in contemporary psychoanalysis found in text-to-text encounter, offered important insights but to build on this contextual analysis and to enter into the lived experience of religion and spirituality requires a person-to-person encounter. This resonates with a move from an I-It encounter to an I-Thou encounter as advocated by Buber (Buber 1987) and as experienced in the analytic relationship (Molino 1997), which also offers a hermeneutic understanding (Brink and Janakes 1979). The very essence of the psychoanalytic encounter is a two-person dyad, meeting in a clinical context that frames and becomes part of the therapeutic process. This encounter forms a narrative that is rarely spoken and shapes the narrative of this research.

Chapter one and the introduction identified my relation to the research in two distinct ways. Firstly, the research narrative is vitally linked to the researcher's personal narrative (Hedges 2010), which raises the question 'What does the concept of narrative mean?' as used in this thesis? Underpinning the conversations that took place in the research are ontological and

³³⁸ One exception is Simmonds' PhD thesis with a wider focus including psychoanalytic psychotherapists as well as psychoanalysts in Australia and the UK (Simmonds 2003).

epistemological assumptions of narrative-as-being, and narrative-as-knowing. ‘The telling of stories and the accurate recording, transcription and analysis ... forms the heart of the qualitative research enterprise ... stories are not simply meaningless personal anecdotes; they are important sources of knowledge’ (Swinton and Mowat 2006: 68). Further underpinning assumptions expressed through the terms of ‘narrative’ and ‘story’ are:

1. The human race has always told stories, traditionally shaped into religious and spiritual narratives, which are held as vital for our understanding and functioning. Such stories shape the way we construct meaning,³³⁹ and how we engage with these stories, publicly and privately, has been researched through autoethnographic approaches focused on groups, societies and cultures (Etherington 2000); and case study approaches in counselling and psychotherapy, a widely adopted pattern initiated by Freud (Magid 1993). This research locates the researcher as one party in a conversation, in the same way that a patient enters into psychoanalytic treatment to engage in conversation leading to interpretations and knowledge about themselves, through the agency of another.

2. We are all influenced by and draw on existing stories set within their specific time and culture (Atkinson and Delamont 2005). Reflexivity is therefore required to both participate in and stand apart from the story/stories we encounter (Etherington 2004). However these narratives are in a continual process of replacement and renewal. New narratives are created, building on previous narratives that are not totally discarded leading to a multiplicity of narratives offering fragments of insight and truth (Midgley 1992; Miller 2008).

³³⁹ As seen in the title of Soldz’s paper ‘Research as the telling of empirically justified stories’ (Soldz 2006).

3. Relational engagement gives the opportunity for new narratives and stories to emerge.

When stories collide, dialogue ensues and new stories are formed. ‘Freud's principal contribution to human life was to inaugurate a gigantic effort at exploration of the inaccessible fastnesses of the unconscious, but every step of the journey must be undertaken by way of the simplest of all human encounters, the dialogue’ (Leavy 1980: xv). Orsi adds following Berger ‘the world hangs on a thin thread of conversation, on the rounds of intersubjective engagement that make and sustain any social world. To interpret a culture means to join this conversation, alongside and together with the people already engaged in it’ (Orsi 2004: 169f.). This research enters into the world of the psychoanalyst to have a conversation about religion and spirituality and to return to tell the story of these encounters, from their viewpoint in the interviews and in my reflexive accounts. Adopting Denzin and Lincoln’s metaphor of the researcher as bricoleur and quilt-maker (Denzin and Lincoln 2005: 4), the fabric of this research is an examination of the tapestries and threads that are ‘spun, woven, knitted, quilted or pieced together’ (Kruger 2008: 12) to form a tapestry that embodies ‘a universal narrative of humanity’s sacred and secular practices and beliefs’ (Kruger 2008: 11).³⁴⁰ The sacred was identified in chapter one of part A, as a constructive and containing term that accounts for social and cultural, religious and spiritual systems, beliefs and practices focused on the ultimate sources of power, identity, meaning and truth.

A second and linked question arises: ‘Is this one researcher’s reflexive account?’ or are there patterns of the religious and spiritual that allow other people’s experiences, ideas, theories, and structures to encounter each other? At the start of my research both were

³⁴⁰ Williams offers another understanding of the *bricoleur* that also resonates with this research. ‘The *bricoleur* is a hybrid who identifies unconscious themes in liminal space and who uses a mythical [or sacred] narrative to invoke an alternative psychological perspective’ (Williams 2007: 348).

combined in a dream. I dreamt of Freud sitting, leaning back relaxed in a chair, a smoking cigar in one hand and addressing me. 'It's all there, you only have to look and see' as he leant forward and pointed me to fluorescent yellow highlighted passages from his Standard Edition, then sitting back he smiled but faded from view leaving me with a sense of anticipation and excitement. I was left with the thought that both the conscious and the unconscious would feature in subsequent research and the methodologies adopted. This linked to my knowledge of hermeneutics and Ricoeur's 'hermeneutics of suspicion'. Ricoeur valued Freud as he saw beyond the surface text to the other text that lies below the surface, like the unconscious, waiting to be discovered. Such concerns are further explored in the following chapter on research methodology.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

My exploration of appropriate research methodologies was aided by my attendance at two research training modules run by the School of Education at the University of Birmingham, with a particular focus on identity and epistemology. I subsequently adopted semi-structured interviews as the most relevant and flexible research methodology that matched the personal dyadic nature of the subject under investigation. Meeting people face-to-face is a form of communication I am very comfortable with drawing on 30 years experience offering pastoral care – helping make sense of complicated and often painful life events within a faith context; and 25 years as a psychodynamic therapist utilizing psychoanalytic principles. Face-to-face encounter, analytic and spiritual is part of the fabric of my being therefore there was correspondence between my methodology – how I do research, and my being – who I am in my research.

The research interview offers potential for new forms of discovery, conscious and unconscious, and locates this within a qualitative research paradigm developed in a unique bricolage by each researcher (McLeod 2001; Kincheloe 2005). The constructs forming my approach include the following.

1. Examination of the lived experience of the research subjects and researcher understood through how they encounter the world and make meaning within it – ontologically, biographically, professionally and spiritually.
2. Multiple interpretations of this lived experience found through rigorous inquiry into narratives – observed, recorded, textualized – generating forms of knowledge,

descriptive and explanatory.³⁴¹ This requires adopting methods that are transparent and consistent unique to the researcher but able to inform the work of existing and future researchers.

3. Engaging with the stories that are told. The story of the universe is a universe of stories where the human race has sought meaning and expressed meaning through stories, myths and narratives that are told, retold and forgotten across millennia, continents and cultures (McLeod 1997; Orsi 2004; Harrison and Young 2008). Stories in the past have been used to address every dimension of human existence and are still used to create: a meaning filled universe; a structured world of thought, feeling and action; the whole gamut of human emotions - hope, fear\terror, love\intimacy, despair, joy and sorrow, wonder and imagination; a means of uniting the outer and inner worlds of other and Other; a capacity to embrace the finite and infinite; and the potential to touch the soul\psyche (Ross 1997, 2008). Psychoanalysis and religion/theology are two examples of very particular forms of narrative (Spence 1982; Schafer 1992; McLeod 1997; Higgins 2003).³⁴² Both psychoanalysis and religion/theology have within their narratives the potential for a revealing/revelation or the unconscious becoming

³⁴¹ While there is a complex interplay between the meaning of the terms 'story' and 'narrative', they can be viewed synonymously (Polkinghorne 1988) functioning in a dialogic form of engagement. McLeod uses the term 'narrative' to refer to the overall discourse as a whole located within a wider social and cultural context, and the term 'story' to accounts - usually of an individual - of specific incidents/events (McLeod 1997). Within qualitative research generally and counselling, psychotherapy and narrative psychology research specifically the term 'narrative' is commonly adopted to define the contextual frame of the research focus (Crossley 2000; McLeod 2001; Denzin and Lincoln 2005; Swinton and Mowat 2006).

³⁴² 'It is clear that psychoanalysis can be seen - and has been seen - as a special type of storytelling. The structure of the 'talking cure' is similar to that of the modern novel, or rather, the modern novel is coming ever closer to the psychoanalytic process ... on the development of a new discourse and the creation of new meanings by and within the analyst-analysand dyad ... above all, the analyst listens. He is the one to whom the story is told and in whom it should produce the effects desired (by the narrator) ... The analyst's listening is of a special kind and it allows the analysand to have a special experience: that of being able to tell his story with no end to someone who does not interfere, does not interrupt, does not expect anything and so is completely ready to participate' (Kluzer 2001: 57).

conscious that offers the opportunity for a new story or chapter viewed as a transitional and/or sacred encounter (Kluzer 2001; Sheldrake 2001).

4. Locating particular kinds of knowledge: knowledge of the other, knowledge of phenomena and knowledge through reflexivity (McLeod 2001: 3). A particular contribution of this research is the addition of knowledge of Other as a form of intersubjective engagement that goes beyond traditional forms of knowing.

These then are the qualitative research constructs that underpin this research, where I adopt a semi-structured interview approach for gathering data, as well as narrative, thematic and intersubjective approaches for interpreting this data.

The selection of research subjects

The selection criteria for those interviewed was based on: recognition as a psychoanalyst through the IPA or a professionally equivalent body;³⁴³ experience of personal analysis and practice as psychoanalytic therapist; and those who had published in the areas of religion, spirituality, culture, philosophy and psychoanalysis. Such publications demonstrated a willingness to engage with others beyond the clinical confines of the analytic consulting room. All (with one exception) were interviewed in their analytic space where they conduct their clinical work. This physically and psychically located the psychoanalyst and my physical presence within this space offering the opportunity for the emergence of unconscious processes – the understanding and use of which forms the essential paradigm of psychoanalytic engagement, distinguishing it from any other form of therapeutic work. My

³⁴³ This is of significance in the USA where historically psychoanalysts needed to be trained as MDs first. This changed in the mid-1980s where suitably qualified clinical psychologists could train as analysts, though not all are recognized by the IPA.

aim was to find psychoanalysts who were willing to explore their work further through a personal interview. The decision to conduct research by face-to-face interviews rather than by e-mail, telephone, video-conferencing, or Skype and web-cam imposed certain time and financial constraints requiring a large investment on my part. This drew me even further into the research process itself.

I made initial contact with four analysts³⁴⁴ with whom I had discussed my research that led to a genuine interest alongside recognition that this was an area they knew little about. One analyst offered personal disclosure of religious and spiritual matters that they rarely talked about saying to me, 'I have a sense I can trust you'. Andrew Samuels, a noted Jungian analyst, author and academic, gave a robust challenge questioning why I was excluding Jung. Three agreed to an interview and the fourth suggested other psychoanalysts I could approach using their name as an introduction. This proved a successful strategy leading to seven interviews (five in the UK, two in the USA). The second strategy was to make contact directly with psychoanalysts on the basis of the published work and reputation, particularly key writers in the field including Rizzuto, Meissner, Grotstein, Jones, Symington, Rubin and Eigen. This strategy was also successful and led to another nine interviews. My timetable needed to fit with their availability and geographical location in: New York, Boston, Los Angeles, San Francisco and Dublin, as limiting myself to the UK would only have provided five interviews. The advantage was a broader, multi-cultural perspective offering a psychoanalytic triangulation from North American and Western

³⁴⁴ I had met three analysts through running a series of continuing professional development days for psychodynamic counselling students at the University of Birmingham between 2003-2007 and we established a relationship through letter, e-mail and personal conversation. I met a fourth psychoanalyst through the West Midlands Institute of Psychotherapy who became my first interviewee and the author of the then unpublished *Psychoanalysis and Religion in the 21st Century* (Black 2006).

European perspectives. The disadvantage was the costs involved – the trip to New York and Boston was personally funded, however the trip to Los Angeles and San Francisco became possible through a small research grant from Newman University College, Birmingham.

In total, thirty-two analysts were approached, seven declined to be interviewed, three never replied to e-mail or letter.³⁴⁵ Twenty-two analysts were willing to be interviewed, although three could not fit into my limited schedule in the USA and three were not interviewed for other practical reasons, resulting in a total of sixteen interviews. In terms of theoretical orientation within the psychoanalytic tradition the interviewees encompassed: contemporary Freudian; post-Freudian; American object relations; British object relations; Kleinian; Post-Kleinian/Bionian; Lacanian; and Intersubjective/Relational approaches.

The selection of research data

In selecting the data generated by the interviews for a thematic narrative analysis the following factors were used:

1. The accumulation of data. Kvale cautions against collecting so much data - the '1,000 page' scenario (Kvale and Brinkmann 2009) - that the qualitative researcher becomes overwhelmed with material, making it difficult to focus on the research question/s. All sixteen interviews were listened to several times as a way of immersing myself in the material, a technique common to qualitative research (Borkan 1999). The subsequent transcripts of eleven interviews generated 123,000 words and when formatted in the required thesis layout came to 426 pages. Through a further process of immersion by

³⁴⁵ It is possible that they did not receive the e-mail or the letter did not reach them.

reading and re-reading these interviews I came to the conclusion that this amount of data offered sufficiently rich insights and reflections leading me to question the feasibility of transcribing the remaining interviews. I assessed that eleven interviews offered a significant challenge in terms of textual representation within the thesis, and that further data would have become unmanageable.

2. Physical limitations. During the course of the thesis I was diagnosed with an upper limb disorder treated by physiotherapy, acupuncture and steroid injections into the elbow. Despite appropriate adaptations such as voice recognition software, I have an ongoing hidden disability that limits the amount of time I can spend at a computer keyboard and use of a mouse. This has a crucial impact on a qualitative research methodology, and semi-structured interviews that utilizes large amounts of transcription and text.
3. Conceptual saturation. Qualitative research also uses the notion of ‘saturation’ to describe the collecting of data until no new information is forthcoming, and which adds little to that already established, whilst recognising in principle that every interview has the potential to offer something unique. Charmaz’s critique is that it can be used to justify ‘very small samples with thin data’ (Charmaz 2005: 528) and offers instead the notion of ‘interpretative sufficiency’. While eleven interviews is a relatively small number, it is a sample size adopted by other researchers (Jenkins 2006) and the data generated met the requirements of Charmaz’s categories of credibility, originality, resonance and usefulness as a basis for ‘interpretative sufficiency’ (Charmaz 2005: 527f.).
4. Cultural homogeneity of a research sample. An aim of this research was to locate spirituality in contemporary psychoanalysis, which takes different forms in the UK, Ireland and the USA. Having immersed myself in these differing cultural contexts, the

addition of a third cultural context - psychoanalysis in Ireland, particularly in its Lacanian forms, detracted from the in-depth focus I intended. A decision was made therefore to exclude the two Irish interviews.³⁴⁶

5. A specific criterion for selection was how much the analyst was able to explore issues of religion and spirituality. Two analysts interviewed were highly regarded in developing innovative forms of contemporary psychoanalysis (Spezzano and Stolorow) and while the interviewees were personable and informative they generated few insights concerning religion and spirituality.³⁴⁷
6. Technical failure of equipment or my operating of the equipment meant one interview was limited to 15 minutes. Running out of recording space on a mini-disc and the failure to press the recording button sufficiently on a digital recorder meant little was captured in what was a very interesting interview with Jim Gooch, another analysand of Bion in Los Angeles.

This resulted in the adoption of eleven interviews (one analyst's interview was conducted in two parts, with a day between) with eleven psychoanalysts in the UK and East and West Coast USA for transcription and analysis. The selection of eleven interviewees offered 'interpretative sufficiency' for a thematic narrative analysis. The bricolage developed to examine religion and spirituality in contemporary psychoanalysis utilizes a new development within qualitative research termed a psychoanalytic intersubjective interview methodology that uses the researcher's skills of detecting and using transference and

³⁴⁶ This generated mixed feelings that somehow I was letting down these interviewees and the others I later excluded.

³⁴⁷ Spezzano had agreed to the interview out of his general interest through a friend and colleague Randy Sorenson, who died the year before. Sorenson's work was published in *Minding Spirituality* (Sorenson 2004). Stolorow thought the interview was more related to philosophy than theology.

counter-transference as a way of accessing unconscious dynamics within a research interview context, rather than the normal therapeutic context (Kincheloe 2005). As transference and counter-transference are unconscious processes their presence cannot be guaranteed in every interview, however where their presence is experienced, they do offer a heuristic and creative knowledge arising out of the lived experience of an interviewee. The research interview itself also has the potential to become an intersubjective encounter, a development central to contemporary psychoanalysis. There is another strand to this selection, which relates to the researcher's experience of each interview. That is identifying the potential or experience of making a transition from an I-It encounter to an I-Thou encounter as identified by Buber (see earlier in this chapter and chapter one of part A).

On this basis – the presence of unconscious processes accessed through reflecting on transference and counter-transference and for potential I-Thou encounter – led to seven interviews being examined in further detail. These interviews also meet my interpretation of the more detailed criteria outlined by Charmaz under the heading of 'resonance'.

- Do the categories portray the fulness of the studied experience?
- Has the researcher revealed liminal and taken-for-granted meanings?
- Has the researcher drawn links between larger collectivities and individual lives, when the data so indicates?
- Do the analytic interpretations make sense to members and offer them deeper insights about their lives and worlds? (Charmaz 2005: 528).

Further reflexive exploration was utilized by establishing a qualitative research day involving a wide range of academic and therapeutic colleagues. This day examined two interviews in detail, as well as listening to actual extracts as a way of examining the generation of unconscious dynamics in the group and the individuals (see appendix six).

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN. RESEARCH ETHICS PROCESSES

Ethical consent is a vital but complex part of any research process and particularly for this research as a unique aspect of this thesis was the identification of the interview subjects (Bond 2004; Gabriel and Casemore 2009). The rationale behind this lay in the limited number of psychoanalysts engaged with religion and spirituality so in quoting them their distinctive ‘voice’ would be identifiable thus I could not guarantee confidentiality.³⁴⁸ The University of Birmingham operated a devolved ethical consent process, partly complicated by the fact I was a lecturer in psychodynamic counselling employed by the same University and a member of the Dean’s Ethical Review Panel that examined special cases within the Schools of Humanities, Arts, Social Sciences and Law. Discussion with my first PhD supervisor in the Department of Theology and the Director of the Centre for Lifelong Learning, where I was located, led to my research proposal and ethical consent form being submitted to and approved by the ethics committee within the Centre for Lifelong Learning. This consent form, signed by the research participants, gave permission for me to quote them for the thesis and later publications. I undertook to provide the participants with a transcript of the interview and a copy of the parts of the thesis where they were quoted and the context that informed this.

Although all interviewees agreed to be named, in clarifying the final text with one interviewee, they stated that they had not realised they were to be named. We therefore agreed that their contribution be retained but that they were identified as anonymous (AN). This revealed to me that ethical consent is not some box-ticking exercise, rather it is a

³⁴⁸ For example if I quoted an analyst in San Francisco who was also a Zen master, most people would know or be able to make an educated guess that I was talking about Joe Bobrow.

respecting and valuing of the other person that places ethics within a relational frame and a dialogical process (Etherington 2009). I adopted a hybrid collaborative research model that combines a responsibility to represent the interviewee in tandem with my lived experience and interpretation of the interview processes. The likelihood is that the political context in which AN operated had changed and become more sensitive during the three-year period that elapsed from the interview to the final transcript and approval. This led to an increased sensibility about comments made in the interview that needed to be respected.

A new PhD supervisor gave me fresh opportunity to re-visit ethical concerns and enquire with the University of Birmingham about changed ethical procedures. My research was not deemed to require any further engagement with these processes. Further ethical issues were raised by a qualitative research day where two interview transcripts were to be read by twelve participants. I re-approached two interviewees asking for permission and to respond by a specific date (one month from the receipt of the e-mail and letter) if they were unhappy about this. In neither case did they respond and so the texts were used. The strength of this ethical approach is its collaboration and transparency mirroring the experience of the research interviews themselves (Israel and Hay 2006). All interviewees were sent a transcript when it was completed. The limitation of such an approach is that until the thesis is in a final draft form only then would I know what quotations were used. At this point final agreement can be reached which could require adjustment to the thesis – the nature of which is not yet known. I deemed the value of specific named contributions worth this risk. Several interviewees responded with some corrections, primarily re-instating small amounts of text for the interview transcript which I had edited. Two interviewees wished to discuss their texts in detail, both offering helpful clarification where they thought I had over-edited

the text rendering some meaning unclear. One of these lightly edited their original words also to clarify meaning. Consequently all interviewees agreed to be named and agreed with the quotations used in the thesis.³⁴⁹

³⁴⁹ One interviewee wanted to qualify aspects of his text, but also acknowledged that he did say what he was quoted as saying, whilst acknowledging he had been quoted in context and that to alter things now would be to devalue the original contribution.

CHAPTER NINETEEN. RESEARCH INTERVIEW PROCESSES

Each analyst was contacted in advance with an introduction to my research, a list of possible interview questions and an ethical consent form.³⁵⁰ My first PhD supervisor suggested that the initial questions were too general and could take up much valuable interview time before getting into the key focus of the research. At one level this was an accurate perception but I retained these questions for two reasons. Firstly, I realized contemporary psychoanalysis was a variegated term with limited agreement (Cooper 2006) therefore it was essential to find what each analyst meant without imposing my assumptions. It gave the time for the interviewee to find their voice, talking about their work in familiar terms before moving onto the more personal and complex issues of religion and spirituality. Secondly, it allowed opportunity for the interviewee to decide whether they trusted me, as some had not met me before. In part this reflected my experience of being interviewed for others' research and noting of my internal processes. It also reflected my decision as an act of transparency to reveal I was a minister of religion.³⁵¹ In my initial interview with DB the questions generated a great deal of valuable information and allowed a person-to-person meeting: therefore I retained these for the remaining interviews to offer consistency, while responding with other questions as they emerged stimulated by the intersubjective processes of that particular interview. This is the subject of later analysis and discussion.

³⁵⁰ Examples are contained in appendix one.

³⁵¹ This has potential consequences for unconscious processes, especially transference and projection that ministers of religion can elicit in others (Field 1996).

The methodology of recording and transcription

Interviews introduce methodological concerns about transcription and analysis of the text as these are in themselves interpretative tasks as ‘Transcriptions are translations from an oral language to a written language’ (Kvale 2007: 93). To minimize translation difficulties I adopted a verbatim record of what was said to ensure reliability and avoided editing out potentially important material unconsciously. I did not tidy up or correct grammar and included pauses, repeated words, and verbal non-words that communicate hmh, ah, uhm etc. I included descriptive terms in the transcript – emphasis, loud, passion, laughter etc. – indicating aspects of the interview that appeared on the recording but not the text to capture the ‘feel’ of the interview.

As the overall aim was to capture the lived experience of a range of analysts from different theoretical traditions and analytic locations a research methodology that encompassed broader rather than narrower emphases was adopted. A thematic analysis of text fitted this rather than discourse or conversational analysis (Braun and Clarke 2006) which have very specific transcript conventions best suited to detailed analysis of a very small number of texts (McLeod 2001). In my research development I had been part of a discourse analysis group looking at a text by Ricoeur where I learnt the discipline of staying with the text rather than the associated ideas that the text stimulated in my thinking. I did not experience this as a research method that best fitted with my evolving research identity focused on what texts generate in the being of the researcher and the researched. I did adopt hermeneutic principles developed by Ricoeur and other biblical scholars, drawn from my previous training as a minister of religion, within a Baptist tradition that placed great emphasis on reading and exposition of biblical texts (Thiselton 1980; Vanhoozer 1998).

The interviews were recorded using a Sony mini-disc recorder (offering a compact size and high-quality inbuilt microphone tested beforehand) and an Olympus digital recorder as a backup recording device.³⁵² The process of transcription involved the following stages.

- Due to the development of a repetitive strain injury that impaired my ability to use a mouse and keyboard, the initial transcripts were done by: a professional typist; a part-time secretary; and a paid postgraduate student.³⁵³
- I finalized the uncorrected draft transcript as I listened to the recording overcoming the limitation of the initial text being produced by others. During this process I made notes of my thoughts, feelings and associations re-activated by immersion in the interview. I then listened to the interview again and corrected my earlier draft. I discovered that I needed to re-insert grammatical mistakes, pauses uhms etc. that the first typist had automatically corrected. When I discussed this with her she had not been conscious of doing this.
- While not done as a pilot interview, the final text of the initial interview with DB was sent to him and he offered one correction from his memory and commented how accurately the text appeared as a record of what he had experienced. The provision of this helpful feedback gave me confidence that the method adopted was effective and reliable.
- The final transcript was read, as I immersed myself in the data. The transcript was re-read and a line-by-line summary written. Alongside the line-by-line summary, other reflections and emerging themes were noted on a large sheet of paper but not organized into a structure.

³⁵² This was even more compact in size, also with a high-quality microphone although it is so compact that the recording button is very small – leading to the failure of this device or rather the operator in one interview.

³⁵³ I had not guaranteed the interviewees confidentiality as they agreed to be named in the thesis. However in future I would include a clause in the ethical agreement to specifically cover this eventuality.

- Using the notes from stage 2, the line-by-line summary from stage 5, and the emerging themes from stage 6, the interview text generated the initial themes used in chapter four from the first interview. I decided to use this as a guide, but be open to modification as the interviews progressed.
- The text was then re-read alongside the line-by-line summary. This enabled the reader to get back into the actual language used in the interview that sets up a dialogue with the line-by-line summary.

This method offers a reflexive entering into the dynamic engagement generated in the interview. The problem with such a detailed qualitative engagement became clear during the transcription phase as it generated an enormous amount of data. Selecting the interviews on the basis of geographic location (excluding Dublin as it introduced another diverse cultural and theoretical [Lacanian] context) and restricting the California interviews to three, rather than the six conducted on the basis of reflexive engagement, still generated 123,000 words of interview text. The complete transcript of one of these interviews is contained in appendix two demonstrating the format and style developed for this research. The remaining interview transcripts are to be found on an accompanying CD contained at the back of the thesis. This material is copyrighted to Alistair Ross and not for publication by a third party in line with the ethical agreement reached between the interviewees and myself.

CHAPTER TWENTY. ANALYZING QUALITATIVE RESEARCH INTERVIEWS

The next stage of the research was to explore these emerging ideas in the person-to-person encounter based on a face-to-face interview between the researcher and a range of psychoanalysts in the UK and the USA. A value of qualitative research interviews is that they have the potential to generate ontological, epistemological, hermeneutic and intersubjective forms of knowledge. This is knowledge encountered as knowing and being.

All interviews were experienced differently offering unique insights and reflections, two particular strands emerging. Firstly the interview mirrored the beliefs – ontological and analytic – of each analyst in relation to religion and spirituality. Secondly, some interviews provided ontological dialogue with moments of intersubjectivity, revealing and the sacred, where connection between the Other incarnated in me as the interviewer facilitated connection with the other person in the room and the Other. But how did I reach these conclusions? To analyze the data in a transparent and reliable way I adopted three research methodologies – adapted to my research focus: a psychoanalytic intersubjective interview approach; a thematic narrative analysis; and a group intersubjective analysis.³⁵⁴ These methods potentially offer new insights and descriptions of the world of psychoanalysts in their engagement with religion and spirituality. They also fit within a general hermeneutic approach that elicits both surface and depth meaning from texts, which in a psychoanalytic context requires a means of identifying the presence of the unconscious.

³⁵⁴ Although arrived at independently, these resemble the wider, narrative and socially constructed ideas developed by McLeod and Balamoutsou (McLeod and Balamoutsou 2001). As a bricoleur the challenge for each researcher is to utilize these in a unique way.

Psychoanalytic Intersubjective Interview Methodology

I previously developed an autobiographical reflexive narrative to engage psychoanalytic and spiritual thinking that formed the basis that underpins this current research. It was uniquely in this work that I discovered my own voice and owned my personal narratives by telling my story (Ross 1997). Like Leavy 'I have learned to draw on my own language, history, and imagination to further my efforts to understand others' (Leavy 1988: 10). Orsi takes this further in valuing an intersubjective reflexivity³⁵⁵ where an autobiographical voice is not a lone voice; it is one that engages in dialogue, at the very least a dialogue with the reader where knowledge and meaning are discovered in intersubjective dialogue. I therefore give my account of the experience of the interviews conscious that the textual engagement subject to the thematic narrative analysis does not fully recount the experience (Kvale 2007) and introduce each interviewee with brief bio-data setting the context. In this thesis I build on these foundations by specifically utilizing psychoanalytic techniques, rather than psychoanalytic theory.³⁵⁶ In this way I therefore address an under-explored area of qualitative research (Gough 2009).³⁵⁷

³⁵⁵ 'Willing to make one's self-conceptions vulnerable to ... genuine encounter with an unfamiliar way of life. This is no in-between orientation, located at the intersection of self and other, at the boundary ... it entails disciplining one's mind and heart to stay in this in-between place ... This in-between ground upon which a researcher ... belongs neither to herself nor to the other but has come into being between them, precisely because of the meeting of the two (Orsi 2004: 198f.).

³⁵⁶ The use of psychoanalytic ideas has been adopted by qualitative researcher's examining discourse (Parker 1997) and narratives (Hollway and Jefferson 2000), with a particular focus on Lacanian and Kleinian ideas (Frosh, Phoenix, and Pattman 2003).

³⁵⁷ Loewenberg has developed a hermeneutic methodology that was too complex for my purposes. 'The following are a few guidelines derived from the hermeneutics of the clinical psychoanalysis sensing and formulating latent unconscious meanings that I have found useful in researching history, biography, and political psychology' (Loewenberg 2000: 108). Loewenberg's list includes: affect; imagery; behaviour; sexuality and gender; money; character; repetition; fantasy; humour; internal conflict; absence of material; action or inhibition; frustration tolerance; aggression and hostility; rationalization; splitting; symbolic politics and anxiety; trauma; narcissism; crises; and life space. 'In each case, the psychoanalyst, historian, and humanist - using their subjective sensibility - become the decoding cryptographer, interpreter, expositor, and translator, culling and unpacking different levels of comprehension and thus transforming the analysand, the present historical experience, the reader, and the future' (Loewenberg 2000: 111).

Thematic Narrative Analysis

The analysing of data to discover emerging themes can be seen as a generic research tool within qualitative research that has generally been termed, thematic analysis. Braun and Clarke argue that thematic analysis has emerged in the last two decades as a range of distinctive qualitative research methods (Braun and Clarke 2006). Thematic analysis fits within a spectrum of qualitative methodologies including: content analysis (Hsieh and Shannon 2005); conversation analysis (Speer 2002; Hutchby and Wooffitt 2008); discourse analysis (Wetherall, Taylor, and Yates 2001); grounded theory (Charmaz 2006); interpretative phenomenological analysis - IPA (Smith, Larkin, and Flowers 2009); narrative analysis (Crossley 2000; Riessman 2002) and narrative inquiry (Webster and Mertova 2007).

The thematic narrative analysis developed and used in this research avoids: the detailed and explicit coding techniques found in content analysis; the micro-analysis and typological approaches of conversation and discourse analyses; the phenomenological focus of IPA; the overarching focus of narrative analysis and the avoidance of intersubjectivity in narrative inquiry. What it does do is to allow units of meaning, primarily words and phrases, to arise from within the texts that have the potential to be formed into a theme. Unlike grounded theory these units of meaning and potential themes are interpreted hermeneutically by the narrative contexts that surround them, including that of the researcher as well as the researched. It could be described as a form of exegesis based on the principles of textual engagement, motif, intention and harmonization. This utilized hermeneutic principles (developed by Ricoeur engaging with biblical texts) adapted to psychoanalytic texts created by face-to-face interviews. These principles consist of:

- Textual engagement – a text is not an isolated unit of meaning but interpreted by the texts that surround it;
- Narrative motif – an examination of the text to identify the presence of constituent themes that unite to form, add or illuminate an overall motif;
- Kerygmatic intention – reflection on what is being told or communicated in the text for the benefit of others and how intentional the author of the text is;
- Diachronic harmonization – clarifying how this fits with other authors/perspectives in other texts (Ricoeur 1995).

Thematic narrative analysis is therefore a qualitative research method that extracts themes from a personal-relational encounter (interviewer/interviewee - researcher/researched) recorded in spoken words, written text, author/researcher memory and intersubjective unconscious processes – some of which can be captured using another research methodology - autobiographical reflexive narrative offering intersubjective evocation of meaning that acknowledges the presence of the unconscious (Eigen 1992).

Group Intersubjective Analysis

A qualitative research day brought together twelve participants from multidisciplinary backgrounds including: a professor of theology (PhD supervisor); a social scientist; an academic researcher from the research department of the British Association of Counselling and Psychotherapy; three professional therapists (all completing PhDs, two integrative, one psychodynamic); a hospital chaplain and psychodynamic therapist; an Anglican priest, performance coach and integrative therapist; a counselling psychologist and qualitative researcher; a youth worker and doctoral student; an integrative therapist and supervisor,

group facilitator and CBT trainer; and myself engaged in a detailed, structured yet reflexive programme.³⁵⁸

The purpose of the day was to gain qualitative insight into the dynamics of an interview between myself and the two psychoanalysts I had interviewed and to see if these dynamics were replicated in a qualitative research group. The intention was to examine the relevance, reliability and transparency of the psychoanalytic intersubjective interview method I had developed. The group offered an opportunity for an intersubjective engagement with a capacity to generate its own reflexive insights alongside psychoanalytic or unconscious dimensions.

Each participant received copies of two interview transcripts and the two interview analyses written by me. They were asked to read one interview in detail and if time was available then read the other. After reading this they were asked to answer some questions in advance of the day and to write this up as a text to be given to me as further reflexive data.³⁵⁹ The participants were asked to read the analysis of my encounter then answer the question, ‘What is your perception of the analysis by Alistair Ross and how did you respond to that?’ The day was split into three sections, two focusing on the discussion of the participants’ reflections. The notes produced formed the basis of the group interaction on the day itself that were kept after obtaining ethical permission. This process, designed to examine

³⁵⁸ Each participant signed a form agreeing confidentiality and permission for their words to be recorded, transcribed, analysed and used in subsequent research and publications.

³⁵⁹ The questions were:

What was your perception of the experience of AR?

What was your perception of the experience of the psychoanalyst?

What was your perception of the dynamics between them?

What was your overall perception of the encounter?

whether the conscious and unconscious dynamics evoked by the textual and reflexive engagement of Alistair Ross was replicated in a different cultural, geographic, and interdisciplinary context, was very successful at all levels as detailed in appendix six.

A transcript was produced and subsequent discussion has taken place with each of the participants informally, and formally, in person, by telephone or e-mail. Wider dissemination has taken place through a qualitative research seminar at the University of Birmingham. The participants consisted of various MA students, visiting academics, part-time doctoral student, students completing a taught doctorate in theology, and my supervisor. The feedback focused on the following areas:

- The value of qualitative research methodologies based on narrative, the interpretation of texts and forms of triangulation
- The importance of structuring and running a research group, with particular attention given to selection criteria
- The value of examining transcripts on different occasions in different contexts allowing the opportunity to compare and contrast
- The importance of my supervisor attending both events being able to give further insights into the nature of the reflexive qualitative research process employed by AR – in narrative therapy terms the value of a witness
- Clarification about the value of intersubjective processes in qualitative research

Both the initial research day and the subsequent dissemination event discovered that the group/personal dynamics reflected in the interview between the researcher and the interviewee were reflected in their experience on the respective day. The participants

identified similar themes to those identified by me; and the events evoked similar dynamics to those described in my psychoanalytic intersubjective account. The correspondence of findings from both events led me to conclude this was a valid qualitative research methodology that can be included in doctoral research and suitable for further use and subsequent publication in an appropriate research journal.

This section outlines the evolution of the bricolage of my qualitative research methodology. Although presented in a developmental section-by-section format constructed to link together in a logical sequence the reality of this research was less clear at the outset. I initially planned to do a series of interviews and analyze the data looking for connections or contradictions between the public and published understanding found in part B and the private and yet unknown understanding found through the interviews. After several early interviews and meeting Eigen in person I soon came to realize that my location in the research process was having a powerful impact on me and that I was having a powerful impact on the other persons involved. Any methodology I evolved therefore needed to capture something of this encounter to make sense of the lived experience, always a vital part of a qualitative research paradigm. Where I fitted in the research was not known before but became known after. This research evolved three methods for capturing how contemporary psychoanalysts understand and speak about religion, spirituality and the sacred in the presence of a researcher identified as a minister of religion.

The semi-structured interviews generated a conscious engagement subjected to a thematic narrative analysis identifying significant themes within the overarching terms ‘contemporary psychoanalysis’ and ‘religion/spirituality’ arising out of lived experience.

This revealed a clear voice on these matters within psychoanalysis that has long been denied, kept quiet or left in professional isolation.

A psychoanalytic intersubjective interview approach gave space for the voice of the researcher identifying ontological and unconscious-becoming-conscious dimensions. These highlight the value in entering into lived experience in a qualitative research context. Until now the unconscious dimension has had limited exposure and application in qualitative research.³⁶⁰

The group intersubjective process acts as a form of triangulation that validated both methods as well as generating its own intersubjective insights. Of particular importance was the replication of the unconscious processes identified by me in my reflexive account, as well as new forms of engagement with the text offering new insights.

All qualitative research needs to answer the question about how quality is maintained in order to add insights suitable for other research. In this context quality was under-pinned by specific attention to a methodical and rigorous interview process; a transparent approach to ethical consent and textual material; consistency across interviews through using the same questions, but allowing for a unique relationship to develop; and the use of the insights of others through the group intersubjective process. This speaks about the richness and depth of textual and narrative engagement as well as lived experience forming a connection with others' narratives, conscious and unconscious, with the ongoing capacity for revealing. Just what was revealed is the subject of the next chapters.

³⁶⁰ The use of psychoanalytic techniques can be found in (Kvale 1996; Kvale and Brinkmann 2009) as well as (Hollway and Jefferson 2000).

CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE. PSYCHOANALYTIC INTERSUBJECTIVE INTERVIEW METHODOLOGY

This chapter is an account of entering into the lived experience of psychoanalysts and our intersubjective encounter. The interviews took place in the space in which the analysts worked,³⁶¹ offering a place of security and familiarity where I was: an ‘outsider’; a professional colleague; an academic researcher; and a ‘non-patient’. This use of a therapeutic context has a capacity to evoke unconscious dynamics as the researcher, who is both a psychodynamic therapist and a minister of religion, becomes a reflexive participant in examining the lives of others through conscious and unconscious processes. Experiences or beliefs about religion and spirituality cannot always be fully expressed in words but rather in ‘felt presence’ and the researcher was open to the possibility of intersubjective presence of the unconscious becoming conscious in the room.

1. Contextual Issues

The following accounts utilize the same structure for each interview using the categories of:

- The past in the present – ontological assumptions
- The personal present – conscious encounter
- The unconscious present – unconscious encounter
- The shared present – intersubjective presence

This research encounter has the potential for generating new insights into psychoanalytic being as well as religious and spiritual presence. Such a unique person-to-person encounter cannot be easily replicated at every level, as the unconscious is uniquely different due to the

³⁶¹ With one exception.

intersubjective nature of the two participants. Within this common structure each interview was unique, therefore the writing varies in length and style as I engage again with the person and the event. The intention is to capture the essence of conversations that flow backward and forward, not as an interrogative form of interview: rather taking the forms of conversational/dialogic (Foley and Valenzuela 2005) and empathic interviewing (Fontana and Frey 2005). Empathic connection included a sharing of ontologies through conversational engagement and a revealing of vitally important beliefs, values and feelings. This can only be transitional as what emerges out of one encounter is not a full portrait of the person, like a Lucian Freud painting, rather a Robert Mapplethorpe Polaroid – a snapshot in a certain time and place. Yet both artist and photographer portray visions of strength and vulnerability in the naked flesh.³⁶²

From the eleven transcribed interviews, six were selected on the basis of the quality of the intersubjective encounter and the quality of ‘felt presence’, that appeared more strongly in some encounters than others. To set a context for these interviews, brief notes introduce each person before their narrative is explored reflexively. The value of such accounts of ordinary experience is that they offer knowledge that is often excluded in theoretical analysis. Following Ellis, Orsi, Miller and Etherington (Ellis 1995; Etherington 2004; Orsi 2004; Miller 2008) I have included brief autoethnographic and heuristic ‘snapshots’ of my meeting with six psychoanalysts to record my ‘being there’. This is Geertz’s term for the researcher’s heuristic perspective within the research process of acquiring data, allied to sufficient reflexivity to analyze this (Geertz 1988). It is a ‘perspective which is shaped by

³⁶² A personal regret about this research is that I did not photograph each interviewee, uncertain of my photographic ability (rather than photographic interest), thus potentially adding another dimension to this exploration. At this stage I was still in the darkroom (Harper 2005).

the physical and metaphysical use of place’ (Pole and Morrison 2003: 139) – in my case the physical space of the consulting room of the analyst and the intersubjective space of the unconscious. Both frame the encounter as we engage in religious, spiritual and analytic discourse with the potential to evoke the sacred.

Jessica Benjamin (JB)

Jessica Benjamin is a pioneer in the fields of relational psychoanalysis, intersubjectivity and gender theory. She is a psychoanalyst in private practice in New York and is on the faculty at the New York University Post-Doctoral Psychology Program in Psychoanalysis and Psychotherapy. She is best known as the author of *The Bonds of Love: Psychoanalysis, Feminism and the Problem of Domination* (Benjamin 1988), *Like Subjects, Love Objects: Essays on Recognition, Identification and Difference* (Benjamin 1995) and *Shadow of the Other: Intersubjectivity and Gender in Psychoanalysis* (Benjamin 1998). Jessica Benjamin is also an associate editor of the journal *Psychoanalytic Dialogues* and a founder and board member of the International Association for Relational Psychoanalysis and Psychotherapy (IARPP).

Meeting Jessica Benjamin

The red 1-line subway train clattered into 18th street station on 7th avenue. The press of commuters parted momentarily as I was swept off the train in a wave of people, along the platform and up the stairs to be deposited at the borders of the fashionable and thriving Chelsea district of Manhattan. Two streets away lay my destination, the consulting room of JB, and the subject of my interview. Two streets of tenement houses, apartment blocks and renovated warehouses studded with the occasional art galleries, fashion boutiques and a

multiplicity of ethnic diners and restaurants. Two streets of Mack delivery trucks and yellow cabs as the frenetic pace of New York life shifted into top gear, the noise reverberating all around on a cold December day. Occasional glances at the map kept me on course until I arrived ten minutes before the appointment, my stomach telling me I was nervous.

I had never met JB before; all our contact had been through e-mail – a virtual meeting sparse in detail and texture. As I stood outside the 19th street apartment block, it all felt very real, this is why I was in New York. The glass doors swung open to reveal a uniformed receptionist who pointed me to the elevators.

The silent and swift transition ended as the elevators doors parted - like the subway - revealing a long and light-filled corridor. At the right door I offered a tentative knock: the door swung open to reveal JB, in reality more diminutive than my mind's projection. 'Alistair Ross?', she inquired in a distinctive American accent as she welcomed me in and led me through to the consulting room, with a galley kitchen to one side. Large windows ran down one side opening out the size of the room. Sitting in the proffered chair and setting up the recording equipment JB offered me coffee. 'I need coffee' she said and when I said 'I don't drink coffee, only Earl Grey tea', she laughed playfully and remarked 'How English'. There was to be much laughter in the interview – indicating a sense of shared exploration and a relaxed examination of areas close to the heart: psychoanalysis, the sacred, the spiritual, the religious and perhaps a touch of anxiety.

Personal ontology

JB's ontology is shaped by late twentieth century radical European Marxist agenda allied to a feminist vision loosely summarized as Critical Theory. The ideas of Marcuse's *Eros and Civilization* (1957) and the excitement of life as a student in Frankfurt³⁶³ influenced her identity and the components of her ontology: the importance of dialogue/dialectic; a questioning of power structures; developing common humanity; and the personal investment to put ideas into practice. For JB the development of being is related to eros, as an expression of a driving desire within all humanity for embodiment and physicality, vitally influenced by our attachments (both past and present) (Marcuse 1969).

At a personal level this ontology communicates in her evident desire to enjoy life - as a proud mother she talked warmly about her son. JB also spoke about the growth of others revealing a vicarious pleasure in their achievement and her part in that. Yet there are others that JB clearly wants to distance herself from: 'Big business' and 'Republican' are objectionable words in her vocabulary, as she amusingly reflected why she does not attract clients from these groups.³⁶⁴

Conscious encounter

Before the interview I was in some kind of awe of JB due to the creativity and breadth of her thinking. I wondered whether I would be able to demonstrate a sufficient knowledge of her work, feeling a little out of my depth. I realized that this had been an implicit assumption in my preparation for interviews, I wanted to probe beyond ideas and be able to

³⁶³ Location of the Institute of Social Research.

³⁶⁴ Such a response chimed with an impassioned anti-Bush Republican exposition from Eigen when I joined his study group earlier. Eigen and JB share in training cohorts of psychoanalysts in New York outside of the restrictive confines of the New York Psychoanalytic Society and Institute (Kirsner 2000).

discuss issues of religion and spirituality. I wanted interviewees to trust me, a trust I needed to earn.

The interview started in a warm business-like way, a welcome and the offer of coffee, discussion about confidentiality, ethical permissions and the setting up of recording equipment. As we both relaxed JB told that me she had ‘stayed over’ for the interview but was time-limited to an hour as she needed to get her car out of the underground car park before incurring another 24-hour parking fee. I experienced a frisson of disappointment as earlier interviews had taken over an hour.³⁶⁵

Despite preparation I had missed a key article by JB (Benjamin 2005a) and I found myself embarrassed.³⁶⁶ JB offered me a summary but having subsequently read this article (Benjamin 2004, 2005b) it would have taken the interview in a different direction (I suspect on a rather more technical and theoretical route) and could have missed JB’s capacity for empathy. As the interview progressed JB and I relaxed which comes across through: shared laughter; cutting across each other; an eagerness to speak and share; ongoing connection through verbal prompts (uh, uhm etc.); engagement with the subject; use of my name; and a playfulness from JB suggesting that I might need to go to ‘Sunday School for psychoanalysts’.

We both chose to be self-revealing. JB told me about her son and his achievements with touching warmth and pride and I talked about being a twin. What came across throughout

³⁶⁵ When I discussed the project originally I had learnt people were generally willing to give an hour but more hesitant beyond that and this also drew on my own experience of being interviewed for academic research.

³⁶⁶ This comes across in the tone of voice in the recording of the interview.

was a high level of honesty – a genuine person to person encounter – and when I asked JB why she had been willing to be interviewed, the initial reply was ‘You were so bloody persistent’ but then she went on to talk about a desire to help as she had a colleague who struggled to find suitable analytic interviewees when in New York.

Unconscious encounter

The central tenet of psychoanalysis is that all encounters have unconscious dimensions³⁶⁷ and layers of unconscious meaning communicated through dreams, symbols and metaphors (Long and Leper 2008).³⁶⁸ Several key metaphors emerged in this interview. One was ‘Republican’ (representing all that she is opposed to and evident in the then US Government) that JB used metaphorically to represent all that she stands against all she believes as vital for human well-being. JB views fundamentalism (Christian, Islamic, political) as something she abhors and wants nothing to do with. Her fear of being described as ‘spiritual’ was that it would align her with people/groups she is fundamentally opposed to. JB’s approach is of an inclusive spirituality that accommodates Buddhism, yoga and other religious/spiritual practices - rather than right-wing Christian fundamentalism. Yet there is another more profound analytic metaphor that I initially missed until discussion with my supervisor – that JB and I were caught up in some Oedipal dynamic. We did not address issues of authority in this interview based on my intrinsic and projected authority as a male minister of religion. JB requested I remove one reference, as she was concerned it would be taken out of context and misunderstood. I agreed to do this

³⁶⁷ While some philosophers and theologians would dispute this statement, it forms part of my ontological understanding and is the contribution of psychoanalysis to the history of thought.

³⁶⁸ A search using the word ‘metaphor’ in the title in PEP v.7 produced a list of 95 articles and reviews predominantly from the 1970s onwards.

as it was part of the ethical process, however the unconscious Oedipal dynamic carries meaning related to authority and threat of what is permitted and prohibited.

JB's inclusive views featured in another metaphor 'soccer' and the task of the analyst to keep several balls moving down the pitch at the same time, not just one. The desire to maintain multiple perspectives reinforces her inclusive perspective on life, psychoanalysis and spirituality and distances her from dogmatic one-dimensional (one ball) perspectives that would be commonly found in traditional psychoanalysis and religion. Soccer is very different from the macho culture of American football, JB offering that she does not fit within traditional societal stereotypes that are offered.

JB's last metaphor was more complex as she used the analogy of 'surfing' by engaging with the 'third' in a person's psyche. There are moments of connection, exhilaration, aliveness, a harmony of person and nature but it can all come crashing down, with the bruising experience of getting 'wiped out'. Getting back on the board can be hard to do. Whether the 'third' is within the person that is reached through intersubjective encounter (JB's view) or both within and without the person to Other (AR's view) there is no denying the exhilaration and the bruising of the journey into the sacred. The last metaphor was interrupted by a telephone call from a client that I only heard JB's side of which revealed JB to be (though she would not have been conscious of this) empathic, concerned and offering a spiritual/psychological holding.

Intersubjective presence

How did I as the interviewer impact on JB was a question I came away with? I had fleetingly experienced the impact of my owned spirituality on JB, so what the interview

allowed was JB to clarify her understanding of the vital place of spirituality as recognition of the psyche engaged with other, the 'third', whilst avoiding fundamentalism of any kind – religious, psychoanalytic or political – and being able to do this in the presence of someone who has made a similar spiritual journey (Ross 1997, 2008). The interview ended abruptly as JB saw the time and needed to get her car out of the garage, yet she clearly wanted the interview to continue - what follows was not recorded.

JB asked me to accompany her to the underground garage and in the lift said that she had experienced in me 'a quality of light' that she thought was indicative of spiritual presence. Even in this transcript the unconscious intrudes as a 'slip of the keyboard' I wrote 'life' not 'lift'. As soon as she had opened the door she sensed something about me that enabled her to trust the interview process and for her to feel she could say what she wanted. JB felt this interview 'was meant to happen'. I felt profoundly touched by such a response that was very affirming of my spirit/psyche at a deep level that I cannot quite put words to – as is commonly the case with intersubjective/mystical experiences.

I was left feeling elated and wistful as JB drove off in her Volvo station-wagon. It felt we had just started to meet and this had been a rich experience. I left thinking life is for enjoyment, growth and a fulfilling of potential with the capacity to give and receive love – which to me speaks of a sacred encounter.

Phil Mollon (PM)

Phil Mollon is a clinical psychologist, psychotherapist and psychoanalyst who is Head of Psychology and Psychotherapy Services at the Lister Hospital, Stevenage. He has written numerous books on trauma, shame, dissociation, the unconscious, the work of Kohut - and most recently on his unique psychoanalytic energy psychotherapy (Mollon 2004, 2008). This combines insights from the psychoanalytic tradition with a holistic understanding of the body, mind and energy. Psychoanalytic listening identifies psychodynamic conflict and trauma - and then the client is guided to use simple procedures to stimulate the energy system in order to clear the structures that generate and maintain the problem.

Meeting Phil Mollon

PM and I had briefly corresponded on the subject of ‘terror’³⁶⁹ and he had warmly replied with a paper on evil in therapeutic relationships. Terror and evil did not seem promising foundations for an interview but revealed PM as an original thinker that would add unique insights for my research.

As I sat in the waiting area of a hospital-based psychiatric unit, I was reminded of a unique institutional feel recalling my time as part of a Chaplains’ department in a psychiatric hospital twenty-five years before. This had been a very positive experience that introduced me to the world of psyche and therapy (Ross 1997). As I was musing, PM appeared, introduced himself and took me to his office.

³⁶⁹ A lecture I had given to the annual conference of the Association of Anglican Advisors in Pastoral Care and Counselling.

What I noticed immediately was the noise, institutional noise, within the building and a great deal of noise outside the building – hardly a haven of quiet therapeutic ambience. PM struck me as being dynamic: there was an energy about him that went beyond his medium build, quiet voice and conventional attire. On the wall were framed certificates on ‘thought field therapy’ that struck me as unusual. I had even then, and despite my ‘normal’ pattern of forming positive transferences to interviewees, a sense that his person would match my high opinion of his writings.

Personal ontology

PM’s ontological views are holistic in nature and are expressed through a series of overlapping concepts. Firstly, PM adopts a concept of universal connectedness. He combines quantum physics, Callaghan’s energy psychology, Freud’s unconscious, and a spiritual tradition that recognizes God. ‘We are all interconnecting energy fields’ that connect the psyche, the body, the mind, and which spans distance and time, including both the unconscious and God. This results in a universal desire for something more, something or someone beyond, a true self, and an expressive spirituality unhindered by dogma. People are ‘ever unfolding’ and this brings great pleasure to PM to see this happening.

Secondly, paradoxically we live with the illusion that we can know our true self, yet this aspect of self is highly elusive. However our search for the true self forms part of a narcissistic structure that defends us from change or engagement with new and evolving concepts.³⁷⁰

³⁷⁰ For a detailed examination of these ideas drawn from Winnicott, see Ulanov (Ulanov 2001).

Thirdly, as human beings we also have destructive and negative aspects that can damage, traumatize and shame others. PM's vision is to help people who have experienced such damage to recover their uniqueness, not denying their traumatic or shameful experiences, but neither being dominated by these nor false selves that hide them. This requires a radical 'beginning with where people are' rather than fitting them into a theory – psychological, psychoanalytic, religious or spiritual.

Fourthly, we evolve out of a time-bound context limited by the language, images, metaphors and understandings; therefore language as used to describe being is always provisional. Consequently life always has a sense of mystery through which we engage with our 'spiritual strivings'.

Fifthly, PM locates himself as an outsider speaking about areas/subjects that he knows others will disapprove of, personally and professionally. He is happy to be an 'independent voice' and not part of any group so that free enquiry is not constrained in any way.

Conscious encounter

The experience of engaging with the opening page of the transcript is that it seems disjointed as the lines are continually split by PM's verbal 'hmn'. Inevitably we are both settling into the interview and he was perhaps more nervous than I had anticipated. As a consequence I rather 'drive' the interview and am much less passive than in other interviews. PM's verbal prompts tell me he is with me and felt far less intrusive in actuality than they appear in their textual form.

As the interview developed I very much warmed to PM and I experienced him moving from an initially cautious, guarded professionalism to a more open, relaxed stance facilitated by my contact with Paul Goodliff and Patrick Casement, people he knew and respected. Later in the interview PM recognized me more fully and wished there had been more time to hear from me. There is the use of humour, my self-revealing of my own ideas, which at times felt as if I was informing PM of developments he was not aware of. Yet I found it difficult to accept PM's compliment at the depth of research that I had done on his previous work and I still found myself being apologetic that I had not read all his work. As the interview progressed there was a talking over each other and at times it seemed as if I was speaking PM's words for him.

Unconscious encounter

This interview left me wondering again about the power of the unconscious, not in an obvious 'slip of the tongue' identified by Freud, but rather in philosophical, ontological and theological terms. The unconscious felt more present in this interview, transcription and analysis than most others. I quoted PM's writing on the unconscious and in doing so unconsciously identified what I believed and felt was happening in the dynamics of the interview and its aftermath.

At the deepest level of the unconscious, pure symmetry prevails. All is one and the whole is reflected in the smallest part - an insight as old as human culture. In the depths of the unconscious, in pure symmetry, we find the Godhead, the awesome Other within - the 'Subject of subjects', which can never be the object - the source of our being and fount of sanity and madness, of creation and destruction, of Grace and Terror (Mollon 2000: 71).

This links with another unconscious association in the interview – the reference to C.S.

Lewis and the Chronicles of Narnia. The Narnia stories offer us entry into a mythical

universe that allows different perspectives, including the religious and the spiritual, and the recognition of good and evil. There are new opportunities, new struggles, new challenges, new discoveries and perhaps this is the link with PM who offers to both Christianity and psychoanalysis a new domain of human encounter with the Other.

Intersubjective presence

I gave PM an opportunity to speak about complex areas that he feels are important but easily misunderstood. PM felt able to explore the more controversial work he has done on energy therapies and their roots in Freud. When at the end of the interview I asked why he had agreed to be interviewed PM gave the most surprising answer of all interviewees. He said apart from wanting to be helpful to me, it would have been ‘spiritually wrong not to ... it would ... seem like turning one’s back on God to refuse’ (PM 857-859). This rooted our encounter as a spiritual and sacred encounter invoking the name of God. The intersubjective space thus assumes the character of sacred space that was uniquely created by both the spiritualities of researcher and researched, utilizing the unconscious energy present.

As I engaged with PM through the final transcription and my immersion in that, one particular thought struck me - he was a psychoanalyst I would like to be in analysis or psychotherapy with. This was primarily because of his holistic, embodied thinking and being, and maybe because there was too an unconscious symmetry that the above quotation identified. The ‘felt sense’ of unconscious encounter was powerful, leaving me with a vital sense that there was much more than I had been able to elicit in one interview.

Alessandra Lemma (AL)

Alessandra Lemma is a consultant clinical psychologist, psychoanalytic psychotherapist and psychoanalyst. She is Trust-wide Head of Psychology at the Tavistock and Portman NHS Foundation Trust and Visiting Professor of Psychological Therapies, School of Health and Human Sciences, Essex University. She teaches and publishes over a large number of areas including: psychopathology; humour; psychoanalytic psychotherapy; trauma and body image disturbances; Klein and envy; self-harm and suicide and the applications of psychoanalysis. Lemma is currently pioneering Dynamic Interpersonal Therapy in conjunction with her colleagues at the Anna Freud Centre, London.

Meeting Alessandra Lemma

Before meeting AL³⁷¹, she was simply the author of a book that I had adopted as the key text for the psychodynamic course I ran.³⁷² AL agreed to do a training day and I arranged to collect her from the concourse at New Street railway station, Birmingham.

It seemed surreal meeting a highly regarded author, speaker and psychoanalyst outside Millie's Cookies but that's what happened. In my mind I was expecting a tall Italian grey-haired academic wearing black. When AL approached me I was surprised as she was very different from my imagination. As the day unfolded I found her to be erudite, creative, thoughtful with a quality of 'realness' that I found immensely attractive.

³⁷¹ Two years before this interview took place.

³⁷² *An Introduction to Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy* (2003). Lemma was also the author of other highly rated books: this however was the one that best suited my course.

Fast forward two years and I am sitting in an anonymous waiting room in an unfamiliar hospital waiting to be called. While I would not normally describe myself as anxious, that ‘anxious waiting’ is a now an aspect of me I recognize. Any anxiety was allayed when on exiting the lift I was greeted warmly by AL, with her big smile and welcoming handshake. We moved to her office and while setting up the recording equipment talked about journeys, meeting again and ethical permission. It was a swelteringly hot day despite all the windows being open. AL said that we had just over the hour as she had supervision and mentioned that she didn’t normally do interviews, as her life was incredibly busy. I replied that she had obviously been promoted since I last saw her, she laughed. Warmth, laughter and shared discovery - spiritual and psychoanalytic - were to be the hallmarks of this interview.

Personal ontology

AL’s Italian, Egyptian, French and British familial and educational backgrounds give her a capacity to see how culture-bound groups can become, where what is held as the ‘truth’ is only that held by this culture and may not be truth in any absolute sense. AL sees relationship as vital, a quality of human encounter that enhances others and her choice of analysts was on the basis of relational being rather than reputation. This reinforces the vital importance of compassion for patients that AL communicates. Being inspired and inspiring others is vital for AL as she writes what she feels passionate about. Knowledge is for sharing, connecting, inspiring as ‘I really do live and breathe these ideas’ expressing something creative in her. Belonging is also a central concern and AL finds a sense of belonging in the psychoanalytic community and the wider professional community. Insight into self has been a hallmark of AL’s life, entering analysis at a young age (20) and is part of a lifelong quest to discover more in herself and others. She wishes to utilize the

resources that people have within them whether they are understood as ‘a life-force, god, an internal object’.

Conscious encounter

Knowing AL only had an hour³⁷³ I drove the early stages of the interview, which AL seemed happy with, indicated throughout by making important verbal non-word responses. When she did verbally respond it was very affirming to hear that my work and ideas as given voice in the interview, were ‘fascinating’. This builds an empathic connection allowing the interview to become a shared endeavour, a space that reveals a willingness to engage in the task of creating something unique. At one point AL appears to take responsibility for the result of the interview by asking if she is not giving detailed enough answers. At another time, we both finished each other’s sentence simultaneously.

One of the enjoyable aspects of the interview is that AL has space to think, rather than it being an opportunity to talk about an area of shared interest and language or to say things that are important to the person for which the interview is a platform. AL free-associated ideas, letting thinking and feelings emerge spontaneously precisely because for her this is a new area and she is keen to discover where it goes. AL looked to me to help her answer the questions, a role reversal where AL allows herself to not be in charge of the interview locating me in the ‘expert’ position. Yet at the end AL had some names of other people to follow up including AN and Salman Akhtar demonstrating her own knowledge of people who could help.³⁷⁴

³⁷³ I had learnt from previous interviews that they could easily run on into a second hour.

³⁷⁴ I would have liked to interview Akhtar: however he is based in Philadelphia, USA and could not be fitted into a self-funded itinerary.

At the end of the interview AL spoke movingly about her marriage in an Anglican Church, reflecting the background of her husband, and out of the warm relationship with the minister agreed to have her son baptized so that he could make his own choices later on. I missed the opportunity to probe a little more into a latent spirituality expressed by AL but noted the fact that she reveals this to me as a minister of religion.

Unconscious encounter

There was a car alarm sounding in the car park below AL's office and she offered to close the window, expressing the hope it would soon stop. The alarm is much louder on the tape than my memory recalled offering several potential meanings. Firstly, the capacity to both hear and not hear as I tuned-out what was clearly intrusive. A key aspect of my research methodology is to capture what so easily becomes edited or tuned-out. By entering into the interview encounter, attuned to the presence of conscious and unconscious associations, new and revealing dimensions of knowledge can emerge. Secondly, adapting the concept of symbolic unconscious communication in a series of reflective questions: Was this session going to be alarming? Was I going to 'scare off' AL who had previously communicated that she did not feel she had any expertise in this area? What 'windows' were going to be opened or closed and was I going to see into the window of AL's soul/psyche?

At another level what the 'sound' of the alarm does is to draw attention to the 'sounds' in the interview that are difficult to capture in textual form. The quality of laughter, the passionate responses, the amusing questions, the soft bird-like cooing of hmnm hmnm, the pleasurable engagement, and the empathy for others. Above all there is a sense of playfulness with sounds, words and ideas that recalls Winnicott's emphasis on play as the

central therapeutic task (Ulanov 2001). AL and I are engaging in play that involves the liminal place of new discovery, objective facts and subjective feelings/emotions – no one of which was consciously imagined prior to this encounter.

In preparation of the final text of the transcript, line 6 should have read ‘the purpose of this research’ but instead read ‘the purpose of this search’. The unconscious typing error reveals that this research is not an objective quantitative analysis, rather it is a search - in the sense of discovery of the new - for the sacred in psychoanalysis or the search for the soul/sacred in the subterranean depths of the psyche being undertaken by me in conversations with others.

I found it difficult to be objective with AL because from my very first meeting I instinctively liked her and wondered what could be happening at an unconscious level? In one way it is a human-to-human encounter where you meet someone and it works, there is a fit. Applying psychoanalytic insight what else might be happening? It could be a positive transference on my part as I now realize that there is a capacity in me to idolize people I have interviewed. Transference begins in my immersion in their writing and subsequent interviews give opportunity for my transference to become enacted. Another aspect linked to positive transference is that this may be an instance of an erotic transference on my part.³⁷⁵ It may be that there is a positive transference on AL’s part because I am a minister of religion and in recent times such a figure has been important to her. It could be a combination of all three where I am in a parallel process in that AL sought as analysts people that inspired her and I sought as interviewees people that inspired me. AL said she wanted to do the interview as she had really enjoyed the day’s training she did for me at the

³⁷⁵ I do not know what AL thinks/feels and probably don’t want to know either in case it breaks my illusion. Her ideas about erotic transference are found in (Lemma 2003: 246-249).

University and that she had enjoyed the contact with me then when I had broached the possibility of an interview. It is clear that there was a mutual recognition of the other as someone who is warm, relaxed, engaging, and yet thoughtful – all positive aspects of being fully human and fully alive.

Intersubjective presence

Had this interview not taken place, AL would not have thought about the place of religion or spirituality. The first time she consciously thought about these in relation to psychoanalysis had been on our first meeting two years previously. So in one sense our brief history helped shape this present encounter, allowing AL to trust me and express her delights and concerns about the pressures of work, family, analytic patients and writing deadlines. AL did not feel she had anything to really say on a subject beyond her expertise, yet as she talked in the interview it was clear she had many helpful observations and comments, which appear in the later thematic narrative analysis. These come out of the encounter with me, so in another sense their discovery for AL was an intersubjective event, one she could not have reached on her own.

After the tape had finished as we were preparing to leave AL expressed the hope that I had obtained what I wanted or needed. I reflected that I felt I had done too much talking, while AL reassured me she had found the interview very helpful. Although expert in many fields she felt she had much to learn and listening to me had greatly helped her engage with what is clearly an important issue, the place of religion and spirituality in psychoanalysis. AL felt something of my passion for this come across as she shared in the experience. It is entirely possible for the sacred to contain powerful emotional dimensions, conscious and

unconscious that combine the spiritual and the sexual aspects of aliveness of being in the presence of another that shares such an encounter (Sheldrake 2002; Ind 2003).

Adam Phillips (AP)

Adam Phillips is a child and adult psychotherapist with an enduring interest in Freud and psychoanalysis. His personal analysts were Masud Kahn and Christopher Bollas, both vitally engaged in the interface between psychoanalysis and literature. Phillips has published and edited over twenty books, many as collections of essays. ‘Phillips has virtually invented the essay as a suitable form for penetrating psychological enquiry’ (Frank Kermode, undated) where he returns to the themes of psychoanalysis again and again. He writes regularly for the London Review of Books, the Observer and the New York Times, and is General Editor of the new Penguin Modern Classics Freud translations.³⁷⁶

Meeting Adam Phillips

AP is a well know literary figure whose provocative and playful writings on psychoanalysis belie an underplayed but significant scholarship and compassionate observation on being human. AP was due to give a lecture to the West Midlands Institute of Psychotherapy and I wrote introducing my research and asking for an interview. His fascinating lecture, on the origins of fundamentalism in the human psyche, was delivered in a sound-deadening wood-panelled lecture hall with inadequate amplification making it enormously difficult to hear all he said. This raised paradoxical feelings as AP communicated that words are clearly very

³⁷⁶ Instead of translation by a single editor, as in Strachey’s *Standard Edition*, each book is translated by individual authors, none of whom are psychotherapists or psychoanalysts. With no indexes, no footnotes and no attempt to standardize the translation from one volume to the next this allows each to become a literary text that gives fresh insights into Freud. Kirsner applauds this development in his article ‘Fresh Freud. No longer lost in translation’ (Kirsner 2007).

important but many were lost in physical translation. His response to me following the lecture was warm, immediate and engaging, ‘That sounds fascinating. I have an hour in July. Ring me’ and he gave me his telephone number.

On coming to edit AP’s interview the transcript finished after nine minutes while AP left his consulting room and the transcriber missed the re-start of the recording on AP’s return. I found myself transcribing the original interview material – a relatively new experience not done since the original interview with DB. As a consequence this took longer during which I was involved in two other activities that may have potential hermeneutic significance. One was producing a digital cyanotype photograph – a Nineteenth century photographic method that produces prints in a striking cyan/blue colour – using digital files and software rather than the potentially hazardous potassium ferricyanide. The other was writing a sermon on the relevance of theology today using the text from Mark 2:22 “And no one puts new wine into old wineskins; otherwise the wine will burst the skins, and the wine is lost, and so are the skins; but one puts new wine into fresh wineskins” (NRSV) concluding what is needed is less a theology of proclamation and more a theology of presence. This left me wondering, what would I discover in the presence of AP?

Personal ontology

AP’s atheism sees humans as very clever animals searching for meaning to avoid the discomfort that there is none. Consequently life is to be lived now with freedom or as much freedom as we can bear and while influenced by the past not dominated by it. Being human is to seek relationship, meaning and love and to live with the consequences of our actions without excuse or forgiveness. Added to this is either the evolutionary drive to perpetuate

the species or the desire to create out of an act of and expression of love: therefore our children are important, both in what they give to us and what they pass on for another generation.

Social and cultural contexts powerfully shape how we interpret words that express the uniqueness of the person and a close attention to this enables AP to come to striking conclusions. AP views secularization as a failed Modernist project because religion has remained a powerful influence in people's lives in opposition to the prevailing attitudes in the social and intellectual milieu he is part of. AP's reputation enables access to people and opportunity to do what he wants to do; yet he rejects the culture of celebrity as seen in giving privileged access to others. He sees the person as more important than the problem, their story needs to be heard so technique is subservient to relationship. The story of a life is always being told and re-told with opportunity for fresh discovery if one is able to move beyond rehearsed narratives. From a Jewish cultural background AP sees that he, like Freud, has the capacity to be both in and outside of dominant cultural narratives.

Conscious encounter

AP's study meets my dream requirements: the width of a Georgian terraced house complete with two large double-sash windows; floor to ceiling bookcases; books spilling over in piles across the expansive floor; a large leather topped traditional wooden desk; a wall full of paintings; and an inhabited and spacious untidiness. I fell in love with it, discovering a new definition of envy in a non-Kleinian sense.

I found AP to be a warm, responsive, curious, questioning man, who clearly had things to say and thought that he had a right to say them, unafraid of voicing his opinion and willing to reveal aspects of self. In some sense I felt a bond of trust was created in part because I don't know what he has experienced at the hands of other interviewers. At least one of the published interviews had a heading that seemed more sensational than the content implied, so I felt it important to clarify how this interview material would be used.

Unconscious encounter

This interview featured three significant unconscious events. The first was my typing 'fear' when AP said 'feelings' - 'Anything that stirs your strongest feeling makes your life more interesting (AP 598-599). So my unconscious fears revolving around this research are: completing the work on time; something happening so I could not complete the work at all; and that I will not have something interesting, valuable, readable, enjoyable or illuminating to say, the way I perceive AP's work to be. Yet more than this there is for me an unconscious fear in any encounter where I do not know the other person, a fear of exposure, failure, rejection, of being over whelmed, as well as of being liked and loved. However it is such encounters that enrich life, but each new relationship is always a risk.

Secondly, while talking about my background including being cut out of my parent's will – a bell began to toll in the background, followed by the sounding of a horn of a passing train. My father worked for British Rail his entire life and trains were a central part of childhood, as if to say that his presence is still alive and well in my unconscious despite any attempts to kill him or me off. I was left feeling very surprised that I was talking so much about my personal autobiography – serving as a powerful reminder that qualitative interviewing is a

two-way process with the researcher attempting to elicit other aspects from the interviewee by revealing something of themselves, consciously or unconsciously.

Thirdly, in describing his pictures AP says ‘Two of them are by two of my children, I mean two of them are by one of my children uhm and I love them’ (AP 753-754). This opens an area that I felt to be very significant in the moment of the interview and on the subsequent recording, poignant, sacred, touching but somehow I felt I could not enquire more. I know little of AP’s history other than that he has an adopted daughter. So I was left not knowing if there is a complex history and other children? This was further reinforced when late in the interview having asked about my faith, AP appears out of the blue, to say ‘Do you have any children?’ The interview left me feeling that AP clearly sees children as of great importance, more so than psychoanalysis or religion, and as recipients of the best we can offer ‘I love them’ (AP 755).

Intersubjective presence

My interview with AP led him to become curious about my faith, and what it is that drives, inhabits, activates, and motivates me? Of all the interviews I have conducted I was more open with AP as there seemed a genuine interest, and as a consequence I subsequently sent him my book *Evangelicals in Exile* (1997). AP was interested to know which theologians I read, how I came to faith and how I lived out my faith. I felt that he wanted a form of dialogue as he had shared something of his narrative and in turn wanted something from me? There was a sense of mutuality that flattered me given his profile and status, but which enabled me to see something of the man behind the reputation in the way a patient might see

him, with a warmth, a critical intellect, a curious, enquiring mind and presence. There is something vital about AP.

As I further reflected two other thoughts came to mind. Firstly, while the patient/interviewer sits or lies on a battered leather couch, AP himself sits on a simple upright unpadded wooden chair, as one would find in a dining room. It created images of discomfort in a greater cause – almost monastic or ascetic-like in its denial of comfort. Secondly, the quality, range and number of paintings on his wall all had a personal dimension. His life was in those images, but each one could be interpreted differently. In the absence of dreams, the pictures provided clues, images, symbols with which one can engage in another reality or dimension, that I would describe as both that of the soul and the psyche.

Anonymous (AN)

AN has a background in psychology, psychiatry and psychoanalysis and works as a psychiatrist and psychoanalyst. AN is a training and supervising analyst and a senior figure in the British psychoanalytic world. He lectures and writes extensively on a variety of subjects related to philosophy and culture. AN asked to remain anonymous as he felt being named was rather intrusive but agreed for his contribution to be retained.

Meeting Anonymous

I previously met AN at an international conference held at the University of London in November of the previous year. Unknown to me, AN was one of a wide range of academics and analysts speaking at the conference, examining how Freud had been translated and how

Freud's ideas were in transition in a new century. It was a rich two days and during one morning session, AN sat on the vacant chair next to me. He arrived a little late, seemingly flustered, and kept on playing with his battered leather briefcase until settling in his chair. He never seemed to sit still for long. I was unsure what to make of him, though he reminded me of how irritated I get when I sit next to someone in church who never settles and robs silence of silence. However at the end of the session I engaged him in conversation about what he was enjoying or finding in the conference to which he offered a frank opinion. AN asked me what I thought and I told him about my research. AN smiled and said mischievously 'I am religious, I believe passionately in atheism' and agreed to be interviewed at a later date. I was left feeling irritated and fascinated in equal measure. It was only once I did some further reading on the cultural engagement of psychoanalysis that I realized how influential AN was.

My first encounter with AN was rather ordinary, the next and the arrangement of it were not. I had changed academic location during the summer of 2007 yet AN consistently left messages and I replied only to find another answering machine. Finally he said it would be best to ring him at home on the Saturday morning before 1200. It happened that I was climbing Scafell Pike in the Lake District that day and reception was poor. At a short break I at last found a mobile signal and was talking to AN arranging an interview, not entirely concentrating, only to find myself falling down a slope and running at full speed in order to stop careering over an edge whilst maintaining a normal conversation with AN on the mobile phone. AN seemed oblivious to this and fortunately I managed to stop, and climbed back up to where my friends were still standing in amazement, as the last thing they had

seen was me disappear over the edge. I wondered if this was an unconscious portent of things to come?

On the day itself the train journey was uneventful, the reception at the clinic was familiar, as I had previously interviewed another person there. AN met me and took me to his office where he explained that he was limited to an hour as he had another meeting to attend.

Personal ontology

AN's ontological views fit within a Modernist scientific, philosophical, rational and realist framework. Psychoanalysis has the status of being a foundational body of knowledge; a body of truth and the task is to work this out in clinical, cultural and societal contexts. In current postmodern and pluralist contexts truth has become a difficult word, but AN wishes to retain it 'with a small "t"' (AN 104). AN comes to this as a passionate atheist and so finds a fit between his view and Freud's, 'I feel myself wedded to a tradition of Freud and Marx' (AN 167-168). For AN there is no 'ultimate being' or 'ultimate core' (AN 179), yet he values tolerance of other beliefs and values. We exist as rational, bodily creatures with yearnings and strivings but no soul. Life is about being passionate, and for AN ideas are passionately believed, held, argued, re-discovered as a vital way of being human.

Secondly, man is a tragic being where 'there is a pain at the centre of our being' (AN 420). 'Real life ... is ... thinking, breathing, sweating, labouring, suffering man engaged in his own tragic condition in life' (AN 419-420).

Conscious encounter

The introduction recounts my initial experience of meeting with AN: however as I interviewed him in context he seemed more natural, more contained and more settled even if the subject had caused him some initial worry. As the interview developed I warmed to AN's candour. My experience was that he moved from a position of cautious, guarded professionalism to adopt a more relaxed collegial stance. He very much focused on the task of answering the questions asked and did not delve into other areas. At the end AN acknowledged that he had asked me little of my religious background but perceived the interview to have been 'very facilitating ... a very rewarding experience' (AN 810-812) that he had enjoyed and wished to have a copy of the transcript as he felt he had made some important connections. This meeting felt like a robust encounter with someone who appeared certain of his views and enjoyed the opportunity to express these, yet who was willing to reflect on aspects of these in a new way.

Unconscious encounter

Forgetting is as an unconscious act and has assumed a significant place within psychoanalytic thinking that Freud linked to repression. Early on in the interview I mentioned that AN's edited book on psychoanalysis included brief biographical data for every contributor but not himself. AN responded that he was the editor and it simply had not occurred to him. At the time I said I would not interpret this however I later was left wondering what AN might be wishing to forget or even repress? Unlike some of the other interviews that took place there was less to speak of in this specific interview that related to the unconscious, or so I thought.

There was a more profound unconscious encounter that occurred long after the interview but one that was vitally linked to the interview. AN had not realized that I wished to name each participant, despite this being a clear statement contained in my introductory material and stated on the ethical consent form that AN signed (see appendix one). Consequently on reading the text that I sent to him, again as part of the ethical agreement, AN rang me to say that he had misunderstood this and felt rather intruded upon. Clearly this had not been my intention and we therefore negotiated confidentiality as a means of retaining AN's important contribution. Yet while this process was occurring it felt as if it was an emotional re-occurrence of my climb of Scafell Pike when I found I was 'falling down a slope and running at full speed in order to stop careering over an edge'. Thankfully, both the conscious and unconscious events, did not lead to disaster. It has validated my reflection that perhaps AN likes to retain control, expressed to some extent in the shape of this present text.

Intersubjective presence

The interview gave AN the opportunity to fulfil his own ambition for psychoanalysis, which is to broaden its scope and make links in the academic and cultural worlds as 'psychoanalysis does not belong to psychoanalysts' (AN 772). The interview also allowed AN to make discoveries for himself, such as seeing how psychiatry served very effectively as a false self at one time. It facilitated AN to 'put one or two things together' (AN 781) he hadn't done before. If anything I became the blank screen, allowing AN to project onto that varying unconscious issues. At the end AN acknowledged that he had deliberately not enquired about my religious background though he would have liked to hear about this if time had been available. The interview therefore more fully reflected the style of analytic

session found within a British Kleinian trained analytic context, rather than a genuinely intersubjective encounter as seen in my meeting with JB, PM, AP, AL or as we shall now examine, JG.

Jim Grotstein (JG)

Based in west Los Angeles Jim Grotstein is a pioneer of Kleinian and Bionian ideas and, following an analysis with Bion, has spent his career promoting and developing Bion's ideas. JG dedicates *A Beam of Intense Darkness* to Bion when he writes 'My gratitude to you for allowing *Me* to become reunited with *me* - and for encouraging me to play with your ideas as well as my own' (Grotstein 2007: v). These ideas are uniquely adapted by JG Grotstein drawing on his work with psychotic and borderline patients (Grotstein 2009a, 2009b). He also explores Bion's O, linking the unconscious, the numinous, and the mystical linked in subjective engagement (Grotstein 2000, 2001). JG has been influential as an original thinker, clinical practitioner, inspirational colleague, supervisor and author with over 250 articles to his name.

Meeting Jim Grotstein

This account begins with the end of the interview rather than the beginning. We are standing on Jim's drive in west LA in the late afternoon on a warm blue-sky November day - waiting for a taxi to arrive. Our meeting in this interview had felt profound, a human-to-human encounter at a depth that Buber would have described using the terms I-Thou. As I proffered my hand Jim pulled me towards him and gave me a big hug saying that meeting

me had been ‘more important than you can imagine’.³⁷⁷ It felt, outside the interview context, that JG was speaking from a deep place. Reflexive and narrative honesty help me acknowledge that Jim with his passion for Scotland (the same name as my Scottish father) felt closer to me in those moments than my own father ever has. Was this an unconscious projection on my part? Was Jim a recipient of my projective identification that he had acted into? While there are multiple realities and no one single causal explanation the experience fits with JG’s own theoretical development and one of his distinctive contributions to psychoanalysis – the transcendent position.

JG stated towards the end of the interview that ‘love and god are the missing element of psychoanalysis’ (JG 1865) and what characterizes this interview in particular was just how often he used the word ‘love’ and how often the term ‘god’ appeared. What JG has created is a unique synthesis of Platonic philosophy, Jewish belonging, Christian Science spirituality, Christian theology from the liberal tradition, Bionian insights, Kleinian technique and a striking use of metaphors drawn from neuroscience and astrophysics. Many of these strands were present in this interview, though some come from my earlier reading of his work but were held in mind during the process of the interviews. JG holds these together through various paradoxes including:

- When we search for O we never find O, but in not-searching O is present
- The unconscious is where we discover and create god, but god was already there to be discovered
- Spirituality is to be found in religion, but must be released from religion to be fully spiritual

³⁷⁷ These were not recorded as they formed part of our final departing conversation.

- We discover the eternal unconscious in our own unconscious and we contribute to the lives of others through the unconscious, but we are time-bound facing the finitude of death and non-existence
- Relational engagement at depth leads to new revelations, new connections, and new insights

Yet underpinning it all is love, a word often absent from psychoanalysis or examined within very narrow parameters.³⁷⁸ The biblical passage that came to mind in the interview was from St. Paul's first letter to the Corinthians, chapter 13, though the verses quoted come from the end 'through a glass darkly, but then face to face' which sums the encounter with JG, and at the end of a whole series of interviews, a theme that underpins sacred psychoanalysis. Sacred psychoanalysis is the attempt to experience love, consciously and unconsciously, through face-to-face encounter but which can only ever be through a glass darkly in that it is beyond words within a domain of the ineffable and the mystical, and ultimately within the realm and being of O, god/gods and God.

I sat in the large, comfortable and ordered study of JG, 'Call me Jim, I'm an American' located on the upper floor of a guesthouse where he sees his patients. JG, an 83 year-old man of medium height and build, grey hair and comfortable but conservative dress, looked so unlike the revolutionary figure he has been deemed. He spoke with warmth, charm and insight. He appeared to want to listen to me as much as I wanted to listen to him. Yet my blood pressure was still recovering from several hours before. I arrived at my anticipated time, having enjoyed the walk from UCLA on a balmy 32-degree sun-drenched November

³⁷⁸ Benjamin and Sayers are exceptions to this general trend (Benjamin 1988, 1995; Sayers 2003).

day characteristic of Los Angeles. JG opened the door, his lunch clearly interrupted and wondered who I was. I don't know who was more shocked as it became clear that JG had not realized I was coming for the interview. While we had agreed a date and a time JG had been expecting a confirmatory e-mail before the event. JG, maybe seeing my stunned expression, recovered his composure and offered to see me for forty-five minutes later that afternoon if I could come back. The door closed. I trudged back to my hotel in Westwood, near UCLA. My whole purpose in coming to LA was to see JG, he was the 'jewel in the crown'. At the newly appointed time, JG warmly greeted me and showed me to his study. He was very apologetic and said that he had rearranged his schedule for the following day and to give me some time then as well. I was overjoyed, as paradoxically our 'not meeting' had resulted in 'greater meeting'.

Personal ontology

JG carries with him a sense of destiny, a destiny that he amusingly refers to as being there since sitting on the lap of Tagore when JG was aged four. Tagore, a noted Indian writer, poet and mystic was fascinated with many of the themes that JG has pursued including: the humanity of God and the divinity of Man; nature mysticism; a fascination with science, physics and astronomy; psychoanalytic thought and literature; later becoming the founder of new movements that challenged imperialism and colonialism (Biswas 2003). JG found such a guru in the person and words of Bion, who JG describes as a genius, and has spent a lifetime advocating and developing his ideas (Grotstein 2007). There is therefore a vital correspondence between Bion and JG's ideas including the following:

- Faith in the creative response of your own unconscious
- Ontology focused on the ability to encounter O and be transformed by O

- Openness to the numinous and the mystical in a non-religious sense
- Belief in an Absolute Truth and Ultimate Reality
- Dreams and the Unconscious as messengers from God encountered as O
- Destiny is to be faced with a calm acceptance that embraces the suffering it brings

Stated simply Freudian and Kleinian metapsychology is based on the premise that people's psychic and subsequent emotional developments are based on the principles of pleasure seeking and pain avoidance. It is possible to transcend these motivations by experiencing a place of transcendence located within and without one's self that is variously ineffable and cannot be fully put into words, where the unconscious connects in unspoken communication.

Conscious encounter

JG had taken on some large, vital, projected form in my psyche. Now knowing I have a capacity to idolize, JG appeared an unlikely guru. Having engaged at depth with his highly complex and fascinating *Who is the dreamer who dreams the dream? A study of psychic presences* (Grotstein 2000) that led to a period of my own dreaming I was anticipating some polymath figure who I was unsure I would be fully able to comprehend in an interview. The human reality was very different. He was warm, affirming, complimentary and communicated a vital interest in my research using the phrase 'how wonderful'. My research was framed as a form of mutual discovery as if he had something to learn as well. Even in this relaxed atmosphere, my aim was to get as much from this person as possible in the limited time available. So early on in the interview my anxiety very much drives this.

Unconscious encounter

Had I ‘forgotten’ to confirm my appointment with JG? On reflection I realised I had simply expected the offered interview to stand, and had not felt the need to confirm – perhaps an unconscious belief that JG would be available to me. I also wondered if JG was ambivalent about an interview, preferring to let his written words speak for themselves? Given JG’s powerful belief in the unconscious, in part matched by my own, something was happening through our mutual awareness of the other’s unconscious, which transcends continents.

What mattered is what happened in the moment in that we met and gave time for unconscious processes to come into consciousness, thus offering a mutually informed unconscious meeting at another level. My time with JG was to have a very powerful impact on me. Between interviews I dreamt of JG, Scotland, angels – replicating JG’s vital dream relating to Klein – yet distinctly linking with my origins in Scotland. We discussed this as JG felt I was co-operating with the unconscious by letting it be both in the dream and in the presence of each other an unconscious symmetry was being revealed.

Intersubjective presence

As a Scotsman, my very presence had important associations for JG as one of his most significant dreams that subsequently shaped his development as an analyst was of experiencing two angels in a scene set in the Scottish Highlands. While I do not claim to be a ‘messenger from God’ I was aware that I am still a minister of religion that in analytic circles is about as rare as the appearance of angels. I had a sense on our departure that something in me and of me was to have a powerful impact on JG and the same dynamic that I would be powerfully impacted by JG. In fact this is exactly what a guru is able to do, but I think JG is not fully aware of this as he too is in thrall to his own guru in Bion. Two factors

stood out from this second meeting. JG described me warmly. ‘I am very much impressed by you, you are the consummate analyst minister, but not the minister of religion but the minister of god, I make a distinction’ (JG 1873-1874). This tribute deeply impacted me, linking with a parental transference, as I wish that it was something my own father could have said. As time raced by the interview ended and a taxi arrived to take me to Santa Monica to interview Robert Stolorow. Standing outside JG’s home I went to shake hands but JG embraced me and said ‘This meeting has meant more to me than you can ever imagine’ and instinctively I proclaimed ‘May God bless you and keep you’ in a form of benediction. A wave and the taxi drove away leaving me with much to ponder but feeling met, touched and encouraged in my very being – some might even describe it as love.

CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO. REFLEXIVE COMMENTARY AND ANALYSIS

A key idea developed in chapter one of part A was that ontological being (that finds some though not complete expression in religion and spirituality) precedes the dominant forms of epistemological knowing found in psychoanalysis.³⁷⁹ The previous chapter charted the lived experience of the researcher entering into the private world of psychoanalysts in their consulting rooms and once within this psychically contained space delving further into their private space of religious and spiritual belief or unbelief.³⁸⁰ Training as a psychoanalyst imposes an epistemological imperative (Elliott 2004) which when added to a hermeneutic of suspicion (Ricoeur 1970) and a collective need to belong to a self-defined and self-limiting group for approval and recognition (Leavy 1988) excludes other forms of knowing and being (Davies 2009).

Contemporary psychoanalysis has evolved a new paradigmatic identity that privilege pluralistic and intersubjective approaches to knowing, thus offering new opportunities for religious and spiritual engagement. The previous chapter examined the lived experience of contemporary psychoanalysts through the reflexive and intersubjective engagement of my 'being there', exploring the ontological and biographical origins that developed before psychoanalytic training, and the beliefs and values emerging during and after training. For some (JG, PM, JB, AP) this has been a re-fashioning of their identity where they shrugged off an implicit psychoanalytic identity in order to discover a new identity that recognized all

³⁷⁹ Though the two are closely related and should not be seen in isolation (McLeod 2001).

³⁸⁰ Rachel, a colleague and friend, who proof-read this thesis pencilled a reflexive comment on the margin of the page. 'This evokes the picture of a small boy sitting on someone's lap and then snuggling in very close, looking in the pockets, examining the buttons, feeling the material – very intimate'. This captures something of these encounters and demonstrates how texts have an ongoing life that can impact others, beyond those intended.

aspects of their being. My engagement in this revealing was to explore their ontology related to beliefs, values, experience and traditions reflecting religious and spiritual identities. The presence of myself as my-self and a representative religious figure with their-selves as themselves and representative psychoanalytic figures opens a space for the intersubjective engagement of humanness that some see as an expression of love (Wright 2009) and I later argue is an expression of the sacred. A critical reflexive analysis of the conscious and unconscious dimensions of these interviewees and encounters provides eight areas of reflection following immersion in this psychodynamic and intersubjective interview context.

The past in the present - ontological presence

The premise that ontology precedes epistemology shaped the critical examination of these psychoanalytic interviews. Psychoanalysts train after completing other professional trainings first: JB as an academic; PM and AL as clinical psychologists; AN and JG as psychiatrists; and AP as a psychotherapist and writer.³⁸¹ They therefore evolved an ontological being having committed themselves to academic (feminist critical social perspectives - JB and AL), philosophical (atheism - AP and AN; Marxist - AN and JB; metaphysics - JG)³⁸² or psychological (PM and AL) forms of thinking and meaning-generation prior to their psychoanalytic trainings, which have been retained through and beyond their trainings. Examining underlying beliefs about what it is to be human reveals aspects of a self that shape the work we do but which have a taken for granted quality, the

³⁸¹ Although AP is an insightful writer on and critic of psychoanalysis, his professional affiliation is as a psychoanalytic psychotherapist rather than a psychoanalyst recognized by the IPA. In AP's terms he is a psychoanalyst as he acknowledges and works with the unconscious, is steeped in Freud's writing and has undergone two analyses with Khan and Bollas.

³⁸² JG is difficult to categorize as his work combines elements of Christian Science, quantum physics, mathematical sets and Eastern spiritual traditions.

facets of which I drew out from the interviews. A spontaneous expression of this occurred when four interviewees revealed that they came from Jewish backgrounds (AL, AP, AN, JG) - which though cultural in expression has powerful religious influences mirroring Freud's experience and the ongoing experience of psychoanalysis (Yerushalmi 1991; Meghnagi 1993; Frosh 2006). This information is not something they revealed in their writings but chose to share in this context of locating their being - consciously or unconsciously.³⁸³ All but one had been influenced culturally, socially, philosophically by religious backgrounds in Judaism, Christianity (PM) and Christian Science (JG) leading some to a wider adoption of spiritualities apart from religion (JB, AN). There was however concern about being labelled 'spiritual' as a reductive vision of the self that did not do justice to the person (JB).

There was a convergence of views of human nature as evolving (AP), experiencing a developmental process that balances internal (AL, JG) and external socially constructed realities (JB, AN) engaged in the search for meaning (PM)³⁸⁴ and offering a being capable of enduring the cruelties of life (AL, AN). All talked about clients in a way that revealed empathy, compassion, pride, respect, hope, love and passion, even if that passion was at times expressed as a desire to remove religious beliefs that were deemed harmful (AN) or the power of psychoanalytic institutions acting as religious authorities (JG). Tensions did emerge related to the notion of other/Other. Some held an over-arching atheism that there is no identification with other/Other (AP, AN), some held a spiritual perspective that there is a

³⁸³ This is not to suggest this was something hidden rather an aspect of self that is accepted but not questioned or examined. I have not read all AP's work so cannot authoritatively say he has not spoken of this.

³⁸⁴ Frosh argues that it is this that links psychoanalysis and religion, specifically Judaism (Frosh 2006).

linking to the other/Other (PM, JG), and some that there are forms of engagement in the space created psychically (AL) or intersubjectively (JB).

The personal present – conscious presence

The opening conversations related to the practicalities of interviewing, a socially stylised convention of greeting and enquiring about the journey, the setting-up of recording equipment and seating, a clarification of time limits and obtaining ethical permission.

My desire to establish trust and build rapport I saw as essential for an interview process where I would be enquiring about sensitive topics for psychoanalysts. My strategy was to be well prepared by having read as much of their work as possible, immersing myself in their thinking and searching for clues as to areas I could follow up as the interview evolved. This reflected my academic responsibility, giving due recognition to their work and contribution to knowledge. It also reflected my anxiety about being taken seriously as a researcher interviewing psychoanalysts and not being an analyst myself, though this was only mentioned once and never appeared to be a problem. It enabled me to orientate myself to the unknown and provide myself with intellectual defences. Such an approach had mixed results. Several were pleasantly surprised as I reminded them of ideas they had not connected before (AL, AN). For others it was not something that emerged in the interview (PM, AP) yet for JB and JG it revealed that despite my preparation I had missed a key paper (JB) or simply not been aware of the vast extent of their writing (JG). JG however found my ability to understand his work, to engage him with questions that stretched his thinking and to give him new opportunity for reflection a profound experience describing me as the consummate pastor/psychoanalyst. I experienced both embarrassment and pleasure,

conscious of how much I do not know, yet willing to own that there is much I do know that came across in the interview.

The initial focus was on their understanding of contemporary psychoanalysis, which some thought too general (JB, AP, AN) and others engaged with well giving them a chance to speak and find their voice (PM, AL, JG). As the previous chapter showed, this question elicited diverse responses revealing the complexity of contemporary psychoanalysis that contextualized the later focus on religion and spirituality where all the participants were able to share with me aspects of their religious past or present.

What is striking from this analysis is that three interviewees chose to tell me about their children. JB, AL and AP spontaneously talked about their children: JB spoke with obvious pride about her son's academic achievement; AL about her child's future potential relational and spiritual choices; and AP's about his daughter's artistic endeavours proudly displayed on his wall. AP was unique in being the only person to ask me if I had children as if I too was being drawn into sharing this important space to think and feel about those closest to me as if this is what it is all - psychoanalysis, religion and spirituality - about. My interpretation of this is that children are a symbolic representation of hope, love and the future. Children are our concrete forms of eternity, forms of life that go beyond us, that we have created and are often the focus of our love. From the atheistic perspective adopted by AP this is all there is, for JB with an intersubjective perspective that encompasses the other/Other they are part of the little/Big energy of universal existence and for AL, a world full of potentials and choices informed by internal and external relationship that offer hope. Children therefore share symbolic forms of meaning with those found in religion and

spirituality without becoming gods. Interpreting children in this way takes us into the next section on unconscious presence.

The unconscious present – unconscious presence

The rationale for a psychoanalytic intersubjective interview methodology as a distinct qualitative research tool lies in accepting the notion of the unconscious as a workable hypothesis and utilizing tools to explore this developed by psychoanalysis. Three analytic techniques were adopted: free association; transference; and the use of metaphors/dreams.

Firstly, free association is advocated by Bollas as the essential form of psychoanalytic being (Bollas 2007) and sees a return to Freud who advocates that analysis should progress ‘aimlessly, and allows oneself to be overtaken by any surprises, always presenting to them an open mind, free from any expectations.’³⁸⁵ While I had a structure for the interviews with several prepared questions, these were allowed to appear in the interview at a space and time that arose out of the interview itself. There were moments where the interview flowed in a free-associative form as I did not impose order on the interview itself. AL may be an exception to this where I felt I drove the interview: however, even here there were areas we explored that I had not imagined - particularly the talking about children. Such a free associative form also allowed the interviewees to ask questions balancing any potential power imbalance always present in interview settings (Gubrium and Holstein 2002, 2003). AP asked me what theologians I read. JB wanted to continue the conversation in a lift and a garage. AN wanted to know more about me but restrained himself due to time constraints.

³⁸⁵ Taken from Freud’s *Collected Papers* translated by Riviere, p. 327. Strachey’s translation is less fluent ‘the most successful cases are those in which one proceeds ... without any purpose in view, allows oneself to be taken by surprise by any new turn in them, and always meets them with an open mind, free from any presuppositions’ (Freud 1912: 114).

PM agreed to an interview as a spiritual responsibility. JG embraced me. AL discovered and talked about religion in ways she had not imagined.

Secondly, transference ‘denotes a shift onto another person ... of feelings, desires, and modes of relating formerly organized or experienced in connection with persons in the subject’s past whom the subject was highly invested in’ (Denis 2005a: 1776). This happens unconsciously: ‘part of the patient’s emotional life which he can no longer recall to memory is re-experienced by him in his relation to the physician’ (Freud 1910: 51).

I brought into the interviews the experiences of being a psychodynamic therapist who uses transference and counter-transference as a therapeutic tool and a minister of religion who has often borne the transferences of others. I could therefore identify various forms these took in relation to different interviewees. JB became a female authority figure that I experienced as challenging, and confrontational as well as personally affirming. With AL the transference was very positive, something that I had experienced before the interview in a previous meeting but even more so in the interview itself which had a playful dimension akin to Winnicott’s transitional space. AN was a male authority figure that I experienced (like JB) as challenging and confrontational though I warmed to his directness and sensed much more than I was able to see or AN share in the time and context available. AP offered to me an idealized transference in terms of his writings, his persona and his consulting room (see earlier in this chapter) which evoked feelings of desire that could be interpreted - as with AL - as an erotic form of transference.

JG elicited an idealized, positive and clearly paternal transference where the hug from him gave me more physical contact than I have experienced with my own father. PM was an enigma as I have found it difficult to identify any particular transference. I liked him, felt he had important things to say, noted he took risks in what he said but I was also left feeling that a great deal was not said. I noted at the time of the interview that he was one analyst I would have felt very comfortable being in analysis with. Reflection now suggests to me that my meeting with PM could be a twin transference where he represented aspects of me (Lewin 2004). Knowledge of transference phenomena is one aspect of interpreting the impact of the interview of the person as in fact they are not transference objects, they are people in themselves. Personal therapy has enabled me to identify these potential transferences and therefore this awareness adds reflexive dimensions of how these might shape meaning in vital human-to-human encounters.

Thirdly, the use of metaphors and dreams. In a 'traditional' psychoanalytic encounter a patient/analysand lies on a couch out of eye contact with the analyst and free associates while recalling their dreams.³⁸⁶ In contemporary practice with a greater focus on interpreting transference relationships, the use of metaphors is more common and the subject of current debate.³⁸⁷ Given the nature of psychoanalytic interviewing dreams are less likely to occur and be available to use as a tool to examine unconscious communications and meaning, although I did dream between the two interviews of JG. Marshall argues that 'metaphors provide the interface between the conscious and the

³⁸⁶ There are variations in clinical practice but this is what has become the myth of psychoanalysis as often analysts repeat what they have experienced in their own analysis. The couch and the interpretation of dreams form key images in the cultural iconography of psychoanalysis.

³⁸⁷ The journal *Psychoanalytic Inquiry* published its first volume in 2009 as a special edition on the subject of metaphor.

unconscious ... metaphors contain the derivatives of unconscious processes. Metaphors are mirrors that reflect all aspects of a person's being' (Marshall 1999: 45). Interviewees variously used metaphors of: conflict and religious intolerance (Islamic fundamentalism, Nazi Germany); co-operation and competition (soccer); the need for continuing learning (Sunday school); balancing exhilaration with fear - being on the edge (surfing); acknowledging the negative (Republicanism);³⁸⁸ suffering and death (tolling bell, the singing detective) and the struggle of good and evil (Narnia). The dream was a personal replica of a prior dream of JG that included angels and Scotland representing vital aspects of my autobiography and spiritual journey – which can be interpreted as a father-son transference. Such metaphors reveal unconscious layers to the conscious exploration of religion and spirituality in psychoanalysis addressing the fundamental issues of being. Working with the unconscious in contemporary psychoanalysis has a particular focus on the nature of intersubjectivity and the generation of a shared encounter that incorporates a potential sacred dimension.

The shared present – intersubjective presence

What was enabled by my presence with the interviewees that would not otherwise have occurred? Some experienced fresh insights into themselves. Several remarked how they had not thought of something that way before or made the connection. This may simply be due to the demands on their time that there is not always the time to think about new areas therefore the interview gave space to explore ideas, to try words out in an unfamiliar language. It gave me new insights into myself. Several interviewees drew me out in terms of talking about myself encouraging me to be self-revealing which included my relationship

³⁸⁸ This same metaphor and meaning was also used in my informal conversation with Eigen in the same week I was in New York to interview JB, JJ and JR.

with my father, the fact of being a twin, my being a minister of religion, what theology I read, what my hopes were for the future. Three offered specific comments about the spirituality of the encounter using such phrases as: a ‘quality of light’ (JB); ‘consummate analyst minister’ (JG); and a ‘duty to God’ (PM) to see me yet I am all too aware that this aspect of the encounter was deeply felt but difficult to categorize. I came away energised by these meetings as if something in my being was ‘stirred’, that something creative was taking place and that a level of meeting was experienced that transcended simple words and had the hallmark of the sacred.

Four other reflections arose in this reflexive analysis. Firstly, the importance of eye-to-eye contact. What cannot be communicated or transcribed from an audio-recording is what happens between the eyes of two people.³⁸⁹ Eye contact is profoundly important in human development as it establishes patterns of engagement and agency that we continue throughout life. The value of a mother or care-giver’s gaze is powerful in the development of the individual’s sense of self and patterns of attachment, while the absence of that gaze is experienced as deeply shaming (Wright 1991, 2009; Mollon 2002). This also has profound theological implications for the capacity to be seen metaphorically by god/God/Goddess – as the source of all religious and spiritual experience (Goodliff 2005a).³⁹⁰ Immersion in the interviews recalled that JB and AL engaged in a great deal of eye contact that I noted as significant. Psychoanalytic reflection on the power and nature of the maternal gaze and the place of the feminine in contemporary psychoanalysis is a key feature of JB’s work.

³⁸⁹ This could be captured through a sophisticated video recording involving three cameras, one on each participant and one viewing both to mark as an index. It is unlikely this would be possible out of a studio context and would lose the naturalness of the consulting room as the psychoanalytic space that I regard as essential for the emergence of unconscious processes.

³⁹⁰ The theologian John Hull explores how theology changes with the experience of blindness (Hull 1990, 2001).

Reflexive accounts of my autobiography (Ross 1997) and re-construction and re-enactments through transference in personal therapy suggest a lack of maternal containment and this may be something I was unconsciously seeking out or particularly alert to. There is a 'seen' and 'being seen' quality of these psychoanalytic interviews that risks conscious and unconscious emergence and revelation - part of which each interviewee must have realized.

Secondly, the importance of voice. What comes across from the audio recordings was how important tone of voice is in communication, where every voice has conscious and unconscious resonance (Wright 2009). Awareness of voice, tone, inflection, pauses and silence has the potential to offer a qualitative research tool for interpreting the actual words spoken, as a hermeneutic form of listening (Kimball and Garrison 1996). JB's voice is softer than her sometimes strident responses read in the text and a different aspect of her voice was captured through hearing her on the telephone which she received during the interview - a possibility that she had alerted me to before the interview started. PM's voice is quiet, gentle and enquiring. AL laughs, conveying excitement and energy. AP is studied, perceptive with an analytic insight of confident enquiry. AN has a deep voice that rushes into subjects then steps back with an ebb and flow of ideas. JG is that of a quiet measured wisdom and boyish excitement at times. The tone of voice captures the aliveness of a session, and featured in a later qualitative research day where sections of two interviews (JB and AN) were played. The impact was to replicate in the group the dynamics I had experienced in the interview (see chapter twenty).

Thirdly, I discovered the extent of my personal investment and that of the participants. A cost of doing qualitative research is the requirement to retain the integrity of acknowledging

a whole range of thoughts and feelings that would often be edited out. Reflexivity is a costly process and something that it is easy to pay lip service to at the start of a research process. The reflexivity presented here is a long endeavour to remain honest, open and seen to be fallible or flawed by others who may offer different perspectives. This was one of the main results of the qualitative research day - the willingness to expose one's deepest thinking and feeling and embryonic ideas with others and open oneself to their scrutiny and implicit approval or disapproval. In doing research interviews with a psychoanalytic dimension I have 'staked' myself as the investment which was far more than I had thought possible at the start. Little wonder I found myself anxious at times, particularly when I turned up at JG's and due to a misunderstanding he was not expecting me. However the result was one short interview (45 minutes) and one long interview (90 minutes) the following day with the opportunity to dream in-between thus allowing more space for my unconscious processes to offer insight. It is an investment that has 'paid-off' as these reflexive comments show and it has changed my understanding of contemporary psychoanalysis, religion and spirituality. Had such interviews not taken place my theoretical engagement with the subject (examined in part B) would still be valid and valuable. Yet I would have missed the aliveness of being that is a central feature of this research on psychoanalysis and the sacred, that analysts, philosophers, and theologians strive to capture in words, ideas, rituals and experiences.

Fourthly, the interviewees were all busy people, yet not so busy that they were unable to be interviewed. I had approached thirty analysts and a number declined which reveals to me that, consciously or unconsciously, the interviewees wanted to be interviewed. Theirs were voices that wanted to be heard, beyond the confidential analyst-patient encounter, in the

wider academic world. Expression of their motives ranged from: my persistence (JB); a genuine desire to help research and scholarship (JB, AN, JG); previous personal contact (AL); an opportunity to discover what they think (AP, AN); and for some a spiritual responsibility (PM, JG). Others felt both a duty and a responsibility to themselves, psychoanalysis, and the wider world of knowledge and human experience. A few were simply intrigued by the subject and wanted to know more from me (JG, AL). My experience with JB and JG particularly changed my expectations of what could occur in an interview and I adopted this in terms of shifting my focus from knowledge generation about religion and spirituality in contemporary psychoanalysis which I now reflect was my stance in the first interview with David Black, to lived encounter with intersubjective potential for the sacred.

This chapter has demonstrated that a reflexive psychoanalytically informed ‘entering into’ the research process elicits certain kinds of information not available otherwise. This requires levels of openness and transparency from the researcher/interviewer that are costly in terms of self-exposure, risking taking a position or making a statement that can be critiqued or rejected by other researchers. Yet the interview text also offers other forms of knowledge that are developed in the following chapter through a thematic narrative analysis.

CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE. A THEMATIC NARRATIVE ANALYSIS

The interview texts, eleven in total, were analysed through a form of thematic analysis that utilizes an interpretation of meaning through the narrative context.³⁹¹ This offered revealing insights into the little researched world of a significant group of psychoanalysts in GB and the USA, as they live and work in the early Twenty-First Century in relation to religion, spirituality and the sacred. Immersion and re-immersion in the interview texts elicited the following key terms that were read and re-read in their narrative context. The following terms form overarching themes that conveyed meaning across the range of the interviews and emerged out of the textual narratives. This chapter therefore expounds: Psychoanalysis and Freud; Key Psychoanalytic Thinkers; Contemporary Psychoanalysis; Contemporary Psychoanalysts; Religion; Spirituality; Buddhism; Mystical/O; and Love. These are examined in detail using the voices of the participants to reveal clusters of meaning (identified by sub-headings).

³⁹¹ The names of the eleven analysts participating in this research selected for transcription and analysis are detailed in the table below and their initials are used throughout the text. The transcripts of the interviews are contained in a CD.

INITIALS	NAME	INITIALS	NAME
DB	David Black	AL	Alessandra Lemma
JB	Jessica Benjamin	AN	Anonymous
JJ	James Jones	AP	Adam Phillips
JR	Jeffrey Rubin	JG	Jim Grotstein
AMR	Ana-Maria Rizzuto	JBR	Joe Bobrow
PM	Phil Mollon		

Contemporary psychoanalysis is a complex and multi-faceted term that contextualizes the emergence of religion and spirituality, therefore the opening question focused on the meaning of this term. All but one interviewee mentioned Freud and other psychoanalysts mentioned included Klein, Bion, Winnicott and Jung.³⁹² Taken together they offer a collective understanding of contemporary psychoanalysis and psychoanalysts. A subsequent question focused on the meaning of the terms ‘religion’ and ‘spirituality’ and the emergence of these in contemporary psychoanalysis.³⁹³

Theme 1: Psychoanalysis - Freud then and now³⁹⁴

The word psychoanalysis was rarely used without reference to Freud. Freud is viewed as a genius whose ideas are still valuable as the quality of his writings offers continuing discovery and being ‘deeply immersed’ (AN 58) in Freud is regarded as essential. While ‘old Freudian’ (JB 575) ideas have been superseded, clinically they are still of value when held alongside newer relational concepts. The ongoing appeal of Freud is such that Phillips is editing new translations of his work³⁹⁵ as Freud is seen as contemporary then and now. Despite greatness one of Freud’s limitations was that he ‘could have disciples, he couldn’t have colleagues’ (JJ 1041), reference to a psychoanalytic dynasty of the analysands of Freud, Sigmund and Anna. Part of that dynastic inheritance is Freud’s antipathy to, as well as Freud’s fascination with, religion. ‘Bion ... always wondered why Freud never

³⁹² Controversially while Jung is a very important figure in the history of psychoanalysis the IPA does not view him as a psychoanalyst.

³⁹³ The value of asking such an open question in a semi-structured interview is that it can preclude prepared answers (Kvale 1996; Kvale and Brinkmann 2009).

³⁹⁴ Freud, Anna Freud, Freudian, Freudianism - 78 references, 3 for Anna Freud.

³⁹⁵ These translations are being done by authors chosen for their literary, linguistic and translation skills. They are not psychoanalysts and Phillips’ editorial vision is to obtain a literary meaning from a text that avoids psychoanalytic and theoretical complications. This series is published by Penguin Books.

discovered the religious instinct which he felt' which 'was as powerful if not more powerful than the libidinal instinct' (JG 1265-1267).

What has changed is an appreciation of Freud in context, seen in the light of idealized Modernity, flawed secularization, and 'hard materialistic' but failing science (DB 405). There is greater appreciation of his Jewish origins³⁹⁶ and status as a cultural Jew and an outsider to the establishment enabling Freud to develop revolutionary ideas. Interviewees specifically mentioned Freud's religious engagement including his Catholic nanny, his long-standing correspondence with Pfister³⁹⁷, and his ambivalence towards the experience of oneness and spirituality around the term 'oceanic experience' (JR 27).³⁹⁸ Yet Freud as the fundamental atheist remains a potent influence in psychoanalysis, then and now.

Theme 2: Key Psychoanalytic Thinkers³⁹⁹

Freud's paradigm for psychoanalytic and religious engagement has been adapted by four influential figures that have shaped contemporary psychoanalysis.

The polarization of Klein

Melanie Klein - her person, her ideas and her followers form distinct groupings in GB and the USA but with similarly conflictual histories. Klein elicits strong feelings and a Kleinian orthodoxy sustained by a group of followers has emerged in GB. 'I am a Kleinian and if I were in London I wouldn't be a Kleinian ... I don't like the attitude that prevails there ...

³⁹⁶ Especially the rabbinical tradition brought from Martha's family. See Behling's biography (Behling 2006).

³⁹⁷ To whom Freud declared himself a godless Jew and Pfister 'did preach to Freud' (AMR 482).

³⁹⁸ The quotations made by JR were edited following discussion in order to fully clarify the narrative context in which these were made.

³⁹⁹ Klein/Kleinian – 47 references, Bion/Bionian – 42 references, Winnicott/Winnicottian – 18 references, Jung/Jungian – 13 references.

the absoluteness' (JG 414-421). 'Melanie Klein's whole theory is religious' (JG1481) with doctrines, such as forgiveness, that 'smacks for me of ... a certain, a moralism. I don't ... like' (AP 695-696). Consequently the term 'Kleinian' is pejorative. People feel passionate about Kleinian ideas offering a distinctive and rigorous clinical approach that goes 'earlier and deeper' (JG 227). Yet 'I worry about the word Kleinian' (DB 324) and some still see the influence of Klein as negative despite their training or analyses being 'Kleinian'.

Another chose their analyst 'not because they were Kleinian, because I liked them, because I was inspired by the way they spoke about their patients and because they touched me in very particular ways' (AL 108-110). In the Independent tradition⁴⁰⁰ Klein⁴⁰¹ is seen as giving important but partial insight alongside Winnicott, Fairbairn, Bion and Balint.⁴⁰²

A group including Grotstein emerged in Los Angeles in the 1960s influenced by British Kleinians, Mason and Bion.⁴⁰³ Their papers were rejected because they advocated Kleinian ideas and people 'suffered greatly' (JG 810) for supporting Klein and Bion.⁴⁰⁴ British Kleinians rejected Bion's later work though Grotstein's unique Kleinian-Bionian synthesis has taken up his ideas.⁴⁰⁵ The interviewees identified as Kleinian often chose to qualify this by the addition of insights from Winnicott and Bion. Klein has been a vital figure for Grotstein⁴⁰⁶ as part of the psychoanalytic corpus that incorporates Fairbairn, Bion, Winnicott, and Blanco but on different philosophical foundations. Throughout there was a dislike of being labelled as Kleinian or post-Kleinian, but Klein offers an alternative

⁴⁰⁰ See Kohon's brief history of the Independent tradition (Kohon 1986).

⁴⁰¹ And some of her followers, Segal and Rosenfeld were mentioned.

⁴⁰² 'I feel that who I have become is a mixture of all these things' (AL 114).

⁴⁰³ The exact nature of Bion's Kleinian standing still polarizes opinions (Grotstein 2007).

⁴⁰⁴ A first person account can be found in Grotstein's recollections of this period (Grotstein 2002a).

⁴⁰⁵ 'It's going to be a radical revolution of the Kleinian mode ... for instance I will take issue with Mrs Klein on her use of the death instinct' (JG 611). See Grotstein's later work (Grotstein 2009a, 2009b).

⁴⁰⁶ Appearing in an early dream that shaped his work (Grotstein 2000).

atheistic vision that dispenses with religion, whilst acting like a religion and whose implicit doctrines find theological parallels.

The ontology of Bion

Bion's work is viewed in two distinct ways. His clinical work in GB alongside Klein is seen as of enduring value but his 'great mind' (AN 451) needed containment by the analytic community to avoid the danger of becoming a guru-like figure. Bion's philosophically focused work marked a radical departure from Klein and this later 'mystical' Bion, with his concept of O, divides opinions.⁴⁰⁷ Some are sceptical, dismissing his ideas as eccentric, others think Bion was a genius working at the edge of madness,⁴⁰⁸ and Grotstein argues he was much more important, especially his later work, than has generally been acknowledged (Grotstein 2009c).⁴⁰⁹ Building on Klein,⁴¹⁰ Bion offers a common language that engages complex psychic experiences described as psychosis or early trauma that existing psychoanalytic knowledge did not adequately address.⁴¹¹ 'What Bion did without anyone realizing it was create a phenomenological and ontological epistemology for psychoanalysis' (JG 743-744). Plato replaces Enlightenment philosophers and linear science in defining the contours of the unconscious as a place of encounter, interpretation

⁴⁰⁷ This concept has been popularized and developed by Eigen (Eigen 1981a, 1992, 1998) and Grotstein (Grotstein 2007).

⁴⁰⁸ Much of this critique stems from Bion's fictional trilogy written in a Joycean literary style, later published in one volume (Bion 1991). 'This is an attempt to express my rebellion ... "Abandon Hope all ye who expect to find any facts-scientific, aesthetic or religious-in this book" ... All these will, I fear, be seen to have left their traces, vestiges, ghosts hidden within these words; even sanity' (Bion 1991: 578).

⁴⁰⁹ This was a theme that ran throughout the entire interview.

⁴¹⁰ 'Some of our ideas are generally accepted across all divides, projective identification, splitting, paranoid schizoid depressive positions' (JG 234-237).

⁴¹¹ 'Bion I think has made the most impact in terms of the normalization as communication of projection identification, sending signals under the radar of language and the two-person model, intuition and I think most schools are using this' (JG 237-240).

and paradox⁴¹² that takes Bion into the realm of the mystical. This ‘later work of Bion ... took on a distinctly spiritual ... leaning, ... obscured by his dense language’ (PM 545-548). Bion was not religious but drew on mystical concepts from Meister Eckhart,⁴¹³ St John of the Cross⁴¹⁴ and the Kabbalah,⁴¹⁵ ‘so Bion would I think hyphenate the mystical with the spiritual’ (JG 346-347) evolving ‘the spiritual vertex of psychoanalysis ... with ... the mysterious area that is of O’ (JG 352-353).⁴¹⁶ ‘If you really read Bion, he’s a mystic ... he’s not a Buddhist mystic or a Hindu mystic or a Christian mystic, he’s just a mystic’ (JBR 250-253). Bion evolved a difference between ‘knowing’ and ‘becoming’ in connecting with the divine, the spiritual and the transcendent within, termed O, a revelatory experience for which words cannot be found, yet experienced in dreams and interpretations at an unconscious level. Bobrow concluded Bion ‘is ... the end all and be all. But if people really get into the Bion, and the British ... have this problem ... Bion is a mystic at heart (JBR 249-250).

⁴¹² ‘A beam of intense darkness’ as Bion describes it and the title of Grotstein’s book on the legacy of Bion to psychoanalysis.

⁴¹³ Meister Eckhart (1260-1328) was a German Dominican theologian, noted for his preaching and writing, later regarded as heretical. ‘God as Trinity both remains within and flows out, at once, so that for us to speak of God is to enter into this flow at the same time as remaining outside it ... humans and all creation share the same “ground” with God, yet they do so dialectically – the “ground” is both the intimate reality shared with God within all things and beyond all things as their source’ (Howells 2005: 118). Bion quoted from Eckhart in *Transformations* (Bion 1965) though these are omitted from the index (see pages 139, 162, 170). References are also to be found in *Attention and Interpretation* (Bion 1970).

⁴¹⁴ St. John of the Cross (1542-1591) was a Spanish Carmelite whose writings have profoundly shaped Western mystical theology and practice through the metaphors of darkness and light, most notably ‘the dark night of the soul’. Bion quotes St. John of the Cross in *Transformations* (Bion 1965) though these are also omitted from the index (see pages 158-159).

⁴¹⁵ The Kabbalah is a mystical expression of Judaism focused on the infinite and unknown Creator and his relationship with finite and knowable creation. Every idea grows out of God through ten emanations – the sefirot – God creates the Universe expressed diagrammatically as the Tree of Life. ‘It is potentially of special interest to psychoanalysts, because more than any other spiritual tradition ... this offers a clearly worked out ... highly elaborated, account of psychic structure’ (Parsons 2006: 124).

⁴¹⁶ ‘The English Kleinians don’t seem to understand, if it’s mystical in the religious sense rather than the domain without objects’ (JG 353-355). ‘I think this is what the what the mystics were trying to do, to locate God within as well as without, the immanent God and that ... I think Bion is doing. He talks about O, he talks about many different synonyms for it, one of which is Godhead which I think in middle English is God hood’ (JG 449-453).

The creativity of Winnicott

Winnicott is a significant influence in the UK and the USA where his ideas offer a creativity held alongside concepts from Fairbairn, Kohut, Rycroft, Milner and Loewald. Winnicott's most creative ideas adopted by the interviewees were: seeing beyond the individual to a 'Third' area of experience – which opens up the possibility of the spiritual⁴¹⁷; the vital place of transitional processes and how objects are used in this; the importance of living with paradox; and the focus on 'being', 'Something that Winnicott understood, Klein did not' (JG 1169).⁴¹⁸ Winnicott, alongside Fairbairn and Kohut, is seen as more open to religious and spiritual dimensions and his transitional concepts offered creative forms of engagement.

The neglected Jung

One analyst (DB) had a prior Jungian training but despite the research focus on spirituality, Jung was noticeably absent. Pfister retained his friendship with Freud because he ignored Jung. This pattern was replicated in the interviews even when the interviewer introduced Jung on occasions. 'I read Jung's *Memories, Dreams and Reflections*, and I thought it was a really fascinating book ... at that age, i.e. seventeen, ... Jung seemed to me to be very deep ... like a great adventure and a great romance ... then I started reading Freud and Freud was much more appealing to me than Jung ... I think Jung's a more interesting man, but I think Freud's a much more interesting writer' (AP 107-123). Jones mentioned Jung as part of the wider history of psychoanalysis, but focused more specifically on contemporary psychoanalysis (JJ 962-963). Given limited references to Jung he could have been

⁴¹⁷ This has some parallel but different philosophical and psychoanalytic foundations to Ogden's 'Analytic Third' (Ogden 1994, 2006).

⁴¹⁸ 'We are object dedicated and we are tied into the object. Winnicott implied that there was the "being infant" and the "doing infant", the "doing" is the Kleinian infant ... but there is the other infant, the one that the environmental object facilitates and allows to grow in his own right separate from the object' (JG 1170-1174).

overlooked in a thematic analysis but silence about Jung is informative and to ignore him would be to continue his historic disenfranchisement from the psychoanalytic community.⁴¹⁹

Theme 3: Contemporary psychoanalysis⁴²⁰

The term ‘contemporary psychoanalysis’ has different meanings. In the UK it is the impact of contemporary Freudian, post-Kleinian and Object Relations theorists/practitioners held within a traditional theoretical context enshrined in the British Psychoanalytical Society.⁴²¹

In the USA contemporary psychoanalysis recalls psychoanalytic pioneers who left traditional psychoanalytic training societies to establish a different theoretical understanding of psychoanalysis⁴²² and has grown into an eclectic identity distinct from classic psychoanalysis. Phillips had little sense that it meant anything, and AN was ‘rather suspicious of the term’ (AN 34); however the interviewees identified four features.

Evolution not revolution

Contemporary psychoanalysis is a way of being rooted historically in Freud but adapting theoretical and clinical developments unique to each analyst. Part of this evolution is a desire to engage with other developments, the most cited being postmodernism,

⁴¹⁹ An example of Jungian engagement with spirituality can be found in Corbett (Corbett 2007). Jung’s influence has had some impact allied to Daoism and postmodernism as a context where Buddhist ideas have been more fully appreciated in relation to psychoanalysis.

⁴²⁰ Contemporary psychoanalysis – 41 references.

⁴²¹ As this is the only analytic institute in the UK recognized by the IPA, it has exerted a dominant control over psychoanalysis here.

⁴²² Clara Thompson, Harry Stack Sullivan, Erich Fromm and others formed the William Alanson White Institute in 1946 advocating psychoanalytic engagement with wider humanitarian, political and social contexts. In 1964 the journal *Contemporary Psychoanalysis* was founded as a forum for interpersonal and alternative expressions of psychoanalysis.

neuroscience and the growth of religion and spirituality. Yet the term is rarely used in the UK where theoretical evolution is essentially linked to Klein.⁴²³

British psychoanalysis has become a bit moribund ... A lot of contemporary psychoanalysis I feel is rather deadly ... very dogma bound ... preoccupied with ... a very unfortunate kind of ... Kleinian shadow that's fallen across the whole of British psychoanalytic thinking ... which leaves many analysts to focus on very negative parts of ... human beings, ... and I think ... very little space for ... communication about spiritual concerns or higher strivings of human beings (PM 48-60).

Others see contemporary psychoanalysis in the UK as 'a much broader church' (AL 47).

'There is a greater openness and ... I think that psychoanalysis is beginning to be a bit less rarefied' (AL 52-53). Similar views were expressed by interviewees in the USA where contemporary psychoanalysis indicates an openness to evolve unlike the perceived rigidity of classic psychoanalysis.

Revolution not evolution

Contemporary psychoanalysis developed an understanding of the clinical encounter where the analyst draws on a wider range of feelings found within the room in an intersubjective rather than a counter-transferential encounter.⁴²⁴ Benjamin saw the relational trend as 'revolutionary because it is so much more egalitarian and respectful' (JB 280-281), whereas an 'insidious lack of respect ... crept into the old psychoanalysis ... Obviously it goes along with the idea that the analyst is a participant, that the analyst can't avoid going into enactment with the patient ... as the real clue to what is going on' (JB 291-294).

⁴²³ This is disputed by those in the Independent tradition including such contemporary figures as Casement (Casement 2002, 2006), Symington (Symington 1986, 1993a, 1993b, 1994, 1997, 1999, 2001, 2002, 2004a, 2004b, 2006b, 2007; Symington and Symington 1996) and Black (Black 1993a, 1999, 2000a).

⁴²⁴ 'Not just about five times a week on the couch, it's actually about trying to reach patients who are hard to reach ... I think the sort of patients who present for help these days of necessity demand that psychoanalysis revisits some of its ... cherished assumptions in terms of practice and how its delivered and gradually I think it will challenge some theoretical assumptions too but at the moment I think the greatest challenge is more at the level of applicability and technique' (AL 54-60).

Similarly,

the move out of the out of Freud's drive model ... to a really relational model is the thing I think is most important ... the idea that we are fundamentally relationship creatures and that who we are and how we become to be who we are and what makes ... mischief in our lives and what needs to be transformed in the course of therapy ... all those things are instantiated in our relational experiences ... most central in contemporary psychoanalysis (JJ 289-297).

Consequently, the place of intersubjectivity and relationality has become a fault-line across the landscape of contemporary psychoanalysis in the USA (Cooper 2006). In the UK, Mollon's development of psychoanalytic energy therapy to deal with trauma and disassociation, identified the roots of his work in Freud's free associative technique focusing on growth and potential, rather than the conventional psychoanalytic focus on psychopathology.⁴²⁵

A pluralistic and spiritual ethos

A unique feature of contemporary psychoanalysis is its pluralism (Cooper 2006).

We call it contemporary psychoanalysis today. In Freud's day it was contemporary psychoanalysis, it will always be contemporary psychoanalysis - it's the spirit of the zeitgeist ... the main characteristics ... from whatever school, is the two-person model ... so intersubjectivity is the catch word ... the analyst is more involved as a participant in the analytic encounter, his counter-transference, his reverie, his feelings about the patient, his patient's feelings about him, it's a dialogue ... the task of analysis is to ... make a union - to be able to feel one's emotions and I think each school does that in a different way ... all of the schools have so much in common and they are speaking a common language (JG 212-228).

A relational dimension to contemporary psychoanalysis held within a more pluralistic ethos gives opportunity for more engagement between psychoanalysis and other disciplines, such as neuroscience, religion and spirituality, strongly advocated by some and strongly opposed

⁴²⁵ Marcus and Rosenberg examine the importance of psychoanalysts identifying their views on human pathology as a key factor in determining how they work (Marcus and Rosenberg 1998).

by others. There are ‘resonances and parallels between a relational understanding of psychoanalysis and certain themes in religion ... I think the relational turn has created a space within psychoanalysis to discuss spirituality in a way that was simply verboten’ (JJ 958-963). Jones added,

I think there were those cultural trends of which psychoanalysis was carried along but I also think that the return to relationality within psychoanalysis also opened up a space ... people were reading ... Winnicott, Kohut, Fairbairn who were clearly much more open to a religious spiritual outlook (JJ 984-988).

Bobrow describes a similar trend on the West Coast and applies this to a spiritual dimension:

Its whole underpinnings are shifting ... what’s exciting about contemporary psychoanalysis is that it’s connecting with other traditions and other areas of thought and practice, from the arts to social theory and social action, including cultural life, to spirituality and religion, to the biological elements of our nature so, psychoanalysis, ... it has come down from the ivory tower (JBR 33-38).

A transformative experience

The therapeutic goals of psychoanalysis have historically been: the reduction of psychic anxiety caused by repression; an excavation of the past psyche to gain insight in the present; and the bearing of suffering as the common lot of humanity without recourse to illusory Others – all of which represent the philosophical beliefs of Freud but whose limitations have been identified (Lear 2005). Contemporary psychoanalysis with the hindsight of twentieth century social, cultural, philosophical and political triumphs and tragedies has seen the development of ‘self’ as a unique category of being arising from the desire for, and experience of, multi-textured forms of personal relatedness. So contemporary psychoanalysis becomes,

a diverse theory of the process of change, ... it’s a theory in flux of human change, and the potentials for human development ... the potentials for transformation that exist in an intimate relationship ... and transformation not just of one person, but of

both ... psychoanalysis is a healing journey that two people make together (JBR 43-44).

The reason I like the contemporary atmosphere is ... psychoanalysis is one among ... a number of very profound methods for human transformation and alleviation of suffering, and actually the creation of human well-being ... I don't see ... that psychoanalysis is the mode of transformation, it's ... a ... comparative view ... comparing primarily ... Buddhist and Zen paths, ... I think there's something that happens in the zeitgeist of being a psychoanalyst, where ... psychoanalysis is life and it's not life, ... it helps us to open to life, but so do ... other pathways (JBR 82-97).

Several interviewees linked this transforming view of being human to the psychoanalytic task that allies it with some aspects of religions and spiritualities, though others refute this. In the British psychoanalytic context there is still little evidence of engagement with religion or spirituality.

If I think back to both of my trainings ... I can't think of a single lecture where either of these terms were thought about as issues to be thought about ... it might come up in a clinical seminar that you have a patient that ... had a very strong faith and ... that might be thought about ... but ... it's not theorized ... was never introduced ... as an issue (AL 480-487).

Theme 4: Contemporary psychoanalysts

The key names associated with religion and spirituality in contemporary psychoanalysis by the interviewees were Eigen (16 references), Symington (14 references), Mitchell (8 references) and Coltart (7 references).⁴²⁶

Eigen was well known by most of the interviewees, especially in New York where he was known personally by all those interviewed, as well as Bobrow in San Francisco and Grotstein in Los Angeles. 'He is extraordinary he is the one man you have got to interview for spirituality' (JG 102-103). 'You have the centre of psychoanalytic spiritual life right

⁴²⁶ Mitchell was primarily associated with contemporary psychoanalysis, rather than religion and spirituality.

there' (JB 65). Eigen's eclecticism integrates Freud, Bion, Winnicott and Lacan, allied to an intersubjective spiritual dimension. While Black sees the religious dimensions of the analyst as a counter-transferential clinical tool to engage the client and their unconscious world, Eigen focuses on the actual clinical encounter relationally and intersubjectively – where both analyst and patient are known and changed. Editor of the *Psychoanalytic Review*, Eigen is a very influential figure and this allows him the opportunity to introduce spirituality into the psychoanalytic domain. Eigen was also mentioned by most of the analysts interviewed in the UK, although his influence is more limited. Phillips introduced Eigen's work through *The Electrified Tightrope* (Eigen 1993) as a vital concern for Phillips is to help people encounter whatever 'makes you feel alive' (AP 686).⁴²⁷

Symington has been the best-known analyst in the UK engaging with religion and spirituality,⁴²⁸ themes that recur in his work, fictional and psychoanalytic.⁴²⁹ 'Time is a real problem ... Symington said ... how difficult it is trying to deal with these huge themes when there is so much that should be read and known when actually one is spending 8 hours

⁴²⁷ It became immediately apparent that Eigen was the key figure in spiritual engagement within contemporary psychoanalysis. Black, Benjamin, Jones, Rubin, Mollon, Phillips, Grotstein and Bobrow also mentioned Eigen. I met with Eigen, we discussed my research and he invited me to join his seminar group where he introduced me to the group as a 'visiting academic and a spiritual person' that he'd enjoyed meeting. The group were exploring Winnicott's *Human Nature* (Winnicott 1988). Eigen intriguingly and provocatively described President Bush as the Devil as a symbol of the evil that occurs when a leader/society becomes so focused on the external and the material that the internal and psychical are neglected or destroyed. Unfortunately due to minor surgery Eigen was unable to be interviewed while I was in New York. We attempted to have an ongoing e-mail correspondence but this lacked the relational dimension I discovered that I realized I required. My learning is that to fully engage with a subject I need to fully engage with the person. This also accounts for my not following up the initial attempt to have a Skype interview with Symington in Australia.

⁴²⁸ Very influential in the UK in the 1980s and early 1990s, Symington emigrated to Australia and continues to write important texts on analytic and spiritual engagement. From a Roman Catholic background and at an early stage as a priest in training, Symington sees psychoanalysis as a natural religion by broadening the scope of religion to embrace the deepest quests of human nature. In a recent fictional publication he writes about a priest facing theological and psychological crises during the 1960s during the reforms introduced by Vatican II, drawing on many of his personal experiences. Black, while mentioned by all the British analysts interviewed is not well known in the USA, though Grotstein and Bobrow recognized him.

⁴²⁹ 'Neville Symington is someone who has written a great deal about all this and I think he intends to keep ploughing the furrow that's my impression' (DB 584-585).

a day ... doing clinical work' (DB 572-575). In this British context 'those people you have mentioned like Patrick Casement, Neville Symington, Nina Coltart would all be viewed as having eccentricities which ... (are) ... tolerated' (PM 694-698). Symington left a deep impression on Bobrow. 'He's a font of new ideas ... and I have the greatest respect for him' (JBR 564-565). 'Without being a Buddhist, I think Jim [Grotstein] and Neville [Symington] and Michael [Parsons] have taken it the deepest' (JBR 584-586).

Mitchell was the pioneer of relational forms of psychoanalysis and involved in establishing a journal,⁴³⁰ the IARPP,⁴³¹ and the relational track of psychoanalytic training in New York. Eigen, Benjamin and Rubin all knew him, as did Jones.

Most influential on me was the late Steve Mitchell ... I felt very fortunate to have him as a conversation partner ... particularly about religion and ... he was starting to get interested in issues of spirituality and psychoanalysis and we would correspond and read ... and I think it was his writings that really got me thinking about things in a ... relational way and ... steered me to people like Winnicott, Loewald and then later Kohut (JJ 216-231).

Jones views the contribution of American contemporary psychoanalysis to be its capacity to synthesize other analytic traditions and other disciplines, including religion. Tensions still exist as Jones recalls Mitchell's review of his book *Religion and Psychology in Transition* 'This is a really good introduction to psychoanalytic theory... really clear and concise ... but I don't know why he has to bring in all this theology' (JJ 555-557).⁴³²

⁴³⁰ Psychoanalytic Dialogues.

⁴³¹ International Association for Relational Psychoanalysis and Psychotherapy founded in 2001.

⁴³² The book was also reviewed in the *Journal of Religion* 'This is a really good ... important understanding of religion, epistemology and human nature but why does he have to talk about Winnicott and Freud of all people' (JJ 559-561).

Coltart was a highly regarded British psychoanalyst but ‘was recognized, with a certain amount of surprise by British psychoanalysts as being very interested in Buddhism ... I don't know she had the sort of influence that those people had in the States’ (DB 163-165). Coltart wrote ‘two essays on psychoanalysis and Buddhism ... she ... suppressed it, if memory serves me for years’ (JR 342-347). It is clear that in the psychoanalytic climate at that time it was not completely safe to belong in the ‘mainstream’ and express religious or spiritual beliefs and practices. These had to remain hidden, leading to the ironic situation that ‘the tolerating of ... Coltart’s ... spirituality or the religious involvement of ... Coltart’ (JR 484-485) by the psychoanalytic establishment, psychoanalysis enters into a ‘compromise formation’. When faced with two conflicting or competing demands, one becomes repressed. Such an approach is deeply unanalytic and betrays an often unacknowledged and deep-rooted functional atheism in psychoanalysis. A more positive analytic position, and one that parallels the Zen concept of ‘beginner’s mind’ and the psychoanalytic stance found in Coltart’s work is to adopt an open stance of assuming nothing a-priori in order to fully enter and understand the patients’ world, conscious and unconscious.⁴³³

⁴³³ Other names mentioned as significant in contemporary psychoanalysis (other than those interviewed) especially in connection with religion and spirituality were Akhtar, Blanco, Bomford (an expositor of Blanco), Britton, Davids, Epstein, Gargiulo, Mayer, Meissner, Miller, Parsons, Rycroft, Safran, Sorenson, Spezzano, and Wright. Of this group four are deceased, two were approached but declined the request for an interview, three never replied to an approach via mail or e-mail, one is not an analyst or therapist, and one was interviewed but not included due to the overwhelming amount of data generated in the existing interviews. As a number of my potential interviewees had also contributed to a key text by Black (2006) I was also mindful of the danger of replicating material also already in print.

Theme 5: Religion and Religious⁴³⁴

*Context*⁴³⁵

AN argues that Freud took religion very seriously at social and cultural levels, while psychoanalysis as a whole neglected religion. ‘Sociologically I understand that religion is a very important glue, and a very important channel for people to have a relationship to the spiritual domain and that not everyone can have that without it’ (AN 359-360). Religion forms a vital part of the social context in which psychoanalysis is located.

Almost all societies and cultures have had religious structures/organizations they must be very important for human beings so there’s a channel for spiritual aspirations as providing a sense of connection and belonging ... something beyond ... providing some language, some symbols, some ceremonies that help to represent and capture that striving ... even amongst people who do not profess any particular or strong religious allegiance ... the existence of religion in society is important ... they like to know it’s there (PM 825-835).

Religious communities offer something psychoanalysis cannot provide⁴³⁶ yet it goes beyond the community to the individual faith of the person.

I remember this particular victim ... at the moment he was being tortured just being in a dialogue with God in his mind and trusting that he would survive ... making use of his belief in God’s goodness as he called it, that he would get through this and that’s what he hung on to ... and had obviously found some solace in religion but there was no doubt that however much you could see it as defensive, in that moment it was immensely sustaining to him and he felt less alone in his greatest hour of need (AL 725-732).

⁴³⁴ 366 references.

⁴³⁵ Most interviewees used the terms religion and spirituality together.

⁴³⁶ In response to the question concerning clients ‘If they bring religion and spirituality in the room, you see that as a positive act?’ Lemma replied ‘Yes I would even in some cases particularly going back to the work with refugees encourage them to link up with religious communities if they have been relevant in their life, I would use that as a network of support ... I would approach it thinking ‘What is the function, the possible function of connection to a church?’ and I would see it as being psychological sustaining to the individual because it provides a sense of community which I think is the first place you need to start in recovering from a number of traumatic experiences ... Actually psychotherapy itself is not something that can be made use of at this point, but that what people need more is something more mundane, normal, more day-to-day life, a sense of connection with others, so there I think religion plays a great part and I would have no difficulty in supporting the individual to do that (AL 617-629).

The term 'zeitgeist' was used to describe the emergence of religion in the wider cultural context that frames psychoanalysis. Jones saw a 'huge explosion' (JJ 922) of literature and courses available on world religions stemming from the 1960s, which gathered pace to become a significant cultural force in the USA. Rubin locates change in the last 20 years towards Buddhism, a subject that's become 'hotter and hotter' (JR 340), challenging the functional atheism inherent in psychoanalysis. By contrast the situation in the UK is still entrenched within a functional atheistic paradigm. Black saw the social and cultural ferment of the 1960s, including non-religious spirituality, forming the context of many British psychoanalysts before their analytic training. The current emergence of spirituality DB finds 'very striking' (DB 398) but sees little impact on the psychoanalytic world. Mollon adds 'Well I suppose I don't see that much of it really' (PM 535), and while noting the emergence of individuals who advocate religious and spiritual practices in fellow psychoanalysts, does not see this as constituting a zeitgeist.

The psychoanalysts interviewed in New York and California saw relational psychoanalysis as a highly significant development that includes a spiritual dimension. This is seen in the rapid development of 'mindfulness' that Bobrow sees as potentially the next advance for psychoanalysis.

What's exciting about contemporary psychoanalysis is that it's connecting with other traditions and other areas of thought and practice, from the arts to social theory and social action, including cultural life to spirituality and religion, to the biological elements of our nature (JBR 34-37).

Of course they've stripped it of all the religion and its just got that guts of the method, a secular version of mindfulness and ... Buddhism ... get(s) lost in the mix at times of that. But that's not always the case (JBR 200-203).

When asked, Lemma shook her ‘head ruefully’ (AL 478-479) and said that the first time she had ever thought about it at all was when I met her two years previously and introduced the subject in our conversation. ‘Of the people I have trained with, I can’t think of a single person for whom religion was an active part of their lives ... religion ... never featured’ (AL 812-815). AN agrees that nothing from religious or spiritual traditions ‘has permeated through’ (AN 505) into psychoanalysis.

‘Religion’ elicited a large range of emotional and critical responses, clearly not a subject that people felt neutral about, unsurprising given its pejorative history in psychoanalysis. All the analysts identified an aspect of religion, at least culturally, in their past and for some it was still a present reality.⁴³⁷ All had religious backgrounds in their family of origin or strongly held systems of belief that have the capacity to act like religion with around half actively belonging to a faith/spiritual tradition.

Jewish	Buddhist/ Eastern	Anglican/ Episcopalian	Atheist/ Agnostic	Spiritual/ Holistic	Roman Catholic	Christian Science
6	4	3	3	2	2	1

Over half (6) of the interviewees offered a definition of religion. Black distinguished between mythical and revelatory/monotheistic religions, but found it difficult to define spirituality other than phenomenologically. Rubin offered,

the Latin religare which means to bind ... and I was struck ... with the analogy, with the irony that religion is supposed to link people, bind them and instead it is separating people ... another meaning of “bind” ... is to tie in knots and I think that’s often what happened (JR 248-256).

⁴³⁷ Either philosophically or in their spiritual practices.

Rizzuto focuses on the internal, psychological world.

I am not dealing with religion ... it's too big ... I am dealing with that aspect of religion that has to do with an internal disposition to acquiesce, or rebel, or deal or use patterns of religious behaviour offered by the community' (AMR 320-322).

Religion is logically religare means "to connect with", that puts divinity in the centre ... and to have a divinity you need a narrative and to have a religion you need a meta-narrative. So all religions have meta-narratives ... and the contemporary world has become postmodern (AMR 407-418).⁴³⁸

Mollon views religion from a holistic perspective 'beyond the false identities that we all have to function with ... beyond language, something beyond our existing knowing ... people are always ... wanting to get beyond those false identities' (PM 360-363). The implication is that not engaging with religion and spirituality leaves a person unable, even with the help of psychoanalysis, to fully transcend a false identity.⁴³⁹ Mollon finds common ground for religion and spirituality.

There is a mystery at the heart of it ... it goes beyond belief ... structures of dogma, it's about being open to the sense of something more than we can know directly ... having access to the source of life, of love, of truth ... to that realm that we might call God ... without ever believing that one can fully grasp it ... however we try to speak of it, it is going to be constrained or distorted by ... the limitations of our language ... all our efforts to think about God are going to involve distortions somehow (PM 396-407).

AN thinks 'with any patient ... you're exploring their religion because we all have ... internal religious systems which ... to some extent analysis uncover(s) a system of religious-like beliefs that person may not even know they possess' (AN 556-561).⁴⁴⁰

⁴³⁸ Rizzuto quoted "In the beginning God created the heaven and earth"; "at the right time the fulness of time the Son of God came to redeem man". These biblical references are to Genesis 1:1 and a paraphrase of Galatians 4:4-5.

⁴³⁹ Or in Winnicottian terms, the false self. See (Winnicott 1965).

⁴⁴⁰ AN later added 'codified religion is an attempt to solve the suffering of man' (AN 710-711) and 'religious sentiment that's to do with accepting the suffering' (AN 711-712). Acceptable religion engages with suffering 'there's a need to accept a kind of wound which can be conceived of in various religious senses, but there is a kind of ungainsayable suffering and so I suppose religion that engages with suffering, as opposed to religion as a solution to suffering' (AN 714-717).

Reactions and Reflections

Religion evokes powerful positive and negative responses. The phrases used by the interviewees demonstrate the impact and depth of strongly held thoughts and feelings found within contemporary psychoanalysis.⁴⁴¹ The words ‘religion’ or ‘religious’ communicate:

‘Simple-minded’ (DB 285)

‘Someone wacky’ (DB 620)

‘Avoiding addressing the reality of the world’ (DB 687)

Something that can be ‘quite uncritical and quite unreflective and that’s always jarring to me’ (JJ 694)

Existing in a ‘compartmentalized ... defensive split’ (JJ 793-794)

Seen by analysts as ‘A definite sign of pathology ... but the environment has softened a bit’ (JR 367-371)

‘A certain primal horror of it that people just don’t like to deal with’ (AMR 35)

As a religious person ‘Officially it is as though I do not exist’ (AMR 183)

‘I think a lot of analysts ... react with some anxiety, hostility even scorn’ (PM 382-383)

‘I hear “religion” and I stiffen up because I ... was introduced to religion as a ... straight jacket, a ... harsh super-ego’ (AL 287-289)

There is ‘no ultimate being, ultimate core’ (AN 178)

Religion ‘approaches delusion’ (AN 595) and ‘any promise of a happier life up there, I consider to be a delusion, and a dangerous delusion’ (AN 719-720)

‘This subject worried me’ (AN 752)

⁴⁴¹ Some were made with American right-wing fundamental Christianity in mind.

‘I think clearly for a lot of people in the world, religious language is the language that enables them to talk about the things that matter most to them’ (AP 396-398)

‘Finally it is my belief that psychoanalysis is more mystical, spiritual and religious than its followers realize and religion especially spirituality is more psychoanalytic’ (JG 728-730)

‘I respect religiosity, I never respect religion ... religion is used ... like alcohol. It is something omnipotent to hold onto that has rules and regulations they can hide behind rather than the free spirit’ (JG 1260-1265)

‘I think many of us who are psychoanalysts would have an objection to religion, especially Jews because we have a knee jerk reaction when it comes to Christianity’ (JG 1780-1783)

‘When I say I am anti-religious, I meant I am anti-institution’ (JG 1798-1799)

By contrast responses to spirituality were:

Jungians ‘really are much more spiritual’ (JB 55)

Yet ‘just because you have a spiritual practice that doesn’t make you a knowledgeable person to talk about religion and spirituality’ (JJ 704-705)

‘an analyst can say well spirituality is really psychopathological and they may be referring to an aspect of spirituality like masochistic surrender to a teacher, a spiritual aspirant masochistically surrendering’ (JR 312-313)

‘I think there’s an embarrassment about anything spiritual amongst most psychoanalysts in Britain’ (PM 61-62)

‘I have always found spiritual matters ... exciting ... I’m not entirely happy with that word but it’s the closest I can come to it, there is a sort of spiritual excitement about getting a sense of something more’ and ‘a sort of spiritual curiosity... being able to explore and enquire freely has always been ... important to me’ (PM 478-481, 422-424)

‘My interest in spirituality has always been there but it got tamed being an analyst because analysts in general were very anti-spiritual’ (JG 331-332)

Philips gives an insight into the powerful emotions and feelings listed above. ‘We have been trained to find religious words very very very powerful and you can’t just decide not to be moved’ (AP 612-614) therefore it is remarkable that religion remains such an unexamined feature of psychoanalytic training, life and practice. There was a distinct fear of being labelled as ‘spiritual’ by one participant in the sense of being forced into a category over which they had no control, yet that same person had written a ‘spiritual’ paper for an analytic conference including spiritual ideas and practices. For others there was a level of guardedness. Rizzuto recalled a noted Jewish analyst experiencing a spontaneous religious experience following bereavement that he was unable to understand and which contradicted his ‘official’ stance as an analyst.⁴⁴² His psychoanalytic understanding of personhood did not equip him with the ability to engage with something potentially beyond his inner world – a key dimension found in religion and spirituality.

Being open in the psychoanalytic world about being religious or spiritual and being psychoanalytic in a religious world is still perceived as difficult, in part due to the non-disclosing background of psychoanalysis. ‘It was very hard both by temperament and of course by training. I am not particularly self-disclosing, that was a hard thing to do ... I was living in both of these worlds’ (JJ 530-531). In actuality it is costly to live at the boundaries of religious beliefs, spiritual practices and analytic presence. It is ‘one thing to say you want to cross these [theoretical] boundaries but it’s another thing to ... really do it’ (JJ 561-

⁴⁴² Their name has been withheld for reasons of confidentiality.

562). An analyst might say a little of their religious or spiritual background at the end of a long analysis even if that is not something they make public. Such disclosure is normally kept within the analytic dyad although several interviewees mentioned this to me as a researcher.

Some analysts were critical of the implicit atheism found within psychoanalysis.

Let me say something about the clinical aspect of this ... pathologizing of religion ... the terrible irony is that it's profoundly anti-analytic ... to start out a priori ... to think atheism is normative and ... religion is pathological, ... you are showing is you're not really analytic (JR 483-492).

All analysts thought there was long-standing prejudice towards religion which some thought was slowly changing. Yet there are still unspoken assumptions of functional atheism within the history of psychoanalysis that has resisted adaptation. One analyst felt 'officially it is as though I do not exist, [am] recognized or talked about. Unofficially, private institutes invite me all of the time, analysts talk with me all the time, ... Kernberg has used my ideas to write ... about religion', recognition coming 'though the back door' (AMR 183-186, 192).

Lemma also saw it as a neglected area,

It ... must be operating in terms of both what I bring ... because of my own experiences and my patients' experiences, because everyone has had some exposure to religion whether it is to by fighting against it or engaging with it or not thinking about it ... Given that so much of psychoanalysis is really also about thinking of one's own beliefs and what we do with our beliefs ... it is striking to me that religious belief is an area that I neglect (AL 972-979).

Autobiography and lived experience

Most interviewees stated their engagement with religion and spirituality in an unembarrassed way in contrast to their perception of these terms in psychoanalysis. This response was self-determined, as I had not asked questions about their familial past; it was

where many chose to begin. The primary sources of religious knowledge came from their upbringing – principally Jewish, though this was no guarantee of subsequent belief or practice (Rizzuto 1979). Two viewed themselves as traditional atheists/agnostics from a Jewish background, cultural rather than religious.

I was raised as a cultural Jew, I was not bar-mitzvahed ... My parents were and are atheists. I was an agnostic ... who probably wasn't at all certain that God existed ... who became ... very spiritual after the mystical experience (JR 165-170).⁴⁴³

Phillips grew up with a conscious awareness of deep historical and cultural roots. Bobrow acknowledges 'we were cultural Jews, very much identified as ... my tribe, but it's never been a spiritual path' (JBR 356-357).

While Frosh discusses the impact of Judaism within psychoanalysis, the impact of a Jewish dimension in engaging with other religious traditions is difficult to identify (Frosh 2006). Within the British psychoanalytic world where 'the Jewish culture is very strong' (PM 632) there were concerns about anti-Semitism, which surfaced in the case of Masud Khan (Hopkins 2006; Willoughby 2004).⁴⁴⁴ Mollon adds 'my impression is that people from a Jewish tradition if they're not practising religious Jews they become ... rather anti and phobic of anything religious ' (PM 628-630).⁴⁴⁵ Lemma adopts a neutral approach 'a lot of people who taught me [were] or have been Jewish but it didn't ... feel like a dominant influence ... that doesn't mean it's not active at some level but it certainly isn't experienced' (AL 859-863).

⁴⁴³ This primary experience shaped Rubin's world-view combining illusion and reality that goes beyond rigid classification, which he retained in his subsequent analytic training.

⁴⁴⁴ Masud Khan, a leading member of the Independent group and closely linked with Winnicott, saw his brilliant career descend into scandal through: ethical breaches – he slept with several patients and financially exploited others; grandiosity bordering on mania; alcoholism and anti-Semitic comments in his final book. This led to his final expulsion from the psychoanalytic community. However Phillips found him enormously helpful. See (Willoughby 2004) for a detailed and balanced discussion.

⁴⁴⁵ These thoughts were substantiated in my interview with AN.

Lemma located her ambivalence to religion from her upbringing that was both Jewish and Italian, dominated by a strict Roman Catholic culture acting as a harsh super-ego which for a long time formed negative associations.

The personal questions you asked me made me think that when I was in my first analysis I certainly talked a lot about my own experience of Catholicism and I chose an Italian analyst and I am sure part of that unconscious reason for choosing an Italian analyst must have been an assumption, right or wrong, that they would have understood a lot about this early life ... I was charged with a kind of antipathy ... I saw it as hypocritical ... I came away from that ... analysis without this rage ... something obviously was worked through (AL 992-1010).

Mollon described a conventional Anglican background but adds 'I think I always had personally a ... religious sense and a ... spiritual curiosity' (PM 419-422).⁴⁴⁶ In a very different American context Grotstein reflected 'I am a Godly man in my own way and I wasn't always aware of it but ... I got it from my mother ... always looking for God, she knew she could not find it in Judaism ... but she found it in Christian Science (JG 1842-1849).⁴⁴⁷ Benjamin felt it was easier to write an autobiographical account than an account about spirituality that felt 'very very personal' (JB 99). Psychoanalytic theory can be variously interpreted and debated, yet to discuss spirituality has a personal and private quality – replete with an intimacy that fears rejection as it touches upon deepest parts of oneself in relation to other/Other that is beyond or a mystical experience that defies rational engagement.

⁴⁴⁶ Both religion and psychoanalysis had their limitations for Mollon as he possessed 'a dislike of being cognitively and conceptually restrained ... being able to explore and enquire freely has always been quite important to me' (PM 422-424).

⁴⁴⁷ What further influenced Grotstein were the traumatic years he faced as an analyst following Bion when Grotstein was caught up in institutional conflict within analytic circles in the late 1960s and continued until the early 1980s. This has left him with passionate beliefs about and opposition to the power of institutions – analytic and religious (Grotstein 2002a, 2007, 2009c).

While autobiography is vital and offers unique insight it can be problematic. When religion and spirituality are based on one personal experience and the danger of *n* equalling one, with an uncritical naivety.

You can talk about your own experience ... I'll learn something from that but don't start making huge ... generalizations about 'What is religion?' or 'What is spirituality?' based on the fact that you practised Buddhist meditation for the last 5 years or that you suddenly found yourself going back to your Synagogue or ... you have suddenly joined the Assemblies of God (JJ 705-710).

Such experiences are 'so private and inward you don't subject it [religion, spirituality, Buddhism] to analysis and it ... has a taken for granted quality which is naïve' (JJ 800-802). Some psychoanalysts saw 'the importance of religious practice and not just religious thought' (JJ 55) that builds links into spirituality not simply as abstract beliefs, rituals and traditions. 'This world of candles and incense, and statues and it was aesthetic and it touched something in me very very profoundly' (JJ 65-67). 'It is true increasingly I've come to think of religion and spirituality as practices in ... the same way that I think about psychotherapy as a practice' (JJ 835-837). Out of a lived experience of religion and spirituality the self becomes uniquely shaped and available as a resource in the analytic encounter.

So I would say ... at a deep level ... I am as a religious and spiritual person ... I really think of it in terms of the use of self ... the relational orientation ... opened up a space where people can really talk about self in therapy and ... the fact that I have a religious practice ... affects who I am (JJ 1366-1373).

Religious experiences are more common than generally recognized. 'When I lecture ... I expect an analyst would take me aside and tell me the story of a religious experience and then always ends with this comment "I've never said that to my analyst"' (AMR 197-200). Some classically trained psychoanalysts discover religion offers a lived experience that can rarely be spoken about in their analytic world. Grotstein sees aspects of psychoanalysis and

religious experience arising in every relational encounter and views psychoanalysis as a mystical encounter that is both known and unknown facilitated by the context of psychoanalytic meeting to allow space for this to take place.⁴⁴⁸ Bobrow adds,

I'm very interested in people's religious practices and how ... they affected them. I'm also interested in their ... stuck places, which is often represent(ed) in their ... personal persecutory religions ... So I'm very interested in religion ... for me Zen Buddhism *is* a religion, even though it's not theistic ... it is a religious practice for me, it's not just a healing practice or a secular practice (JBR 363-370).

Clients/Patients and clinical encounter

Rubin and Jones see one of the changes in the climate in which psychoanalysis exists and that has made an important impact on psychoanalysis itself has been the increasing desire to examine religion and spirituality. This has been 'patient driven' where people, disenfranchised from organized religion, come to 'psychoanalysts to talk about religious and spiritual matters, because it's the only place they have to go' (JJ 972-929). Jones adds 'so the combination of this explosion of material being available in the public domain, the growing interest in the culture at large and ... people coming to their psychotherapist, psychoanalysts where we talk about these things' is making an impact (JJ 945-948).

Patients help the analyst in this regard.

I've always found that my patients, the ones that I work with for any length of time ... start to talk to me about spiritual or religious concerns, I don't introduce it, they start to talk to me about it ... it's part of human beings' spiritual strivings, enquiry and people probably get a sense that I'm not going to react negatively ... with anxiety or hostility to religious or spiritual communications (PM 368-382).⁴⁴⁹

⁴⁴⁸ A feature he attributes to his own experience of being in analysis with Bion (Grotstein 2007).

⁴⁴⁹ 'It will sometimes happen that a person I have been seeing in therapy will suddenly turn in a religious direction. Somebody has led them to start going to a church for example and so prayer suddenly becomes part of their life or they have they say people are praying for them. Then things start happening, positive developments in their life, circumstances seem to conspire in a benign way for that person and so you get a connection between the prayer that's being talked about and the circumstances in the person's life' (PM 482-491 edited).

Mollon adds ‘I do get a sense of delight when I hear that kind of thing’ (PM 493-494), while Lemma has been changed by her clinical work.

My attitude to religion and the function of religion in people’s lives has changed dramatically ... particularly the work I have done ... with survivors of torture and refugees where often they will make reference to the thing that ... kept them going in those most horrible moments was of some kind of faith. I have been profoundly moved by those stories in a way that I find it hard to put it into words, I mean, I just feel my god this sustained them, it was a life force, however you understand, whatever it really means it doesn’t matter, this thing called faith helped them to survive (AL 292-305).

Around half of the interviewees maintained a traditional analytic stance of very limited self-disclosure,⁴⁵⁰ dealing with issues if raised by the client/patient, some of whom specifically sought an analyst who understood issues of religion or spirituality.⁴⁵¹ Bobrow experiences clients coming for psychoanalysis who want someone familiar with spiritual practices, not as a collusive strategy but as a creative engagement with the whole person. Rubin similarly adopts a whole person approach, but saw a potential problem through collusion or artificial compartmentalization if the focus was kept solely to religious or analytic issues rather than the clinical needs of the patient. This would limit dialogue and be detrimental to the needs of patient. The best approach is to open a therapeutic space allowing an unconscious presence of personal religious or spiritual being where there is an awareness of ‘the analyst’s own spiritual viewpoints ... [shaping] the intersubjective field’ (JR 32-33).

Others saw the importance of meditation in offering a stillness that matched Freud’s evenly hovering attention (Brenner 2000). This stillness allows the analyst to get into the depths of

⁴⁵⁰ This is an important and complex debate within psychoanalysis. See Gensler, Hart and Hadley’s chapters in (Willock, Curtis, and Bohm 2009).

⁴⁵¹ Often discovered through their publications. A paradox of the analytic stance of limited self-disclosure occurs when analysts become authors where in their writing for another context, they become self-revealing. This has been my clinical experience which I had not fully appreciated earlier in my practice when I produced an autobiographical text (Ross 1997).

the psyche through making space for a sustained level of thinking, allowing meaning to emerge, attentive to psychic processes and wrestling with complex issues by listening to patients at a number of levels. As part of this process issues of religion and spirituality are treated with respect as the analyst works out what this means in relationship to their patient's psyche. 'The analytic attitude is a depthful, compassionate exploration of the variety of meanings, functions or ... of whatever the patient brings up' (JR 487-490).⁴⁵² For Rizzuto, understanding their religious background is part of assessment through asking 'Do you pray?' (AMR 711), making this dimension explicit and able to be voiced. Unless these issues are addressed 'patients are going to be the replica of the analyst that came to me and said "I have had a religious experience, I repress it but I never told my analyst about it."' (AMR 842-844).

Black and Lemma noted religious patients gave insights into religion that did not go beyond the consulting room as the therapeutic space contains the subject. By engaging with a patient the analyst enters into a perceptual world without adopting or believing it, but believing they believe this is vitally important. Holding forms part of therapeutic containment before interpreting what beliefs, symbols or practices might mean.⁴⁵³ Religion and psychoanalysis potentially offer refuge and redemption from childhood pathology where events predate religious adherence.

⁴⁵² One word slightly changed to render clearer meaning. 'I go into the session and try to be in a meditative state of mind by which I mean internally spacious, minimum of agendas ... there's a lightness of touch so that I can see those agendas so they are not filtering my perception, my hearing, my affective attunement with my own insides and with the patient and then I try to have an associational approach where I don't assume anything means anything ahead of time. So if a Buddhist ... I don't assume that's constructive it could be deadly, pathological, it could be killing them (JR 522-529).

⁴⁵³ Holding is a theoretical, clinical and psychological practice established by Winnicott emphasizing the impact of the external world with the infant's internal world and how this finds reparative parallel in psychoanalysis.

These were individuals who before joining the faith community were in deep psychological trouble ... I couldn't help but obviously see the religion as a refuge from ... issues that were extremely painful and actually threatened to completely disintegrate the personality and somehow in finding this new family and a sense of belonging, direction, structure ... was immensely containing for them ... I never interpreted that ... I would never have felt it appropriate to challenge the meaning that religion held for them. I saw my role as helping them to deal with problems that brought them to therapy now rather than ... engage in a deconstruction of what religion had meant (AL 516-531).

AN believes analysts should adopt a neutral stance but recognizes that the unconscious makes it impossible for the patients not to know something of the analyst, including their beliefs for or against religion. In the interview AN adopted a neutral stance towards me (a minister of religion) however his strong feelings about the dangers of religion came across powerfully.

Dialogue partner

Phillips identified a problem with dialogue 'because the language is almost organized to exclude each other ... even though there seems to me there are a lot of links and I certainly think theology in a way is the most interesting way of reading about psychoanalysis' (AP 845-846). Other interviewees saw these traditions in dialogue whilst recognizing the problem that each can exist in isolation, 'like a defensive split it's so compartmentalized that it doesn't get evaluated' (JJ 830-831). Black sees the future of psychoanalysis requiring 'a dialogue with adjacent disciplines, neuroscience, philosophy, religion ... these things need to come in and influence us and hopefully us to make a contribution to them' (DB 67-70). Jones notes psychoanalysts engage with spirituality but fellow academics find it difficult to engage with psychoanalysis.

Areas of dialogue include: the nature of consciousness; autobiography as a source of theological and analytic engagement;⁴⁵⁴ issues of personal transformation as ways of making sense of life ; complementarity of language; the nature of good and evil;⁴⁵⁵ working with pathology;⁴⁵⁶ and the use of religious practices to experience an inner analytic self engaging body, mind and spirit.⁴⁵⁷ Jones finds ‘certain resonances and parallels between a relational understanding of psychoanalysis and certain themes in religion ... that don’t exist in ego psychology or ... classical Freudian psychology’ (JJ 958-962).

Such dialogue allows spiritual retreats to include psychoanalytic reflection on the dynamics of the spirit/psyche – a feature mentioned by Jones, Rubin and Bobrow. Grotstein takes a broader perspective arguing they are two dichotomous descriptions of one reality.

The essence of the religious experience in psychoanalysis ... [is] psychoanalysis pretends to be atheistic and it’s really very religious ... psychoanalysis goes on inside the individual in the unconscious, it’s an ineffable entity ... it has to do with the universality of psychoanalysis as a mystical entity, which has its own functioning. It just needs somebody to ignite it’ (JG 1479-1494).

In line with his rejection of an objectified God, Grotstein imagines the unconscious as an ineffable entity that acts in a manner theologians attribute to the action and being of God (Macquarrie 1966). Yet this vital relational dimension - God/unconscious/ineffable entity - exists apart from human personhood but comes to ‘being’ through relational encounter that both religion and psychoanalysis provide in different forms.

⁴⁵⁴ ‘That sounds really interesting’ (DB 712).

⁴⁵⁵ In terms of answering complex questions such as these, theologians are seen as sharing common ground with psychoanalysts in wrestling with the challenge of providing answers. ‘I think that’s a tradition that we have a lot to learn from and doesn’t involve us being religious but there are very great minds who have been involved in thinking through the implications of different ways of thinking, I very much feel I could be interested in that form of thinking without having to feel that it would sign me up’ (AN 729-733).

⁴⁵⁶ Several interviewees made reference to clinical examples of this occurring. An important part of the psychoanalytic role is to critically engage with religious beliefs, addressing any pathological dimensions, in order to free the person to discover a healthier spiritual way of being.

⁴⁵⁷ ‘Raising them to a higher level of being and interaction and connection with the world’ (JB 728-729).

God does inhabit the mind, the unconscious and that he ... is the unconscious, 'he' I hate to call God 'he' that is already objectifying him, personifying him but there is a godliness about us that we have been very shy about accepting ... and worshipping him is a defence against it, experiencing is far deeper (JG 1602-1606).

Bobrow concludes 'Within psychoanalysis the dialogue of spirituality, religion ... has been ... more marginalized ... than in psychotherapy as a whole'⁴⁵⁸ however: 'there still are some serious resistances within psychoanalysis to letting in spirituality, meditation and religion' (JBR 234-235). Referring to Eigen, 'he probably will always be a prophetic, marginalized voice in any field because of the creativity and dynamism and challenge of his writing and teaching' (JBR 241-243) but Bobrow identified himself, Safran, Rubin and others as voices that are, at times, ignored.

I think the meeting of spirituality and religion and more so spiritual practice ... with psychoanalysis has potential ... it's just a more powerful approach if the two are in touch with one another. Their mission is overlapping, it's the liberation of human potential, wisdom, compassion, and the relief of suffering, basically they have a common purpose, coming at it from different points of view, different perspectives (JBR 491-498).⁴⁵⁹

Spiritual practices brought by patients are an opportunity to discover something unique within this person allied to an engagement with the unconscious.⁴⁶⁰ 'I think together they are partners in liberation and they should make common cause' (JBR 518-519).

⁴⁵⁸ 'So ... in San Francisco there's not a whole lot of interest. In Los Angeles, there's a whole lot of interest Buddhist, or otherwise ... in London, there's some interest with Neville Symington ... In New York, there's quite a lot of interest' (JBR 204-209).

⁴⁵⁹ The 'transformational experiences that they offer and prefer are similar but quite different, but I do believe that they have a tremendous amount to bring to one another, both in terms of the practice and in theory and the principles, and I actually think they are the new wave, I mean we're seeing it within non-psychoanalytic psychology, it's happening' (JBR 498-502).

⁴⁶⁰ Bobrow adds 'now that we have more spiritual practitioners doing psychoanalysis, it's going to change psychoanalysis from the inside out' (JBR 509-510) and 'likewise we have more spiritual teachers who have had good therapy, and some have had a psychoanalysis, and they understand ... unconscious motivation and communication and the healing potential of two people over time. So ... let's see what happens in fifty years, without trying to make an amalgam. But I just know that this is a marriage that's a good marriage. I don't know how it's going to turn out, and I don't want to create some hybrid prematurely, but I'm very committed' (JBR 512-518).

A critical dialogue between psychoanalysis and religion needs to recognize that neither is privileged and neither is pathological, and avoid adopting a position ‘that’s unquestioned and ... unimpeachable’ (JR 260-264). This dialogue is two-way as,

the analytic attitude is a depthful, compassionate exploration of the variety of meanings and functions: compensatory; pathological; constructive of ... the patient... so to start out a priori and to think atheism is normative ... and religion is pathological, the first thing you are showing is you’re not really analytic ... but also its anti-analytic ... to take ... the meaning of someone’s spiritual quest at face value ... because we try to take nothing at face value (JR 488-499).

Rubin, Eigen and Jones suggest that every aspect of the psyche, including religion and spirituality can be ‘all sorts of products of the psyche ... religion, spirituality, artistic creativity’ (JR 513-514) need to be approached from a position of ‘not knowing’ which religious and analytic practitioners can find difficult to do.⁴⁶¹ Bobrow feels passionately about Buddhist, Zen and psychoanalytic dialogue enriching life.⁴⁶² Mollon recalls ‘I could talk freely about my spiritual interest and explorations and he would always respond with interest ... rather than discouragement, he wouldn’t try to analyze away what I was’ (PM 713-716).

⁴⁶¹ Rubin adds we ‘have not fallen as deeply into the trap of assuming a priori that religion and spirituality and mystical experience (are) pathological. We ... look at the healthy and constructive aspects ... I’m appreciative of both traditions but ... look honestly at what’s the impact on the life, the psyche and the behaviour of the particular person I am working with’ (JR 539-546).

⁴⁶² ‘Buddhists and the spiritual practitioners do not understand the unconscious. They don’t understand unconscious emotional communication ... Buddhists speak about transference and counter-transference and projection. They don’t have a clue as to how it operates and how ubiquitous it is. So I want to educate those people about unconscious emotional communication and how it happens, how powerful it is, ... likewise, I don’t think that the psychoanalysts I’ve known ... [know] how things can be full and complete of themselves, in a non-dualistic way. They don’t understand shunyata or emptiness ... I think it takes religious experience ... to understand how similarity and difference, and all of those dualities fall away and are non-contradictory, that you can have something incredibly universal that includes the particular and doesn’t rule out the individual or the particular, and that is a religious experience ... bringing those into dialogue’ (JBR 385-406).

Fundamentalism – religious and psychoanalytic

Black distinguishes between mythical religions (Buddhism, Hinduism) and monotheistic religions (Christianity, Judaism, Islam), noting that psychoanalysis found it much easier to engage with the mythical religion, a view shared by half the interviewees. Psychoanalysis' difficulty with monotheistic religion is an inability to engage with fundamentalism and post 9/11 terrorism (Jones 2002a; O'Neil and Akhtar 2009). Lemma notes a trend,

picking up people's thinking and my own interests at the level of fundamentalist beliefs ... that's entered much more the zeitgeist ... obviously it is about religion in a way, but it's not at all about religion ... the way in which people can engage with religious beliefs to justify or enact certain particular internalized object relationships (AL 895-500).

Fundamentalism concerns AN as it: places someone outside the influence of psychoanalysis; confirms a psychoanalytic critique of pathology and domination of a super-ego; leads to an externalization of the violence done to a person within; is viewed as an underlying principle behind wars and other atrocities, mentioning the Nazi regime – hence some awareness that not all fundamentalism is religious in origin. Several psychoanalysts noted the fundamentalism of Kleinian approaches,

its very dogma bound ... preoccupied with ... a very unfortunate kind of Kleinian influence or Kleinian shadow that's fallen across the whole of British psychoanalytic thinking ... which leaves many analysts to focus on very negative parts of ... human beings ... on destructive parts and I think with very ... little space for communication about spiritual concerns or higher strivings of human beings' (PM 54-58).⁴⁶³

There is an implicit 'functional atheism' to psychoanalytic fundamentalism, 'I think a lot of analysts would react with some anxiety, hostility even scorn, they might try to conceal it, but I think it's there' (PM 382-384). Phillips' perspective links the internal and external

⁴⁶³ Grotstein expressed concern at fundamentalist attitudes of British Kleinians that rejected Bion's later work, as well as the abuse of power experienced in some psychoanalytic institutes, the American Psychoanalytic Association and the International Psychoanalytic Association (Grotstein 2002a, 2007, 2009a).

worlds. ‘We’ve probably never lived in more religious times ... religious fervour is all around us. Whatever we think of it, we can’t be indifferent to it ... whatever is latent in them is re-inforced by what’s going on contemporaneously’ (AP 616-621). In failing to address issues of religious fundamentalism, psychoanalysis fails to offer the insights it has about the origins of fundamentalism in the inner world of the psyche becoming played out in the external world. Psychoanalysis as a whole has failed to address the fundamentalism inherent within its training institutes therefore limiting its engagement with wider cultural change (including fundamentalism and the growth of spirituality) many see as essential for psychoanalysis’ survival in the twenty-first century (Cooper 2006; Willock, Curtis, and Bohm 2009).⁴⁶⁴

Implicit fundamentalism has led to psychoanalysis becoming viewed as a religion (Kirsner 2000; Sorenson 2004), dominated by: a Messianic visionary and infallible founder; inerrant and orthodox texts that cannot be questioned⁴⁶⁵; a priesthood whose unique function sets them apart; initiation into particular denominations with special rituals; a couch for confession and absolution; and authority retained by a universal body. Deviance from orthodox rituals and teaching are viewed as heretical, resulting in expulsion, being cast out of paradise - the Garden of Eden - into the hostile world.⁴⁶⁶ Echoes of this ironic account of psychoanalysis as religion was found in over half the interviews.

“Thou shalt have no other gods before me” I mean ... all things can be translated back into religious language in terms of how orthodox they were, well that’s idolatry

⁴⁶⁴ Relational/intersubjective approaches are exceptions.

⁴⁶⁵ Although later interpretations like targums are added.

⁴⁶⁶ The metaphors of expulsion from the Garden of Eden and Lucifer falling from heaven emerged in the scientific disputes that formed the ‘controversial discussions’ – the definitive moment in British psychoanalysis. No attention has been given to the unconscious association of these metaphors concerning the primal struggle between Anna Freud (God) wishing to expel both Adam and Eve from the Garden and Lucifer (Klein) from heaven (King and Steiner 1991: 808).

... and God ... tells you not to worship false gods and you can only have one God and I'm it' says the psychoanalyst (JB 589-592).

Psychoanalysis can be viewed as a form of 'ancestor worship ... that impedes creativity' (JR 22-23). Stated more strongly it becomes 'sectarian ... feuding and idol worship' (JR 124) and 'a puritanical religion, not just a religion' (JG 790).

Historically, psychoanalysis and religion acted in a similar manner, permitting or prohibiting ideas and actions through adherence to orthodoxy. This power dimension is challenged by the emergence of spirituality and postmodern forms of psychoanalysis.

Lemma, discussing religion reflects,

It's about finding a sense of community and belonging, to something just slightly bigger than oneself but ... a version of being in the psychoanalytic world is that does become your religion. I don't mean ... beliefs are absolute ... I don't engage with it in that way but in terms of the structure that religion provides, a sense of belonging, of having a sense of shared purpose with others, that I think I would probably get from psychoanalysis' (AL 466-474).⁴⁶⁷

When asked about the psychoanalytic equivalent of faith, Lemma viewed 'faith as being hope and I would understand hope as being internal connection with a good object that gives you a sense of perspective ... so it frees you ... as the activation of a benign internal figure' (AL 739-748). AN viewed religion and psychoanalysis as philosophical systems, vital for understanding humanity. 'Freud and Marx ... both ... had a very deep respect for religion' (AN 167-168) adding Marx,

describes it as the ultimate expression of man, where he expresses the highest in himself ... the soul of soulless conditions, it's a real expression of a man. And Freud certainly thought it one of the best ways of ... studying ... metapsychology ...

⁴⁶⁷ 'I see my relationship with psychoanalysis as being as I said earlier like a religion, ... I don't care if it's true or not, it makes sense to me, it has helped me, I see it helping my patients, I don't have this investment ... of saying it is better than' (AL 661-664).

is to study religion because religion is writ large, the expression of the struggles that are very human struggles' (AN 171-177).

Within psychoanalysis certain figures always attracted a religious-like following. 'Bion ... everything he said was invested with such powerful meaning by everyone else that you did feel you were at a ... religious gathering and if you said anything you would be heretical' (AN 442-445) yet such a stance is endemic within psychoanalysis and of Freud himself and subsequent apostles (Schwartz 1999). Grotstein locates himself in opposition to institutional, religious psychoanalysis with its canons, revelations, founding figures and high priests. Psychoanalysts have subsequently acted as if 'their spirituality was the unconscious' (JG 334).

Theme 6: Spiritual/Spirituality⁴⁶⁸

As noted earlier it is difficult to separate religion and spirituality, many analysts using the terms interchangeably. A thematic narrative analysis of the terms 'spiritual/spirituality' revealed three clusters of meaning in addition to those already discussed in relation to 'religion/religious'.

Religious decline and spiritual growth

Phillips believes 'people don't recover from 2,000 years of religion in ten minutes ... secularization either is impossible or is much much more difficult than anybody thought' (AP 388-390) – a view supported by some contemporary social theorists (Woodhead and

⁴⁶⁸ 159 references.

Heelas 2000; Flanagan and Jupp 2007; Lynch 2007b). While secularization as a total project is questioned, it is still a social phenomena.⁴⁶⁹ In the USA secularization,

produced a kind of unchurched but not unreligious population ... who grew up without significant affiliation with a religious institution and you had an ... increasing interest in religious and spiritual matters, so where did people go, they didn't go to their minister, priest or rabbi because they never had [one] they went to their psychotherapist (JJ 896-905).

In the UK, Black believes the appeal of Christianity is declining and needs radical change in order to avoid a retreat into fundamentalism or becoming privatized religious or spiritual experience.⁴⁷⁰ Jones suggests this interest in spirituality has its roots back in the late 1960s when 'people either go underground and get really radical ... or they go out to Height-Ashbury and start smoking dope and following the mahraguruyogi or ... develop a certain kind of spirituality' (JJ 1199-1202).⁴⁷¹ 'People do not want to talk about religion anymore ... now it is spirituality' (AMR 394-395). Mollon⁴⁷² sees a vital interest in spirituality but none with religion. 'All the leading figures in the energy psychology field are or become very spirituality orientated - that doesn't mean that they necessarily embrace any particular religious system or belief system' (PM 774-776).⁴⁷³ Lemma was less aware of spirituality in her British context but saw greater significance of religious and spiritual issues in non-Western cultures. Psychoanalysis offers its own culture encompassing the whole of life that

⁴⁶⁹ Secularization is regarded as a Eurocentric and Westernised theory that has limited applicability beyond these contexts. The same critique is also made of psychoanalysis.

⁴⁷⁰ Psychoanalysis as a meta-narrative and as an institution is also in decline (Hansen 2009).

⁴⁷¹ Jones was involved in the student political movements of the late 1960s.

⁴⁷² A pioneer of psychoanalytic energy therapy (Mollon 2004, 2008).

⁴⁷³ Callaghan 'talks about how he used to describe himself as a militant atheist but through his work he says he arrives at the view that there must be a God ... I'm sure he does not embrace any particular religion' (PM 782-788). Rizzuto also identifies the trend of spirituality moving away from religion that covers the same decades. 'So if you need a religion you have to buy a certain meta-narrative ... but if you had a spirituality you have the movement in the opposite direction. Here you are the centre, God is not the centre, you are the centre and then you begin the search. I am in the search, I am searching for someone there, someplace that will respond ... sending messages "if there is someone there please answer". So spirituality is a search that seeks peace of mind, realization of oneself ... it does not have (a) meta-narrative, but ... a hope that there is something there that transcends, and they believe that there is something whatever it may be, it cannot be clearly defined' (AMR 440-449).

makes it difficult to go beyond equating this with ‘paradigm blindness’.⁴⁷⁴ AN however distinguishes between religion and spirituality as they are,

entirely distinct ... spirituality refers to a kind of feeling state of mind, whereas religion - a whole body of thinking, of doctrine to do with engagement, understanding if you like, of man’s soul. I would distinguish also between religious sentiment and codified religion ... and like everything that human beings produce ... religion (is) extremely double-edged, both expressing ... ultimate yearnings and ultimate strivings and even truths about man’s soul and also being one of our greatest tragedy because despite what all the religious leaders claim, religion is also always implicated in extreme rivalry and war, hatred and lack of toleration (AN 141-158).⁴⁷⁵

Philips confesses ‘I find it very difficult ... when people use the word, to really picture what they might be talking about’ (AP 404-405), agreeing with my description that ‘for many people spirituality is a more generic, easy term for something that isn’t quite religious’ (AP 422-423). Similarly AN comments, ‘I haven’t mentioned the word spirituality, I ... am not very sure what it means ... I prefer the word soul’ (AN 707-708). Black adds ‘I thought spirituality was just such a kind of cloudy and indeterminate term that I didn’t quite know what its boundaries were in any direction’ (DB 267-268): however as Black explored this further he equated positive aspects of religion with spirituality. Grotstein said ‘I think the problem is religion versus spirituality’ (JG 1778) and argues ‘spirituality to me is religion without religion’ (JG 776). ‘I find my religion very unspiritual, I wish it had more spirituality rather than worshipping a narcissistic chauvinistic God who is very unappealing’ (JG 1789-1790). Bobrow holds these in tension ‘I’m very interested in people’s religious lives or religious practices, religious histories. Oftentimes it has nothing to do with spiritual

⁴⁷⁴ The same critique applies equally to religion and some forms of spirituality.

⁴⁷⁵ ‘I think they are different kinds of things. I think many people feel a kind of religious sentiment without wanting to be ... signed up to any deity or organized religion ... religious sentiment is ... some feeling of connection with I think with the world, some sense of there being important forces which are beyond our understanding and so on’ (AN 146-153).

experience ... but every once in a while their religious experience will have some spiritual nature to it' (JBR 375-379).

Others see spirituality as a positive term embracing what it is to be fully human and overlapping with psychoanalysis emerging spontaneously.

All of a sudden people started talking about religious and spiritual issues in the middle of this on-line seminar ... Eigen was ... and what it said to me ... is that there is some resonance in relational psychoanalysis to certain religious and spiritual themes so there is a natural arising (JJ 992-998).

Mollon embraces spirituality as the higher strivings of what it is to be human while still subject to psychoanalytic scrutiny and an essential aspect of humanness often denied by psychoanalysis.

Evolving generic spirituality

By adopting a generic form of spirituality shorn of theistic and religious doctrines, new levels of engagement can be seen in contemporary psychoanalysis, especially relational and intersubjective approaches that are similarly shorn of analytic doctrines and institutional orthodoxy. Spirituality elicits more positive responses, being seen as superior to religious observance.

Spirituality I think ... is actually the core of what it is that people are, it's a way of ... seeking ... how am I doing ... trying to connect some larger entity. The question of what defines ... I don't consider it to be all that important ... because I still think all paths lead to one place ultimately and of course that is where religion is divisive and problematic whereas the idea of spirituality ... suggests there are multiple paths maybe as many as there are human beings ... leading to a universal something ... but I believe there are many, many particularities (JB 361-374).

Rubin adds positively that spirituality is ‘a multifarious term that has a lot of dimensions’ but sees a danger that ‘we speak past each other because we think we are referring to the same ... kinds of spirituality’ (JR 267-269).

A psychoanalytic vision is to enable ‘people heal their wounds’ (JB 721) and ‘seen from a spiritual point of view, ... raising them to a higher level of being and interaction and connection with the world’ (JB 727-729). ‘In a purely free associative mode spirituality probably has more benign associations ... about having a space in oneself, where one is ... disconnected from what is immediately impacting and can have a broader perspective on life’ (AL 451-456). This does not mean spirituality is a free-floating form of religion, or religion without rules or restrictions. Rubin offers a coherent and systematic view of the role of spirituality applied in a psychoanalytic context. He describes spiritualities of unity, character, meaning, self and practice in a pluralistic form that offers well-being – both spiritual and psychical (JR 268f.) accounting for the deepest connection that human beings can experience.⁴⁷⁶ In absolute contrast AN sees dangers in ‘mystical spirituality’ (AN 425) avoiding the deepest sufferings of human life, offering escape rather than engagement.

Bobrow thinks ‘spiritual experience can arise right within ... analysis ... it can arise anywhere, but it needs to be identified ... cultivated ... experienced for what it is’ (JBR 272-274). Like O it needs to be experienced which is often beyond the ability of analysts - ‘they don’t understand just how powerful and destabilizing and revolutionary that O is, it is the

⁴⁷⁶ Rubin develops these further in his chapter in (Black 2006).

unnameable, always the immeasurable ... they try to see it from a psychological perspective' (JBR 259-261).⁴⁷⁷

Spirituality as "Coming Out"

A powerful metaphor used to describe spirituality in psychoanalysis was 'coming out', with specific cultural parallels to gay or lesbian sexual orientation.⁴⁷⁸ It implies: fear; rejection; misunderstanding; uncertainty; and concerns about being labelled or marginalized.

Yes I think it happens as part of this ... this upsurge of interest in religion and spirituality in 70s, 80s and 90s ... psychoanalysts starting to come out of the closet and say "Yeah I have a religious practice too but don't tell anybody you know shhh kind of keep it under cover" ... people felt free to ... "come out of the closet to, come above board" about some of their own interests and practices (JJ 914-921).

'Psychoanalysts weren't immune from these trends they too ... came out of the closet' (JJ 933-934). 'Yes I have been practising psychoanalysis and Buddhism for more than 30 years ... on psychoanalysis and Buddhism ... more and more analysts ... are coming out of the closet and admitting that they meditate' (JR 338-341).⁴⁷⁹ The Freud Museum's (London) publication of a book on religion, the first of its kind from an iconic psychoanalytic centre, was viewed as 'a sort of religious coming out' (PM 583) driven by external demand rather than internal desire.⁴⁸⁰

This metaphor offers a profound parallel. Just as there are still ongoing struggles for equality and acceptance by gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgendered peoples within society

⁴⁷⁷ O is a concept developed by Bion and expanded by Grotstein and Eigen. See later section on mysticism/O.

⁴⁷⁸ The term is also used in relation to bisexual or transgendered sexualities.

⁴⁷⁹ Several words added at the request of JR to render clearer meaning.

⁴⁸⁰ See (Ward 1993, 2006).

and psychoanalysis (Galatzer-Levy and Cohler 2002) the same can be true for religion and spirituality.

Theme 7: Buddhism/Buddhist⁴⁸¹

Buddhism offers distinctive forms of spirituality that create a bridge between theistic religion (perceived as fundamental/pathological) and pluralist spiritualities. Buddhism provides the structure of religion without deity and the tradition of spiritual practices with greater openness to dialogue than other religions.⁴⁸² Buddhism through the practice of meditation also offers common ground for engagement with the clinical practice of psychoanalysis. Rubin writes ‘if you don’t understand the ... unconscious, the dense rich texture of ... the way unconscious mechanisms work ... your mind can be quiet and still and equanimous but you are missing something vital’ (JR 417-419). Rubin offers, ‘the way I try to listen - is to integrate the Eastern and Western ways of listening, to quiet and still the mind and then to be interested in meaning’ (JR 420-422) understood psychoanalytically ‘putting those together to create something new’ (JR 424). Black believes Christianity and Buddhism have common ground in underlying ontological values of love, kindness and compassion.⁴⁸³ Thirdly, psychoanalysis and Buddhism are different in the UK and the USA, a fact that initially surprised Black. In the UK, Coltart was identified as of particular importance (DB 163f.) and contemporaneously Parsons (Parsons 2000, 2006) and Black (Black 2006) have become important in religious and spiritual engagement.

⁴⁸¹ 69 references.

⁴⁸² When describing psychoanalysis as a puritanical religion Grotstein adds ‘Buddhists they were not’ (JG 792) implying that the term Buddhism/Buddhist, used metaphorically, offers a different quality of religious and spiritual engagement that is much more attractive than traditional religion.

⁴⁸³ ‘I sort of assumed that psychoanalysis and Buddhism have a lot to say to each other’ (DB 119-120) said Black, who identified positive aspects of religion related to an emerging dialogue with Buddhism and the Dalai Lama. Jones notes that there is a tension as both Buddhism and Christianity can be studied academically and understood psychoanalytically: however both are religious and spiritual practices that require a spiritual engagement through prayer and meditation (Jones 2003).

My patients talk more about spirituality ... many more mention Buddhism ... I recognize as a trend that lots of people who may have similar backgrounds to mine have turned away from a ... rigid sort of religious upbringing but have embraced ... Buddhism as a way of finding ... a sense of community and belonging (AL 460-467).

This impact is much less than in the USA where a wide range of Buddhist thinkers and practitioners engage with psychoanalysis, and Buddhism is seen in an increasingly favourable light, though still regarded negatively by some.⁴⁸⁴ Benjamin recalls,

In the American Psychological Association ... we have large meetings once a year, people give papers and someone was giving a paper about this patient who had taken up Buddhist meditation in between sessions and was presenting this as though it were a piece of pathology that the patient was in a sense not wanting to deal with the loss between sessions ... so I actually did stand up and say that, that was a really a rather jaundiced way to look at it, and that it was very creative for the patient to find a way to both calm herself and also organize herself in-between sessions and that it didn't detract from her analysis, on the contrary (JB 563-573).

However, Buddhism's very popularity is a problem.⁴⁸⁵ Bobrow's concern is that aspects of Zen are taken out of context and applied in therapy and Zen teachers adopt a simplistic understanding and use of transference and counter-transference, neither fully engaging with the unconscious.⁴⁸⁶ There is still much for psychoanalysis and Buddhism to learn through dialogue, avoiding the danger of equating Freud with Buddha.

⁴⁸⁵ 'In America you can go down the street and sign up at the Zen centre down the street here and you can practise Zen Buddhism, and then you say alright now that I've practiced Zen Buddhism for 5 years I can talk about Buddhism ... as someone who has studied Buddhism academically, and lived in Japan ... I think that's a very narrow view of Buddhism' (JJ 803-809).

⁴⁸⁶ 'What the Buddhists don't understand is the contribution of the unconscious emotional communication and how ... you can be thinking pure thoughts, cultivating goodness and really hurting yourself and other people ... that's where psychoanalysis comes in. On the other hand, I don't think psychoanalysts understand the fact that our thoughts and our feelings do condition our well-being. I mean, there is this idea that you have private experience, and if you have a rageful experience, it's just your private experience and you'll work it out in your analysis. But the fact is that if you're stuck on rage and you can't find a way to work it through that will toxify your life. And so, I think the Buddhist teachings about cause and effect, and the importance of intention and the quality of mind have something to teach the analysts and analysts' appreciation of the deeper layers of emotional thinking and motivation. Because Buddhists say it's not just what you're thinking, but your intention that conditions something. But analysts have written about intention and motivation from time immemorial. I want to bring those together' (JBR 416-432).

Theme 8: Mystical/Mystic/O⁴⁸⁷

If aspects of religion and spirituality challenge adequate description, 'I feel there is something very important in it but I also think we don't have the vocabulary to say what that is quite yet' (DB 684), the mystical proves even more elusive.⁴⁸⁸

One of the big influences on my life has been the mystical experience ... it turned my world view upside down and one of the things that I viscerally and intuitively saw and felt was that the boxes that we create ... felt like illusions ... It was a genuine mystical experience and I had a glimpse of another way of seeing and another way of being and it didn't have to do with these boxes: spirituality; psychology; object relations; self psychology; all seemed in the Wittgensteinian sense – nonsense, non sense, not stupid or silly but nonsense it just didn't make sense to me I just didn't think that's the way the universe worked' (JR 109-120).

There is an inherent mysteriousness, ineffability (Klein 2003) and beyondness encountered that Bion and Grotstein attempt to encapsulate with the concept of O and other aspects of the unconscious whilst acknowledging the impossibility of this task (Lopez-Corvo 2003). Eigen offers a different metaphor that of 'coming through the whirlwind' (Eigen 1992) to capture this while Mollon adds,

there's the Matte Blanco tradition which does seem to lead to ... encounter with something mysterious and other and a ... path, one path to an awareness of God ... the later work of Bion ... took a distinctly spiritual ... leaning although it was obscured by his dense language' (PM 542-548) and 'Grotstein ... very much took the further reaches of Bion's thinking and took them a bit further and you do certainly get a sense of the spiritual in his writings' (PM 623-627).

Grotstein saw Bion's O as his 'venture into spirituality' (JG 274). Such experiences have found parallels in the concept of the 'analytic third' developed by Ogden (Ogden 1994, 2006) who defines it as an unconscious intersubjective construction between the analyst and patient that offers potential for the unconscious inner object world of the patient to be engaged with. This aspect of self connected via the unconscious to that which is beyond the

⁴⁸⁷ 35 references.

⁴⁸⁸ See discussion in chapter one.

self, enables multiple selves to be identified and integrated drawing on psychic and spiritual resources. Grotstein defines this as a transcendent position, Black as a meditative position (both drawing on traditional Kleinian ‘positional’ terminology). I would categorize this as transcendent Otherness that draws from the Bionian/Grotstein tradition of psychoanalysis, exemplified in the work of Grotstein. Bion, ‘was very deeply involved with religious metaphors ... Bion’s interest in O came from the religious mystics, particularly Meister Eckhart ... the Kabbalah and its mystical tradition, so Bion would ... hyphenate the mystical with the spiritual’ (JG 337-347). This forms an overlap with psychoanalysis ‘he would call it the spiritual vertex of psychoanalysis and I think it had to do with that mysterious area that is of O’ (JG 351-353).⁴⁸⁹

In parallel with this there is also an intersubjective Otherness that draws from the intersubjective and the relational aspects of contemporary psychoanalysis, exemplified in the work of Eigen and Benjamin who see ‘there is only one reality, there’s just different ways of looking at it, they overlap at times’ (JB 200-201). A unifying level of analytic and spiritual engagement takes people to another level, or another place of reality variously named as God, other/Other or the ‘Third’. I see both forming a dizygotic sacred Otherness in contemporary psychoanalysis that is transitional and mystical – experienced rather than defined – that fits within the interpretative framework of sacred psychoanalysis outlined in chapter eleven of part B.

⁴⁸⁹ Bobrow supports Grotstein’s view of Bion but adds ‘Bion is a mystic, at heart. If you really read Bion, he’s a mystic. But he’s not a Buddhist mystic or a Hindu mystic or a Christian mystic, he’s just a mystic’ (JBR 249-253). Similarly, Jones finds common ground for Christianity and Buddhism through the mystical text *The Cloud of Unknowing*. Rubin was changed by his mystical experience resulting in him searching for meaning, which led to Buddhist and psychoanalytic thought and practice.

Theme 9: Love⁴⁹⁰

Sayers suggests that love, alongside religion, is being recovered by psychoanalysis (Sayers 2003)⁴⁹¹ and this was an important concept used by most of the interviewees. While there was a large numerical occurrence of the word, a thematic narrative analysis understands a word or idea within its context. This is especially important when love is used so widely to mean many things. Six uses of the word ‘love’ were identified. Firstly, love is simply a general expression, i.e. ‘I love to read ...’ as a personal statement about a like or a desire. What is significant is that the interviewee is choosing to tell me, as the interviewer, indicating a willingness to enter into a degree of self-revelation. Secondly, love is an aspect of being, so interviewees talked about making love, searching for love, or used love in the context of relationship. AP said of his former analyst, the controversial Masud Khan⁴⁹², ‘I loved him and vice-versa actually’ (AP 165). Thirdly, love is used as an over-arching concept, bearing meaning in philosophical rather than religious terms. JB finds parallels in ‘the history of love in the Western world ... this idea of being partners in God rather than being partners with God, being partners with another person in God’ (JB 239-243) and connection to the third/Third as an aspect of psychoanalytic encounter. Fourthly, love is clearly identified as a specifically Christian concept with reference to ‘God is love’ (three references) and the love of God. Fifthly, love was used to refer to the legacy we pass on to our children and our patients. As they evolve their own futures, it is out of the knowledge of having been loved by their parent, grand-parent or analyst that enables greater potential to

⁴⁹⁰ There were 43 references to love made by nine of the eleven interviewees.

⁴⁹¹ Love has been the subject of psychoanalytic reflection especially by focusing on its clinical aspects in the work of Bergmann (Bergmann 1980, 1982, 1988, 1995) and Kernberg (Kernberg 1974, 1977, 1994, 1995). See also Solomon on love and lust in the countertransference (Solomon 1997).

⁴⁹² Khan can be better understood through a reading of his key text (Khan 1988) and recent biographies by Willoughby and Hopkins, with Willoughby offering the best critical and contextual insights (Willoughby 2004; Hopkins 2006).

be realized. Sixthly, love was seen as a vital aspect of being, 'I think anything you can love makes your life better and anything that stirs your strongest feelings makes your life more interesting' (AP 598-599). This life is potentially open to psychoanalytic and religious or spiritual analysis and interpretation, although Grotstein believes 'love and god are the missing elements of psychoanalysis' (JG 1865) and if these can be incarnated in the person of the analyst, it puts them in touch with the truth. This vital theme is one to which we return in the concluding chapter.

CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR. THEMATIC COMMENTARY AND ANALYSIS

This thematic narrative analysis identified the key words/phrases used by all interviewees as:

- Psychoanalysis
- Contemporary Psychoanalysis
- Religion/Religious
- Spiritual/Spirituality
- Buddhism
- Mystical/O
- Love

Given the extent of the data (123,000 words) this has not exhausted the generation of meanings, codes and themes and the text of the interviews is appended and available for future research on the lived experience of religion and spirituality in contemporary psychoanalysis. Presented here are the core themes examined within their narrative context, where each category has further dimensions and these have been outlined, emerging through an interpretative narrative in which they were told.

Freud's influence casts a long shadow from his origins in the nineteenth century and his work and ideas have a clarity and relevance (suitably contextualized) ranging from an aesthetic experience through a textual form of engagement to a re-discovery of techniques, especially free association, that have ongoing significance. This offers a recovery of ideas and practices that have been overlooked by the emergence of counter-transferential

understandings that shaped clinical practice in psychoanalysis from the mid to late twentieth century. Freud is not redundant, yet neither is he reified or canonized.

This appears to be less true for Klein and Bion as the natural successors to Freud, Klein more so in the UK.⁴⁹³ Bion has found an advocate in Grotstein, Grotstein himself is a highly creative writer and theorist and is an influential figure in West Coast psychoanalysis offering new ideas for clinical practice in a 'Kleinian/Bionian mode'⁴⁹⁴ however it is clear that 'Hampstead Klein' and 'California Klein', 'Clinical Bion' and 'Mystical Bion' are very different and their work evokes polarized responses. In examining how analytic contexts permit discussion or support prohibition including the acceptance or rejection of religious/spiritual dimensions Phillips responds 'What people speak about depends upon what people can hear and I think analysts inevitably just because they are people convey both explicitly and implicitly what they are prepared to listen to and respond to, so every analyst is going to get a selective range' (AP 477-480).

Even in an age of pluralism Jung and Lacan – two notable Freudian heretics or creative psychoanalytic innovators (depending on the theoretical situation and assumptions of the reader) are still largely neglected.⁴⁹⁵ To include Jung and Lacan would have so broadened the scope of the thesis that a detailed critical analysis would have been lost through the space required for expounding their ideas in the detail they deserve. Their presence should be acknowledged, as they have influenced the shape of contemporary psychoanalysis by

⁴⁹³ The importance of possessing a 'Kleinian' label in the UK appears important even when there is a dislike about being labelled.

⁴⁹⁴ Bobrow primarily agreed to be interviewed because I had interviewed Grotstein.

⁴⁹⁵ A brief discussion is found in the introduction. Jung and Lacan are noted in this thesis but their work not elaborated upon. One analyst interviewed, Ross Skelton, would identify as Lacanian but due to space, time, physical and health limitations not all 15 interviews were included in the final thesis.

their absence as much as their presence. Pluralism is a particular American contribution to psychoanalysis as a whole. This offers therefore greater scope for religious, spiritual and mystical engagement – especially Buddhism. Yet that very pluralism also allows for the powerful voices that reject any religious or spiritual aspect of psychoanalysis, a view found in the UK where psychoanalysis is less accommodating of religion, which is tolerated as an eccentricity or simply ignored – a common result of functional atheism.

By contrast, Phillips sees a fundamental imperative to believe but it is not always religion. The capacity to believe or disbelieve is a profound aspect of being human, as fundamental as our concerns with love, sex, power, and money.

I think anything you can love makes your life better and anything that stirs your strongest feelings makes your life more interesting and religion clearly does. It seems to me it trades on one's capacity to be powerfully moved, to feel that one's life is meaningful, ... it creates a sense of significance (AP 598-603).

Many of these aspects identified by Phillips find expression in contemporary forms of spirituality.⁴⁹⁶ Yet throughout the thematic analysis, despite the clear presence of religious and spiritual views, there was a reticence to speak about God/god in most of the interviewees. God is never fully discussed or defined and is essentially absent from most of the interviews. Lemma refers to the faith of some of her patients, victims of torture, calling on God which she understands as an internalized good object that offers hope. AN sees a successful analysis as transforming a belief 'in an all-powerful or all-punishing God and you ended up with a more tolerant God' (AN 568-569). One fear Christians have expressed about psychoanalysis is that it removes faith but AN argues 'I certainly wouldn't think it was a successful analysis because the person renounced belief' (AN 569-570) as it is not

⁴⁹⁶ See chapter two for a fuller discussion of spirituality that identifies particular components of a generic spirituality.

just that a person believes but what a person does with such a belief.⁴⁹⁷ Grotstein offers distinctive views about God.⁴⁹⁸

I think God is misused ... God has been confiscated and kidnapped by religious people, religions kidnapped God and taken the God out of God ... just as psychoanalysis has taken the analysis out of analysis ... I think the language of Godliness applies very much to the unconscious as I see it with patients certainly in the sense of hope, the sense of faith, faith in there being a unity (JG 467-472).

Later adding 'religion must objectify God and there it becomes desecration' (JG 1351-1352). 'I think God is alive and well, but not in religion, I think if the god is the god that I know or experience he would have nothing to do with religion' (JG 1804-1805).⁴⁹⁹

It became clear the term contemporary psychoanalysis has a specific meaning in New York, more so than the UK or California. Yet from an insider perspective it is not perceived as contemporary psychoanalysis, rather just the form of psychoanalysis practised by that person that has taken a different theoretical turn. Contemporary psychoanalysis is less a specific body of ideas and more a network of relationships associated or identified with ideas at a symbiotic level. A great deal of information and knowledge are generated relationally. For example take the psychoanalysts I interviewed in New York. I knew of Eigen through his books, *The Electrified Tightrope* and *The Psychoanalytic Mystic* but he was mentioned by Andrew Samuels⁵⁰⁰, who also suggested I interview Jessica Benjamin. I therefore needed to go to New York, where Eigen invited me to a seminar group and in

⁴⁹⁷ A view supported by most interviewees.

⁴⁹⁸ These have their origin in Grotstein's Christian Science background.

⁴⁹⁹ Strikingly there was no single mention of the term 'goddess'. Whilst it can only be a tentative position to argue from absence, it is suggestive at least that while the feminist impact on psychoanalysis has been profound, feminist theological engagement and goddess/pagan/Wiccan/cosmic Earth Mother spiritualities are yet to engage with psychoanalysis (Lynch 2007b).

⁵⁰⁰ Samuels is a creative and innovative thinker on Jungian and psychoanalytic issues based in the UK but part of IARPP. I invited him to do some CPD training for my students during which he and I had several conversations.

conversation he encouraged my work and thought that it was necessary, as he felt very much like a pioneer or lone voice at times. Benjamin also agreed to be interviewed in New York. I was also familiar with the work of Jones, who also agreed, as did Rubin as I was keen to interview someone from a Buddhist background. I did not know until the interviews that Eigen and Jones used to be neighbours, that Rubin had been talking with Eigen and Benjamin that week, that Jones was publishing something for Eigen and that he had been in contact with Rubin. All of them at some stage had been in contact with Mitchell, which illustrates the complexity, the smallness and relationality of the psychoanalytic world, for good or for ill.⁵⁰¹ It can be difficult to be in dialogue when at the heart of a tradition or system of thought, belief or practice so much is invested in sustaining the enterprise – one reason for the isolation and authoritarian nature of many psychoanalytic institutes (Kirsner 2000, 2001). Locating oneself in a transitional or liminal space allows new possibilities, movements or evolutions to occur. ‘I’m ... a fellow traveller with psychoanalysis ... what I call creative marginality ... finding myself on the boundary and finding a way hopefully to use it somewhat constructively is something that’s continued through my life (JJ 1289-1293).

What clearly emerges in the interviews⁵⁰² - but less so in a thematic narrative analysis - is the distinctive personality of each psychoanalyst. They cannot be labelled, a particular fear that was expressed by most interviewees, but rather, they can be experienced.

Psychoanalysis is therefore a set of interwoven ideas and powerful personalities that speak to the heart of being human, the very self with its past in the present and the future.

⁵⁰¹ Kirsner examines this in detail and notes the powerful dynamics to do with conformity – long an Achilles’ heel of psychoanalytic life (Kirsner 2000).

⁵⁰² Discussed in chapters twenty-one and twenty-two.

Psychoanalysis' hydra-like existence continues both consciously and unconsciously and it is something people feel passionate about - personally and professionally. To this group of people who identify as 'psychoanalysts' beyond the dogma and the disputes, people and their psychic damage calling out for healing, really do matter. Overall most of the analysts interviewed saw religion and spirituality as vital dimensions of human experience - individually, collectively and unconsciously. How this shapes the notion of sacred psychoanalysis is the focus of the final chapter in the final part D that follows.

PART D. SACRED PSYCHOANALYSIS – AN INTERPRETATION

The conclusion to this thesis takes the form of a multi-layered interpretation.⁵⁰³ In psychoanalytic terms this is a key therapeutic technique, when the analyst expresses in words what they understand about the patient's inner world based on narratives, memories, fantasies, fears, wishes and dreams. As the relationship between the analyst and the patient develops, formerly unconscious material becomes known, often in fragmentary or incomplete forms, and interpretation offers a new statement about the patient. An interpretation requires the conscious and unconscious engagement of both to reveal new understanding of the past and the present. Roth terms this 'mapping the landscape', which captures a unique dimension of this thesis (Roth 2001). Yet interpretation also involves 'an inescapably subjective dimension' used with 'a quality of "certainty"' (Lemma 2003: 184f.) as I am located in the landscape as a climber, not simply a cartographer. Interpretations arise out of 'an intersubjective matrix in which they crystallize' (Stolorow, Atwood, and Brandchaft 1994: 53) and takes us into the area of hermeneutics, detailed in the following chapter.

This research has examined the phenomena of a re-discovery of religious perspectives and the emergence of wide-ranging spiritualities (since the late 1970s), as new developments within contemporary psychoanalysis. How these developments, described in the thesis as aspects of 'sacred psychoanalysis', crystallize and are interpreted, forms the substance of these final chapters in answering the central question woven throughout this research, 'Does

⁵⁰³ Hinshelwood talks about three levels of interpretation, with the intention of reaching a new sphere of understanding within the unconscious and its dynamic processes (Hinshelwood 2006).

sacred psychoanalysis represent a new analytic movement with definable features constituting a new *Weltanschauung* or is it a diffuse phenomenon within psychoanalysis that parallels developments seen in contemporary culture?’⁵⁰⁴

Sacred psychoanalysis as advanced in this thesis takes two particular forms. Firstly, sacred psychoanalysis is an interpretative framework that provides a structure which integrates the religious and spiritual engagement that has been evidenced in contemporary psychoanalysis for the last thirty years. It offers a way of understanding or interpreting this development, which does not require religious or spiritual belief or practice in order to be truth-bearing and meaning-making. Any psychoanalyst from any background, theistic, atheistic, non-theistic, agnostic, pantheistic or pluralistic can utilize this interpretative framework to make sense of the different expressions of religion and spirituality found in contemporary psychoanalysis. This is examined in detail in chapter twenty-six.

Secondly, sacred psychoanalysis offers a hermeneutic understanding that consists of three over-lapping narratives. This allows each analyst to situate him or herself within a narrative frame through which they understand the experience of the religious or the spiritual. These hermeneutic understandings are focused around the themes of translation, transition, and transformation and are examined in chapters twenty-five to twenty-seven. Before examining these, some further reflection on hermeneutics is required and is found in the following chapter.

⁵⁰⁴ An overview of these developments can be found in the work of Gordon Lynch (Lynch 2007a, 2007b).

CHAPTER TWENTY-FIVE. 'SACRED PSYCHOANALYSIS' AND HERMENEUTICS

Hermeneutics began as a discipline of interpreting biblical and classical texts but through the work of Heidegger, Ricoeur, Gadamer, and Habermas expanded to include philosophy, theology, social sciences, qualitative research, counselling, psychotherapy and psychoanalysis (McLeod 1997, 2001; Alvesson and Sköldbberg 2000).⁵⁰⁵ Addison summarizes hermeneutics as 'trying to understand, take meaning from, or make intelligible that which is not yet understood is not only the central task of hermeneutics, it is an essential aspect of being in the world' (Addison 1999: 148). It is a term used to describe the creation of meaning by interpreting the 'text', where a text can be a written narrative, a voiced narrative, such as an interview, or any other form of capturing the words of a person. By drawing on one's personal, ontological, philosophical, political, psychoanalytic, religious or spiritual identity, a new discovery of meaning in the 'text' can be discovered. This becomes available for the person interpreting the text, and the text or the person that is interpreted. 'In principle, such a hermeneutic text interpretation is an infinite process, whereas in practice it ends when a sensible coherent meaning has been arrived at' (Kvale 2007: 109).

Ricoeur is the name most often associated with psychoanalysis, through the impact of his book *Freud and Philosophy* (Ricoeur 1970)⁵⁰⁶, and his desire is to see how hermeneutics

⁵⁰⁵ A helpful overview can be found in Sass' chapter 'Ambiguity Is of the Essence. The relevance of hermeneutics for psychoanalysis' (Sass 1998). Stolorow is a key figure in developing intersubjectivity theory in psychoanalysis, who drew particularly on Heidegger (Stolorow, Brandchaft, and Atwood 1987; Stolorow, Atwood, and Brandchaft 1994; Stolorow 2006, 2007). He was one of the sixteen psychoanalysts I interviewed.

⁵⁰⁶ Ricoeur had previously examined atheism and psychoanalysis. 'We are far from having incorporated the truth of Freud's teaching on religion. He has already reinforced the belief of unbelievers; he has scarcely

opens up worlds, meanings and connections (O'Dywer 2009). Subsequently new hermeneutic approaches evolved which Alvesson and Sköland identify as objectivist hermeneutics and alethic hermeneutics. In objectivist hermeneutics there is a clear divide between the subject studying and the object studied, allowing for a degree of objectivity, but does not claim scientific status. 'Alethic hermeneutics dissolves the polarity between subject and object into a primordial, original situation ... the basic idea concerns the *revelation of something hidden*, rather than the correspondence between subjective thinking and objective reality' (Alvesson and Sköldberg 2000 57f.). Alethic hermeneutics combines existential hermeneutics, poetic hermeneutics and a hermeneutics of suspicion linking the work of Heidegger, Habermas, Ricoeur and others. Alvesson and Sköland offer an integrative hermeneutic circle that unites objectivist and alethic perspectives by utilizing intuition, empathy and the existential dimensions as common factors.

The interpretative approach adopted to answer the question identified earlier, is similarly integrative, and spans the relative objectivity of a thematic narrative analysis and the '*revelation of something hidden*', not known or re-discovered or experienced for the interviewees alongside reflexive intersubjective dimensions (as seen in chapters twenty to twenty-four). It can be described as a hermeneutic of translation, a form of hermeneutics

begun to purify the faith of believers ... He who plumbs this movement to its depth will truly have taken on Freudian iconoclasm in the very movement of faith' (Ricoeur 1966: 36). Ricoeur's ideas became embroiled in a complex debate that dominated the early 1980s as to whether or not psychoanalysis is a science focusing on objective truth or a technique focusing on the creation of subjective meaning. On the one hand Grunbaum, a philosopher of science argued, like Popper, that psychoanalysis could not be classed as a science as its claims cannot be refuted or falsified (Grunbaum 1984), a sceptical approach also adopted by Gellner writing as a philosopher and social anthropologist (Gellner 2003). On the other hand Habermas argued that psychoanalysis was a particular kind of science that uniquely included a hermeneutic reflexivity (Frosh 1999), a view supported by Greenberg and Mitchell who argued that psychoanalysis was both a science and an interpretative discipline (Greenberg and Mitchell 1983). Gomez offers an insightful critique of this dispute, concluding that a psychoanalytic view of the person has its foundations in the nature of the soul/apparatus dichotomy of the psyche (Gomez 2005).

that offers a cross-over or transfer by identifying two hermeneutic approaches. Their juxtaposition allows for correspondence and communication between by delimitating an area of shared interpretation, yet allowing each approach to retain its distinctive identity.

Such an approach requires knowledge of another language or other conceptual systems. An important point made in my interview with Black (DB), and implicit in most subsequent interviews, was how difficult this is. Due to the cost, nature and timing of psychoanalytic training, normally after a prior career in another discipline, and given the monastic lifestyle of practising psychoanalysts described by Coltart and Benjamin as a vocation (Coltart 1993a; Benjamin 1997), the opportunity for acquiring a sufficiently rigorous understanding of religious, spiritual or theological issues is limited.

Most of the psychoanalysts I interviewed had acquired a wide range of ontological, religious and spiritual beliefs, including formal theological training or spiritual practice for some, prior to their psychoanalytic trainings. They had acquired a different language with which they could translate psychoanalytic ideas and experiences, their own and their patients', into religious, spiritual or sacred concepts. The earliest forms of religious and spiritual engagement in contemporary psychoanalysis adopted this hermeneutic of translation, as seen in the work of Rizzuto and Meissner who drew on the theological language from a Roman Catholic tradition, one as a Jesuit priest, the other as a lay-person influenced by Casel.⁵⁰⁷ They found themselves in a position of believing in an objective God as the source of all love, life, truth and being, as expressed in orthodox and classic Christian

⁵⁰⁷ See chapters five and seven for more details of Rizzuto's work on god-representations and the Catholic influences in her background (Rizzuto 2004b).

theology held by the Roman Catholic Church. Both held specific theological beliefs in an objective external God who exists outside the human psyche, yet whose very presence is experienced within the human psyche in forms of religious experience. This religious experience, while having a spiritual and theological dimension, is also a psychic event to be understood psychoanalytically.

Rizzuto understands this through the power of words found in theological and analytic contexts.

I learned that there are words and words: those that can change people and things and those that cannot. Liturgical and sacramental words or the words of the priest in confession could bring about help, transformation, forgiveness. Those transformative words, however had to be said in the right place and circumstances, with the right attitude, and be addressed to or heard from the right person ... Transformative words must be sacred and come from the committed heart of the believer ... The preceding description may seem very remote from psychoanalysis, but it is not. Psychoanalytic praxis also requires a particular relational frame and context between two people to give their words the power to transform. A ritual of meetings and times and mode of talking must be established to give the words spoken the necessary context to activate their transformative power. Words spoken outside the context cannot reach that sacred space of psychic life where the core of the patient's desires, fears, and conflicts lies hidden from him or herself (Rizzuto 2004b: 437f.).

Rizzuto and Meissner find a shared experience that can be translated into two different languages. For Rizzuto it was a specialized object relationship, a god-representation, which preceded Freud's Oedipal drama, which illuminated the possibility of future belief or unbelief. Rizzuto's work has been groundbreaking in disciplines external to psychoanalysis (see chapter seven), yet less than half the interviewees had any knowledge of her work. While Rizzuto is clear that her work is not about belief in God or a theological project it does expand the possibility of normal and non-pathological religious and spiritual beliefs, understood psychoanalytically. Rizzuto has been able to open up the language of religious

and psychoanalytic discourse by developing a concept that can be meaningfully translated by both.

Meissner begins from a theological perspective and examines the development of grace, faith, and hope as central aspects of the Christian tradition. He examines these through a psychoanalytic lens, including more recent developments in ego psychology, and identifies a vision of human personhood.

The therapeutic task, therefore, on both an individual and a religious level, is to oppose and eliminate what is infantile and destructive, but at the same time to respect and respond to the ideal ... the ideals, values, faith, and hope that are the lifeblood of society (Meissner 1987: 302).

Earlier Meissner identifies the ideal as God, and here and in his later work, he holds together the religious and therapeutic dimensions by translating the language of a Christian vision for the individual and society (Meissner and Schlauch 2003; Meissner 2009).

While both Rizzuto and Meissner have a specific theological background and a vocabulary to aid translation (Rizzuto 2004b), McDougall, a psychoanalyst well known in British and French psychoanalytic worlds, did not. As ‘a humanist open to everybody's religious beliefs’ she was invited to meet with the Dalai Lama who asked ‘what is the essential quest of the psychoanalyst?’ (Molino 1997: 79). Both agreed that ‘discovering the most intimate and deepest truths about oneself’ could come about through psychoanalysis and meditation. While there was agreement, ‘We did find a Tibetan word for the unconscious - *alia* - which the Dalai Lama described as a deep current that links all humanity together (a little like the Jungian unconscious)’ at times the translators struggled to find Tibetan words for

psychoanalytic or religious concepts, such as guilt.⁵⁰⁸ In their interviews, as well as their numerous publications AN, Benjamin, Black, Bobrow, Rubin, Grotstein and Jones all revealed a bi-lingual ability to translate psychoanalytic, religious, spiritual and philosophical terms.⁵⁰⁹

Bomford, drawing on Matte-Blanco and the language and traditions of Christian theology concludes they are engaged in the same search for the Other.

The search for the Centre, the Unconscious, God, the One ... is the search for ultimate meaning, beauty, justice, forgiveness, peace. The desire that implies it is surely universal ... God is called the soul of our souls, the spirit within our spirits, and Freud was one of the great explorers of the soul (Bomford 1999: 149).

Yet Bomford does not limit himself to a hermeneutic of translation, this is merely a start and later focuses on how one engages in transition from one state of being to another, ultimately leading to a transformation, though Bomford has in mind the transformation of the Church and Christian tradition in order to engage with the needs of people today. To fully account for the hermeneutic tasks involved in understanding sacred psychoanalysis, I evolved an interpretative framework, detailed in the following chapter.

⁵⁰⁸ All references are found in McDougall's interview with Molino (Molino 1997: 79f.).

⁵⁰⁹ A list of their works can be found in the reference list.

CHAPTER TWENTY-SIX. 'SACRED PSYCHOANALYSIS' - AN INTERPRETATIVE FRAMEWORK

Chapters seven to sixteen crystallized the key forms of religious and spiritual engagement following immersion in the vast and growing literature. These were identified as:

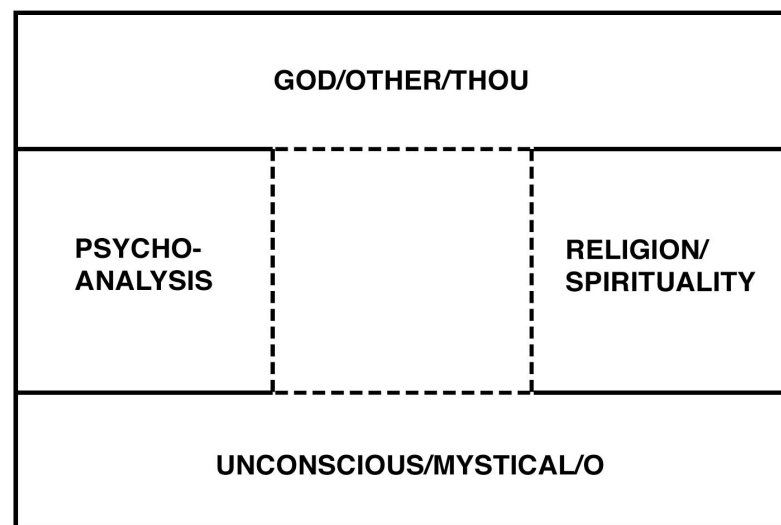
- Confessional/Credal (including god-representations)
- Incarnational/Transferential
- Natural religion
- Maternal religion
- Jewish perspectives
- Buddhist perspectives
- Hindu perspectives
- Muslim perspectives
- Mystical perspectives
- Interpersonal, Intersubjective and Relational perspectives

How these different forms of engagement related to each other, and to psychoanalysis, can be understood more clearly through the development of an interpretative framework. This is a linked set of concepts, represented here diagrammatically, in order to investigate relatively unknown areas of thought and practice and to see the relationship between them, often in new and revealing ways. Freud used the metaphor of scaffolding to develop his model of the mind in interpreting dreams, but was careful not to confuse the scaffolding with the building (Freud 1900: 536, 538, 598, 610; 1905a: 217).⁵¹⁰ An interpretative

⁵¹⁰ Freud added further models of the mind as his work developed (Freud 1938: 159).

framework can act as such scaffolding and be used as a tool for ‘research into the unknown of the unfolding fresh emotional experiences that make up actual analytic sessions’ (Sandler 2005: 499). My interpretative framework is more flexible than simply a theoretical construction implied by Freud’s scaffolding, as I locate a correspondence between differing concepts, hypotheses, theories, experiences or practices. It has parallels with an understanding of metaphor in terms of linguistic function where they ‘participate in the metaphorical capacity of provoking the mind to think something new by seeing a resemblance previously unnoticed or unthought’ (Klemm and Klink 2003: 503). This can be expressed diagrammatically.

Figure 1. Sacred psychoanalysis – an interpretative framework



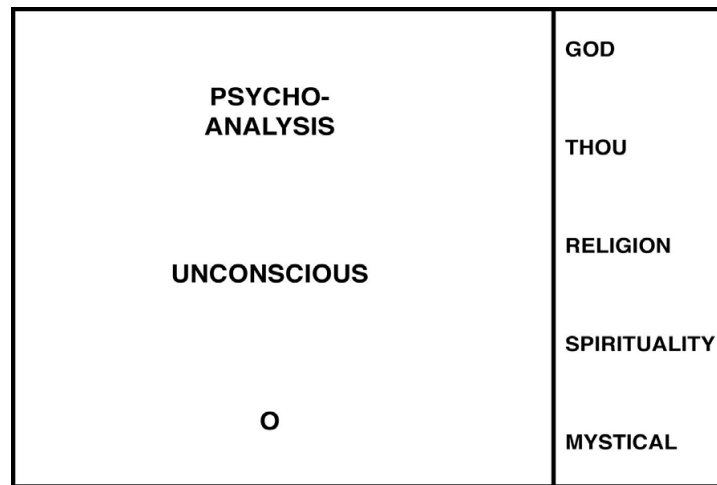
As outlined in chapter one, psychoanalytic theories contain implicit ontological, epistemological and philosophical assumptions (Marcus and Rosenberg 1998) and psychoanalytic training imposes these on existing beliefs and values, including the religious

and the spiritual (Sorenson 2000, 2004). Consequently every psychoanalyst has a unique set of beliefs and values that can be located within the interpretative framework developed here. This interpretative framework is composed of four areas represented by three or five solid lines and one dashed line. The solid lines represent a boundary or a framework that delimits or defines a term, such as ‘spirituality’ for example.⁵¹¹ A danger of any form of dogmatic or fundamental form of psychoanalysis, religion or spirituality is that it becomes so defined in an attempt to retain analytic, doctrinal or liturgical purity, the result is a hermetically sealed world (as seen in figures 2 and 3), that offers no, or very little, external engagement. While recognition is given to the value of other ideas, concepts or traditions, there is no ‘space’ for creative engagement or synthesis between the two.⁵¹² The interpretative framework is boundaried by fixed lines. A different balance of these factors can be found in a dominant psychoanalytic interpretative framework seen in figure two, on the following page.

⁵¹¹ See chapter two for a discussion of the nature of definitions and the working definitions adopted in this thesis for religion, spirituality and the sacred.

⁵¹² LaMothe has adopted Winnicott’s ‘potential space’ and reframed this ‘in terms of four interrelated, dialectical processes (surrender-generation, recognition-negation, care-quiescence, and disruption-repair)’ (LaMothe 2005: 207). He believes this more fully captures the self-states experienced in analytic relationship and enhances ‘intersubjectivity, meaning, value, and aliveness’ (LaMothe 2005: 220) understood in analytic and religious terms.

Figure 2. A dominant psychoanalytic interpretative framework



Psychoanalysts within this framework see religious or spiritual concerns as issues of pathology or cultural expressions to be interpreted by a dominant psychoanalytic discourse.

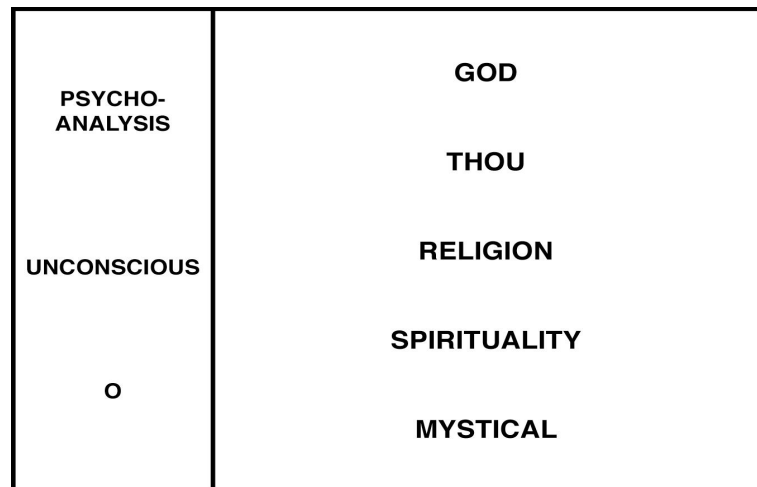
Copper, an influential and respected analyst in the USA (Cooper 2006, 2005) commented,

In my opinion, religion and spirituality are appropriate topics for psychoanalytic investigation, and totally inappropriate as foundational ideas within psychoanalysis. As your note indicates, spirituality cannot be delinked from religious thought and, once again, religion is an important topic for analytic investigation, but not a base for analytic ideas. I find recent attempts to connect spirituality (religion) and psychoanalysis deplorable, part of an attempt to replace scientific investigation by mystical belief. The significant components of what most people mean by spirituality - sensitivity, empathy, altruism, some sense of our limited place in the universe, etc. - are each of vast importance in understanding human behavior (sic.) and are not appropriately represented by religious belief, which as often as not supports prejudice, tribalism, murder, etc. Obviously, I feel strongly (Cooper 2009).

Cooper is not unrepresentative in holding such views (Britton 2006).⁵¹³ A similarly strong and diametrically opposed view is represented in figure 3 on the following page.

⁵¹³ See also the interview and comments made by AN in chapters twenty-two and twenty-three.

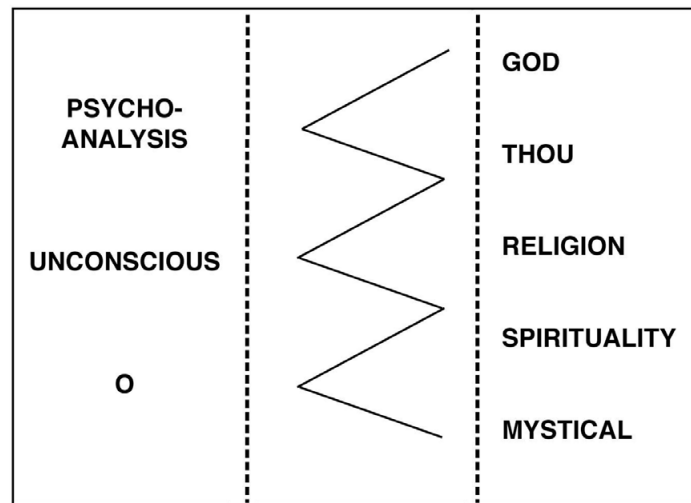
Figure 3. A dominant sacred interpretative framework



In this framework there is the dominance of sacred traditions, with allied beliefs, values, traditions, liturgies, or spiritual practices. Even if there is an intellectual assent to other ways of being and thinking, they become split off from any form of engagement. While there has been a long history of a critique and rejection of Freud by theologians within different traditions (Macquarrie 1966; Ross 1993), more often Freud is simply ignored or appears as a footnote under a discussion of the nature of humanity (Erikson 1987; Migliore 1991; McGrath 1996; McFadyen 2000).⁵¹⁴ While many early critiques were limited to a surface reading of Freud's texts, they are often subsumed in a Christian response to the emergence of psychotherapy and counselling as secular disciplines that replaced traditional religion (Rieff 1966; Wells 1993; Hurding 2003). There were however a few people, such as Pfister who pioneered a creative dialectic between the two, as seen in figure 4 that follows.

⁵¹⁴ I am focusing on the work of Christian theologians, as this is the field I am most knowledgeable about. There are exceptions such as that found in the work of Paul Fiddes (Fiddes 2000a, 2000b). However each religious tradition has critics of psychoanalysis.

Figure 4. A personal dialectic interpretative framework

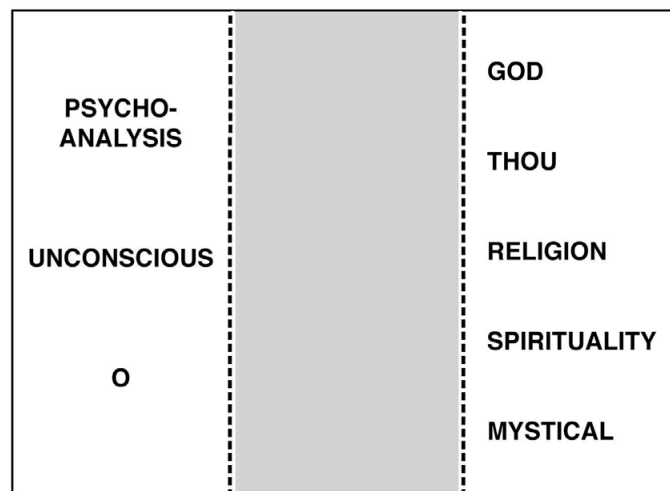


Pfister pioneered religious and psychoanalytic engagement holding together conflicting paradigms through personal relationship with Freud. His work and letters reveal an oscillation between the two in the form of a personal dialectic, as illustrated by the zig-zag central section of figure 4. While Pfister's work was pioneering and linked to his close friendship with Freud, it does lack a critical dimension, the exception being his *The Illusion of a Future* (Pfister 1993), his response to Freud's provocative *The Future of an Illusion* (Freud 1927). Fromm was a later pioneer that adopted such a dialectical approach, but who added a breadth and depth of critical insight missing in Pfister (Fromm 1950, 1957, 1963, 1967; Suzuki, Fromm, and DeMartino 1960).

Many of the psychoanalysts identified in the chapters that form part B (as well as chapter three, part A) adopted this approach. This dialectic framework was transitional and more prevalent in the early history of psychoanalysis. The disadvantage of this approach was that it allowed people to keep two aspects of the self, the psychoanalytic and the religious/spiritual in separate compartments, with the potential to perpetuate an unhealthy

form of splitting reminiscent of early psychopathology (Likierman 2001). In the last three decades there has been the evolution of a common ground framework, as seen in figure 5.

Figure 5. A common ground interpretative framework



Attempts at engagement that overcome the separation inherent in a dialectic framework, have focused on identifying an overlap of interest, though the precise nature of this was determined by the dominance of religious or psychoanalytic beliefs. For example, Hans Kung as a theologian associated with the Roman Catholic Church identifies the theoretical weakness of both Freud and psychoanalysis in addressing many issues of being human, but values some psychoanalytic insights and sees these aiding the theological task (Kung 1979). Donald Capps, a Protestant pastoral theologian, has with Paul Pruyser, long pioneered religious, spiritual and psychoanalytic engagement on a wide range of topics including hermeneutics, transitional phenomena, the psychoanalytic study of religion, psychobiography, the psychology of religion and the applications of psychoanalytic insights

to ministry, personality, and pastoral care and counselling (Capps 1984, 1997, 2001, 2003; Jacobs and Capps 1997a; Pruyser 1968, 1974, 1983, 1991a, 1991b; Jacobs 2000).⁵¹⁵

Psychoanalysts have tended to focus on religious experience as the subject for analytic reflection, but in ways that avoided pathologizing the subject and that led to enrichment for religion, spirituality and psychoanalysis (Meissner 1994; Black 2006; Wright 2009).

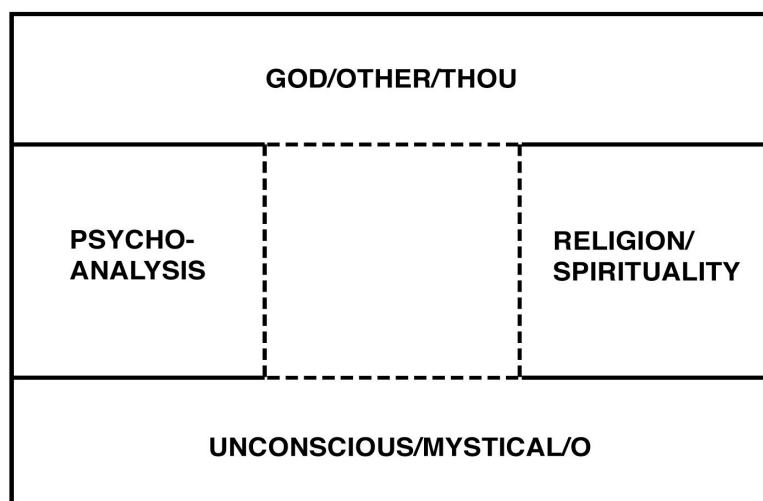
The shaded section of figure 5 (above) illustrates that psychoanalysis and the sacred can have a common existence with a shared interest in religious experience but without this altering their essential beliefs, which remain static. Meissner who views there are two paths challenges this.

The 1st path concerns itself with developing a coherent and psychologically valid analytic explanation of what it conceives to be religious experience or belief as a form of psychic experience, the 2nd sets out to design a valid psychoanalytic account of what authentic adherents of any religious belief system or systems actually believe and experience. This 2nd focus positions itself in the interface of psychoanalysis and religious belief and experience and seeks to establish an explanation which is both psychoanalytically valid and acceptable and seeks at the same time to remain open to and even integrable with religious belief systems and experiences ... the 1st path seems to me to be self-defeating, while the 2nd remains potentially open to promising and useful dialogue that can potentially enrich both areas (Meissner 2006b: 243f.).

This thesis argues that in the last three decades more sophisticated forms of dialogue and engagement have taken place. These have been examined in detail in earlier chapters, but there is a noticeable growth in the breadth and complexity of these dialogues, especially with psychoanalysis in its contemporary form. The interpretive framework developed here

⁵¹⁵ Capps' book on hermeneutics was the first text that introduced me to the subject and to the work of the philosopher, Paul Ricoeur.

fulfils Meissner's vision for a 'meaningful cross-disciplinary dialogue' where 'psychic dynamics and religious realities are conjoined and intermeshed' (Meissner 2006b: 244f.).⁵¹⁶



Returning to the interpretative framework in figure 1, the dashed line acts as a semi-permeable or porous boundary that has sufficient strength to contain, yet allows a movement of ideas and experiences into new spheres or an emergent synthesis. This interpretative framework retains the dynamic nature of the human psyche that is an essential part of psychoanalysis that is ever evolving and revealing, through the presence of the unconscious. At the core of this framework is a 'space' composed of four dashed lines representing sacred psychoanalysis. Spero adopts Kristeva's hermeneutic task of textual encounter, in an attempt to 'carve out a space' drawn from 'the mysterious exchange between Moses and God depicted in ... Exodus 33:13-23', which he terms 'divine space' (Spero 1998: 457). Applied in a clinical context Spero sees this metaphor of space illuminating the patient's narrative and recasting 'the meaning of the metaphor in a way that transcended her own personal text' revealing new ideas of greater and potentially universal significance (Spero

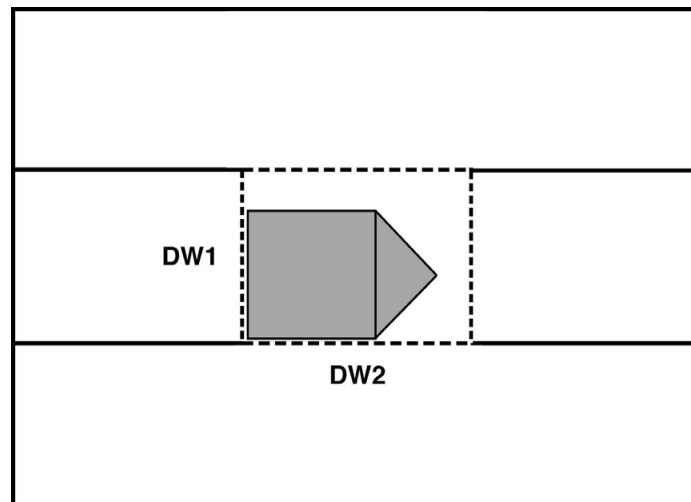
⁵¹⁶ Autobiographical accounts revealing the desire for, and the tensions concerning this dialogue, are found in *Psychotherapy and Religion. Many paths, One journey* (Weiner, Cooper, and Barbre 2005).

1998: 457). The framework developed here takes the metaphor of ‘space’ further. This ‘space’ that is not precisely defined (as in the other four areas) offers potential for multiple connections drawing from religion, spirituality, psychoanalysis, the Divine and the unconscious where each set of ideas and practices mutually engages with each other. The exact shape of this sacred space is difficult to define and finds expression in the terms, mystery, enigma, paradox, and ineffability.⁵¹⁷ Such a space, or ‘third’ area offers: transition (although the transitional object is not cast aside but retained and re-visited throughout adult life); transformation as in Bollas’ transformational object; sacred presence and potential for linking with the transcendent in I-Thou encounter. Through relational connection in the external world and through experiencing the numinous realm of the unconscious in the internal world, being is experienced maternally, mystically, symbolically and ontologically.⁵¹⁸ This interpretative framework of sacred psychoanalysis privileges the core space, rather than the constituent boxed areas as the place of engagement for psychoanalysis, religion and spirituality. To illustrate the differing forms of engagement offered by this interpretative framework and the insights this generates, Winnicott, Meissner, Symington and Eigen are used as representative examples. What follows is a brief account of each person located within this framework.

⁵¹⁷ Many of these themes are found in Josephine Klein’s work (Klein 2003).

⁵¹⁸ This language is found in Jung’s writing, as well as in Bion, Eigen and Grotstein.

Figure 6. Winnicott (DW1-2)

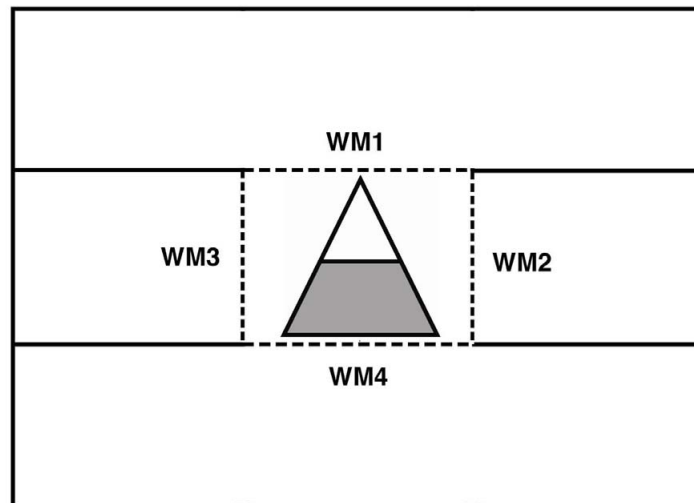


Winnicott was strongly influenced by religious background without adopting specific religious faith (Hoffman 2004). Winnicott is located within the areas bounded by psychoanalysis (DW1) and the unconscious (DW2), with movement in the direction of the religious/spiritual, but some separation from God/Thou. Winnicott believed in psychoanalysis as a means of identifying the truth about human nature (Winnicott 1988), and of identifying the true and false self (Winnicott 1965) through ‘experiencing that is undertaken with one's whole being, all out, “with all one's heart, with all one's soul, and with all one's might.”’ which Eigen terms the ‘*area of faith*’ (Eigen 1981a: 413). Winnicott went on to advocate a ‘third area of existing, a third area which I think has been difficult to fit into psycho-analytic theory’ (Winnicott 1989: 57) tentatively exploring religion and the mystical,⁵¹⁹ a sphere in which the true self could be found. Winnicott never defined the true self, and ‘most likely he meant living authentically with a lambent corporeality and unimpeded psychic life ... in peaceful unison [which] cannot be described. It is the essence

⁵¹⁹ The best exposition and understanding of this dimension of Winnicott is found in the work of Ulanov (Ulanov 2001).

of living' (Akhtar 2009: 298). However as we can see in figure 7, Meissner offers a very different form of religious and spiritual engagement to Winnicott.

Figure 7 Meissner (WM1-4)

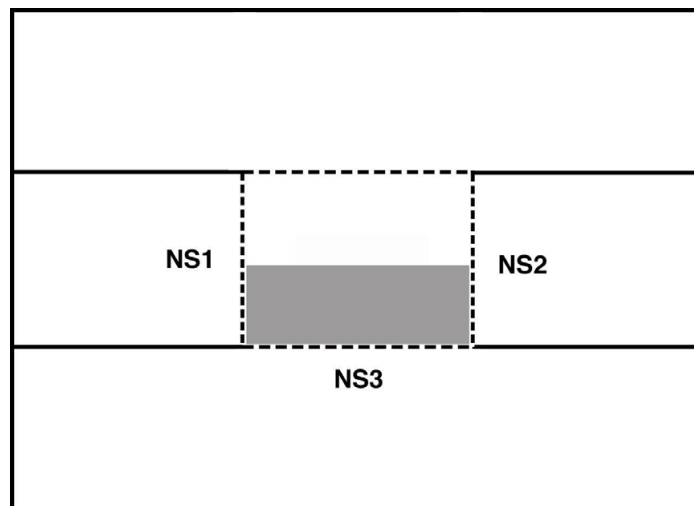


Meissner holds a belief in an objective God (WM1), a commitment to a Roman Catholic faith position (WM2), a belief in psychoanalysis (WM3), and acknowledges the importance of both the unconscious and the mystical (WM4). Yet Meissner's theology is held apart from psychoanalytic scrutiny, as his focus was on developmental theory, religious experience and a form of transitional experience as an expression of grace (Meissner 1987). Expressed diagrammatically in figure 7, Meissner's engagement takes on a particular shape and reveals areas as yet unexplored. So, extensive and seminal as Meissner's work is, this framework offers understanding as to why still more can be written as other analysts, theologians, spiritual practitioners and religious thinkers engage in this 'space'.⁵²⁰ One such

⁵²⁰ Meissner reflecting on his contribution to this field over forty years concluded, 'the multiplicity of viewpoints remain divergent and oppositional ... I would urge consideration of any approach that offers the possibility of facilitating the continuing dialogue between psychoanalysis and religion' (Meissner 2009: 240).

person was Neville Symington. By contrast figure 8 shows some parallel between Meissner and Symington.

Figure 8. Symington (NS1-3)

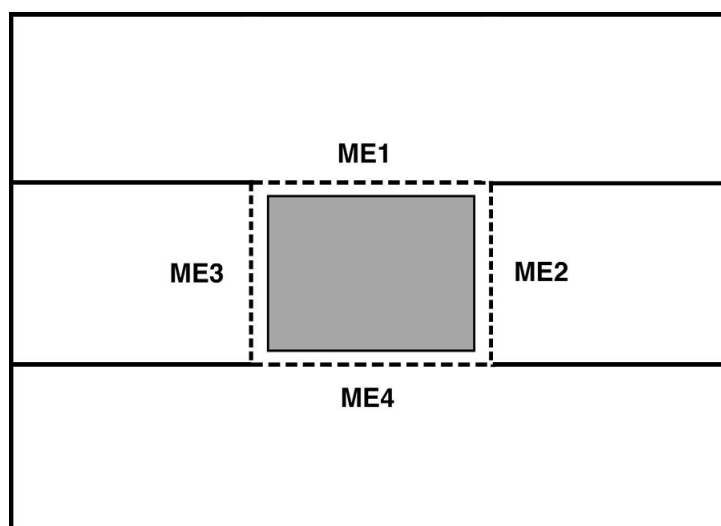


While similar to Meissner in many respects, Symington chose to leave the Roman Catholic priesthood and a belief in an absolute and objective God (Symington 2004b). He pursued a career as a psychoanalyst (NS1), while maintaining his interest in religion and spirituality (NS2) reaching a position where he saw psychoanalysis as a natural religion (Symington 1993a, 1994, 1998, 1999, 2001, 2006a) exploring the unconscious and the mystical (NS3). He evolved a belief in a natural and inclusive religious perspective that embraces all religious and spiritual insights, seeing psychoanalysis as a natural religion, united in the pursuit of truth and morality.⁵²¹ Consequently Symington's diagrammatic expression of engagement, in figure 8, is similar to Meissner's without the inclusion of moving towards belief in an objective God.

⁵²¹ See chapter seven for an account of Symington's role in psychoanalysis in GB, and chapter nine for a fuller account of his ideas.

Eigen paints a different picture from Winnicott, Meissner and Symington and this is seen visually in how he engages in the central ‘space’ of the diagram.

Figure 9. Eigen (ME1-4)



Eigen’s work is engaging and enigmatic, creating powerful discords and resonances in my reading of his texts and this was experienced in my personal meeting with him.⁵²² It is clear from his writing that he covers all four areas in equal measure as seen in figure 9. While this is a strength in terms of accommodation and intersubjective presence, Blass’ critique notes that his language and ideas are elusive (Blass 2006: 27). Eigen writes to create something in the reader or listener⁵²³, rather than offer a tightly defined account, and this

⁵²² In December 2006 I travelled to New York to meet and interview a number of psychoanalysts as part of my research. I had the opportunity to talk with Mike Eigen and join his study group discussing Winnicott’s *Human Nature* (Winnicott 1988) where I was warmly welcomed and my research encouraged. Eigen affirmed me as a researcher and as a spiritual person in a spontaneous expression to the group. Unfortunately I was unable to interview him due to his patient commitments that day.

⁵²³ Joyce describes the impact of Eigen on her spiritual and analytic engagement. ‘For years now I have participated in seminars on the writing of Wilfred Bion led by Michael Eigen. Eigen emphasizes the primacy of faith in Bion’s understanding of the analytic attitude. Initially I would leave the seminar feeling I had barely understood what was being said. But when I returned to my consulting room I was working with deeper attentiveness and aliveness. Shifts in my sensibility kept, keep occurring. Attentiveness to the evolution of the emotional truth of a session requires a radical openness that undermines a knowing stance ... Bion advocates

reflects Eigen's experience of Buber. Eigen heard Buber, then in his mid-eighties, speak at a synagogue when visiting America.

I don't remember much about what he said ... But I was fascinated by the *way* Buber spoke ... entrancing-the way he lowered his head into his arms after saying something, waiting for the next revelation. He took this time between utterances, time to pause, to listen. For Buber, speaking was a way of listening ... By speaking, Buber was teaching listening. My memory has Buber with a white flowing beard ... thick boned with the thunder and lightening of Sinai crackling off him ... Light reflected off Buber ... for Buber, listening was electrifying. There was rest, quiet, pause between, but expect to be burnt by the tongue's fire. Buber's death between utterances was anticipatory. One emptied self in order to be ready for the next time Thou surge, from moment of meeting to moment of meeting, waves of impacts (Eigen 1998: 154).

This interpretative framework offers insights into the way religious, spiritual and psychoanalytic engagement takes place, while illustrating similarities and differences between exponents.

The conclusion to this chapter, offering a critical and contextual examination of religious, spiritual and psychoanalytic engagement, is that a unique form of engagement can be identified within contemporary psychoanalysis, termed 'sacred psychoanalysis'. Within sacred psychoanalysis the focus is on relationship with the self, between self and other, self and Other, being and Being, and I-Thou. Yet any attempt to fully capture this dimension of psychoanalytic being of psyche/soul is limited by language. Multiple terms drawn from psychoanalytic, religious and spiritual traditions are used to embrace what is paradoxically inexpressible but cries out for expression. These terms include,

- Transcendent position
- Transitional space

approaching each session without memory, desire, and understanding. This resonates with the approach to prayer described by St John of the Cross' (Joyce 2005: 108).

- O
- Contemplative position
- Transformational object
- Nirvana
- Incarnation
- Numinous
- Being
- Enlightened or awakened being
- Khora/chora
- Pranja

They form part of an inexhaustible list drawing on even wider religious, spiritual and psychoanalytic cultures and language forms. This language gives expression to the central concern of contemporary psychoanalytic, religious and spiritual engagement, which were the nature of the unconscious, (paradoxically accessible and inaccessible), expressed in Bionian terms as O or Other. This requires the acceptance of psychoanalysis as a unique and evolving constellation of techniques and theories that accesses the internal world of another human being, through familiarity with one's own personal being, in a defined or boundaried relationship. The result is a new form of knowing and not-knowing, a sense of otherness, that is as revelatory and elusive as the ontological, spiritual and mystical dimensions of human personhood. Yet each person also has an external world, shaped by religious, social, cultural, and philosophical traditions and ideologies, where they exist in

relationship to others and live out their internal psyche/soul narratives.⁵²⁴ My evolution of an interpretative framework combining each of these dimensions, offers a form of theoretical containment and allows for the specific location of different theorists to be identified. This interpretative framework of sacred psychoanalysis, also offers the opportunity for new unfolding, new being, new connections, new intersubjectivities to emerge, variously described as translation, transition, and transformation.⁵²⁵ How these forms of engagement are lived out in contemporary psychoanalytic experience is the subject of the interviews that are dealt with in the following chapters.

⁵²⁴ Kovel locates psychoanalysis within a broader spiritual context. 'Once the authenticity of spirituality is recognized, the oceanic experience takes on a new aspect as well. For, the reality of interconnectedness is not all there is to the oceanic experience ... the first spiritual experience is also necessarily a material and bodily experience. Because of this, the spiritual will continue to be realized in the material through life. Spirituality is no illusion; the illusion, rather, is to think that spirit is divorced from matter, or that the care of souls can take place without the care of bodies. In other words, the world is not to be fled from but transformed, if the spirit is to be realized. As the ecological crisis painfully brings home, a spiritual transformation will be necessary for survival as a species' (Kovel 1990: 85).

⁵²⁵ Franco describes the purpose of psychoanalysis to help religious experience develop from man-as-God to man-with-God (Franco 1998).

CHAPTER TWENTY-SEVEN. 'SACRED PSYCHOANALYSIS'- INTERVIEWS AND ENCOUNTERS

What I brought to the research was a discovery of my own voice in preparation for listening to the voices of others (Chase 2005), seen as a central feature of hermeneutic listening (Kimball and Garrison 1996). My personal narrative began in a reflexive autobiography, examining the constituents of a psychodynamic theology (Ross 1997). This developed into further reflection on the experience of two people in the context of a therapeutic relationship, searching for a depth of encounter that Buber defines as I-Thou (Ross 1999).⁵²⁶ However the quality of I-Thou encounter eludes precise definition of being, stretching language to its limits and beyond, as found in mystical events (Ross 2008). This is held in tension with the difficulty of capturing such rich encounters and requires utilizing a bricolage of qualitative research methods that captures the essence of the encounter.

So the research started with a reflexive account of my personal narrative, in order to make explicit often-implicit ontological foundations, as these influence the way research findings are interpreted. The subject area of research - religion, spirituality and the sacred in contemporary psychoanalysis - was then identified using descriptive categories, locating the research within wider philosophical and theoretical discourses. Frosh and Elliot reviewed psychoanalytic history and theory, through the lens of critical developments that shaped late twentieth century thought, including feminism, sexual identity and orientation, and postmodernism (Frosh 1999, 2010; Elliott 2004). Such a task still required focusing on the recovery of religious perspectives and the emergence of spirituality within contemporary

⁵²⁶ See a brief discussion of Buber's I-Thou in chapter one.

psychoanalysis and this is the purpose of the chapters in part B. This led to immersion⁵²⁷ in the textual narrative accounts of religion, spirituality and contemporary psychoanalysis, resulting in a chronological account of developments in the UK and the USA from the 1970s which marked the beginning of small but significant changes in religious, spiritual and psychoanalytic engagement. Underpinning various forms of religious, spiritual and psychoanalytic engagement were three entwined threads.

Firstly, there is the motivation of the psychoanalyst to enter into an area fraught with disapproval, rejection, and criticism. The strength to go against a professional culture requires personal resources, and in the case of early pioneers this was an explicit faith tradition that went beyond simply religious observance (Meissner 1984a, 1987; Malone 2005).⁵²⁸ Importantly such pioneers were ‘insiders’ and participants with a voice in psychoanalytic culture, yet also existed at the margins or liminal space where new discovery or engagement was possible. It is clear from the depth of engagement detailed in part B, that a wide range of analysts from different psychoanalytic cultures and different religious and spiritual traditions were highly motivated to do the complex and technical task required for such sustained and detailed dialogue. While Meissner’s seminal text *Psychoanalysis and Religious Experience* stems from 1984, he subsequently returns to this engagement again and again from differing perspectives and adds new insights covering faith development, values and ethics, grace, cults, the messianic and the future, mysticism, the

⁵²⁷ A detailed and sustained focus on the subject involving reading and re-reading books, articles and texts, such as interview transcripts, and seeing what thoughts, feelings, and insights crystallize as a result. See Borkan’s chapter on ‘Immersion/Crystallization’ (Borkan 1999).

⁵²⁸ Given what is perceived to be the dominance of Jewish analysts in psychoanalysis, religious observance in and of itself does not lead to religious or spiritual engagement. There are however motivations other than the religious. Where there is a sufficient degree of narcissism the person sets their own standards or rules regardless of those held within a profession, as clearly seen in the case of Masud Khan (Khan 1988; Willoughby 2004).

nature of God's involvement with people and a psychobiography of Ignatius of Loyola (Meissner 1987, 1988, 1994, 1995, 2001, 2005).⁵²⁹

Similarly, in a British context, Symington's influential *Emotion and Spirit* from 1994 marked an area of discussion that he, like Meissner, returned to offering new reflections and engagement (Symington 1998, 1999, 2001, 2004b, 2004a, 2006b, 2007, 2006a). While others have followed, Meissner and Symington are part of a small group who were motivated to pioneer religious, spiritual and psychoanalytic engagement because it speaks to a vital, but ignored and neglected, aspect of being whole and being human. The risk of entering a liminal space is always that of rejection by the establishment, yet the reward is living at the cutting-edge of different disciplines, offering new and revealing connections.⁵³⁰ Simmonds links liminality to transitional phenomena as a place of discovery (Simmonds 2003).

Rizzuto, Meissner, Symington and others enter into the pioneering spirit of Freud, in being willing to face a sceptical audience with newly discovered ideas.⁵³¹ To confront an atheistic psychoanalytic culture with a specific belief in an objective God known by an act of

⁵²⁹ Meissner also produced psychoanalytic articles and books on a wide range of topics detailed in the reference list (Meissner 1984b, 1991, 1993, 2000, 2006a).

⁵³⁰ My early attempt of this form of engagement, 'A Christian evaluation of Sigmund Freud' adopted a theological framework using the categories of creation, fall and redemption, reflecting my narrower theological outlook at that time drawn from evangelical, Reformed and L'Abri traditions. This was a 10,000-word project to fulfil a probationary studies requirement for accreditation as a Baptist minister by the Baptist Union of Great Britain. The recommendation following this was that I pursue further academic research alongside my work as a Baptist minister. The limitation was I had not been through a personal analysis and so was engaging with psychoanalytic theory, not practice. Such a theological engagement would not have been deemed of sufficient merit to be heard in the contemporary psychoanalytic world, although later research on 'Clinical Theology' did have some impact on the areas of pastoral theology and pastoral counselling (Ross 1993). In doing this I also discovered that to offer psychoanalytic concepts to a theological world was also to enter a liminal space.

⁵³¹ Freud's role as a lone pioneer has been exaggerated in psychoanalytic history. He often developed his ideas through dialogue with others, often by letter, as seen in his correspondence with Fliess (Masson 1985), though his ideas were still unique in the formation of psychoanalysis.

revelation, in a more challenging fashion than Pfister, requires considerable courage and faith.⁵³² Such courage or faith stems from the core of a person's being, that they bring into their development of a psychoanalytic being (Molino 1997; Spezzano and Gargiulo 1997; Sayers 2003). It is not surprising therefore that several psychoanalysts interviewed used the metaphor of 'coming out' to capture these new developments, utilizing the struggle for a minority, repressed and disenfranchised group to be accepted by the dominant status quo.

Secondly, a chorus of voices from the literature and the interviews harmonize on the note that religion and spirituality are vital aspects of human personhood, even if they do not adopt religious or spiritual beliefs themselves. Benjamin sees these as the core issues of being. Phillips argues that the words, ideas, symbols, and rituals associated with religion are very powerful and cannot be ignored. Lemma sees the transforming power of belief in often-destructive experiences of clients. Rubin and Jones explore how the depth of being requires going beyond just psychoanalysis. Mollon values Freud as a pioneer whose ideas about how being is constituted was just a start and new ideas have emerged. The inclusion of a spiritual dimension is required to meet the needs of people today who, if given opportunity, talk about such matters when they examine the depths of their lives in the presence of a therapist they trust. Grotstein sees psychoanalysis and spirituality united in encounters within the unconscious that have multiple dimensions that embrace psyche and soul. By contrast, Black and AN are more reserved. They view the role of religion as important if it can avoid an inherent fundamentalism, but that it, like psychoanalysis has the potential to change others for the good.

⁵³² Pfister represented a liberal German Protestant theological tradition that saw Jesus as the ultimate example of love uniting all humankind on the basis of goodness and love.

Thirdly, Winnicott and Bion contributed new theoretical concepts of transitional phenomena and an original approach to the place of the unconscious, including the concept of O, that stimulated new forms of psychoanalytic creativity. This offered an opening up of psychoanalytic theory, still largely dominated by powerful psychoanalytic societies imposing a theoretical stranglehold on psychoanalytic training (Kirsner 2000). Winnicott was not perceived as a threat, balancing the egos of Anna Freud and Klein (Rodman 2003), yet with a healthy independent streak telling trainees, ‘Learn the basics, then do what you like’ (Winnicott quoted in Molino 1997: 177). While Bion was initially in a Kleinian camp, until he developed his distinctive philosophically-based ideas and, later mystically-based ideas, he was always ‘a law unto himself’ (Molino 1997: 175). Both Winnicott and Bion valued other forms of knowing and not-knowing, and other ways of being human, that were more inclusive than simply a psychoanalytic world-view where the goal of psychoanalysis is to face ‘the final, ineffable, unspeakable experience of another human being’ (Bion quoted in Molino 1997: 177).

Yet their role was more than simply theoretical, they were representative of a more inclusive form of psychoanalytic being. Coltart added that Bion ‘unlike many psychoanalysts, [he] understands about faith and mystical experience’ (Molino 1997: 175) and Bion’s very presence helped Coltart and others to develop a distinctive faith or spirituality, without there being a direct influence. Phillips added that Winnicott, whatever his theoretical contribution, has the capacity to evoke an affinity between the psychoanalytic and the spiritual, a view echoed by Ulanov and Hoffman (Ulanov 2001; Hoffman 2004). Eigen recalls meeting Bion and Bollas. The meeting with Winnicott gave him immediate insight

into his being, but the meeting with Bion gave him insights that emerged over the next decade (Molino 1997).

After a first interview it struck me forcibly how involved I was in the interview process, itself revealing an intersubjective dimension. I wanted new insights and knowledge to emerge from the lived experience of the interviews.⁵³³ My relational way of being meant I ultimately selected qualitative interviews as a means of discovery and dialogue through person-to-person encounter (Hollway and Jefferson 2000; Kvale 2007; Kvale and Brinkmann 2009). This drew on my theological and pastoral trainings and 30 years as a minister of religion, alongside my eclectic and later psychodynamic trainings, working as a therapist for 25 years. Awareness of my own subjectivity had also been a crucial part of my own personal therapy with various psychoanalytic psychotherapists and Jungian analysts. Developing insights drawn from my ‘self’ enabled pastoral encounters to be a rich exploration of shared discovery, often focusing on an I-Thou dimension and forming the basis of the pastoral counselling and supervision I offered (Ross 2003, 2006; Ross and Richards 2007). Without conscious realization I was experientially and theoretically moving towards a theory of intersubjective presence. This encompassed what could be known in a shared reality of two people encountering one another in the potential or transitional space that is created (Ross 1999) and the unconscious dimensions of psyche and spirit connecting other and Other.⁵³⁴

⁵³³ A full transcript of this interview can be found in appendix two.

⁵³⁴ A belief that God is Other reflects my theological view, however the use of the term Other allows people to engage with that which they perceive to be Other, Ultimate Presence and similar descriptors, without limiting this to my monotheistic stance. The Otherness of God or God as Other as both presence and absence, finds echoes in many Christian mystics and reflects my spiritual understanding and practice, often experienced as I climb or scramble up mountains or explore desolate or barren places (Lane 1998).

Interviews as a qualitative research tool offered this form of intersubjective engagement that Ellis and Berger describe as ‘reflexive dyadic interviewing’. While the interviewer asks the interviewee questions, the interviewer may choose to disclose personal experience or reflect on the process of communication taking place.

The interview is conducted more as a conversation between two equals than as a distinctly hierarchical, question-and-answer exchange, and the interviewer tries to tune in to the interactively produced meanings and emotional dynamics within the interview itself (Gubrium and Holstein 1997). When telling the story of the research, the interviewers might reflect deeply on the personal experience that brought them to the topic, what they learned about and from themselves and their emotional responses in the course of the interview, and/or how they used knowledge of the self for the topic at hand to understand what the interviewee was saying (Ellis and Berger 2003: 162).

In my case I evolved a psychoanalytic intersubjective interview process, utilizing psychoanalytic techniques to further examine the presence of conscious and unconscious processes.⁵³⁵ How these differing forms of knowledge, themes, and conscious and unconscious subjectivities can be interpreted as sacred psychoanalysis is the focus of the next chapter.

⁵³⁵ Discussion of this qualitative method is found in chapter twenty-one.

CHAPTER TWENTY-EIGHT. 'SACRED PSYCHOANALYSIS' - A HERMENEUTIC OF TRANSITION

The transitional concept is grounded in Winnicott and has been adopted widely as a form of engagement between psychoanalysis, psychotherapy, religion and spirituality, as seen in the work of Rizzuto, Meissner, Pruyser, Capps, Jacobs, Ulanov and others (Pruyser 1968, 1974, 1983, 1991a, 1991b; Jacobs 2000; Ulanov 2001).⁵³⁶ An often-unasked question, however, is what is the transition from and to, and how does this happen? Two particular forms of transition can be found that answer these questions, transitional space and the evocation of thirdness.

Transition as transitional space

In Winnicott's thought transitional phenomenon were the means by which a baby is able to separate from a mother, yet at one level the mother comes to be internalized within the baby as it moves from dependence to both independence and inter-dependence. Alongside this Winnicott offers that part of this transition is a creative place, an intermediate place of experience where one can create and play as a unique self, not simply an expression of a mother. As such the transition is not just that of movement to, but of presence within through acts of creativity that Winnicott finds analogous to those found in art and religion.

Winnicott ... opens for us the spaces we reconnoiter (sic.) throughout our whole life, entering ever more deeply into contact with ultimate reality ... We gather up in these spaces the spirit of hope that is the governing texture of religion ... This is the space of human beings who desire an interior life. Winnicott opens the space, and the result is a living metaphysics (Ulanov 2001: 6).

⁵³⁶ The transitional concept is still used in analytic understandings and is subject to ongoing thought (Cancelmo 2009).

Winnicott saw transition as more important than the symbolic as it ‘gives room for the process of being able to accept difference and similarity’ (Winnicott 1971: 6). A hermeneutic of transition moves beyond that of translation in offering a new language, new thought forms that still require translation, but move beyond a literal word-for-word correspondence. Grotstein stated towards the end of my interview with him that ‘love and god are the missing element of psychoanalysis’. What characterized this interview in particular was just how often Grotstein used the word ‘love’ and how often the term ‘god’ appeared. Grotstein used language taken from a unique synthesis of Platonic philosophy, Jewish belonging, Christian Science spirituality, Christian theology from the liberal tradition, Bionian insights, Kleinian technique and a striking use of metaphors drawn from neuroscience and astrophysics in order to develop a hermeneutic of transition. Grotstein holds these together through various paradoxes including: when we search for O we never find O, but in not-searching O is present; the unconscious is where we discover and create god, but god was already there to be discovered; spirituality is to be found in religion, but must be released from religion to be fully spiritual; and we discover the eternal unconscious in our own unconscious and we contribute to the lives of others through the unconscious, but we are time-bound facing the finitude of death and non-existence. Grotstein illustrates clearly that relational engagement at depth leads to new revelations, new connections, and new insights that epitomize a hermeneutic of transition.

Transition as evocations of thirdness

Ogden first developed the analytic third with a specific psychoanalytic understanding where ‘the unconscious intersubjective “analytic third” is forever in the process of coming into being in the emotional force field generated by the interplay of the unconscious of patient

and analyst' (Ogden 2005: 6). However the idea of 'thirdness' has become used more widely in a metaphorical capacity indicating something other that arises in psychoanalytic settings, as it is a language that speaks of transition. Green charts how the concept of thirdness, even if not named as such, is present within psychoanalytic theory ranging from the Oedipal triangle (Freud), the psychoanalytic setting (Winnicott), Bion's alpha function, and in the language of 'the unconscious as a discourse of the Other (Lacan)' (Green 2004: 110). Benjamin places thirdness as an essential part of intersubjectivity and correlates it to a form of internal mental space. For Benjamin the process of creating thirdness is the most significant aspect of psychoanalytic encounter (Benjamin 2004, 2009),⁵³⁷ but sees dangers in it being reified. She also finds parallels between the historical understandings of love expressed in religious traditions, with the concept of a relation to an intersubjective Third. Grotstein adds to this by adapting thirdness to an immanent and numinous encounter present in the psychoanalytic relationship (Grotstein 2002).

Ogden, Green, Benjamin and Grotstein see thirdness as an internal, conscious and unconscious construct which points to something else, something other and potentially Other. If intersubjectivity involves the unconscious of the analyst, the presence within that analyst of ontological, religious or spiritual beliefs and practices will be ever present.⁵³⁸ If that analyst or patient believes that Other/O/God/Thou has existence beyond the psyche, then 'thirdness' offers the possibility of an experience or a transition that is both internal and

⁵³⁷ Benjamin has developed three aspects of the third: the primordial, the symbolic and the moral. 'I think in terms of thirdness as a quality or experience of intersubjective relatedness that has as its correlate a certain kind of internal mental space; it is closely related to Winnicott's idea of potential or transitional space ... For in the space of the thirdness, we are not *holding onto* a third; we are, in Ghent's (1990) felicitous usage, surrendering to it ... an orientation to a third that mediates "I and Thou"' (Benjamin 2004: 6f.).

⁵³⁸ Sorenson helpfully examines the patient's experience of the analyst's spirituality and the analyst's experience of the patient's spirituality (Sorenson 2004).

external to the psyche in a numinous or I-Thou event, however it might be understood differently by the other party. Ogden's 'thirdness' is not exactly the same as a co-created intersubjectivity advocated by Benjamin and Eigen. 'There is a bi-directional dance between patient and analyst that each person registers differently - a co-created dance governed by what we call the third' (Benjamin 2009: 441). There is also an implicit link between thirdness and the doctrine of the Trinity in Christian theology, with Fiddes adopting the term perichoresis to describe the dynamic dance of God (Fiddes 2000a). Lamborn develops the ideas of Trinity and thirdness further by using the metaphor of 'good and near neighbours' living alongside one another for mutual benefit (Lamborn 2007).⁵³⁹ Stone describes this willingness to engage with the unconscious in,

the hope that such interplay will lead to transformation ... in the direction of greater self-transcendence. Thus both the analyst and the analysand ... participate in any verbal and non-verbal dance, full of emotional resonance, in which both rely on our search for an underlying process ... called "The Third" or the Ground of Being ... Some analysts ... have understood this process of development through self-transcendence as having an inherently spiritual dimension (Stone 2005: 423f.).

A hermeneutic of transition holds together religious, spiritual and psychoanalytic engagement, moving beyond the symbolic, to offer a potential for experiencing in a new way, such as 'thirdness/Third'. Drawing on Winnicott, Schlauch argues that for this transition to take place 'we need to be connected to someone/something that exists outside

⁵³⁹ 'The "analytic third" offer its neighbouring theology of the Trinity an example of the dialectic of unity and multiplicity as it is embodied in human relational experience. It illuminates the possibility of living trinitarian faith as *practice*: ... The Trinity, itself, invites us to surrender ourselves to this "music," entering into a deeper recognition of the Divine Other who transcends the name "Three in One and One in Three." Surrendering ourselves to the triunity of Divine Life, we make our claim on the potential space of "thirdness" in our relationships ... Religion, for its part, offers its neighbor the possibility that, however much the "third" may be called upon, it already exists "in being" for us. The "third," as I conceptualize it and have experienced it in my own analytic journey, is that which can reveal to us something of God - the "ground of being" which precedes and animates our relating. *Religion reminds us that we are not so much co-creators of the third, ushering it in through our own efforts. We are, rather, co-participants in a realm that both transcends and resides within our relating.* Religion's offering to psychoanalysis is a notion of "thirdness" envisioned not as "developmental achievement," but a Reality which lives forever beyond our intersubjective couplings ... the property of none, awaiting our dawning recognition' (Lamborn 2007: 525).

the transition (it is, by definition, not in transition: it is, by implication, immutable, eternal)
... to what has being, is being (and not non-being): being-itself.) (Schlauch 2006: 77).

This leads into another evolving hermeneutic, a hermeneutic of transformation and emergence of being, examined in the next chapter.

CHAPTER TWENTY-NINE. 'SACRED PSYCHOANALYSIS' - A HERMENEUTIC OF TRANSFORMATION

The engagement between religion, spirituality and psychoanalysis is viewed by many as a transforming encounter⁵⁴⁰, although transformation is often used in a generic sense without clear identification of how and what one is being transformed from and too.⁵⁴¹ Kovel writes,

Can we imagine a psychoanalysis that is open to transcendence while retaining its critical and demystifying edge? One that does not reduce the activities of the human spirit - whether in religion, art, or radical political activity - to consolation or the defence against helplessness and hatred? One that sees us rather as creatures who by nature reach beyond ourselves and transform ourselves, because it is in our nature to reject our separateness (Kovel 1990: 85).

The words used too describe such transformations are evocative and include: signals of transcendence; mystery and mystical; acts of faith; and the divine/Other/I-Thou. These will be examined before concluding with a focus on Bolas, who has a more defined vision of transformation as a transition from an aesthetic to a transformational object.

⁵⁴⁰ See chapter two for a detailed examination of ways in which such transformation is understood. For Neri, drawing on Bion, Winnicott and Tillich (briefly), this involves faith and trust. 'It is characterized by an interest in what lies under the surface, in what could develop but is still unknown. It belongs to that psychic function which allows us to work with something which is not yet there ... if it appears in the life of one of my patients, it makes me very happy, and I feel satisfaction with the results achieved through our work' (Neri 2005: 95).

⁵⁴¹ Schlauch describes the result of a group of theologians, psychoanalysts, philosophers, artists, feminist thinkers, and literary scholars who met at Boston College from 1993, including Meissner and Rizzuto, interested in the dialogue between religion and psychoanalysis. 'As our conversations unfolded, we became progressively aware of our assumption that in some sense psychology-psychoanalysis and religion shared a common ground, while struggling to identify what that common ground was. Psychoanalysis as an unfolding process of discovery and achieving understanding, and with it increased inner freedom, bore some remarkable resemblances to some religious traditions. For example, both psychoanalysis and religion assume that crucial dimensions of reality were hidden, and the process of disclosure could only be achieved through the use of symbolic and metaphoric language. Both understood that human beings, involved in the process of seeking to understand hidden dimensions of reality, would in all likelihood at some point take the path of least resistance in their pursuit and inevitably adopt the illusion or assumption that they had already reached their destination. If so, their symbols could then be employed literally, as signs. Their idols would become gods ... transformation ... an underlying thematic center (sic.) around which our conversations had unwittingly been orbiting evolved into an organising theme' (Meissner and Schlauch 2003: ix). All saw ongoing potential for dialogue and transformation in the dialectic of engagement.

Signals of transcendence

It is too easy to reify experiences of transcendence and enshrine them in some religious ritual.⁵⁴² Psychoanalysis consists at best of a human-to-human encounter at a depth facilitated by a psychoanalytic encounter where there are ‘signals of the sacred’. Such ‘signals’ arising in the experience of an other in the room as shared psychoanalytic space also point to an Other if this can be conceived by the people involved. In the course of the interviews different themes emerged as to what such ‘signals’ might be, although I did not use the term or ask this as a direct question.⁵⁴³ The themes that emerged embrace:

- Self-revelation
- Honesty
- Openness
- Insight from the past
- A sense of felt presence
- Embracing not-knowing
- Loving and being loved
- Insight into personal Being
- Moments of Otherness
- Feeling alive

Each of these ‘signals’ occurs in a psychoanalytic context and requires interpretation, where those psychoanalysts able to draw on religious or spiritual traditions can discern a language

⁵⁴² For a helpful discussion of the danger of this see Otto’s *The Idea of the Holy* and texts by Jones (Jones 2002a, 2006, 2008). Ross and Plante also address this issue (Ross 2003; Plante 2007).

⁵⁴³ A signal points to something beyond and is adapted from its first use of this term by Berger (Berger 1990, 1967). It is not used in the Lacanian sense of sign, signified or signifier.

that speaks beyond the intersubjective encounter, as a revealing of other and Other. They point to the possibility of transformation that is one rationale for psychoanalysis itself, but allows for the possibility of much more. Several interviewees also noted that in such moments what is being referred to is beyond words, a place where language and metaphor fail, taking us into the realm of the mysterious, the awesome, the ineffable, the numinous, and the mystical (Ostow 2001; Klein 2003). Loewald refers to these as 'intimations of eternity' linking these to faith between the analyst and patient that bring ultimate concerns into a dialectic and unity of being (Niels 2003). Black concludes,

that the 'internal good object' of modern psychoanalysis is exactly continuous with the fundamental good objects of the mature religions. If in places they seem to contradict one other, that is ... because one of the parties ... is holding onto convictions as a matter of introjected belief rather than genuine understanding (Black 2000a: 24)

Mystery and Mystical

The biblical narrative of salvation begins with creation and ends with eschatology, passing through exodus, exile, incarnation, crucifixion, resurrection, and the coming of the Spirit, the Church and its sacraments (Higgins 2003). Within a Roman Catholic faith tradition particular focus is placed on the Eucharist (Mass), where the words of a priest transform consecrated elements of bread and wine, into the body and blood of Christ, termed transubstantiation.⁵⁴⁴ Believers are transformed by entering into the re-experience of a once for all sacrifice that is re-enacted. Although Rizzuto did not discuss this concept she did refer to Casel, whose work offers a theological and philosophical account of mystery: mystery understood theoretically through the theology of Casel and the psychoanalytic ideas of Freud and Winnicott, and experientially through the symbolic world experienced in a

⁵⁴⁴ This is one of several theological disputes that divided the Christian Church from the Reformation onwards.

Catholic Mass, mystical encounter, god-representations and a personal analysis. Loewald and Winnicott both saw the Eucharist as a symbolic event that had echoes in psychoanalytic events but saw a need for further transition or transformation (Winnicott 1971; Loewald 1988). Also drawing on a Roman Catholic tradition, Matte-Blanco developed mystery as a category of his asymmetric and symmetric thinking. There is that which is known and that which is unknown, existing in unconscious but logical unity that offers the mystery and paradox of being human.⁵⁴⁵ ‘With Matte-Blanco, the category of *mystery* enters psychoanalysis as a working principle’ which Eigen links to the Kabbalah (Eigen 1992: 32) and Gargiulo links to negative theology and apophatic spirituality (Gargiulo 2004a, 2007).⁵⁴⁶ In his interview Mollon identifies dimensions of personality that go beyond traditional psychoanalytic theorizing and which draw on holistic and spiritual traditions.⁵⁴⁷ In adopting mystery as a category, psychoanalysis enters the sphere of the sacred where

⁵⁴⁵ ‘For Matte-Blanco, the psyche is characterized by bivalent logic: the logic of indivisibility (the unconscious) and the logic of division (consciousness) ... *each stratum is present in a mysterious way in every one of the strata which are nearer to the surface. ... the indivisible is mysteriously present in the profound depth of anybody, however covered and asymmetrical the surface may appear; present yet not directly or immediately grasped. The indivisible is there but it is invisible.* (Matte-Blanco 1988, p. 55; italics Matte-Blanco’s)’ (Eigen 1992: 31).

⁵⁴⁶ ‘Is this *ground* ... what Lao-Tzu means by our human essence, that which is deep and dark within us ? And if it is, then a capacity for silent awe, for a quiet acceptance of mystery - which is not simply a cover term for our ignorance, - is an essential ingredient for any practising psychoanalyst. I think that such an acceptance of mystery is crucial if we, and I mean both patient and analyst, are ever to experience an enchantment with the world, notwithstanding how profoundly troubled that it constantly seems to be ... What many mystics, throughout the ages, have tried to inculcate, namely, an encounter with that which is transcendent in human experience, has been de-mythologized by psychoanalysis. The mystery, we have learnt, is within us, not outside of us. Psychoanalysis has provided a new space in which to live life, and paradoxically, in doing so, it has re-found old truths. The only transcendence we can know, now, is an everyday transcendence. Standing in Winnicott’s shadow we can say that this is good enough’ (Gargiulo 2003: 387f.)

⁵⁴⁷ Freud also addressed mysterious attributes to items, places, or people deemed taboo linked to the sacred and the uncanny (Freud 1913). The closest Freud came to this subject area was in an exploration of the ‘uncanny’ where he sets out to ‘solve the mystery’ of the *unheimlich*, literally translated as ‘unhomely’ which does not fully translate. Yet Freud himself tells us he needs to translate what the ‘uncanny’ is as it is not something easily grasped within his experience. He defines it as ‘that class of the frightening which leads back to what is known of old and long familiar’ including ‘the most mysterious repetition of similar experiences’. His psychoanalytic viewpoint is that it is what we unconsciously know as ‘secretly familiar’ and is related to the repressed desire to return to the mother’s womb (All references Freud 1919).

spirit and psyche combine and offer a ‘multidimensionality that adds mystery, possibility and richness to living’ (Eigen 1992: xvi).

By their very nature the mysterious and the mystical overlap. The mystical form of engagement was detailed in chapter fifteen but Bomford summarizes the apophatic tradition and relates it to psychoanalysis where God is,

Being itself ... beyond the distinction of being and non-being ... God is darkness, emptiness, absence ... characterized chiefly by paradox and self-contradiction ... the mystical journey may be seen as an attempt by the conscious mind to enter the unconscious ... of entering the depths of the soul ... Matte-Blanco saw this unconscious as the source of emotion, a mode of pure being from which unfolds the creative imagination (Bomford 2006: 256).

Bomford builds on the mystical tradition and experience to creatively engage Christian religion with psychoanalysis based on ‘transcendental moments’ (Bomford 1999: 150) encountered through an in-breaking of one aspect of the unconscious to the other.

Symington sees the mystical as a place to encounter O, and the spiritual, but warns of religion’s attempts to control such direct access to God (Symington 2008). Eigen returns to the mystical again and again as another thread running through his work, though he does emphasize absence and dread, which can be shared through intersubjective presence.⁵⁴⁸

Mystical encounter is transforming, both validating a profoundness of being human, and also present when words fail (Eigen 1992, 1998; Molino 1997).

Acts of faith

Bion first developed ‘acts of faith’ to describe in scientific terms, rather than religious or mystical ‘the decisive moment of interpretation’ (Sandler 2005: 292). ‘Faith that there is an

⁵⁴⁸ Eigen covers many themes focusing on potentially negative or destructive aspects of the self (Eigen 2001a, 2002).

ultimate reality and truth – the unknown, the unknowable, “formless infinite” ... the evolution of ultimate reality (signified by O)’ (Bion 1970: 31). Faith enables transition and movement in the conscious and unconscious as a person evolves into who they are, which Bion also termed transformation (Bion 1970; Sandler 2005). For Eigen this transition requires an act of faith but unlike Bion, he drew on wider religious and spiritual traditions, and this theme runs throughout his subsequent work (Eigen 1981a, 1998, 2001a, 2001b, 2001c, 2002, 2004, 2005)⁵⁴⁹. Knowledge in and of itself, is not sufficient, it needs to be able to move a person beyond where they are into another sphere. ‘One may also experience an I-sensation or God-sensation, a foreboding, a premonition, a faith’ (Eigen 1992: xi). Faith, adopting a biblical definition as ‘the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen’ (Hebrews 11:1) finds expression as a dynamic within psychoanalysis that has the potential to change a person as they move in transition from one psychic location to another, yet not abandoning the old for the new. Safran argues that faith is required by both the analyst and the patient, which if certain conditions are met, can result in a healthy outcome. When challenged by a colleague about using the term faith, given its spiritual associations, rather than hope, Safran replied,

Faith has a paradoxical quality to it, implying both a fundamental trust that things will be all right and a tolerance for not knowing what the final outcome will be or how it will emerge. For example, one can have both faith in the existence of a divine principle and the acceptance that ‘God moves in mysterious ways’. Thus faith implies something beyond simple hope.⁵⁵⁰

⁵⁴⁹ ‘This faith has in it the love of life. It is passionate about living. It opens heartwide and cannot stop opening ... Faith does not exclude other capacities but opens up a larger sense of who we are for one another, so that we can not only survive the destructive aspects of aliveness, but grow through the profound enrichment mutual impact can have’ (Eigen 2002: 738f.). These texts are a representative sample of the prolific range of Eigen’s work.

⁵⁵⁰ Safran adds, ‘This is captured beautifully in Eliot’s (1963) ‘East Coker.’

*I said to my soul, be still, and wait without hope
For hope would be hope for the wrong thing; wait without love
For love would be love of the wrong thing; there is yet faith
But the faith and the love and the hope are all in the waiting. [p. 186] (Safran 1999: 22).*

Akhtar concludes succinctly, faith ‘takes one into an area of psychological experience that, by reason of being dimly lit, turns out to be scary and alluring’ (Akhtar 2009: 104).

Channel for the divine/Other/I-Thou/O

Bion and Grotstein see ‘transformations in O’ as a vital aspect of being, that is simultaneously a desire and a destiny, which cannot always be sought, and simply experienced (Bion 1965; Grotstein 1983, 2007). Grotstein adds,

It is my belief that theologians, shamans, mystics, philosophers, mathematicians, physicists, and others, each from his/her own perspective, have been preoccupied since the beginning of time with the paradoxes and mysteries of existence, whose ultimate template can be thought of as the domain of the ineffable or the numinous. In contemplating the awesome mysteries of the preternatural and the divine, they were delving, I now believe, in the twin yet unified realms of mystery, of the two unknowns, one of which Freud ultimately located within the unconscious (Grotstein 1999: 1).

Mollon sees the psychoanalytic encounter as a place of profound meeting, if one is willing to see beyond some of the inherent limitations of a psychoanalytic view of the world, and comes closest to Buber’s ideas. Martin Buber in *Ich und Du* (1923) published later in English as *I and Thou* (1939) highlighted psychical and spiritual encounter in a way that evolved Otto’s ideas and brought them into the realm of ordinary relationship. He distinguished the I-Thou relationship, into which we enter with the fulness of our being, from the I-It relationship, in which we relate to the Other in functional or conceptual ways. If Thou is identified as God/Yahweh, the divine Thou enables human I-Thou relations to reflect the Thouness of the Divine. A true relationship with God must be an I-Thou relationship in which Other is truly met and experienced. In I-Thou, Buber expressed a paradoxical symmetry that finds echoes in Matte-Blanco’s work where a giving of oneself to another, and viewing another as more than oneself, leads to a greater sense of self and

self-knowledge echoing the words of Jesus ‘For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it’ (Mathew 9: 24). Used in psychoanalysis, especially in its relational and intersubjective forms, Buber offers I-Thou as a potential for a depth of meeting and openness of being, that both experience in a reciprocal relationship that is conscious and unconscious, opening each party for the mystery and sacredness of the other, reflecting the being of Other.

Aesthetic and Transformational Objects

The evolution of aesthetics as an important aspect of personhood has a long and complex history (Eagleton 1990): however a focus on the internal location of creativity has been an important contribution of psychoanalysis. Psychoanalysis views art as resulting in an external object which directly relates to the artist’s inner world and experience. Aesthetics are inextricably linked to an inner landscape. Different psychoanalytic traditions have evolved theoretical structures to account for this. Kleinian theorists focus on drives where creativity emerges as a form of reparation for aggression and guilt, ideas further developed but linked to the quality of mother-baby experiences by Stokes (Sayers 2003), Meltzer with Harris-Williams (Meltzer and Harris-Williams 1988), Segal (Segal 1991) and Britton (Britton 1998). Object relations theorists also focused on the quality of mother-baby experiences but understood these as representational objects that opened up other object worlds. Shafranske makes an explicit link between Rizzuto’s god-representations and Bollas transformational object (Shafranske 1992).⁵⁵¹ Bollas’ ideas represent a unique

⁵⁵¹ ‘The model of the transformational object presents a conceptualization on which to bridge representational processes within the transitional space to an earlier period in the development of object relations. Further, the search for the transformative within a diverse range of human endeavours, including the religious, may be understood from the context of the representational world through the model of the transformational object’ (Shafranske 1992: 71).

development of Winnicott and object relations thinkers found in his seminal *The Shadow of the Object* (Bollas 1987).⁵⁵² Here Bollas advocates a sophisticated vision of transformation as a transition from an aesthetic object to a transformational object, as the core aspect of full personhood. For Bollas the aesthetic object or moment is experienced as a profound but subjective rapport with an object, and like Winnicott, Bollas sees the arts as a similar symbolic search for transformation. This includes ‘non-representational knowledge of being embraced by the aesthetic object’ such as ‘the sudden enclosure of the self by a sacred presence’ (Bollas 1987: 30) as occurs in conversion experiences, however it is not limited to religious events and includes a wide range of aesthetic experiences. It is an ego memory of the first aesthetic moment of a mother and baby simply being, then being transformed by these encounters that are recalled as radical otherness. Akhtar writes, ‘the transformative potential of mother and of experiences with her is imbued with a reverential and near-sacred quality’ (Akhtar 2009: 292) and it is this that informs Bollas’ thinking.

An aesthetic moment however does not automatically lead to transformation, as much can go wrong in a person’s developmental phase of being. Psychoanalysis therefore offers a reparative encounter where the analyst becomes a potential transformational object, but recognizes that a patient may experience them as pathological transformational objects. Similarly Bollas identifies the danger that if a person experiences a profound aesthetic moment this can weld them to the aesthetic object and a lifetime of trying to recover something that once was but remains elusive now. Bollas was also alert to the pathology of such an aesthetic moment leading to a conviction or state of mind so welded to an idea or a

⁵⁵² This builds on ideas Bollas published in psychoanalytic journals on the aesthetic moment, the search for transformation and the transformational object from the mid 1970s.

cause it becomes pathological as seen historically in fascism and genocide (Bollas 1992) and currently seen in religious fundamentalism.

Just how psychoanalysis transforms a person, for all its technique, is still mysterious.

‘Freud released us all to be continually mysterious to ourselves and others’ (Bollas 1999: 1).

Bollas attempts to capture this as ‘a type of autobiography, as a realization of our place in the mystery of an embracing intelligence, as a new form of the self’s habitation, as a new form for thinking, and as a new type of relationship’ (Bollas 1999: 181). Bollas sees the psychoanalytic encounter as an opening up and ‘moving the patient towards ‘O’, Bion’s sign for infinity’ (Bollas 1999: 192) as a form of deep and mysterious subjectivity before concluding ‘If there is a God this is where it lives, a mystery working itself through the materials of life, giving us shape and passing us on to others’ (Bollas 1999: 195).

Bollas offers another object in his work, the aleatory object, by which he distinguishes a transformation that we seek as opposed to the transformation that happens spontaneously.⁵⁵³

Other analytic writers see the vital importance of such psychic events communicated through Likierman’s concept of the sublime (Likierman 1989) and Klein’s concept of the ineffable (Klein 2003). Wright also takes up these themes and applies them to the sacred. Like Bollas he locates the transformational encounter in the pre-verbal, sensory, object relating of early mother-baby existence that all can experience as ‘*an intuition of the sacred*’ (Wright 2009: 161). Wright adopts Buber’s critique of religion’s desire to control and institutionalize, where the vision is tamed, and sees the need for ‘further breakthrough to the

⁵⁵³ Bollas ‘is making a significant distinction between objects we not only desire but also unconsciously create, on one hand, and objects which come into our lives by unpredictable chance, the latter of which “object-use” us ... it seems to unearth or cause to epiphanize the “unthought known” within us’ (Grotstein 2002b: 83).

sacred, and at this point religion is spiritually renewed' by the '*individual's* experience of the sacred' (Wright 2009: 161). Wright re-affirms Bollas' spiritual vision as found in his language.

Bollas is aware of the religious resonance of what he writes for his language is redolent with religious expressions. 'Reverential', 'beseeching', 'supplication', 'transported', 'uncanny', are just some of the words he uses. But the word 'sacred' occurs repeatedly and is the closest he can get to this earliest experience: 'The sacred,' he says, 'precedes the maternal' (Wright 2009: 165).⁵⁵⁴

A sacred psychoanalysis therefore consists of an interpretative framework that locates the core aspects of being expressed in religious, spiritual and psychoanalytic language, which frames a space within which exists a threefold hermeneutic of translation, transition and transformation. This has a perichoretic form as in a dynamic dance of the sacred, which choreographs, weaves and moves together, yet allows for a free-form in-breaking of that which is Other.⁵⁵⁵

Love – a missing dimension of the sacred in psychoanalysis

All the psychoanalysts I interviewed when talking about their patients revealed concern, compassion, empathy and passion. In one particular interview the analyst needed to take a telephone call while I was still in the room, a situation they had mentioned was a possibility. It revealed to me a different dimension of the person I had up to that point experienced in the interview, redolent with those qualities of concern and compassion. Yet I hesitate to use the word love, as it seems like an alien intruder into the psychoanalytic vocabulary when

⁵⁵⁴ Jones adds, 'By rooting the experience of the sacred in the most basic of human dynamics, Bollas implies (like Otto) that we are all *home religious* (inherently religious), that we all have the potential for transformative, sacred experiences' (Jones 2002b: 161).

⁵⁵⁵ Fiddes uses this term to apply insights from his understanding of a theology of the Trinity in pastoral contexts (Fiddes 2000a).

understood beyond the limited clinical confines explored by Bergmann and Kernberg.⁵⁵⁶ Just as the defining of spirituality needed to recover the dimension of love as a descriptive category (see chapter one), the same task faces psychoanalysis.⁵⁵⁷ As I reflected further it became clear to me that underpinning it all is love, a word so remarkably absent from psychoanalytic literature.⁵⁵⁸ Grotstein sees this as an aspect that needs to be recovered when he writes, 'The discovery of love was incidental to the epiphany of an aspect of self that could love. *This is the essence of the other half of true intersubjectivity*' (Grotstein 2002b: 89).

A careful reading of the text of this thesis reveals love as a hidden thread woven through many forms of religious, spiritual and psychoanalytic engagement. Love can be understood as an aspect of ontological, psychological and theological dimensions intrinsic to human nature.⁵⁵⁹ Love can also be understood as an over-arching component of spirituality expressed in myths and narratives often enshrined in religious texts.⁵⁶⁰ Love is perceived as a particular, though not exclusive, quality that stems from a Christian faith tradition that adds to the analytic and intersubjective dimension (Campbell 2005).⁵⁶¹ Three interviewees specifically mentioned 'God is love', without a specific biblical reference in mind.⁵⁶²

Oden combines theological and analytic insight when he comments,

⁵⁵⁶ See theme 9 'Love' in chapter twenty-three.

⁵⁵⁷ Symington sees the root of genocide, Holocaust and mass madness as the consequence of the absence of love (Symington 2008).

⁵⁵⁸ Sayers being an exception as she adopts a wider, biographical perspective that goes beyond the clinical dimension (Sayers 2003). Wright also has a moving passage on this. See (Wright 2009: 184). It is also a theme found in Grotstein's later work (Grotstein 2000, 2002b).

⁵⁵⁹ Further details from the thematic analysis are found in chapter twenty-three.

⁵⁶⁰ Discussion of this is found in chapter one. See also a discussion of stories and narratives in chapter seventeen.

⁵⁶¹ Pfunder writing from a Sufi perspective adds 'our suffering took place within a context of love, an invisible spoken presence that I could feel unfolding in the background' (Pfunder 2005: 156) before concluding 'All these seem deeply enhanced by Sufi experience, the art of Being, being present in the present moment ... a remembering of Origininary Radiance, in the context of love' (Pfunder 2005: 163).

⁵⁶² This phrase 'God is love' comes from 1 John 4:16.

consequently *love* is of all terms the one most directly attributable to God as essential to God's being ... we are not without some knowledge of love as human beings, for no person can grow to maturity without it. Love is a confluence of two seemingly paradoxical impulses: the hunger for the desired object and the desire to do good for the beloved (Oden 1987: 118f.).

Love can be further understood as a capacity of authentic personhood that goes beyond the self to influence family, friends, children and patients, consciously and unconsciously. It was a quality that was also revealed in the interviews, consciously and unconsciously, whose insights into my self and the self of the interviewees were at times, moving and profound. I came away changed in some ways through meeting: my I, had met a Thou, in shared encounter. This captures a dimension of authentic personhood that like Ogden and Benjamin's 'thirdness' has the capacity for something unique. Such encounter is shared, yet can be understood or experienced in different ways, depending on each person's orientation to ontological, spiritual or religious dimensions that form 'sacred psychoanalysis'.

CHAPTER THIRTY. ‘SACRED PSYCHOANALYSIS’- CONCLUSION

At the start of the thesis I noted that Freud’s distinctive voice, like that of a large operatic tenor, dominated the stage on which psychoanalysis was performed. I also recognized that within Freud there was another, more muted voice, that has in the last thirty years come to be heard. This research has focused on my reflexive voice as the researcher, the textual voice of the burgeoning literature and the living voices of interviewees engaged in the analytic task or working with religion and spirituality. This thesis has identified four further and distinctive voices that are responses to my initial research question ‘Why has religion been re-discovered and spirituality emerged in contemporary psychoanalysis?’, leading to another related question ‘Is this a new *Weltanschauung* that can be called “sacred psychoanalysis”?’

Firstly, what is striking is the determination of the individual to be heard, despite being viewed ‘as a voice crying in the wilderness’ (Isaiah 40:3; Matthew 3:3; John 1:23) and at considerable risk to psychoanalytic reputations.⁵⁶³ Just as Luther nailed his 95 theses to the door of Schlosskirche (castle church) in Wittenberg (unaware of future events that formed the Reformation), Rizzuto, Meissner, Leavy, Symington and others nailed their religious and spiritual theses to the door of Berggasse 19 in Vienna (unaware of future events that were to shape contemporary psychoanalysis). The public expression of religious and spiritual beliefs situated such psychoanalysts as non-conformists to prevailing psychoanalytic cultures (Malone 2005). Many contributors in this thesis have drawn on their own personal experiences, including their religious and spiritual biography, as a source

⁵⁶³ Especially in the late 1970s and early 1980s.

of strength, wisdom and insight that enabled them in this ‘prophetic’ task.⁵⁶⁴ While not ushering in a Reformation, Counter-Reformation or a new *zeitgeist*, they did form the basis for a ‘third wave’ that has ongoing influence in challenging the ‘tendency toward an atheistic philosophical position [that] has prevailed among many leading psychoanalysts’ (Kernberg 2000: 452). In the last decade there has also been an increased engagement with the Christian tradition moving beyond the work of such pioneers as Meissner and Rizzuto.⁵⁶⁵ Sacred psychoanalysis therefore can be interpreted as a new *Weltanschauung* in the making, but one which requires new ways of engaging with an enormously complex subject area. One way of advancing this can be found through utilizing the interpretative framework (detailed in chapter twenty-six) that evolved out of a critical immersion in the narrative and literature of religious and spiritual engagement.

Secondly, from an ‘inside’ perspective psychoanalytic belonging appears to be like one very large, multi-generational and dysfunctional family, where some branches do not speak to each other, meeting occasionally and metaphorically at births, marriages and funerals (Grosskurth 1998). Belonging has a local dimension often determined by the analytic institute,⁵⁶⁶ attending key conferences and events, and through links formed through a person’s training analyst or analysts and supervisors (Kirsner 2000, 2001, 2004). Multiple links occur through personal influences, professional relationships, and theoretical or

⁵⁶⁴ Freud also viewed himself as a prophet, quoting ‘a prophet is never known in his home country’ when a visiting student and patient Abraham Kardiner discovered that Freud was relatively unknown in Vienna (Kardiner quoted in Gay 1976: 13).

⁵⁶⁵ For example Lowell and Marie Hoffman combine their Christian faith with their analytic trainings and have established the Society for the Exploration of Psychoanalytic Psychotherapies and Theology. Marie Hoffman’s book, *Towards Mutual Recognition: Religion, Psychoanalysis and the Christian Narrative* is due for publication by Routledge in late 2010.

⁵⁶⁶ There are other contexts that offer a form of community generating belonging, such as the ‘Tavistock’ in the UK, the New York University Postdoctoral Psychology Program in Psychoanalysis and Psychotherapy in the USA, and the recently established International Association of Relational Psychoanalysis and Psychotherapy.

clinical papers presented at conferences, written as journal articles, and books, offering a textual-based form of belonging. People don't have to meet the actual person because they meet through their words; hence the influence of previous generations is still vital in the psychoanalytic world. Consequently the theories of Winnicott and Bion provided a form of psychoanalytic credibility, while also offering the potential for new analytic engagement. Their theories have significantly shaped subsequent religious and spiritual engagement, although Eigen, Symington, and Grotstein have also made unique contributions. How individual analysts and psychoanalytic institutes view Winnicott, Bion, and intersubjective approaches, also influences how they view religious and spiritual engagement and understanding. For such people sacred psychoanalysis could never be a *Weltanschauung*, however there is a marked change as religion and spirituality can no longer simply be pathologized and are given due consideration in an understanding of personhood.⁵⁶⁷ This finds different expressions in the psychoanalytic cultures of the UK and the USA. It is clear from the interviews that within a British context there is a gradual acceptance of religious and spiritual dimensions, but these have made little impact on the training, institutional, and political life of the BP-AS. In an American context, the engagement with Buddhism is a clear and growing trend that is particularly allied to relational and intersubjective forms of contemporary psychoanalysis.

Thirdly, from an 'external' perspective despite the role of psychoanalysis as a formative cultural force in the twentieth century, it has become vitally influenced by changes in wider culture. The last three decades have seen psychoanalysis become progressively more

⁵⁶⁷ In the context of discussing counter-transference Bernstein and Severino believe that each analyst has to recognize that they have 'dumb spots' (like blind spots) where their thinking is not able to adapt to or adopt a change in psychoanalytic thinking in areas that challenge their strongly held beliefs. This can equally be applied to recognition of the emerging importance of religion and spirituality (Bernstein and Severino 1986).

pluralistic, pragmatic and integrative (Sandler and Dreher 1995) and some see this as essential for the very survival of psychoanalysis itself.⁵⁶⁸ The desire for the sacred is a powerful dynamic that demands attention and finds new expression in contemporary psychoanalysis (Orsi 2004; Lynch 2007a). Through the ongoing development of intersubjective and relational approaches, with a genuine engagement of the 'other/Other', religion and spirituality have found a voice. This matches the growth of spirituality as a vital part of wider social and cultural developments (Lynch 2007b). Yet this emerging interest in spirituality is focused in the nature of encounter and transformation.

Fourthly, another voice emerges by entering into the encounter of two people, exploring the sacred, drawing from religious, spiritual, ontological, philosophical, and autobiographical concepts to interpret. This was revealed in the psychoanalytic intersubjective methodology applied to the interviews, utilizing conscious and unconscious processes. Such unexpected encounters show the potential for I-Thou moments to happen spontaneously. Such encounters are sacred, where the sacred refers to psychological and spiritual processes that are: contained within a boundaried space (physical or psychical); that are intentionally sought and accidentally found; and marked by presence and absence of the other/Other (Reiland 2004).

The biblical passage that moved from the unconscious to the conscious in my interview with Grotstein was St. Paul's exposition on love found in the first book of Corinthians, chapter thirteen. However the particular verses come from the end of the chapter in verse twelve, 'For now we see through a glass darkly; but then face to face'. This summed up the

⁵⁶⁸ Kovel expressed this thought as early as 1990 (Kovel 1990).

encounters with Grotstein where there was a level of knowing and unknowing, conscious and unconscious (see chapter twenty-one) but a revealing of love. At the end of my series of interviews with leading and authoritative figures in the psychoanalytic world, examined thematically and reflexively, this is a vital dimension that underpins sacred psychoanalysis. Sacred psychoanalysis is the attempt to experience love, consciously and unconsciously, through face-to-face encounter but which can only ever be through 'a glass darkly' in that it is beyond words within a domain of the ineffable and the mystical, and ultimately within the realm and being of O, god/gods and God. Like the aleatory object mentioned earlier, each relationship where there is the presence of a belief in an Other has the potential to experience the in-breaking or the Thouness of God where 'love is *between I and Thou*' (Buber 1987: 28). Adopting Phillips' insight that, 'because our languages of love are versions of theology and epistemology, they are relentlessly redemptive and enlightening' (Phillips 1994: 41), each encounter has the potential for intersubjective space identified by the interpretative framework developed earlier. Such an event is revealing - the mirror clears for a moment and is no longer dark - is experienced as an overwhelming, a numinous presence, and translated as love leading to a transformation of being. This then is my interpretation of religious and spiritual engagement in contemporary psychoanalysis, 'sacred psychoanalysis'.

Other stories - an alternative narrative of research

The purpose of doctoral research is to present a clear thesis that can be tracked through the subsequent pages, traced through the literature, discerned in qualitative engagement and can add critical insight. The eventual clarity does not always betray the messiness and disorder of entering into such research at depth. Here are several examples.

Firstly, some of the interviews were conducted before I had completed the critical and conceptual understandings developed in part B. Consequently they could have taken a different form, yet entering into complex areas as a 'naive' participant allows, as Ricoeur argues, a different form of knowledge or understanding. The reality was that I had become so bogged down in material that a colleague suggested that I just do the interviews, an act that re-energized both the research process and me.

Secondly, in using a thematic analysis what gets missed? The limitation of an interview transcript is that it can only verify what took place when the 'record' button was pressed. While recorded interviews pick up information that the interviewer's memory would not have recalled or filtered out, it never fully captures the whole experience (Kvale 2007). I experienced this in meeting JB, where some words spoken after the interview as we were descending in a lift, had an important personal impact on me and spoke of a real encounter between us. They were not recorded. A secondary issue was the vast number of themes that could have been added to those highlighted in the thematic analysis and is a consequence of eleven interviews running to 123,000 words of potential data. In addition the qualitative research day with discussion of two interview transcripts was recorded and transcribed, leading to a further 20,000 words, marginal reflexive comments written on the interview texts and additional written submission in response to my questions. Some of this rich data is found in appendix six.

Thirdly, a specific tension related to the form of the interview transcripts for both the interviewer and the interviewee. Does a verbatim transcript mean every literal word, pause, breath, laugh, creak, sound, and the multiple phrases we use while thinking ah, oh uhm,

etc.? What is the place of mistakes or tidied up quotations? There was an ever-present temptation, duly resisted, to lightly edit in order to make sense and facilitate coherence, rather than allow a rough, ragged, open-ended text that is authentic but not always comprehensible. Several interviewees commented that they found it difficult to accept the difference between their perception of how articulate they were, and the hesitant, at times rambling, transcript of the interview.

Fourthly, obtaining transparent ethical permission from each interviewee was important. Yet it was only on producing the final transcript that I knew what quotations I was going to use from the interviews. I experienced an anxiety that interviewees would withdraw permission at the last moment. Several interviewees took the opportunity to correct and alter the manuscript text I sent to them, usually adding in words that I had edited in a long quotation. Others due to illness, being out of the country, or impending publication deadlines delayed responding, which was anxiety-provoking in itself. One rang me at my workplace on a Friday, did not get hold of me, although the message he rang did, and I spent a weekend imagining the worst, which was not the case. It was a helpful reminder of how much of my persona and being I had invested in this research. I am not an objective and disinterested spectator, the research is a vital part of who I am and what I am doing.

Fifthly, I am aware that the sample size is small. The sixteen initial interviews, led to eleven interviews being selected for a thematic analysis and six interviews for the psychoanalytic interview process offering a greater reflexive engagement. One justification for this relates to the size and scope of the thesis. Putting these interviews into a context of a narrative that had not been fully told before required a considerable space within the

thesis. The longest part of the thesis, part B, (approximately twenty-three thousand words) is condensed from a much larger draft version running to sixty thousand words. A balance is sought in setting up a critical dialogue of different voices, textual and clinical, leading to a difficult decision to limit the space given to each area.

Sixthly, in part, as a counter-balance to pathologizing tendencies inherent in psychoanalysis, I have focused primarily on religion and spirituality as positive aspects of human development. A fuller account requires acknowledgment that there can be destructive dimensions to all faith positions, where beliefs and actions can be held so fundamentally that the results are destructive for the person, family, group, community or society (Schreurs 2002; Ostow 2007). This is clearly seen in the development of religious terrorism in the last decade (Jones 2002a, 2006, 2008), though this has a long, complex and often over-looked history.⁵⁶⁹ Eigen deals with such destructive elements (Eigen 2001a) and Grotstein utilizes metaphors of demonic ‘third forms’ (Grotstein 1997a) and a ‘black hole’ to capture these dimensions (Loly 2009).⁵⁷⁰

Finally, a specific problem is raised for any researcher when they are researching a field that is growing dramatically. When I began in 2003, the field was large, but in 2010 it is now

⁵⁶⁹ ‘It is easy to confuse adequate with inadequate sacred objects, such as substance use, dogmatism, cults, and the unhealthy idealization of significant others. It is equally easy to embrace unhelpful schemas of the sacred, including the idea that the divine is universally punitive, that it is capricious and unpredictable ... unhealthy attributions to the sacred can have deleterious effects on emotional and physical functioning’ (Gurney and Rogers 2007: 971f.).

⁵⁷⁰ Ostow adds, ‘although we ordinarily think of the word “spirituality” as carrying powerful and admirable values, it can be used to promote perversity ... Spirituality can be degraded to spiritualism or perverted to the demonic ... The adolescent meditator in the lotus position and smoking marijuana does not ascend to a higher level of spirituality than the biologist who is trying to construct a theory of the evolution of behaviour’ (Ostow 2004: 60). Rizzuto also recognises, ‘God may enter psychoanalytic treatments in many forms. God may be used as a defence against the transference, secretly displacing onto God, in prayers and rituals, feelings and wishes that may appear frightening if overtly expressed to the analyst. God may be used as a resistance, when the patient insists that s/he cannot talk about certain matters. God can be used also for satisfying one’s own wishes about not having to feel guilt’ (Rizzuto 2001: 44).

enormous. In the conclusion I have highlighted some of the patterns and trends but it cannot be comprehensive. Most of the chapters in part B deserve doctoral study in their own right. My research offers an overview that charts the landscape more comprehensively than has been done before. My hope is that this will enable other researchers to identify areas they can usefully take further.

Conclusion

This research is a reflexive narrative involving the researcher, the person-to-text analysis of the current literature and the person-to-person engagement with psychoanalysts. It concludes by offering an interpretation that sacred psychoanalysis has emerged as a *Weltanschauung* influencing an increasing number of psychoanalysts within contemporary psychoanalysis, and with the potential to influence many more as an increasingly confident voice emerges. It exists in clusters of people, texts, and locations that have been given voice through an emerging pluralistic ethos within contemporary psychoanalysis. The roots of a sacred psychoanalysis are found in: the phenomenon of a re-discovery and re-examination of the role of religion and religious experience; a re-visioning of Freud's Jewish identity; the emergence of a generic spirituality; an expansion of the role of the unconscious as a place of mystery and the mystical; and a valuing of person-to-person intersubjective encounter drawing on analytic and ontological resources. Sacred psychoanalysis consists of a theoretical framework of engagement, and the formation of a new vocabulary to more fully account for the yearnings and experience of the individual human psyche/soul.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1. Introductory Letter, Interview Questions and Ethical Consent Form

1. The emergence of spirituality in contemporary psychoanalysis.

Introduction

My name is Alistair Ross and the focus of my research is the emergence of religion and spirituality in contemporary psychoanalysis. This research interest arises out of: my longstanding academic interest in Freud - I am currently writing about Freud's correspondence with the Rev. Oskar Pfister, including fresh translations of unpublished edited correspondence; my clinical practice as a psychodynamic counsellor, supervisor and trainer (I am an accredited member of the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy and a member of the West Midlands Institute of Psychotherapy); and my status and experience as a nonconformist minister of religion (Baptist) and Pastoral theologian. A number of these interests came together in a recent chapter entitled "Psychodynamic counselling, religion and spirituality" published in Sue Wheeler ed. (2006) *Difference and diversity in counselling -- contemporary psychodynamic perspectives* published by Palgrave Macmillan. I can provide a photocopy of this on request.

Research focus

There is a widespread perception of the growth of spirituality in culture and therapy in the last two decades. This research explores how this is experienced within contemporary psychoanalytic thought and practice, when traditionally psychoanalysis has been antipathetic towards religion.

Interview focus

Following a conversation with Patrick Casement in 2003 about this work, my intention is to interview psychoanalysts and psychoanalytic thinkers who have published work concerning religion, spirituality, philosophy and culture as these relate to psychoanalysis. The focus would be to determine the narrative of religion and spirituality in contemporary psychoanalysis as viewed from different perspectives and cultures.

Ethical consent.

A separate sheet covers this matter.

Contact Details

Alistair Ross, Academic Team Leader – Counselling, Lecturer in Counselling (Psychodynamic), School of Public Policy, University of Birmingham, Weoley Park Road, Selly Oak, Birmingham B29 6LL

From September 1st 2007 the University of Birmingham is transferring all counselling training to Newman College of Higher Education, Birmingham. My contact details at Newman College are (supplied in the original sheet). My home e-mail is as supplied as is my home telephone number and I am available most evenings.

2. Potential Interview questions

Question one. How would you describe contemporary psychoanalysis?

Question two. Can you tell me about your interests and your published work?

Question three. Thinking about religion and spirituality, what do these terms mean for you? What do you think are the key aspects of religion and spirituality?

Question four. What is your view on the apparent emergence of religion and spirituality in contemporary psychoanalysis?

Question five. How do issues of religion and spirituality impact on your clinical work, when you are in that analytic space?

Question six. Are there issues concerning religion and spirituality which you would like to write about, but have not yet done so or not yet spoken about?

Question seven. What are the dynamic functions for the psyche of individuals and communities of religious and spiritual beliefs, experiences, and activities?

Question eight. Are there any areas or issues that have struck you during this interview that you would like to add?

Question nine. Can you tell me why you were willing to be interviewed?

3. Research Interviews: Consent Form for Participants

The first part of this document describes a research project which is being carried out, outlining the aims of the research, how it will be done, and indicating how ethical issues will be treated. The second part is a statement to be signed by those who are willing to take part in the research.

Part One: Aims of the research

The research will develop a better understanding of the place of religion and spirituality in contemporary psychoanalysis. This is part of a PhD programme being undertaken by Alistair Ross, Lecturer in Counselling, School of Public Policy, University of Birmingham. From September 2007 this post is being transferred to Newman College of Higher Education, Birmingham, although Alistair Ross remains as a doctoral student at the University of Birmingham.

How the research will be done

The theoretical context for this work is a form of narrative analysis based on personal reflection, published texts and interviews. Interviews will be conducted with psychoanalysts in Britain, Ireland and the United States and recorded (digitally and on a mini-disc). Verbatim transcripts will be analyzed in an attempt to understand how concepts

are developing. The interviews are planned to take place between October 2006 and October 2007.

Arrangements

1. Raw research data (audio recordings) will be held at the home of Alistair Ross in a secure metal filing cabinet. Alistair Ross will keep this raw data for the purposes of: meeting the University's requirements expressed in their code of conduct for research (this is for a period of at least 5 years); as a historical record of his research; and for potential future use. Future researchers can approach Alistair Ross for access to this material in which case permission will be sought.
2. The verbatim transcripts will be available to the interviewees and form appendices to the thesis. Comments from the transcript will be made available to interviewees when used as part of a wider discussion in the thesis, although Alistair Ross retains editorial control. In future publication Alistair Ross will retain editorial control. The identities of participants will not be confidential, as their names will be attached to the relevant quotation. Given the very restricted number of people writing in this field it is not possible to ensure anonymity.
3. Consent to participate can be withdrawn at any time up until 31 July 2008.
4. The potential benefits of this research are a greater knowledge of a previously under-researched area that can enhance the development of psychoanalysis, psychotherapy and psychodynamic counselling. The potential harm is that individual contributors may believe their words have been taken out of context and manipulated into a form they would not accept. Every effort will be taken to respect all contributions and the context in which it is given. Contributors do have a right to withdraw if they believe this to be the case.

This form has been based on guidelines provided by:

1. The University of Birmingham's Code of Conduct for Research. This is available at <http://www.ppd.bham.ac.uk/policy/cop/code8.htm>
2. Tim Bond's (2004) *Ethical Guidelines for researching counselling and psychotherapy*, for the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy.
3. The British Educational Research Association's (2004) 'Revised Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research'.

This form has been approved by the Research Committee of the Centre for Lifelong Learning (now under the auspices of the School of Public Policy) at the University of Birmingham.

Publication

On completion of the PhD, publication will be sought for all or part in book or journal form.

Part Two - Consent Form

If you are prepared to participate in this research as outlined in Part One, please complete this form. Note that it is your right to withhold your consent without giving a reason. If you do give your consent, you can withdraw any time up until 31 July 2008. Notice of withdrawal must be in writing.

I agree to participate in this research under the arrangements stated in part one.

I understand the purpose of this study and I am participating voluntarily

Name of Participant

Signature

Date

Name of Researcher

Signature

Date

Appendix 2. Interview text

Sixteen interviews were conducted by the researcher and took place between October 2006 and November 2008. Eleven interviews were subsequently transcribed. The text of one interview, that with David Black, is reproduced in this appendix in full to illustrate the form of the interview, the style of verbatim transcription, and the psychodynamic experience (through transference and other unconscious processes) of entering into the experience of the interview, a dynamic revealed by the group analysis day (see chapter three). The remaining ten interviews are contained in a CD attached to the final page of this thesis. This allows readers access to these important interviews for further research, although ethical agreement reached with the participants requires that these are not reproduced or quoted by a third party without seeking their permission.

The interviews are arranged in chronological order and the following initials refer to the specific psychoanalyst.

INITIALS	NAME
DB	David Black
JB	Jessica Benjamin
JJ	James Jones
JR	Jeffrey Rubin
AMR	Ana-Maria Rizzuto
PM	Phil Mollon
AL	Alessandra Lemma
AN	Anonymous
AP	Adam Phillips
JG	Jim Grotstein
JBR	Joe Bobrow

1 **Interview with David Black by Alistair Ross - 23rd October 2006**

2 AR: So hopefully one or other of the microphones will pick up what we are saying. I

3 think the microphones are quite good

4 DB: they are very sensitive

5 AR: So I don't think you have to (laughter)

6 DB: I don't have to sit forward

7 AR: No I don't think you have to sit forward I think, or (pause) I'd like you to be

8 relaxed (laughter).

9 DB: okay (pause)

10 AR: As I said David some of these questions are, I'm trying them out in an actual

11 interview situation; I've tried them out

12 DB: yeah

13 AR: with colleagues and so on and it will be interesting to get feedback from today.

14 But uhm I imagine this process will take about an hour,

15 DB: right

16 AR: so

17 DB: yeah well I am free until, I ought to be, I will be free until 10 to 11 or something

18 like that I should think

19 AR: well I will, if it takes 45 minutes that's fine, if for instance it rolls on obviously

20 there's the point where, uhm you'll have to say stop, uhm also if there's a point at

21 which there's something you said that for some reason you just don't want on the tape,

22 uhm just ask me, just indicate and I will stop them for that moment.

23 DB: right, yeah

24 AR: but I think the first question is really there about, its almost about, imagine you

25 talking to an interested but intelligent person who knows nothing about

26 psychoanalysis. How would you describe contemporary psychoanalysis to such a

27 person? It's not meant to be an interview question, is not meant to be an exam

28 question but what are the strands that are vital and important for you and your work as

29 a...a contemporary psychoanalyst?

30 DB: I think the thing that's developed, not radically changed but developed since

31 Freud's day is probably chiefly that we are more and more aware of the uhm

32 sensitivity of the analyst and the need to make use of all our own responses to the

33 patient, not not just to what the patient says or to the apparent content of his dream or
34 whatever it may be but to all sorts of other things like the atmosphere of the session,
35 feelings evoked in the analyst, the fantasies evoked in the analyst, all those kind of
36 things are uhm sources of information we increasingly believe about what's going on
37 in the patient. I think that would, since you are asking about contemporary is analysis,
38 I feel that's the sort of direction of the movement.

39 AR: So so within the British tradition in which you were trained with an object
40 relations background, is it an object relations background you have or a Kleinian
41 background or I know you did a Jungian training first.

42 DB: yes

43 AR: and then did another training as

44 DB: yes

45 AR: a psychoanalyst

46 DB: yes I think of myself as pretty kind of mainstream Kleino-Winnicottian object
47 relations theory. That's my that's my position as a practitioner and I think I'm a fairly
48 sort of conventional analyst when I am at work.

49 AR: yes obviously that comes out in your writing, there is an affinity to those
50 positions really which we'll come on to it in a minute. Uhm just in terms of one of the
51 debates that entered into psychoanalysis, ah really in the 1980s "is it a science or is it a
52 hermeneutic?", uhm and I know those are obviously quite large polarisations, any
53 sense of you would stand within that situation or the polarity?

54 DB: yes I think of, the word psychoanalysis has several meanings, that's the difficulty
55 with it. I mean it describes a body of theory and it also describes a therapeutic
56 practice and the therapeutic practice obviously has to be hermeneutic because one is
57 continually trying to decode the meanings of what is happening or what is being said.
58 But my own feeling is that psychoanalytic theory is aspiring to be a science, so I stay
59 on the scientific side of that divide really (a few muffled words).

60 AR: I've noticed obviously in your writings in your 2006 chapter, I have not been able
61 to get your 2004 paper uh (pause) yet, the one in the IJP, but am going to the Institute
62 of Psychoanalysis library following this interview and I will get copy a there, that's
63 the one on sympathy

64 DB: yes

65 AR: that you refer too. Obviously you do draw increasingly on things from
 66 neuroscience in terms of an affinity to support your thinking.

67 DB: Hmm. Yes I see the future of psychoanalysis as requiring more and more a
 68 dialogue with adjacent disciplines, neuroscience, philosophy, religion, I think all these
 69 things need to come in and influence us and hopefully us to make a contribution to
 70 them (voice drops) as well.

71 AR: Right, so it is important for you that it is a two-way contribution, both
 72 psychoanalysis has something to contribute and these other disciplines have got
 73 helpful insightful things to say to psychoanalysis.

74 DB: I think so, yes, I think that they can kind of stabilise things that we see, uhm I
 75 mean I think a lot of the work being done on memory at the moment by
 76 neuroscientists is very illuminating (said with emphasis) to psychoanalysis as we are
 77 working continually with the idea that early experiences somehow imprinted onto the
 78 individual in a way that then influences him later on and we can now see from
 79 neuroscience much more detail of how that actually happens.

80 AR: Moving onto another question David. Uhm I have read as much of your work as I
 81 can which is, you've produced more and more, a lot once you start tracking it down,
 82 bits and pieces, going back to the articles in the dictionary of pastoral care uhm edited
 83 by Alistair Campbell all those years ago. That, it is the same David Black I'm talking
 84 to

85 DB: Actually it is, yes (laugh)

86 AR: Well you wrote articles on ambivalence, and 5 or 6 short...

87 DB: I had forgotten about those to be truthful, but I remember I did it (soft voice,
 88 apologetic?)

89 AR: And then, did you write a history of the Westminster Pastoral Foundation, was
 90 that published in Contact or?

91 DB: Yes, that was published by the Sheldon Press.

92 AR: So I've come across that some time ago, not recently but then obviously some of
 93 your reviews and it seems to me that your writing developed very much from the
 94 1990s, 1993 uhm about in the article on an object relations perspective on religion and
 95 then the other thing that was also very interesting was the article in Stein's book, the
 96 chapter in Stein's book, *Beyond Faith*.

97 DB: *Beyond Belief*

98 AR: *Beyond Belief* but obviously there has been quite a bit more recently in terms of

99 your 2004 articles both in the British Journal of Psychotherapy which I've read (softly

100 spoken) then there is the chapter in the book you edited in 2006, with your own

 101 chapter. Could you tell me about how did it come about that you became the author,
 102 well the editor of this particular book, and what was that process like?

103 DB: Yes uhm I never really know how I became the editor of it except in the sense

104 that Dana Breen who is the general editor of the new library of psychoanalysis

105 approached me one day and asked if I would be interested in doing it and I said 'yes'

106 (soft voice tone) 'I was'. I presume it is on the strength of some of the things you

107 mentioned,

108 AR: hmh hmh

109 DB: you know the article, the international journal on object relations and religion and

110 there was another article I published in the British Psychoanalytical Society Bulletin

111 which was a talk in memory of Nina Coltart, which was also about religion, so I

112 presume it was on the strength of that Dana approached me. And it was a very

113 interesting experience because it gave me an excuse to really get in touch with people

114 who I thought would be interested to write about it and surprisingly many people were

115 interested too. There is one thing just to, one thing that struck me because I think my

116 own interest in religion although I have a Christian background is really in the Eastern

117 traditions, I studied Buddhism and Hinduism too, I did a masters degree in those

118 things in the very early 1970s and Buddhism uhm and continues to interest me a great

119 deal, perhaps increasingly and I sort of assumed that psychoanalysis and Buddhism

120 have a lot to say to each other

121 AR: yeah

122 DB: and other sorts of religion which have much more kind of mythological content

123 that it's perhaps harder for psychoanalysts to make something of but among British

124 analysts, virtually all of them were thinking of the Abrahamic traditions, Judaism,

125 Christianity, Islam whereas in America of course there are many many analysts

126 interested in the interface between psychoanalytic thinking and Buddhist thinking, so I

127 was quite, I was quite surprised by that really. That's just one...

128 AR: Yes because obviously there's Eigen, Epstein, Rubin, (mumbled words) as you
129 say there's quite a number of people and once you are in contact with them and you
130 read their work in fact they introduce you to another layer of analysts who are
131 interested in Buddhism

132 DB: Yes

133 AR: It feels they are the tip of the iceberg

134 DB: Yes exactly

135 AR: Although obviously they have quite different variations of Buddhism are at work
136 once you start reading

137 DB: yes

138 AR: their particular work uuh and obviously here in Britain I guess Nina Coltart I
139 guess is probably as far as I understood or as far as I have read the one analyst who
140 was more open about Buddhism than anyone else in a way that impacted on their
141 writings

142 DB: hmh

143 AR: and has been for quite some time, you know I think, from the early Nineties and
144 'Slouching towards Bethlehem' and other papers

145 DB: yes

146 AR: which she produced. So there's there's a difference in terms of slant, do you
147 think that is something about British and American culture? I'm just thinking about
148 the dominance of a of a religious ideology that has certain governmental and (pause)
149 what am I trying to say (soft voice), that that that that Protestantism uhm is certainly
150 very different in America than it is in Britain.

151 DB: Yes, yes (soft)

152 AR: And it's you know it means certain things, if you talk about being religious it's
153 seen as church going or a particular form of way of thinking uhm

154 DB: Yes

155 AR: That is presumably right-wing and traditional and (pause) so ...

156 DB: Yes I think America is much more open to religious ways of thinking including a
157 lot of Christian Right but also probably many more Buddhist teachers ended up in
158 America. I mean I know of several Tibetan Buddhists who went to America in the
159 60s and 70s. And before that there were the Japanese who actually gathered

160 influential culture bearers, if you like, to work with them and promote their thought,
161 people like Eric Fromm back in the 50s and Karen Horney back in the 40s. These
162 were people who were influential in America in a way that I don't think anybody was
163 in Britain. I mean Nina Coltart was recognized, with a certain amount of surprise by
164 British psychoanalysts as being very interested in Buddhism and sympathetic to it, but
165 I don't know she had the sort of influence that those people had in the States.
166 AR: Uh uh it's almost as if uhm the sort of parish mentality of Anglicanism infects the
167 whole British culture.
168 DB: Yeah
169 AR: You exist in these little parishes, what you know goes on there but doesn't
170 necessarily become known somewhere else
171 DB: yes
172 AR: if the psychoanalytic community in Hampstead doesn't mind being called a
173 parish, if that is not mixing metaphors, there is something about this community that,
174 is I have a limited awareness of it but it's about people knowing people knowing
175 people and there isn't, it's not, psychoanalysis in Britain doesn't seek to be a
176 movement in a way perhaps it has become in some parts of America.
177 DB: yes. and I think it's a bit unfortunate for psychoanalysis in Britain that there has
178 only been one body that has trained people called psychoanalysts
179 AR: yeah
180 DB: which has tended to cause us to huddle in a way that has perhaps hasn't
181 encouraged the openness that's been possible in the States where there has been many
182 different psychoanalytic training institutions.
183 AR: almost certainly (loud) one of the implications in Britain has been a very precise
184 geographic location. I read somewhere, it may be anecdotal that something about
185 50% of all British psychoanalysts live in Hampstead and Swiss Cottage (laughs).
186 DB: yeah
187 AR: But when you actually look (loud) at the directory that is available on the web
188 and look for geographical locations outside of London, I could find one analyst in
189 Birmingham, one in Worcestershire,
190 DB: hmn
191 AR: there's one in Staffordshire,

192 DB: yeah

193 AR: you know, there is one...

194 DB: yes

195 AR: there is two in Leeds (laugh), you know it's fascinating to see (loud) is how it has

196 obviously become very geographic, geographically located and that will give it a

197 different sense of identity because you do meet people, you can go to meetings. So

198 for instance I'm in Birmingham, and in order to be here for nine o'clock today I left at

199 half past five this morning,

200 DB: my God (shock)

201 AR: just because it takes time to get places.

202 DB: I'm sorry about that (empathic)

203 AR: No, that's fine (loud and laugh). I'm fine it's worth doing, I thought I would

204 rather get here, and but for instance, if suddenly to my thinking, that in order to meet

205 somebody or to meet a group of people on a regular basis you have to plan a three-

206 hour journey. You don't go very often

207 DB: no, right

208 AR: so, so there isn't the same community that uhm emerges whereas I guess one of

209 the things about America, has been that there's been distinct communities that have

210 emerged that have promoted, because of being able to talk to one another

211 DB: yes

212 AR: where it has impacted a wider culture

213 DB: yes

214 AR: So thinking about (loud) your recent work, what would you say is the main thrust

215 of your work uhm at the moment (soft)? A lot of it is very recent in you produced

216 your book in 2006 and the lecture that you gave at the West Midlands two years

217 before that

218 DB: yes

219 AR: and I can see some of the strands in your chapter.

220 DB: yes I think, what I gave was in some ways, at least in part an early version of the

221 chapter. Uhm (pause) Yes, it feels as though my thinking is sort of continually

222 developing and I don't have a sort of particular statement about psychoanalysis and

223 religion, but I think that what I try to think about most at the moment are to do with

224 consciousness and how does one conceive consciousness and there's a little paper in
225 the BJP 2004, which is an attempt to at least look at the different theories of
226 consciousness that are around, which, which are extraordinarily diverse. There is an
227 absence of any kind of consensus really on how consciousness is to be conceived and
228 what its relationship to the brain is. Uhm (pause) and I think where I got to in that
229 paper in the book, the idea of a contemplative position
230 AR: hmn
231 DB: seemed to me to a kind of be the starting point for something. I don't know quite
232 what it is going to be a starting point for, but it (pause) it it gave I felt as though it
233 gave me freedom to stop thinking so much about neuroscience which had rather sort
234 of hypnotised me for several years and to start is thinking well actually thinking
235 consciousness and what one discovers by introspection has its own validity, whatever
236 the neuroscientific correlates of it may be. So I felt that the idea of a contemplative
237 position was actually giving a kind of base from which one could trust introspection
238 more (voice drops) I think that's my, I think that's the function of it really.
239 AR: I find that fascinating I really thought was both highly original and very creative.
240 It feels to me that they the notions are you suggesting backed up by linking it to
241 neuroscience, but not limited by neuroscience, and by an awareness of other religious
242 and spiritual traditions, not just the Judaeo-Christian one suddenly from me, made me
243 think this could be a new step in terms of psychoanalytic thinking or engagement with
244 religion and spirituality in a way that is fully psychoanalytic, that uh (pause) is also
245 rooted in neuroscience, but is allowing something else to happen that religion is
246 perhaps or spirituality is searching for but can't always put words too. So I found that
247 very helpful. I haven't read Grotstein's work, you talked about the transcendent
248 DB: I think he's moving in the same sort of direction using a different vocabulary.
249 AR: Yes I mean one of the disadvantages of doing a PhD part-time is that there is
250 never enough hours in the day to read and of course the more you get into it the more
251 you want to read.
252 DB: yes
253 AR: but that's something else I will have to go away and read but it certainly seems
254 very clear and helpful and a good place to move on from, this is a good place, I think
255 in your chapter you were being quite modest in saying this is just a tentative but

256 (pause) has there been any, have you had any particular responses to that chapter,
 257 (pause) or has anyone written about it or at all (soft)?

258 DB: I don't think, It's certainly only been published for a few months so it's fairly
 259 early days yet. Uhm no, a few people have said kindly things about it but as yet its
 260 not transformed the world (laughter – shared)

261 AR: although I'm not sure you set out to transform the world but uh

262 DB: (noise of agreement)

263 AR: when you talked about that particular idea with your colleagues what has their
 264 responses been? Maybe you haven't tried that out with your colleagues?

265 DB: Uhm I haven't actually presented that paper in a strictly psychoanalytic context.
 266 I mean I gave it, earlier versions of it, in two or three places including the Birmingham
 267 talk (soft) and basically it seems to have attracted quite a, you know, quite an
 268 enthusiastic response in the moment (emphasis last 3 words). People having a lot of
 269 questions, thoughts and reactions to it so you know I haven't felt discontented with it.

270 AR: okay now thinking a bit more about religion and spirituality, what do these terms
 271 mean for you? And what do you think are the key aspects of religion and spirituality
 272 and I mean, I know these are really straightforward and simple questions (laughter -
 273 shared), but thinking about what do the terms mean for you?

274 DB: Well I remember when Dana Breen asked me if I would edit that book she said
 275 you know 'you could call it psychoanalysis and religion' or you know, you might
 276 think in terms of spirituality and I found myself saying rather definitely I wanted to
 277 call it religion, because I thought spirituality was just such a kind of cloudy and
 278 indeterminate term that I didn't quite know what its boundaries were in any direction.
 279 Uhm (pause) Since then, I've been less sure of that reaction. Uhm (pause) I suppose
 280 the more I think about these questions the more I feel that we are in a very new era
 281 and the traditional religions well certainly traditional versions of Christianity that I'm
 282 aware of uhm seem to be losing their hold on educating people, I mean obviously they
 283 have been doing that for the last 200 years. They seem to be doing so very rapidly
 284 right now with all this, uhm the rise of a very kind of simple-minded religion as it
 285 seems to be, this rightwing evangelical American thing that is so powerful over there,
 286 and makes very little impact on most educated people over here. But even the
 287 Catholic Church, and the Anglican Church, or the Church of England uhm seem to be

288 sort of foundering in political problems over gender issues, and so forth, uhm which I
289 think can only drive away people who have any serious interest in what I think
290 religion is about, which is probably more like spirituality when one gets down to it.
291 Uhm so I suppose what, to try and answer your question, I suppose what I think these
292 things are about is something ontological, you know how does one actually conceive
293 the universe and how do we conceive our lives within it (pause) and those questions
294 are now being debated more interestingly and very often, I think by the people who
295 are talking about neuroscience and the people talking about consciousness and
296 psychology and the people talking about Buddhism, which is much more in dialogue
297 with these things than they are by, as far as I know, the established churches. I think
298 this may be different, as it is such a vast scene and one just doesn't know enough and I
299 think about what you're saying about not having enough time to read. That is very
300 true to me too (pause). I think Judaism for example is probably getting into some of
301 these debates, much more than Christian churches that I know of. But I'm very
302 struck, for example, by the Dali Lama setting up formal meetings between advanced
303 meditators and neuroscientists and psychologists and one psychoanalyst has got
304 involved in those discussions, did I say neuroscientists? Because he is saying
305 Buddhism has its own way of construing consciousness, which has been very
306 carefully researched by meditation over the millennia. But now here are scientists
307 coming from a completely different angle, but with the same interest, so to speak, in
308 thinking about what does the consciousness tell us, what is consciousness, let's get
309 into a dialogue let's share because Buddhism has something to learn from
310 neuroscience and neuroscience from Buddhism. This seems to me to be the creative
311 end of what is going on at the moment, and my sense is that the theistic religions are
312 probably going to have to join that conversation and probably change very radically in
313 the process (soft).

314 AR: Yes I think certainly historically there's been some
315 discussion/debate/engagement/dialogue/thinking about mysticism, there have been
316 theologians who have met with other people, Buddhist, Hindu, Taoist and probably
317 exemplified by Thomas Merton, you know, who was engaging much more with some
318 ideas. So I think that certainly there is a strand of dialogue that exists.

319 DB: yes

320 AR: But somehow I hear you say that doesn't seem to be impacting the general stance
 321 which is, you you tell me is quite defensive, it's about you know we need to sort out
 322 this, this and this and it is a very internal discussion I think that the Church is pursuing
 323 at the moment rather than the one that is being creative and actually trying to make
 324 connections with completely different traditions and I guess there is the whole notion
 325 of fundamentalism and that needs
 326 DB: yes
 327 AR: to be grasped, grappled because in like the conclusion you wrote to your chapter
 328 in *Beyond Belief* which is actually saying some of these things whatever if you choose
 329 to believe a particular God it is a choice whether that is good or bad but that religion
 330 has a lot more to do with in its desire to connect both over time and rather than this
 331 individualist spiritual supermarket which, where you can take any combination you
 332 like from the pick-n-mix counter and may have meaning in that moment but doesn't
 333 necessarily transform people in terms ongoing values or pursuit of justice or peace,
 334 some of the moral dimensions that I think you talk about in certainly some of your
 335 earlier work you talk about religion having this moral dimension that psychoanalysis
 336 doesn't always engage with in the same (pause, quiet tone) way.
 337 DB: Yes, well I've been interested, in fact particularly interested in you know I said
 338 ontological, fundamentally it's an ontological project I think it's the sort of ontology
 339 out of which moral values arose so to speak and have a stability which if one just
 340 takes a psychoanalytic approach to values one can't find a ground for the stability of
 341 principles because it all to with feeling and according to Klein and Winnicott, and I
 342 very much agree with them, you know if we treat somebody badly we feel bad about it
 343 very often and then we want to make reparation and that's a moral response but it is
 344 only a feeling response and you can't say it has any authority over somebody else who
 345 might have a different feeling response to treating somebody bad shrugging their
 346 shoulders saying well 'I couldn't care less' you can't say one of them on purely
 347 psychoanalytic grounds is better than the other . I think you have to have an
 348 ontological commitment before you can ground your morality in principle. So I've
 349 said that much too quickly but (meaning?), anyway that's the kind of thinking that is
 350 behind that, yes.

351 AR: Yes, and I don't know whether you had a connection in your WPF days with
352 Wendy Robinson?

353 DB: Yes I knew her quite well as a matter of fact at one time.

354 AR: Right because she has written a paper about that on the ontological ground of
355 being which I think was a WPF lecture she did it was probably about 10 years ago.

356 DB: Really

357 AR: I know Wendy so,

358 DB: yes

359 AR: so we sometimes have ontological

360 DB: very, very (feint, missed something here. I didn't listen and spoke over)

361 AR: discussions on the Orthodox Church which means you never quite know where
362 the conversation is going to go. But yes that is the sort of debates that are happening
363 in the church community or as you were saying is increasingly beginning to happen in
364 the Jewish community although much more is happening in the Buddhist community
365 talking about the nature of being, the ontology of all things as opposed to how many
366 people are sitting in the pews on Sunday it does make the Church seem somewhat
367 parochial in its quaint quirks as an institution.

368 DB: yes, that's a very slanted view as I'm not really involved with any

369 AR: No I think it's a reflection of a broader cultural movement which relegates
370 religion to the private

371 DB: yeah

372 AR: you could say the Church as an institution is increasingly being privatized a bit
373 like British Rail

374 DB: yes

375 AR: used to be you could ring up BR enquiries and you could get details from here to
376 Aberdeen whereas now if you want to try and book a ticket that says I want to go
377 there, there and there they say 'sorry you cant do that'. Now that it is privatized it has
378 its own niches just looking after it particular area

379 DB: yes

380 AR: so if I bought a ticket and go by train on the Chiltern line but wanted to go via
381 Euston because it was more convenient the answer of course is that I can't (hesitation)
382 so I think that's (vague sounds) the Church or religion at the moment in society is

383 increasingly privatized which I think does polarize it and one of the reasons why
 384 fundamentalism is apparently greater than I think it is

385 DB: At large, yes

386 AR: because people think you can do anything you want in private you can wear a veil
 387 in private, you can cover your face but don't take it into the public so I think that's
 388 one of the quite complex debates underpinning some of the recent events (reference to
 389 the new story of Muslim women being banned from wearing the hajib in schools)

390 DB: yes

391 AR: but eh so my fourth question is and you might have covered this already is David
 392 is what about the apparent emergence of religion and spirituality in contemporary
 393 psychoanalysis? I know you do in the introduction to your book give an overview but
 394 why do you think it is happening now in a way that it wasn't happening in the 1980s
 395 for instance certainly in Britain?

396 DB: It is very striking. I think that there are probably several reasons for it. I mean I
 397 think that the 1960s it really did make a difference so all of us now who are
 398 psychoanalysts in our 60s or so are all children of the 1960s and there was a kind of
 399 openness to ways of thinking then which I think inevitably has influenced us however
 400 much we may think of ourselves as doctors or psychiatrists or social workers or
 401 whatever our professional backgrounds have been uhm (pause) so that is very very
 402 different from someone with the background of someone like Freud growing up you
 403 know with hard materialistic 19th c. science as his background. I think inevitably
 404 postmodernism and feminism and all those kind of things softened those hard edges. I
 405 think the other thing is actually the sense of the world being in crisis, the ecological
 406 crisis, (pause) the lack of anywhere one can look in the political world for (pause)
 407 something that seems to be morally based and sound and I think this creates a
 408 profound sense of unease in most of us and so there is a kind of looking around now
 409 for what, on which one can base hope for the future really and you know the kind
 410 confident belief in materialistic scientists which led to things like communism and
 411 socialism as being more or less secular creeds that isn't around any longer. You have
 412 the stridency of Richard Dawkin on one side, a scientism v. the possibly exaggerated
 413 ideas of fundamentalism and creationism around. Like you I am not sure how much
 414 of that there really is, I don't think I've ever met a creationist in my life, but you

415 know that noisy dialogue between hard thinkers I think increasingly does not appeal to
416 most of us, I think there is more awareness (pause, soft) that the world is very
417 complex and simple solutions even hard psychoanalysis so to speak are just not good
418 enough.

419 AR: So in some ways it might be that psychoanalysis has become relocated within the
420 cultural understanding of our world in one, twenty or thirty years ago it would have
421 been a hard science evidence type approach to say well psychoanalysis says the future
422 of religion is an illusion, Freud said this and that would have been taken pretty much
423 as read by a lot of people

424 DB: yeah

425 AR: Whereas I think obviously postmodernism has broken to some extent the power,
426 of the hold of master grand narratives

427 DB: yes

428 AR: that we can't look for global solutions in that way and maybe it's the shadow side
429 of postmodernism is that it's not that you don't believe in anything but can you
430 believe in anything is the paradox, you can't believe that but what can you believe in?

431 DB: The answer is the contemplative position (laugh) despite all that.

432 AR: So there is you are saying you are suggesting is there are new ways of bringing
433 aspects together that different analysts are trying to develop uhm (pause) because
434 certainly if I look at the analysts that have written about spirituality (pause) it is quite
435 hard to find them. I mean I think Ana-Maria Rizzuto's book was very influential, but
436 that came out in 1979 followed by Meissner, you can track a strand, a particular strand

437 DB: yes

438 AR: a route, but in terms of British perspective there are occasional articles and
439 references in journals but until uhm (pause) well there was a 1990 conference
440 'psychoanalysis and religion' held at the Freud museum

441 DB: Oh yes

442 AR: and Ivan Ward edited a book of that so the chapter by, did you contribute to that?

443 DB: Yes, yes. A little book 'Why is psychoanalysis another religion'

444 AR: Yes. I remembered that as I was driving here this morning. I've got it somewhere
445 I would have re-read it but really that seems to have been the first time that it was

446 engaged with in a particular way by an analytic institution, whether that was the Freud
447 museum or the...

448 DB: Yes that's probably true

449 AR: so something was around and of course I am trying to work out what.

450 DB: yes

451 AR: is the answer, I don't know but something about being given a voice.

452 DB: Yes I mean I think probably Freud was just speaking with the conventional voice
453 of materialistic science really when he said what he said about religion and I think
454 there was a very widespread assumption certainly among scientists and
455 psychoanalysts that religion was just going to wither away. You know it had been
456 discredited and science was obviously a much more satisfactory way of viewing the
457 world (pause) and then it didn't happen and increasingly it hasn't happened so to
458 speak with the rise of the religious right in America and the rise of everybody's
459 awareness of Islam obviously in recent years and also I think there has been an
460 increasing awareness with the collapse of communism and the discrediting of
461 socialism that (pause) these materialistic convictions just don't provide a base for life.

462 AR: That's very helpful David I hadn't in my own thinking I hadn't made a
463 connection with collapse of socialism and in some ways you could actually I know
464 they are two different events but you could psychoanalysis opening up to religion in
465 some ways is a bit like the fall of the Berlin Wall (laugh from DB) you know some
466 unspoken divide somehow changes I am not going to link the two in my writing but I
467 am just thinking that the timing of being around that time how much freedom that
468 there was that Gay people did seek their identities because I was at a conference a year
469 after the Berlin Wall fell down at an European Conference where I was meeting
470 people from different faith backgrounds from former communist countries what was
471 fascinating was because until then my knowledge was limited to Eastern Block and
472 then when you met people they were talking about their traditions their country and
473 how they had survived in terms of faith contacts in those circumstances and what
474 happened in one country say Estonia was actually very very different from somewhere
475 else so despite the appearance of this monolithic

476 DB: yeah

477 AR: in fact there had been elements of faith very much alive it had been a real part of
 478 people's tradition but it was enshrined in their culture and it was something they were
 479 almost recovering so I will have to do some thinking about that and again it's to do
 480 with these grand movements shaping and changing

481 DB: Yes

482 AR: They create fissures like earthquakes that move you can't predict when its going
 483 to happen but you do know something shifted

484 DB: Yes I think the phrase you used in the absence of master narratives I think that's a
 485 very important thing I don't think we can think now in terms of master narratives
 486 though I think the theme, I see fundamentalism as a retreat from the frightening
 487 challenge of a world of which there isn't a master narrative

488 AR: Yes and I think that suddenly there is fundamentalisms around and it's a defence
 489 against a critical engagement or openness or it's the unwillingness to face the
 490 ontological task that goes beyond the particular set of beliefs uhm (pause, soft) you
 491 know when you think that someone else from a different tradition can reach the same
 492 position you have ontologically that's quite challenging because you say what makes
 493 my beliefs different and distinct from theirs but I think that some of the things that you
 494 do challenge several times in your writing about the defensiveness that can be adopted
 495 in any context uhm uhm (pause, soft) moving on just for time David my 5th question
 496 is how do issues of religion and spirituality impact your clinical work when you are in
 497 this analytic space and in some ways it's interesting doing the interview here because
 498 this is very much your space your analytic space (soft laugh DB) you have created
 499 (soft).

500 DB: How does it impact on clinical work?

501 AR: yeah

502 DB: I don't know I'm not aware that it does really uhm I mean I think it must be there
 503 somewhere in (pause) the background of my motivation for doing the work but in
 504 terms of what I actually try to do with patients I think it continues to be
 505 psychoanalysis. I don't sort of feel (soft) that my attitude to spirituality gets into it
 506 really uhm (soft)

507 AR: although in terms of your writing, supposing a client comes and they have a
 508 particular faith or belief that's personal to them and assuming that it's not a defensive

509 aspect or a regressive aspect of trying to look at something else you would work with
 510 them along the lines perhaps you suggested in your chapter about maybe helping them
 511 find a contemplative position alongside working through a depressive or a schizoid
 512 position
 513 DB: I'm not sure really uhm I mean I was thinking of the chapter in the book by
 514 Fakhry Davids uhm which I think is a very interesting attempt to sort of tease out the
 515 different ways in which a practising analyst might think about the apparently religious
 516 experiences that his patient brings him uhm (soft) I think I would be sort of listening
 517 in something of that kind of way to you know to think how is how is this belief
 518 playing a part in the patient's psychological processes uhm (soft) I don't think that it's
 519 up to me really to be going beyond that yeah as a therapist
 520 AR: So do you, have you found the experiences in your work as an analyst where
 521 what you are experiencing in the room with a patient might be akin to something you
 522 would experience in meditation in terms of consciousness a state of being or at a
 523 similar it generates in you going back to what we saying at the start of about
 524 contemporary psychoanalysis focusing on the whole aspect, have you had experiences
 525 like that or would you make distinctions between the two?
 526 DB: I suppose I would in the sense that I think in the clinical situation one is attending
 527 to whatever arises in oneself in order to think what is this telling me about what may
 528 be going on in the patient or with the patient so its instrumental really in the clinical
 529 situation in a way that I don't think it is meditation, in meditation your concerned for
 530 the experience in its own right so I think although there is a certain analogy I think the
 531 idea of the hovering attention of the analyst uhm (pause) descriptively is similar to
 532 some of things that one tries to do in meditation but I think the purpose of it is
 533 different, someone's attitude to it is different
 534 AR: Yes because certainly in my reading of Eigen's work it's difficult to know it feels
 535 much more enmeshed
 536 DB: Yes
 537 AR: And obviously he is situating himself in a different perspective from you so if
 538 you write a book with a title *the psychoanalytic mystic* it's a bit of a clue isn't it that
 539 the discipline is a much greater correspondence and obviously his focus on some of

540 the aspects of Bion, Winnicott, Lacan he takes aspects of their thinking that relate to
541 that

542 DB: Yes I think my approach to psychoanalysis is much more instrumental than
543 Eigen's would be, I do see it as a therapy it's a technique that one's using as therapy
544 and sometimes it's deeply moving and all kinds of things happen for oneself so to
545 speak in it but that is all subordinated to its task as I see it

546 AR: Yes question 6 David are there issues concerning religion and spirituality, which
547 you would like to write about but you haven't yet done so or you haven't spoken
548 about?

549 DB: (pause) Well I really want to see where these thoughts about consciousness go as
550 I say I felt sort of liberated in a way by writing that tentative position paper but ready
551 for what I am not yet sure but there are a lot of very interesting things going on at the
552 moment especially in America these dialogues I mentioned between the Dali Lama
553 and other people that seems to me to be the most creative area that I know about in
554 this area of psychoanalysis and psychoanalysis is just one of five or six different
555 disciplines that are all contributing to it

556 AR: Yes there is nothing similar that you are aware of happening or going to be
557 happening in a British context

558 DB: I don't really know about it so much in a British context although there are very
559 interesting things in the British context there is an organization called the Scientific
560 and Medical Network I don't know if you have come across it

561 AR: I have not come across that

562 DB: There is the Schumacher College down in Totnes, Dartington these are places
563 where dialogues are taking place between people with a background in science,
564 serious trained scientists and spiritual ways of thinking so there are some things going
565 on in this country

566 AR: And in the psychoanalytic world are there any further linkings within the
567 spirituality that are around that you are aware of or is it just if you are a psychoanalyst
568 you work and you see patients on a regular basis and with regular frequency and you
569 don't actually have a great deal of time I think there's that...

570 DB: Time is a real problem just as you were saying in your experience. Neville
571 Symington said that in the introduction to one of his books how difficult it is trying to

572 deal with these huge themes when there is so much that should be read and known
573 when actually one is spending 8 hours a day you know doing clinical work and so I
574 am very conscious of that (soft) I just don't know I mean it would be interesting to
575 see if several of my gifted colleagues at the Institute of Psychoanalysis contributed to
576 that book
577 AR: yeah
578 DB: In order to contribute to that book they probably allowed themselves to write in a
579 way they hadn't written before uhm and it will be interesting to see if that will take
580 them any further? I don't know the answer to that I know one or two of them do seem
581 to be thinking further now as a result of having let themselves get into the area and
582 obviously Neville Symington is someone who is written a great deal about all this and
583 I think he intends to keep ploughing the furrow that's my impression
584 AR: Yes he has agreed to be interviewed
585 DB: Has he now
586 AR: This will be an equal and novel experience because it is going to be over the
587 internet using the web cam
588 DB: Oh right
589 AR: Using Skype
590 DB: Yes I know Skype
591 AR: Which means it's agreed as long as we can find a time that suits whatever time
592 zones are in Australia and here
593 DB: Some hour in the morning
594 AR: yes so that will be very interesting to see his perspective on that uhm and I am not
595 yet sure how this will go in terms of the number of people I will interview because
596 what struck me about something you were saying about a whole range is of analysts
597 who were around as young people in the 1960s and the impact that that's had just
598 thinking about the ages of the people that I have planned to interview they would all
599 really be in their mid to late fifties, sixties and mid seventies interestingly so that has
600 made me think that perhaps I ought to be talking to a younger group of analysts as
601 well
602 DB: You will have to work hard to find them
603 AR: Of which (mumbled) you are saying that there are not very many

604 DB: We train so late in life you see it's a sort of tertiary stage of training most people
605 have had a profession already and then they train as analysts nowadays usually in their
606 late 30s, 40s
607 AR: Yes so certainly I need to be talking perhaps to some people in their 40s
608 DB: That would be good
609 AR: but of course the difficulty about that is that they may not as yet published
610 anything
611 DB: hmh hmh
612 AR: because if you think about it unless you have an academic or another career first
613 in which you have published once you then invest in your analytic training which is
614 going to take time you don't really have much time for anything else while that
615 process is happening once you are newly qualified you are then it's about establishing
616 your practice
617 DB: it's about establishing your practice establishing your bonafides as a real
618 psychoanalyst not as someone wacky going off into religion
619 AR: Well, yes some people might perceive that if a young analyst were suddenly
620 embracing different aspects
621 DB: hmh hmh
622 AR: would some people do you think saying what are they doing and they haven't
623 learnt the basics yet
624 DB: They certainly would in the past I think that too is changing but there was a time
625 when it felt really quite risky to acknowledge any interest in something like what we
626 are talking about umh and I think it's probably only since 1995 or so that it's started to
627 feel safe to be known as somebody with an interest of this sort
628 AR: I think in that sense that Neville Symington's book was actually (pause) quite
629 helpful
630 DB: indeed
631 AR: in terms of someone with good bonafide credentials and apparently I don't know
632 DB: Well no absolutely
633 AR: But someone who was very much in the analytic community opening and
634 branching out saying look this can happen and it doesn't make you a bad analyst you
635 can still engage fine at a therapeutic level that you can be aware of other dimensions

636 that people bring so (pause) and just a couple of final questions (soft) David, are there
 637 any areas or issues that have struck during this interview that you would like to add
 638 because I know we have been very focused in terms of my questions
 639 DB: yes (pause) I was thinking of the idea of ontology grounding values really uhm
 640 (pause) I mean there is a phrase that people sometimes use which I am not quite
 641 comfortable with but I think it's getting at something you know I think Max Weber or
 642 someone talked about the disenchantment of the Universe the removal of the idea of
 643 magic and then the idea of religion in favour of scientific understanding and some
 644 people of talked about the need for re-enchantment of the Universe something like
 645 that see I don't like that language I don't think of enchantment but it does seem to me
 646 that if there are to be values that people actually hold to as opposed to pervasive
 647 dishonesty of public life for example it's not going to values that people hold to its
 648 going to be because they construe the world as something that values matter in. I'm
 649 not putting this very well I'm thinking of the word worship and the idea that the word
 650 worship is to do with recognizing worth and recognizing value so to speak objectively
 651 and obviously you can never say the values are objective that it doesn't seem adequate
 652 I have said this many times in the past it doesn't seem adequate to say values are only
 653 subjective there is some sort of movement between objectivity and subjectivity that
 654 allows value to really have value not just be provisional and instrumental, utilitarian
 655 that seems to me the heart of the matter really. I am very impressed by how you did
 656 mention Thomas Merton and I think good Christians good Buddhists and I am sure
 657 good everything else have actually come down to values I mean ontology is all very
 658 well but it will always be questionable always be theoretical but there are convictions
 659 like the Dalai Lama saying that only religion is kindness. you know I think a lot of
 660 practitioners of all religions would come down to some simple statement like that like
 661 that, it is probably present in their Christian notion, God is love, ultimately that is
 662 what matters, what attitude do we have towards other people, what attitude do we
 663 have towards the ego system. So I think that is what is the driver behind all this
 664 AR: No, that's very helpful that notion about values and certainly you state that very
 665 clearly in your chapter about the importance of objectivity or the engagement between
 666 the subjective and the objective there has got to be for you certainly, you have to
 667 engage with that otherwise it's just wishful thinking or it's just something else

668 because I think I was a little intrigued by the ending to your chapter where I am just
 669 finding it here (soft) where having talked about the importance of the contemplative
 670 position and then talking about the 'objective of faith and its conviction you cannot be
 671 guaranteed by objective of evidence because subject can be biased you can't be
 672 discovered in an objective evidence objectively considered' so I think that was the last
 673 paragraph you say this 'the contemplative position also makes room for reservation
 674 that many psychoanalysts feel towards religious ways of thinking, that they can serve
 675 as an escape' and I think my intrigue I think was having stated a very positive point, a
 676 helpful point you end it feels a slightly defensive as if you are saying but I've also got
 677 to address this particular issue that psychoanalyst are going to raise with me in
 678 response to this. Anyway can you recall any of the processes that came about or do
 679 you think I am misreading uhm (pause, and soft) this
 680 DB: (pause) yes (pause, sigh) I don't know I think I occupy a sort of middle position
 681 (loud, rushed) with regard to religion because I feel there is something very important
 682 in it but I also think we don't have the vocabulary to say what that is yet quite and
 683 very often when I actually meet religious beliefs I found myself thinking Freud really
 684 did have a point in his criticism and often there is a sense of people using religion as a
 685 kind of way of avoiding addressing the reality of the world (soft) so its partly
 686 defensive in the eyes of my colleagues I suppose but its partly also expressing my own
 687 caution
 688 AR: Yes I think maybe defensive is too strong a word, maybe if there is a slight
 689 cautionary note defences are okay (shared laughter) partly because I did think that this
 690 whole notion of contemplative position was actually really highly original and I, in
 691 terms of my reading both theologically and psychoanalytically I would imagine that
 692 you have read much more psychoanalytic literature than I have, certainly you would
 693 have read much wider in terms of Eastern traditions, uhm I probably have a much
 694 stronger background in a theological background and training
 695 DB: Do you
 696 AR: Yes I did a theological degree after a history degree, so up until about 10 years
 697 ago worked as a minister of Religion
 698 DB: Did you (soft)
 699 AR: And technically still am a minister of Religion

700 DB: Is this a Church of England or Church of Scotland
701 AR: It's a Baptist Church
702 DB: Oh really (quizzical)
703 AR: Yes a Pastor, so which places itself very much pretty much as a denomination
704 within an Evangelical tradition so it's something about the conformity but I did write a
705 book about 9 years ago called *Evangelicals in Exile* talking about wrestling with
706 theology and the unconscious which was partly autobiographical but looking at events
707 I had been through and wanting to look at them, understand them from a theological
708 perspective but then also wanting to understand them from a psychological
709 perspective and finding correspondence and language between the two
710 DB: Now that sounds extremely interesting
711 AR: That's the source of I mean that's my background in trying to find a commonality
712 of language in communication for which things are ultimately very profound, uh
713 (pause) so profound it's difficult to put words to it but that doesn't you can't then use
714 that as an excuse for not doing the thinking or reasoning or making the connections. it
715 feels to me with that chapter you really wrestled hard to make these connections
716 between psychoanalysis and neuroscience and religious traditions. I think I guess one
717 of the reasons why there are not very many analysts that do write about religion and
718 spirituality is because to do it properly you actually need to have done a great deal of
719 reading and thinking you know you do actually need both a knowledge of your
720 analytical tradition and of a theological or other spiritual tradition and of a good
721 working knowledge of philosophy and in your case too an addition of science as well.
722 It's actually there are not that many people David that actually have that combination
723 of interests I'm discovering and because we just let some other people think these
724 things well actually you discover there are lots of people that don't
725 DB: Yes, yes
726 AR: They just want to inhabit the middle ground they don't want to make any
727 connections with any other tradition or discipline. Finally David do you know of any
728 other people I could or should be talking too in terms of interviews like this or
729 discussing this further?
730 DB: In Britain?

731 AR: Yes you have mentioned some of your colleagues, Fakhry Davids, I know you
732 can't speak for them but

733 DB: I can't speak for them Fakhry is a very interesting thinker and comes from a
734 Muslim background which is unusual em (pause) Kenneth Wright I don't know if you
735 have read his chapter but I think it is very good a very interesting piece of thinking
736 that

737 AR: Yes and Ron Britton

738 DB: Yes I mean Ron Britton is obviously one of our great thinkers in British
739 psychoanalysis at the moment and tremendously a nice man I mean why not why not
740 indeed

741 AR: I think I have probably not followed Ron Britton up well obviously I have no
742 connection I don't know him

743 DB: No

744 AR: so I can't simply just contact him out of the blue but the other is I probably didn't
745 think I know enough about Klein and contemporary Kleinian thinking, it feels a bit
746 like I am still catching up

747 DB: yes uh

748 AR: because certainly a lot of his discussions are particular in relationship to the ego
749 and where that fits in a relationship so he alludes to religion

750 DB: yes

751 AR: in a broader sweep of creativity as proposed to writing specifically about religion
752 other than this chapter here where he looks at Job

753 DB: I mean he is very interested in religion though he I mean I would say Ron stays
754 within psychoanalysis looks out at religion rather than sort of straddling the gap in the
755 way I try to. he has written quite a lot about Milton and about Blake. He has been
756 very interested in poetry and he is very very intelligent interesting thinker but there is
757 a very nice book of his called "Imagination and Belief" I think it's called which you
758 might to interested to look at before contacting him yes he is very nice and
759 approachable and would be very articulate. I always feel when I'm speaking I'm sort
760 of floundering around my thoughts are going in so many different directions but Ron
761 would have a much more fully articulated position on all these issues but he wouldn't

762 be speaking with as much sympathy for religion as I have I think he would see it from
 763 a psychological perspective

764 AR: Well I think David that's all the questions I've got and as you say you feel as
 765 though you have been floundering around it hasn't felt like that to me

766 DB: Good

767 AR: I think that what you have been doing is wrestling with the complexity of these
 768 huge issues where it is sometimes hard to find an exact language or an exact form
 769 doesn't mean we shouldn't stop from trying

770 DB: Well you are obviously engaged in the same process

771 AR: I am trying, trying to be and interestingly I do have a number of clients who have
 772 faith backgrounds

773 DB: yes (soft)

774 AR: and it does raise questions about what is the nature of what is my engagement
 775 with them or do they come with an explicit agenda? Some of them find out I have a
 776 faith background and make all sorts of assumptions the fascinating thing is
 777 assumptions they make about my beliefs which is actually their fantasy

778 DB: yes

779 AR: and interestingly I would probably work with it in the same way

780 DB: Yes

781 AR: I don't actually talk particularly about beliefs I help them understand that I know
 782 the language they are talking about and have some sense of their particular world but
 783 what's happening in this world here. So what, the other thing which strikes me is the
 784 dependence on one's belief in the unconscious and how you think the unconscious is,
 785 in terms of if you have a particular set of beliefs, values, religion, spirituality? Is that
 786 always in the room in relationship with the client and accessible to the client at an
 787 unconscious level, that it is not quite Jung's collective unconscious. I'm not quite so
 788 sure about that but something about a correspondence at an almost unspoken level
 789 (pause), which of course you don't know about unless you speak about it or it emerges

790 A dominant psychoanalytic interpretative framework in the work

791 DB: Yes how can one know the answer to that I mean it must be true that everybody
 792 brings a rich presence with them don't they which is quite different according to who

793 it is far more than can be put into words (faint) so in some way presumably that's
794 present

795 AR: Ok well unless you have got any questions for me David or anything, questions
796 you expect me to ask you and I haven't

797 DB: No I wasn't really expecting to be able to cover these

798 AR: Well one last question which I suddenly realize is here this is more personal I
799 suppose which is can you tell me why you were willing to be interviewed?

800 DB: (pause) Oh em well I am quite flattered to be interviewed but also I think I do
801 welcome opportunities to try to put my thought into words and that's why I write
802 these things you know because I find it's only when I put things into words that I then
803 start building forward in my thinking so in other words thoughts just go around and
804 around so it's actually valuable to me to have an opportunity like this to and it's
805 interesting to be interviewed because I am not accustomed to being interviewed in this
806 kind of way and I will be interested to see what I have turned out to have said
807 (shared laughter)

808 AR: Right well I will just stop it there I think

Appendix 3. Oskar Pfister and the unpublished Freud/Pfister correspondence

Pfister (1873-1956), while identified by Alexander as one of forty psychoanalytic pioneers, is not well known and no biography of Pfister exists (Alexander, Eisenstein, and Grotjahn 1966). Lee is preparing to publish a biography drawing on his PhD thesis 'Of the Spirit and Of the Flesh: The Life and Work of Oskar Robert Pfister (1873-1956), Protestant Pastor, Pedagogue, and Pioneer Psychoanalyst' (Lee 2005).

Born in 1873 in Zurich and despite his father's death when Pfister was three years old, he was shaped by his father's Christian background, his role as a Protestant pastor, and his training as a physician to help his parishioners. Little is subsequently known until Pfister began his academic and theological trainings. Pfister studied theology, philosophy, psychology, pedagogy, and the history of religion at Basel (1891-1892, 1893-1894) and Zürich (1892-1893, 1894-1895). In 1896 he also attended lectures in psychiatry in Berlin. Pfister records breaking off an academic career to follow his vocation to meet the pastoral needs of people through active service as a minister of religion, and in 1902 moved to the prestigious Predigerkirche in Zurich, as part of the the Reformed Church of the Canton Zurich. The Reformed Church was hugely influenced by the development of new theological trends initiated by Schleiermacher and Ritschl. Pfister's theology was theologically liberal in focus. Here he had tenure, a fact that was to become significant in his subsequent advocacy for psychoanalysis at a time when many in the wider church would have utterly opposed such ideas.

Pfister found that 'theology, whether historical, systematic or practical failed to meet my burning need ... to fill men with Christian love and make them instruments of Divine love' (Pfister 1948: 21). Pfister turned his academic abilities to writing and was motivated by a concern to recast theology in the light of God's love. 'Throughout I was aware that essentially I was practising the psychiatry employed with so much genius by Jesus' (Pfister 1948: 21). In 1908 'I became acquainted with Sigmund Freud's psychoanalysis. I found myself unable to agree with its philosophy and its at first materialist and later agnostic background; but I felt powerfully attracted by many of its scientific aspects ... I tried forthwith to apply these discoveries in my Ministry' (Pfister 1948: 23). They met in Vienna in 1909 and out of this friendship Pfister began his pioneering role of applying psychoanalysis to a theology based on love as the ultimate expression of God. They also started their life-long correspondence.

Subsequent research in the archives of the Freud Museum, London, identified the dates of the unpublished letters by comparing their list of dates with those in the published book. The edited letters were identified by a close reading of the text and noting which letters contained ellipses. Research at the Sigmund Freud collection at the University of Essex,⁵⁷¹ revealed correspondence between Ernst and Anna Freud about the Freud/Pfister letters and the archive also contained some typed transliterations from Freud's handwritten, and often difficult to read, Gothic German script. The list of letters was still incomplete but

⁵⁷¹ The Sigmund Freud collection is held at the Albert Sloman library, University of Essex, on behalf of Sigmund Freud Copyrights, administered by the literary agents Marsh Patterson Ltd. In 1960 Ernst Freud had selected and published 315 of Freud's letters spanning 1873-1939, out of a possible 4,000 (Freud 1960). Many of these remain under embargo in the Freud Archive, held at the American Library of Congress.

photocopies were accessed from the Freud Archive held at the American Library of Congress, Washington D.C. In collaboration with Dr Ruth Whittle and Dr Elystan Griffiths, some of these letters were translated.⁵⁷²

The results of this research were four-fold. Firstly, Anna Freud had edited a small number of New Year's greetings that Freud routinely sent, and a postcard from Freud's trip to the USA in 1909, also signed by Jung, one of Pfister's colleagues in Zurich.

Secondly, several of the edited extracts related to a period around 1912 when Pfister was contemplating a divorce. This would have been a scandalous event especially for a minister of religion. Freud was concerned about the reputation of psychoanalysis, as the press in Zurich had already published critical comments about Freud's ideas on sex. However he was fully supportive of Pfister and wished to support him, whatever the outcome. Thirdly, most of the edited letters related to a particular patient, Frau H, who had uniquely been treated by Jung, Pfister and Freud. This case Freud viewed as one of his failures, and Falzeder identified that each analyst was using a different letter, Frau C (Jung), Frau H (Pfister) and Frau A (Freud) for the same person (Falzeder 1994). In hindsight this patient and her treatment, on the basis of information recorded, illustrates the power of counter-transference in a way that was not developed in psychoanalysis until the 1950s (Winnicott 1949; Heimann 1950, 1956). This patient and her treatment formed one of the differences of opinion leading to the later split between Freud and Jung.

Fourthly, Whittle and Griffiths' draft translations noted a stylistic change in Freud's writing when he touched on religious themes to Pfister. His clear structured use of language and sentence construction became much looser and more hesitant. Solms examines why translation is of such importance to psychoanalysis.

From this point of view, Freud was in fact the first psychoanalytic translator. And we, the translators of Freud, do not only face the problem of finding the best words in our own language to match the German words that Freud used; far more importantly, we are faced with the problem of finding the best figurative language to describe those 'unknowable' things occurring inside us, which can never be perceived directly, and which Freud was the first to describe. Under these circumstances, ... we are all (Freud no less than his translators) groping in the darkness (Solms 1999: 39f.).⁵⁷³

⁵⁷² Members of staff in the Department of German Studies, University of Birmingham. I obtained an award from the Dean's Special Initiative Fund (2005) that funded these initial translations.

⁵⁷³ A preceding part of this quotation is as follows, 'Freud is drawing attention to a problem which lies at the very heart of psychoanalytic translation, and indeed at the very heart of psychoanalysis itself. He says that if we did not use figurative language to describe the processes that occur deep inside us, then not only would we never describe these processes at all, we could never even become aware of them ... the processes which concern us most directly in psychoanalysis – namely unconscious mental processes – do not have any perceptual qualities. We can never see, hear, feel or touch the things that are going on at the deepest level of our souls ... And in psychoanalysis ... we 'become aware' of unconscious mental processes by attaching *words* to them. To that extent the very aim of psychoanalysis is to engage in the process of translation ... which ultimately reveals our inner nature ... In my view, herein lies the nub of the unique problems of translation that we face in psychoanalysis: in psychoanalysis we are compelled to find words to describe things that we can never know directly, things that we can never perceive ...' (Solms 1999: 38).

Solms also identifies the challenge for researchers, which I experienced when I became involved in the interpretative process of translation. Although I did not know any German, I did possess a detailed knowledge of psychoanalytic and religious concepts and tried to get into thinking what Freud was meaning.⁵⁷⁴ It highlighted for me contextual and interpretative tasks that require decisions about: balancing literal accuracy in one language which reads awkwardly in another; substituting words, ideas or concepts when there is no direct translation; and debates about the place of dynamic equivalence as a means of translation or whether this becomes a hermeneutic task.

⁵⁷⁴ This recalled my early attempts as a theological student to learn Old Testament Hebrew and New Testament Greek, including exegesis and the complex debates around different translations of the Bible.

Appendix 4. Ontological Foundations

These are stated as a set of overlapping assumptions, rather than any form of systematic or integrated structure, although as presented here they do approximate a developmental framework.

1. People exist in relationship from the moment conception leads to viable and sustainable life.⁵⁷⁵ This ontological assumption is based on my personal experience of twinhood and subsequent work with lone twins. Lone twins understand the experience of other, even in utero, and subsequently loss, if that twin dies even before birth (Piontelli 1986, 1992, 2002; Woodward 1998; Sandbank 1999; Lewin 2004).
2. The formation of the psyche/spirit/soul also occurs from conception and also contains a relational dimensionality by which we can apprehend God/Other (Fiddes 2000a). A capacity for Other/God is part of the fabric of embodied being/self that inhabits cell, memory, psyche and soul (Newell 2000).
3. The expressing quality of this relationship is mediated through: body; touch; sound; smell; and eye contact (Bick 1968; Winnicott 1971; Wright 1991) which are especially important at a very early stage of psychological development (Stern 1985; Waddell 2002).
4. The absence of sustained and appropriate experiences of human relationship can lead to at best: the creation of a protective false self characterized by intellectualization and splitting (Gomez 1996; Willoughby 2004; Abram 2007); or at worst an experience of entering the abyss of non-being (Lake 1966), destruction and damage to true self, and a psychotic deadness conveyed by the 'black hole' metaphor (Grotstein 2000; Ashton 2007; Loly 2009).
5. We are not conscious of these influences/events but they have an existence in the unconscious, which appears in life through significant events, significant relationships and significant experiences, both psychological and spiritual (Grotstein 2001).

In the depths of the unconscious, in pure symmetry, we find the Godhead, the awesome Other within – the “Subject of subjects, which can never be the object - the source of our being and friend of sanity and madness, of creation and destruction, of Grace and Terror (Mollon 2000: 71).

6. There is a revelatory dimension to human experience that speaks of a transcendent Other. This is experienced aesthetically, intellectually, therapeutically, and spiritually either individually or as part of a faith community. This often involves the spiritual

⁵⁷⁵ The philosophical issues around the origins of life have been dominated by the abortion debate and a particular theological stance taken both by the Roman Catholic Church and American fundamentalist Christian groups. Summary discussions of these issues can be found in Jones *et. al.* 'A Theologian's Brief: On the Place of the Human Embryo Within the Christian Tradition and the Theological Principles for Evaluating Its Moral Status' (Jones and al. 2001) <http://ethicsandmedicine.com/17/3/17-3-jones.htm> accessed 25/1/2007.

disciplines of reflection, meditation, prayer, expressed in ritual and worship (Del Monte 1995; Ross 1997, 1999).

7. Human beings have an intrinsic desire for love, relationship, meaning and purpose. This results in a desire to communicate and seek out relationship. However unless a person experiences relationship at a level of being able to form a sufficient degree of trust, they are not able to fully apprehend the God, Thou or Other. A therapeutic relationship offers a redemptive relational way of being that can allow for the possibility of relationship with Thou or Other which appears revelatory (Ross 1999; Buckley 2008).
8. Being human involves the creation of psychic/soul space.

As we evolve from foetus to adult, we metamorphose from an ontological existence in spacelessness and timelessness to an identity and a dialectic between Self and Other which is defined in space and time ... 'dropping' from the third dimension of space/time into the null dimension of no space and no time. The journey into the labyrinth may become uncanny when one moves from the third dimensionality of the outside world into its zero dimensionality (Grotstein 1997b: 600)

9. Spirituality and the sacred, rather than just being individual experiences, also value community of which the Christian Church is a particular expression. Defined Christianly, it is a dialogue of that who is Other with those who know and experience that self is incomplete without this. The result is a revelatory encounter, through text, word, experience, emotion and psyche. These experiences are regulated and formed into histories or continuities of meaning that match with people's shared experiences, across cultures and centuries, encapsulated in doctrines and rituals that form the experience of church or faith community. Tillich describes this in terms of co-relational being leading to the ground of Ultimate Being, a theological stance that requires a capacity for paradox (Macquarrie 1966; Ross 1997).
10. Spirituality and the sacred can be experienced powerfully outside, alongside and inside faith traditions and communities - often linked to notions of vision, seeing and the aesthetic (Lynch 2007b; Pattison 2007; Elkins 2004; Sullivan Kruger, Harrison, and Young 2008).
11. Part of being human is a capacity to create and bring to life ideas, emotions, and relationships. This is often focused on the highly creative and distinctive evolution of our own gods, idols and rituals – sacred and profane (Gamwell and Wells 1989; Loewenberg 1992; Lynch 2002, 2007a; Burke 2006).

Appendix 5. A summary of Rizzuto's concepts of god and object representations

1. Object representations are part of more complex psychic processes. For example, there is a moment of meeting when two individuals relate to one another. This is a complex exchange represented by an 'object' which is formed in the memory. A memory process is established that rules, codifies, regulates, stores and retrieves 'memories to the sense of being oneself' (Rizzuto 1979: 75). Present day encounters, such as with an analyst, activate a psychoanalytic process of transference, where the memory process becomes reactivated.
2. Psychoanalysis is one of several disciplines that help understand the concept of object representation, and the psychoanalyst needs to recognize their own involvement in the object representation process. Consequently 'the analyst must resort to his own memorial processes ... his empathic acceptance permits him to "create" representations of his past and his objects' (Rizzuto 1979: 76). Rizzuto alludes here to an important concept that was later to become central to interpersonal and intersubjective approaches to psychoanalysis (Stolorow, Atwood, and Brandchaft 1994; Stolorow, Brandchaft, and Atwood 1987).
3. People experience the world as a succession of object relations and provide a framework for the psyche.
'We have never experienced life out of the context of objects. In the course of our historical development as human beings, we have been storing endless, complex memories (including our fantasies) of objects that form part of the memory's reservoir. Thus memories will inevitably be called to conscious or unconscious experience whenever we deal with any aspect of ourselves that is object related. In as much as there is not an aspect of ourselves not object-related in some way, we cannot wish, feel, fantasize, or even live without memories of our objects' (Rizzuto 1979: 77).
4. The 'simple pathology of everyday living' comes about because we are unable to integrate our present sense of self, including our ideals, with conscious and unconscious memorial processes.
5. These 'memorial processes', are composed of synthesized object representations and multiple experiences over time and 'the richness, the complexity, the dialectic connection which object representations have with our self-representations is what gives the constantly reworked memories of our objects their paramount importance in mental life' (Rizzuto 1979: 78).
6. Memories and object representations remain immortal in psychic reality – they are never lost. 'Memories of objects cannot be destroyed because they have no substance to destroy' (Rizzuto 1979: 79).
7. Theories of object representation require the acceptance of the concept of self as the total person (Schafer 1976) - this is a complex and controversial area in psychoanalytic metapsychology.

8. A total sense of self, including split off parts 'as Freud suggests throughout his writings, the distressing memories of our objects' (Rizzuto 1979: 80), invokes defence mechanisms of repression and denial. 'Their unwelcome "presence" barring our wishes reawakens original feelings...Objects do not come back to our memory by themselves. We remember them preconsciously - or consciously, when we feel them as a presence' (Rizzuto 1979: 81).
9. There can be a maturing process within the self where one's objects contribute 'to the texture of psychic existence ... using our full range of emotions from love to hatred ... to make our objects do what we want in that marvellous metaphorical "place" called the "space to play"... and permit us great emotional freedom. We can now love or hate our objects, play or fight with them, laugh or cry with them, but only in fantasy ... being who we are and who we want to be' (Rizzuto 1979: 81f.).
10. Rizzuto warns of the danger of conceptual confusion about the nature of objects. 'Guided by their language, psychoanalysts too have often made object representations into entities of the mind, capable of exerting actions on their own' (Rizzuto 1979: 83). Psychoanalysts need to avoid abstract epistemological theorizing and focus on 'a fully mature memorial activity that permits us to be truly historical beings in the context of our past experiences with our significant objects' (Rizzuto 1979: 83f.).

**Appendix 6. Qualitative Research Day 28th March 2009 10am – 4.30pm
with Alistair Ross**

Venue:

Lecture Room 5, ground floor Hamilton Building SG1, Selly Oak Campus, Weoley Park Road, University of Birmingham, Birmingham B29 6LL.

Parking is available at the front of the building and the side. Access via side entrance. Ring doorbell and/or ring Alistair's mobile (supplied)

Timetable: Provisional, can change on the day

- 0930 - Tea/Coffee available
- 1000 - Introduction to day – Alistair
- 1015 - Personal introductions
- 1030 - Discussing Text One – Jessica Benjamin
- 1130 - Break
- 1145 - Discussing the Analysis
- 1245 - Lunch
- 1330 - Discussing Text Two – Anonymous
- 1415 - Break
- 1425 - Discussing the Analysis
- 1510 - Break
- 1530 - Reflection on individual and group learning
- 1630 - Depart

Please complete an expenses form for mileage/travel.

This would be a good time to find where you stored the texts, waiting for those opportune moments you imagined would magically happen. If you could write your own responses and let me have a copy, this would greatly aid my reflection and learning. Copies can be made on the day.

Any problems please e-mail or contact me via home

Many thanks, **Alistair**

Ethical Permission for a Qualitative Research Day led by Alistair Ross

I give permission for Alistair Ross to:

1. Record the qualitative methodology research day on March 28th 2009. This recording will be transcribed and a copy available on request by application to Alistair Ross.
2. Use individual participant's research notes made in preparation for the day for further use in his PhD, dissemination to other research groups/conferences and potential future publications arising out of the research.

I understand and agree to:

3. Treat the interview material as confidential

Any specific comments/statements made during the day that I do not wish to be included in the transcription can be excluded. This requires notification to be made to Alistair Ross by April 5th 2009.

Signed..... Signed..... Date.....

The participants came to the day having read the two texts supplied. The following questions were asked.

What was your perception of the experience of AR?
What was your perception of the experience of the psychoanalyst?
What was your perception of the dynamics between them?
What was your overall perception of the encounter?

Here is a sample of participants' responses on their perception of the dynamics and the encounters of two interview transcripts and AR's responses to these.

DM writes 'I was struck by how much seems to be going on in an interview apart from the topic under discussion ... the topic of the discussion cannot - it seems to me - come centre-stage until common ground between the people involved is established - a sense of knowing who *you* are and who *we* are in this situation ... The image that came to mind as I read were principally connected to dancing - people trying to find out who is taking the lead (at times conversation felt rather competitive - some mutual display of prowess which may have been intended to build rapport, but which may have caused some suspicion in the interviewee); unspoken questions which nevertheless seemed to be around included: do [we] want to dance together, what is the rhythm that is going to carry us along? This dance felt slow to

get going: I felt ... when AR asks a very personal question, there was some kind of movement towards each other; until then, it seemed more like AR and AN were circling each other, warily, trying to establish context/meaning/ a sense of engagement.'

JG commented on the second interview, 'a dance of tentative exploration, exploring positions and boundaries, resulting in an attunement and sharing. I see JB's statement about religion and psychoanalysis as a metaphor for the dynamics of the interview – I think what we are really struggling with here, is what it means the people to have less conventional boundaries, not between disciplines, but between ways of thinking and being in the world and of opening these boundaries up so we can see one way of being and thinking enhancing another way of being and thinking, rather than being guarded and territorial ... a modality of being, that is much more postmodern recognizing different strands of thinking.'

ARF writes 'I felt on reading the transcript, Alistair had experienced the interview as rich and interesting, my own counter-transference to the interview was different. I had a strong sense of frustration and irritation at times when reading the transcript. This was associated with the tendency for AN to talk in what I felt were very intellectualized ways, and to draw extensively on the writings of others. This, it felt to me, meant that I never really got a clear sense of where AN was personally coming from. For example, I wanted to know where the roots of his "passionate atheism" lay ... some important connections appear later in the interview when AN talks briefly about Freud's Jewish background, and being Jewish himself, and of Freud being an outsider, but these connections never become explicit ... While I think I was probably being quite unrealistic in expecting this professional encounter to provide something beyond a relatively academic discourse, I found it hard to get beyond my counter-transference to this to think more Alistair's experience in the interview.'

'When I reflected upon this feeling, it led me to wonder whether there might be a parallel process in operation, and to consider whether Alistair may have experienced some frustration in the interview ... AN was very hard to pin down at a personal level. Alistair's remark that "all the other contributors have written something (i.e. bio data) but you haven't written anything" might be, in terms of counter-transference, an invitation for AN to "contribute some bio data" during the interview. Perhaps Alistair had a sense, at the early stage of the interview, the AN might need to be encouraged to contribute some "bio data" here? ... I was also interested by AN's remark at the end of the interview that, "at the back of my mind I avoided asking you what your attitude was to religion". This could be a reason for worry ... However, overall, I felt that AN had found the interview extremely interesting and useful. He comments that he wants a copy of the transcript because he has "put one or two things together I hadn't done before". I get a sense that perhaps he is slightly surprised by this, having originally said he did the interview more or less out of a sense of duty ... the analysis of AN's position on religion and psychoanalysis appeared very accurate and rich.'

ME adds, 'Alistair seemed to start with a number of positioning statements, and I was not sure whether this set the scene for the interview or influenced it, or shaped it in some way? A 'purist' approach may have started from a more neutral place of not locating himself as a 'minister of religion' BUT this was requested by JB and AR responded. This left me with a sense of two dancers circling each other ... was this going to be a collaborative or

adversarial encounter? There was reference to laughter and I was not sure whether this was genuine and congruent or defensive?’

‘JB (10) was surprised that AR (6,7,8,9) thought that there was an emergence of the sacred and JB stated that was ‘interesting news to me’ which AR responded with by further locating his views on the transatlantic psychoanalytic scene ... JB then drops a bombshell (74) with reference to her ‘big spiritual paper’ which AR has ‘missed’! The next half page of material indicated AR’s genuine shock / embarrassment and JB’s offer of giving him a copy. From this JB finally shares significant personal material (87 ff) including her ‘nervous laughter’ as ‘it felt very very personal’ and then quoted a colleague who stated that she felt JB to be ‘a spiritual person’. AR shows immediate interest in this but JB (101/102) warns AR from putting in print that she is a ‘spiritual person’ with a threat ... using a “playful tone”.’

‘AR’s next question initially does not *fit* with JB, but (259 ff) is a real turning point in that from this point JB continues to engage and encounter AR and I think that the narrative of (263 – 268) shows JB wanting to find a meeting place with AR, as she ends with quoting her colleague but perhaps subconsciously saying to AR: ‘many of your ideas are compatible with mine even though I wouldn’t use your language’ ... From here onwards the interview grew in depth and there was further sharing from both and JB admitted in the lift to not knowing: ‘about what to say and how much to say not having met before’ (723 / 724) though she had ‘enjoyed’ the interview (723) and decided that it was ‘meant to happen as there was a quality of light about AR’s being’ (725). Clearly both AR in his final comments and JB in hers indicated that the interview was regarded most positively.’

It is clear, even from these brief extracts, that the interview texts have the capacity to evoke critical, analytic and counter-transferential feelings in the reader. While each participant owned their own counter-transference, they also offer that their reflection of the experience of the interview reflects the unconscious dynamics that were occurring. This suggests that such a qualitative research methodology has considerable potential, where the people concerned have the psychodynamic skill and insight to identify their own unconscious processes. It also suggests that there is still qualitative potential in these interview texts for ongoing insight and interpretation.

Appendix 7. Meeting Mike Eigen – a psychoanalytic mystic – by Alistair Ross

This paper was originally written as a section of a chapter in a PhD thesis on the emergence of religion and spirituality in contemporary psychoanalysis. This paper was presented at a theology research seminar at the Queen's Foundation for Ecumenical Theological Education in 2007, and at the West Midlands Institute for Psychotherapy in 2008.

In December 2006 Alistair Ross travelled to New York to meet and interview a number of eminent psychoanalysts as part of a doctoral programme. The transcripts and their subsequent thematic analysis are dealt with elsewhere, and what follows is a study of Eigen based on his seminal text following their meeting at his Central Park West consulting rooms.

Michael Eigen is a psychologist, psychoanalyst and a training analyst recognised by the *National Psychological Association for Psychoanalysis* (NPAP) a key organisation in the USA, but of particular importance in New York.⁵⁷⁶ He is also the Associate Clinical Professor of Psychology at the *New York University Postdoctoral Program in Psychotherapy and Psychoanalysis*, another key organisation in the development of psychoanalysis in the USA, and again in New York. Stephen Mitchell, the leading founder of the relational school of psychoanalysis, largely established the 'intersubjective' track for psychoanalytic training. This approach combines ideas about intrapsychic processes based on object relations with ideas about person-to-person interaction from interpersonal psychoanalysis pioneered by the William Alanson White Institute, New York that developed ideas by Sullivan, Fromm, Fromm-Reichmann, Thompson and the Ricohs. Consequently the 'intersubjective' strand adopts a pluralistic approach to analysis including feminist thinking, post-modern approaches as well as Jung and Lacan. Eigen is the current editor of *The Psychoanalytic Review*, the oldest, continuously publishing psychoanalytic journal (since 1913). The *Review*, the official journal of the NPAP is interested in the engagement of psychoanalysis with wider cultural issues and offers a trans-theoretical voice for all forms of psychoanalytic thinking.

Eigen wrote extensively on a wide range of psychoanalytic issues before his first critical engagement with religion and spirituality in his 1981 paper 'The area of faith in Winnicott, Lacan and Bion'.⁵⁷⁷ The ideas developed in this 1981 paper form the foundation of Eigen's thinking expressed in a collection of essays published as *The Psychoanalytic Mystic* (Eigen 1998). It is a critical examination of this collection of essays (that made his ideas more widely available) that is the basis of this paper. This critique uses four perspectives with which to view Eigen's work. These include: his religious and spiritual history; his understanding of mysticism; his understanding of psychoanalysis; and his hermeneutic synthesis.

⁵⁷⁶ The NAPA established in 1948 was the first non-medical psychoanalytic training institute and 'pivotal in establishing psychoanalysis as an independent profession in New York' (Appel in Casement 2004: 160).

⁵⁷⁷ Subsequently published in *The electrified tightrope* (1993).

1. Eigen's religious and spiritual background

Eigen's starting point is his own experience and he recalls speaking with God since early childhood, though he recognised (through an allusion to Wordsworth, presumably the poem *Tintern Abbey*), a spiritual existence before this. 'Before words and the creation of our world, souls probably breathed freely together' (1998: 11) and later he adds 'we are children of God before we are children of our parents' (1998: 189). His parents were Jewish, though this religious tradition appears to have become much more significant to him following his father's death in the later 1980s (1998: 25, 190) when he explored the Kabbalah. Parsons describes their significance:

One more schema of spiritual transformation is the Tree of Life, in the Kabbalistic tradition of Jewish spirituality. This is a remarkable diagram which sets out ten *sephiroth*, or centres of energy, to describe different elements in the nature of man. It is potentially of special interests to psychoanalysts, because more than any other spiritual tradition that I know of, this offers a clearly worked out, indeed a highly elaborated, account of the psychic structure (Parsons 2006: 124).

As a young man Eigen was instructed in Catholicism, which illness prevented him from completing, yet despite various crises with the Catholic Church he discovered truths that he has retained while pursuing another religious path (1998: 25). Eigen as an 'idolizing youth' (1998: 154) was impressed by hearing D. T. Suzuki speak about Zen Buddhism and especially his passivity and presence. 'What I saw was a man being himself, not trying to make an impression, gracious perhaps, but solid as rock' (1998: 153). Suzuki was the most influential figure to bring the Zen variant of Buddhism to the USA.⁵⁷⁸ Zen is essentially a religious form of enlightenment which occurs in moments of intuitive or unconscious awakening that defy logical argument or comprehension. These are referred to as *satori* 'an intuitive apprehension of the nature reality that transcends conceptual thought and cannot be expressed through words and letters' (Keown 2003: 256). This spiritual experience is the key focus as 'Zen has an iconoclastic tendency, and seems to regard the study of texts, doctrines, and dogmas as a potential hindrance to this spiritual awakening' (Keown 1996: 77). Suzuki was also knowledgeable about aspects of Christian mysticism, especially Eckhart, and he found parallels between the two (Suzuki 1957). Some of these concepts and experiences, Zen and Eckhart, re-appear in Eigen's psychoanalytic work.

Around this time Eigen also heard Martin Buber, then in his mid-eighties, speak at a synagogue when visiting America. Buber had developed a philosophically based, existential Jewish spirituality that focused on the very personal I-Thou encounter between oneself and God. This was contrasted to the I-It encounter between oneself and the created material world. Though this latter encounter is the essential for human survival, it is not sufficient for truly human life and being.⁵⁷⁹ Eigen describes the experience of hearing Buber. He stood as if he were,

⁵⁷⁸ See the *Oxford dictionary of Buddhism* (Keown 2003).

⁵⁷⁹ Buber's thinking was influential in other disciplines such as theology in the work of Emil Brunner, and the pastoral theologian Frank Lake (Ross 1993).

waiting for the next revelation. He took this time between utterances, time to pause, to listen. For Buber, speaking was a way of listening ... for Buber, listening was electrifying. There was rest, quiet, pause between, but expect to be burnt by the tongue's fire. Buber's death between utterances was anticipatory. One emptied self in order to be ready for the next time Thou surge, from moment of meeting to moment of meeting, waves of impacts (1998: 154).

During this period Eigen also met Erich Fromm, an influential psychoanalyst who was part of the neo-Freudian school that emerged in the USA consisting of analysts, sociologists and anthropologists who applied psychoanalytic ideas to wider contexts, which found a home in the William Alanson White Institute. Fromm developed an interest in Zen and was part of a significant conference that took place in the late 1950s where a large group of up to fifty psychoanalysts met with Suzuki and others and engaged in the interface between these two disciplines. Fromm identifies the differences.

Psychoanalysis is a scientific method, nonreligious to the core. Zen is a theory and technique to achieve "enlightenment," an experience which in the West would be called religious or mystical. Psychoanalysis is a therapy for mental illness; Zen is a way to spiritual salvation (Suzuki, Fromm, and DeMartino 1960f.).

Fromm then engages with the areas of convergence and sees how each discipline can enhance the other, in a similar way to a prior book *Psychoanalysis and Religion* (Fromm 1950). Eigen was influenced by ideas from Fromm through his writings which he devoured (alongside Jung) in his late teens and early twenties (1998: 154, 182, 201), and also adopts a convergence approach but found his meeting of Fromm in person, 'too activist'. For Eigen the physical presence and impact of both Suzuki and Buber in their different ways was influential. It went beyond just the ideas and Eigen was touched by these experiences.

After a painful and blissful mystical experience in his twenties Eigen explored Zen Buddhism further, which he has come back to consistently over forty years. Eigen also found aspects of other religions helpful including Hinduism (1998: 20, 24, 193), Taoism and Sufism (1998: 24, 193). In 1980, Eigen met with Bion, who made a cryptic remark about the Kabbalah but it was only following his father's death a decade later that Eigen explored this in depth when 'Judaism provided a powerful point of access to Divinity' (1998: 25). Throughout Eigen's writing he draws on Biblical passages (Ps 150 for example); Biblical figures (Jacob especially); Jewish teachings and midrash (Creation stories) and Jewish sayings (personal communication). So Eigen concludes he took up the 'biblical challenge to love your God, with all your heart, soul, might. This all your heart, soul, might, mind – all of you, good and evil aspects, *all* – there is no more passionate calling (1998: 25).

2. Eigen's mystical concepts

While it is true that 'there is no universally agreed upon definition of mysticism' (McGinn 2005: 19). Eigen and his writings are regarded as mystical. It is said of Eigen that all his 'writing is imbued with a deeply charged sense of religiosity, of mystery and wonder. There is throughout the evident sensibility of a mystic' (1998: 190). He speaks from his own

experience, allied to a formidable psychoanalytic understanding. Eigen states his position very clearly on the opening page of his introduction.

Many analysts are deeply mystical, or have a foot in mystical experience, or are friendly towards mysticism. For me, there are moments when psychoanalysis is a form of prayer. There is, too, a meditative dimension in psychoanalytic work. Psychoanalytical-mystical openness to the unknown overlap. Analytic workers, not religious in the literal sense, may be touched by intimation of something sacred in the work (1998: 11).

Eigen's mystical approach can be expressed in five overlapping concepts.

1) The whole of life can be a place of spiritual and mystical encounter, with the potential to illuminate and paradoxically the ability to destroy. So 'mystical elimination and the facts of life need to learn how to live together. The body needs warmth, spirit illumination... spirit can annihilate or inspire everyday life, as the latter can nourish or suffocate spirit' (1998: 13). Eigen believes that the role of prophet has a vital part to play in keeping alive this mystical dimension.

2) There are distinct and different kinds of mysticism. There are mysticisms of emptiness and fullness, difference and union, transcendence and immanence. One meets the Superpersonal beyond opposites or openness to the void and formless infinite. There are mystical moments of shattering and wholeness – many kinds of shattering, many kinds of wholeness. In moments of illumination, not only one's flaws stand out, one's virtues become a hindrance (1998: 13). Eigen appears to suggest that there is a co-mingling of God and creation, one inhabits the other.

3) Mysticism and madness have a symbiotic relationship. 'They've had enriching and destructive impacts' (1998: 24) on each other in a way that enhances the capacity to be fully human. Eigen identifies through the struggles of his patients the tightrope of madness and mysticism.

4) Mystical experience is understood in the context of a dualistic God. We worship a God who loves and destroys, creates good and evil, is compassionate and angry, blissful and severe. We try to separate and divide these poles to gain some clarity, but often can't tell one from the other. Satan is luminous; God is dark, as well as the reverse. We move between positions in which Satan is part of God, God part of Satan, desperately play one off against the other (1998: 21). Eigen's thinking here more closely resembles Taoism with its emphasis on acknowledging and uniting and integrating the opposites found in the Universe and in the self so they are in harmony (Keown 1996: 75).

5) Mystical experience needs to be understood, paradoxically while it cannot be fully apprehended, as it was the failure to agree an understanding of the mystical that Eigen sees was a part influence in the split between Freud and Jung (1998: 27). For Eigen the roots he found in Buddhism and Judaism gave a context with which to understand the mystical and provided 'umbilical connections to the universe, lifelines to the mother-ship, as I swim in space' (1998: 153).

Eigen adopts the same approach for mysticism and psychoanalysis that some Christians have adopted in a dialogue between Zen Buddhism and Christianity. This discerns ‘behind the engagement some sort of *philosophia perennis* which overcomes all dualisms ... the focus here is on experiencing the one ultimate reality which exists somehow above or beyond the particularities of religious language ... based on an intuition of sameness’ (Barnes 2005: 455).

3. Eigen’s psychoanalytic ideas

Eigen begins by challenging the claim that psychoanalysis and mysticism are ‘mutually exclusive’ (1998: 11) though he does recognise that ‘most psychoanalysts tend to be anti-mystical, at least non-mystical (1998: 27). Eigen addresses these issues in three ways. Firstly, he challenges the reductionist approach which sees all mystical experience as infantile ego states relating to mother/father images. Freud sees ‘the ego’s perception of deeper psychic structures or processes, or relatively boundless states associated with early infant – mother fusion... Freud depicts early states in which “primary ego-feeling” (all is ego) goes along with “primary identification” (all is object). Or, rather, boundaries are open, so that I am part of you and your part of me are indistinguishable (I have you – You are me). Yet Eigen points to Freud’s other writing, ‘mysticism is the obscure self perception of the realm outside of the ego, of the id’ (1998: 27). So the two cohere when it is recognised that,

our present ego-feeling is, therefore, only a shrunken residue of a much more inclusive – indeed, all embracing feeling which corresponded to a move into a bond between the ego and the world about it... precisely those of limitlessness and of a bond with the universe... the ‘oceanic feeling’ (1998: 28).

Eigen believes that Freud’s understanding failed to do justice to the depth and diversity of all mystical experience.

Nevertheless, Freud’s writings are rich with implications for mystical experience... he refers to the Almighty in informal ways, and uses mystical imagery to portray creative processes... psychoanalysis was akin to the ancient mystery rites. Freud writes more on religion than on any other subject except sexuality (1998: 13).

Secondly, mysticism is opposed by psychoanalysis because it is seen as a distraction from the evolution of a distinctive analytic consciousness. Mysticism threatens to take the psychoanalysis back into the realm of metaphysics that Freud believed he had escaped from through the new route of metapsychology. Eigen expresses it bluntly, ‘Psychoanalysis is too sophisticated to be mystical’ (1998: 27), a position he challenges throughout his book. Eigen sees the reverse that it requires a great deal of psychoanalytic sophistication to engage with the same depths, experiences and madness in one’s self and one’s patients that mysticism encompasses.

Thirdly, Freud’s view that religion hinders the growth of the individual and Society from reaching their full maturity due to dependence on something other than themselves, such as ‘the violent, temper tantrum, paranoid-schizoid, infantile ... Jewish God (a volcano God)

(Freud 1939).’ (Eigen 1998: 12). Freud’s view was that one of the values of psychoanalysis was its ability to deconstruct all religious beliefs, and spiritual and mystical experiences. This Freud clearly did in his, *The future of an illusion* (1927), *A religious experience* (1928), and *Civilisation and its discontents* (Freud 1927, 1930, 1928), though Eigen makes little reference to these.

Having challenged what had been an orthodox view of Freud’s religious concepts, Eigen examines Freud’s understanding of the ‘oceanic feeling’ and believes that Freud has underestimated the importance of such states of bliss and fusion (1998: 31, 190). Eigen suggests that there is a complexity and an ambiguity in Freud regarding religious experience that he never fully resolved (1998: 28). Eigen drew on four later psychoanalytic theorists, Milner, Lacan, Winnicott and Bion in order to illustrate his understanding of psychoanalysis and mysticism that gave adequate account of the term ‘oceanic feeling’.

Firstly, Marion Milner.⁵⁸⁰ Milner was a British psychologist, educationalist - particularly children, artist and psychoanalyst who has been in analysis with Payne from 1940 and was supervised variously by Sharpe, Riviere and Klein, all key figures in the British psychoanalytic world (Rayner 1991). She was ‘very close to Winnicott’ (Sayers 2002: 111) who also analyzed her husband. Milner was asked by Winnicott to analyze Susan, a young woman living with the Winnicotts who was to become hugely influential in Milner’s writings, and she in turn was analyzed by Winnicott, a situation that soon became unworkable. Milner used her work with Susan, who called herself a ‘mystic’, and Susan’s doodles and drawings, to develop the importance of the mystical in psychoanalysis expressed in her seminal book *The Hands of the Living God* (Milner 1969). Sayers comments,

Bion’s writing is often very abstract, pared down and difficult to understand. Milner’s books, by contrast, are immediately inviting and accessible. Perhaps that is why they have been much more influential in bringing about greater sympathy, both within and beyond psychoanalysis, with the project of finding and refinding health and creativity through returning it to and reviving an illusion of inner-outer fusion with the infinite which is so central to mysticism (Sayers 2002: 117).

Eigen views Milner’s contribution as providing an interpretative tool for both psychoanalysis and mystical experience (1998: 13) focusing on embodiment, symbolization and transcendence (1998: 14). Eigen gives space to Milner whose work on mysticism has been largely neglected by the psychoanalytic community.⁵⁸¹

Secondly, Jacques Lacan. Lacan regarded as arguably the most eminent French psychoanalyst of the last century, sought new meaning in Freud by drawing on philosophy, linguistics, anthropology, and mathematics. He provided a new Freudian metapsychology focused on three inter-related areas of human experience, the Imaginary, the Symbolic, and the Real. In a re-working of Freud’s drive theory Lacan viewed human sexual drives as providing a more important function than just satisfaction and repression. Adopting the term ‘jouissance’ Lacan advocated a psychological and embodied connection within oneself

⁵⁸⁰ Further biographical details can be found in *Divine Therapy* (Sayers 2003).

⁵⁸¹ A good account of her work can be found in (Parsons 1990).

and to others, and ultimately to Other (Klotz 2006) Other (small o) is defined as ‘someone recognisable or as someone more or less equal to oneself’ and ‘as the Symbolic field in which every person is constituted as a speaking subject with desire’. Other (capital O) ‘is an order that is situated beyond the subject but which nevertheless allows for the possibility of a social bond or a relationship with the other. The Other is the locus of language that is necessary to provide the message with its articulated meaning’ Eigen whilst acknowledging that Lacan claims to be anti-mystical utilizes the concepts of the symbolic, jouissance, and the other/Other in his a unique synthesis that sees these concepts emerge in the intersubjective space created.⁵⁸²

Thirdly, Donald Winnicott.⁵⁸³ Winnicott as a pioneering paediatrician and psychoanalyst focused much of his working and thinking on the early phases of the mother/infant dyad. He saw the psychoanalytic process reflecting the same early stages of this dyad, which he explored theoretically in a number of highly original clinical papers, though he never sought to establish a systematic theory, like Lacan or his clinical supervisor and colleague Melanie Klein. Winnicott used language in a poetic and paradoxical way that allows space in-and-through which meaning is generated. Eigen sees in Winnicott a focus on ‘aliveness-deadness - what conditions enliven-deaden self’ so that ‘His work resonates with a sense of the sacred. He wrote of a sacred core of personality, the incommunicado self ... Winnicott did not need an other world mysticism ... For Winnicott, the emptying – opening let something real happen. Emptiness – openness was a method for courting spontaneity. Thus the real was not entirely or simply the three-dimensional material world, the matter how important the latter. The real was associated with playing, chaos, destruction and surviving destruction, madness’ (1998: 15). Eigen adds ‘religion in this sense of ties between (neither here nor there, here – and there – and – between) becomes the defining ingredient of the real. The realness of living becomes a value in its own right’ (1998: 16). Winnicott as read by Eigen developed a sense of the sacred through aliveness and in encountering the true self in the real world, almost at a sacramental level.

Fourthly, Wilfred Bion.⁵⁸⁴ Bion was a highly decorated but traumatized officer in the First World War, who in 1918 went on to study history, philosophy, literature and art. He subsequently trained as a doctor, then a psychiatrist based at the Tavistock Clinic in the 1930s, when he began his training as a psychoanalyst with Rickman, interrupted by the Second World War, but continued with Klein from 1945. His work at the Northfield Military Hospital, Birmingham led to pioneering work of groups and group dynamics still used today (Harrison 2000). Bion sought to develop his psychoanalytic ideas through mathematical and philosophical concepts and equations and his subsequent work divided opinions. On one hand these have been described as ‘elaborate, turgid, often paradoxical and incredibly abstract notions. They emerge ... as a jumble of grandiosely-conceived, over-intellectualised and misguided efforts at achieving an impossible, even undesirable goal’ (Esman 1995: 429). On the other ‘His ideas have spread beyond the ghetto of his Kleinian roots to every major school within the psychoanalytic framework ... he was one of

⁵⁸² Bion developed a different concept of O that is open to several meanings including the mystical (Grotstein 2000, 2007).

⁵⁸³ Biographical details can be found in (Kahr 1996) and (Rodman 2003).

⁵⁸⁴ Biographical details can be found in (Bleandonu 1994).

the founders of intersubjectivity ... he was able to make the most significant paradigm changes in psychoanalytic theory and technique to date' (Grotstein 2007: 4f.).

Two of the most significant psychoanalytic concepts that continue to have currency are his ideas about the 'container' and the 'contained', as well as his understanding of the concept of O (Lopez-Corvo 2003). Alhanati defines this as,

Ultimate reality or Absolute Truth which is unknown and unknowable. However, an analyst, by suspending memory and desire, can be at-one with O and then can consequently know evolutions of O. This is the analyst's primary task. Becoming O stands for the total experience, the openness to that which is unknown and unknowable. It is a state of which unconscious preconceptions and saturated elements did not interfere with experiencing emotional reality. O is the origin of any transformation, the realisation, the thing-in-itself (Alhanati 2006: 331).

Eigen takes Bion's concept of O expressing as it does the 'void and formless infinite' and links this to the psychoanalytic explorations of the human person (1998: 16). From Bion's rich and complex amalgam of philosophical, religious, spiritual and psychoanalytic ideas Eigen sees an interpretative strand where 'he filters mysticism through psychoanalysis and psychoanalysis through mysticism' (Ibid.). Bion's ideas have a paradoxical Platonic and Hegelian focus where Godhead and O share a fundamental identity that can both be known and will always be unknown. The human experience, described psychoanalytically, is insufficient to say all there is to know but rather points to the fact we do not know or exhaust other or Other.

Eigen draws on each of these theorists to illuminate the depths of human encounter experienced in a psychoanalytic situation. In this place of a one-to-one humanness of relationship it is possible to experience the abyss of non being, moments of madness, psychic fragmentation, mystical illumination, the creativity of the true self, jouissance, emptiness or the aliveness of embodied being.

It does carry a sense of mystery, the thrill of unknowing, shivers of awakening. It does have a sense of taking as deeper into life, opening existence. Winnicott, Bion and Lacan overlap in emphasising insufficiency in the face of who we are out of what we go through. Winnicott emphasises unprocessable agony, a sense of agony beyond what we can experience, an agony that drives us mad. Bion emphasises shattering, explosive force, whether evil force destroying existence, or force of terrifying truth. Lacan emphasises inability and fragmentation we fill with imaginary wholeness. In each case, mystical feeling interlaces with insufficiency-excess. Mystical feeling often is aroused by a smaller psychic grouping encountering a larger, more powerful grouping outside its boundaries. The first reaction of biblical prophets encountering God may range from fear – terror to awe – dread. Freud notes that mystical feeling is aroused by ego's apprehension of id (1998: 20).

Eigen was questioned about his psychoanalytic stance in an interview 'You seem to be reclaiming for psychoanalysis an actual, experiential dimension of mystery, of the infinite,

of the immaterial: words that have all suffered the weight of Freud's "oceanic feeling...." replies,

Well, I've felt the oceanic feeling. The term the self was unfortunately watered-down psychoanalytic discussions of mysticism because mystics themselves, while enjoying oceanic feelings, sometimes were often brought up short and left terrified by the onset of a numinous awakening. They were overturned, and shaken to their core. The prophets, whenever God or an angel appears, get the dickens scared out of them, they get scared stiff and it is terror, terror... there's such a terrifying impact of the uncontainable and it's not all... oceanic bliss... that's the way it is with mystical experiences, or encounters with the divine. They can be too much for the human equipment at a certain time (1998: 190.).

Eigen uniquely synthesizes psychoanalytic theories and the language of mysticism to illuminate what it is profoundly difficult to put words to. He writes to create evocative responses in the reader that give a taste of what could possibly be. He offers a new form of creating meaning.

4. Eigen's hermeneutics

While Eigen does not use this term, it can be seen as an essential part of his approach. Parker summarizes Habermas' thinking on hermeneutics.

Psychoanalysis as a clinical practice is reflexive for it provokes self-reflection at the individual level, and the knowledge ... the patient in analysis gains does not cause a cure to happen. Rather, it is self-knowledge and self reflection that is the cure: 'the act of understanding to which it (psychoanalytic depth hermeneutics) leads is self reflection' ... the task is not explanation but understanding ... The second aspect is that the object of study is always a text ... speeches and conversations can be treated as texts ... the third aspect of hermeneutics ... is that the approach can be taken further to apply to texts that are supra-individual, in which something beyond an individual's intentions are uncovered (Parker 1997: 142).

Eigen locates textuality, conversation and speech in the experience of the therapeutic encounter, an encounter that is not just limited to psychoanalytic or psychological terms. He sees these experiences, embracing the whole of life, as profoundly psychological and profoundly religious and spiritual, influenced by his own personal history. Eigen's work is underpinned by the following loosely held ideas and concepts.

'Parochial arrogance – religious or psychoanalytic - is out of order. Mutual permeability, creative combinations, the generative unborn can't be absorbed or channelled by overly rigid postures. We are very much in process of discovering the what, how and who of experience ... regarding the immensity of what we are given, find, and create' (1998: 25).

To this Eigen offers an elasticity of concept that allows different words to express the dimension of other, something beyond self. He does not use mysticism as a signifier of truth content unlike traditional religiously framed mysticism as found in the Christian

tradition. He rather adopts a Zen approach that retains the aliveness of the clinical encounter and is willing to embrace the whole of life. The unknown residing in the unconscious as an ever present 'breaking-in' of truth and experience is valued through the agency of encounter with another who can offer a language and a relational framework for meaning and sense making of the most profound experiences. Eigen advocates what he calls 'paradoxical monism' (1998: 24, 37f.) that something sacred runs through all events and experiences (1998: 25). This could be seen as a key interpretative tool in his writing, that while Eigen is clearly very psychoanalytically and philosophically informed (as evidenced by his numerous publications in the psychoanalytic journals) he is able to put words to and reach a depth of clinical encounter. By acknowledging the sacred within himself, within religious traditions (East and West) and within the Universe, Eigen offers new ways of reading, understanding and experiencing psychoanalysis. By combining all these facets of thinking, experience, self, client and world Eigen can reach a point of illumination that he speaks from 'my own experience, my life, my truth' (1998: 24).

Eigen offers a unique synthesis of religious and philosophical ideas from long before Freud, allied to psychoanalytic ideas from Freud onwards that are formed into an intersubjective analytic encounter that exists in time and beyond time, partly conscious and partly unconscious. This link into Eigen's personal history steeped in an early but unorthodox spirituality and a later recovery of orthodox Hassidic form of Judaism. Meaningful encounter becomes generated in the transitional and transcendent but paradoxically immanent space of the intersubjective moment. Eigen thus is a psychoanalytic mystic whose presence in person is as powerful as his words.

Appendix 8. Is it possible for religious thinking and psychoanalytic thinking to coexist?

Irma Brenman Pick, 'I think it is difficult and, if you take religion in a bigger context, then one has to respect that there are things beyond our knowledge or beyond our capacity to know. I feel absolutely sympathetic to that and it becomes easier if rephrased as spirituality. To have some kind of respect for forces that are beyond us, as it were, becomes more manageable. But ritualised religion, or rituals of any sort, are a problem' (Stein and Stein 2000: 32f.).

Janine Chasseguet-Smirgel, 'My propensity would be to say "no" because, like Freud, I am an atheist. Psychoanalysis is supposed to destroy religious belief because of the way in which it tries to understand the core of religious thinking ... I would say that you have to look at each person and try to understand how they function, rather than saying "yes" or "no" in a definitive way' (Stein and Stein 2000: 70).

Peter Fonagy, 'I was brought up as a Communist - very anti-clerical, very anti-religion. But I think it can. I've seen a lot of very good analytic patients who had very strong religious beliefs. I think there are neurotic and psychotic aspects to every human activity. Religion is a very good example of this and has larger than its fair share of both. But there are normal adaptive aspects to it as well. Although I'm not personally persuaded as to the existence of a deity I don't think they are mutually exclusive. People with strong religious beliefs should pursue a career in psychoanalysis if they can. Nina Coltart was a Buddhist and Donald Cohen ... is a very religious Jew. Quite honestly if there is a meeting on Yom Kippur at the British Psycho-Analytical Society and the attendance isn't quite as high as it would normally be. The true sign would be to look at how many Jewish analysts have their sons circumcised - just in case' (Stein and Stein 2000: 83).

David Malan, 'I'm not religious any more, but I have been, and I have certainly deliberated about the possibility of reconciling these two conflicting ideas. I am now an agnostic as I don't know whether I believe in God and not. Psychoanalysis certainly makes it more difficult to believe in God, to believe in religious teachings and to believe in the sort of superstructure that our religions have' (Stein and Stein 2000: 262).

Joyce McDougall, 'If people obtain sustenance and help from their religious thinking, this can go along with psychoanalytic thinking. Freud, however, was rather virulent on this question ... but then he tended sometimes to put psychoanalysis into the position of religion and give it the same reference. We have to be careful not to deify different schools of psychoanalysis ... unfortunately Western religion seems to put the Divine outside the self rather than looking within the self, which is a more eastern or oriental tendency ... I was very impressed with the Dalai Lama's tremendous insight into many of the things that we have been struggling hard to formulate over the last century' (Stein and Stein 2000: 282f.).

Malcolm Pines, 'There are quite a number of people who do combine their psychology and their theology ... I don't believe one has to be an atheist to be a psychoanalyst ... these rather mysterious, intangible, non-scientific, non-materialistic entities like soul and spirit are absolutely vital to psychoanalysis, otherwise we will become a dead, materialistic, positivistic science ... I can't think of many people from the British Psycho-Analytical Society who are religious or actively practise religion, but then one doesn't know of their

personal lives in that sort of way. But I certainly do think that religious thinking and psychoanalytic thinking can coexist, especially so if you are looking for the spirit or the soul, to the relationship with greater entities than ourselves and situating oneself in the world of the unknown. Then “yes”, I think psychoanalysis and religion are in the same area’ (Stein and Stein 2000: 310f.).

Charles Rycroft, ‘That's a fairly impossible question. Nobody seems to know what they mean by the word spirituality any longer. On the whole, Freudians are not very religious and are therefore suspicious of any words that have a religious history ... I suppose that a lot of people who became analysts nowadays would have in an earlier generation been called spiritual. But that is a grey area and I think it will remain a grey area for a long time’ (Stein and Stein 2000: 338).

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