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A STUDY OF METHOD IN THE PSYCHOLOGY OF RELIGION:
PSYCHOANALYTIC CONTRIBUTIONS FROM 1960 TO 1980

The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary

PH.D. 1982

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A STUDY OF METHOD IN THE PSYCHOLOGY OF RELIGION
PSYCHOANALYTIC CONTRIBUTIONS FROM 1960 TO 1980

A Dissertation
Presented to
the Faculty of the
Southern Baptist Theological Seminary

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Philosophy

by
Leigh Edward Conver
May 1982

APPROVAL SHEET

A STUDY OF METHOD IN THE PSYCHOLOGY OF RELIGION
PSYCHOANALYTIC CONTRIBUTIONS FROM 1960 TO 1980

by

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Read and approved by:

Edward E. Thornton (Chairman)
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L. Wade Rowatt

Date: May 8, 1982

THESES

Ph. D.

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Dedicated to

Col. Edward A. Coates, Jr. M. D.

Jan. 1889 to Feb. 1982

Soldier, healer, lawyer and seeker

Table of Contents

	Page
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	viii
Chapter	
1. INTRODUCTION	1
Statement of the Problem	1
Statement of the Purpose	4
Definitions	5
Psychology of religion	5
Method	6
Psychoanalysis	6
Study	7
BACKGROUND INFORMATION	7
Student's Interest in the Subject	7
Scholarly Research on the Subject	9
Delimitations	11
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	14
DIRECTION OF THE DISSERTATION	15
A FINAL LITERARY DISCLAIMER	18
2. THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE PSYCHOANALYTIC PSYCHOLOGY OF RELIGION PRIOR TO 1960	19
Freudian Psychoanalytic Theorists	20
A Brief Synopsis of Analytic Psychology	26

The Jungian Interpretation of the Role of Religion in the Human Experience . . .	34
Contributions by Other Psychoanalytic Theorists	37
Donald Winnicott's Contributions to Psychoanalytic Theory	39
Freud's Methodology	42
The Case Study Method of Research	56
The Empirical Versus the Phenomenological Debate in the Psychology of Religion . . .	61
3. THE PSYCHOHISTORICAL METHOD OF ERIK ERIKSON	70
Introduction to the Chapter	70
Psychohistory as Method in Psychology of Religion	70
Definition, Purpose, and Goals of Psychohistory	74
Methodology in Psychohistory	77
Erik Erikson's Contributions to the Methodology of Psychohistory	86
Analysis of Criticisms of the Psychohistorical Method	93
Critical Assessment of Erikson's Methodology in Young Man Luther and Gandhi's Truth	107
Applications of Psychohistory to Psychology of Religion	115
4. THE DYNAMIC METHODOLOGY OF PAUL PRUYSER . .	131
Introduction to the Chapter	131
In Search for the Roots of the Dynamic Method of Paul Pruyser	133
Primary Theoretical Influences: Psychological Underpinnings	136

The Theological and Philosophical Underpinings of the Dynamic Method . . .	143
The Presuppositions Implicit Within the Dynamic Method	151
Definition of Pruyser's Dynamic Methodology	158
Pruyser's Methodology as an Example of Psychoanalytic Method	166
Critique and Analysis of Pruyser's Methodology and its Applications to the Psychology of Religion	176
5. THE CLINICAL METHOD OF ANA-MARIA RIZZUTO . .	190
The Psychological Foundations of Rizzuto's Theory and Methodology	193
The Definition of Rizzuto's Methodology .	203
Features of Rizzuto's Methodology Which are Common to the Psychoanalytic Method of Research	209
Critique of Rizzuto's Method and Its Applications to the Psychology of Religion	221
Rizzuto's Method as a Parallel to Other Forms of Psychological Research	213
6. THE INTUITIVE-SPECULATIVE METHODOLOGY OF ANN AND BARRY ULANOV	231
In Search of the Psychological and Theological Roots of the Ulanovs' Methodology	233
Description and Definition of the Ulanovs' Methodology	240
The Critique of the Ulanovs Methodology and Its Applications to the Psychoanalytic Psychology of Religion	254
7. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS	266
The Use of Case Study as a Methodology . .	266

The Place of the Unconscious in Psychoanalytic Method	269
Continuing the Empirical and Phenomenological Debate	271
Orientation Towards Religious Experience	273
The Multi-Disciplined Approach Towards Methodology	275
Utilization of Ego and Self Psychological Theory	278
Integration of Theory with Insights from Non-Psychoanalytic Sources	280
Heuristic and Therapeutic Applicability of the Methods	281
The Relationship Between Personal Agenda and Research Methods	284
In What Direction is the Psychoanalytic Psychology of Religion Headed?	289
The Continuing Dialogue between Psychology and Theology	289
ISSUES FOR FURTHER RESEARCH	291
SUMMARY	293
BIBLIOGRAPHY	294
ABSTRACT	319
BIOGRAPHICAL DATA	321

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And to my grandfather, Col. Edward A. Coates, Jr., M.D.,
who died three short months before I reached our goal, I
gratefully dedicate this dissertation.

Chapter 1
Introductory Statements

Every discipline of a scientific sort makes progress according to the sophistication of its methods and the initiation and instrumentation of its methods in problem areas. The psychology of religion is no exception. Equally important for the development of a science is its serious appreciation of its own limitations.¹

Statement of the Problem

Within the history of the discipline of the psychology of religion there has been a continual identity crisis. This crisis has been evident in several ways. The most obvious evidence is in its lack of a secure home within the total academic field. Walter H. Clark describes the hybrid characteristic of the field in the following manner:

Unlike other branches of psychology, the psychology of religion has never enjoyed a wholly respectable academic status. It belongs partly to religion and partly to psychology, and more often than not it has fallen between these two stools.²

University faculties and departments of psychology find difficulty embracing the psychology of religion due to its lack of commitment to pure empirical studies. Theological communities have on occasion had difficulty embracing the

¹Orlo Strunk, Jr. ed., Readings in the Psychology of Religion, p. 251.

²Walter H. Clark, The Psychology of Religion, p. 5.

behavioral sciences as relevant to theological education. Within those seminaries which did find relevancy in psychological studies, the psychology of religion has tended to be blended into pastoral psychology, pastoral counseling or pastoral theology.³

A second source of identity confusion has come as a result of the historical tension between the objective, empirical study of human experience and the subjective, phenomenological approach to the same data of human experience. This struggle has characterized the whole field of psychology.⁴

A third source of the identity confusion can be traced to the variety of methodological techniques employed by researchers in the field. As many as twenty techniques of data collection have been documented in the history of the discipline prior to 1960.⁵ Hiltner made an early attempt to systematize these various research techniques into broader understandings of methodology in the

³Orlo Strunk, Jr., "Modes of Doing Religious Psychology," Review and Expositor, LXXVI (2), (Spring 1979), p. 165.

⁴James E. Dittes, "Religion: Psychological Study," in D. L. Sills (ed.) International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences, 13, p. 414.

⁵David A. Flakoll, "A History of Method in the Psychology of Religion (1900-1960)," The Journal of Psychology and Theology, 4(1), (Winter 1976), pp. 54ff.

psychology of religion,⁶ Later articles by Hanford,⁷ and Havens⁸ attempt to delineate the problems between the empirical and the phenomenological approaches. Flakoll gives a cursory historical account of method in the psychology of religion.⁹

Orlo Strunk's article in the Spring 1979 issue of The Review and Expositor attempts to describe a broad understanding of method in the psychology of religion which includes the more recent influences of humanistic and transpersonal psychologies. The emergence of these two new forces in psychology has revolutionized the study of psychology in general. These new forces bring implications for the study of the psychology of religious experience as well.

The psychoanalytic psychology of religion is as old as Freud's The Future of an Illusion and Civilization and Its Discontents. With these two works, Freud made

⁶Seward Hiltner, "The Psychological Understanding of Religion," Crozer Quarterly, 24(1), (January 1947), pp. 3-36.

⁷Jack Tyrus Hanford, "A Synoptic Approach: Resolving Problems in Empirical and Phenomenological Approaches to the Psychology of Religion," Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion, 14 (3), (1975), pp. 210-227.

⁸Joseph Havens, "The Participant's vs. the Observer's Frame of Reference in the Psychological Study of Religion," Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion, 1(1), (October 1961), pp. 79-87.

⁹Flakoll, op. cit.

public his theory that religion is a common cultural neurosis that attempts to provide resolution to the stresses inherent within the Oedipal struggle between the son and the father. Since Freud, the psychoanalytic psychology of religion has been characterized by among other things, a continuing theoretical struggle over the validity of Freud's basic presupposition.

Recently, two articles,¹⁰ and one significant book, have attempted to assess the current psychoanalytic contributions to the psychology of religion. These works are summary assessments of various psychoanalytic theorists and their methodological similarity of discrepancy with Freud. Their analysis of current psychoanalytic research with the psychology of religion has not adequately described how the identity crisis within the field has been impacted by psychoanalytic theory and methodology.

Statement of the Purpose

The purpose of this dissertation is to provide a description, analysis, synthesis and critique of the contributions of four specific methodological approaches to the psychoanalytic psychology of religion. The four methodologies chosen represent recent applications of psy-

¹⁰Hiltner, op. cit. and Paul Pruyser, "Sigmund Freud and His Legacy: Psychoanalytic Psychology of Religion," in Glock, Charles Y. and Phillip E. Hammond, Beyond the Classics: Essays in the Scientific Study of Religion; Heije Faber, Psychology of Religion.

choanalytic theory and method to the psychology of religion within the last two decades.

By description of methodology, this research means to provide a clear definition of each theorist's method.

By analysis and critique, this research intends to provide insight into the psychological and philosophical/theological presuppositions within each theorist's methodology. Specific positive or negative biases towards religious phenomena will be identified. Any unique parallels to other forms of psychological research into religious experience will be identified in order to help assess the points of continuity and discontinuity of methodology within the whole field of psychology of religion.

By synthesis, this research intends to provide conclusions that reflect the heuristic values of these methods to the research, teaching and psychotherapeutic applications of the psychology of religion. Special consideration will be given to the implications of these methods to the empirical versus the phenomenological debate as well as to the use of the case study method in the psychoanalytic psychology of religion.

Definitions

Paul Johnson has defined the "psychology of religion" simply as the "scientific study of religion that looks within human experience to understand what religion

means to persons."¹¹ Wayne Oates further defines the task of the psychology of religion in the following fashion:

...The psychology of religion is a concerted effort to bring the sacred and secular definitions of human life into dialogue with each other and to speak of God in both a sacred and a secular manner. The psychology of religion is an effort to identify the human experience of the divine; to identify and purge the distinctly idolatrous distinctions of religious experience; and to unmask the elements of human deceptiveness in what otherwise would seem to be loft, transcendental religiosity.¹²

"Method: is defined by H. B. and A. C. English as a noun which denotes a

systematic way of dealing with facts and concepts. This is the broad usage which includes...different kinds of operations. It is suggested that these operations be distinguished by separate terms: a) rational principle, or the form of reasoning utilized: e.g. hypothetico-deductive principle, inductive principle (both more often called methods); b) point of view, a way of looking at the data, or the intention assumed in an investigation: e.g. the nomothetic point of view, the mechanistic point of view...¹³

Method in the psychology of religion will refer to the operations and principles by which religious experience is studied psychologically.

"Psychoanalysis" is defined by Leland E. Hinsie and Robert J. Campbell as

¹¹Paul Johnson, Psychology of Religion, p. 14.

¹²Wayne E. Oates, Psychology of Religion, p. 15.

¹³H. B. and A. C. English, A Comprehensive Dictionary of Psychological and Psychoanalytical Terms, p. 321.

The separation of resolution of the psyche into its constituent elements. Psychoanalysis is procedure, devised by Sigmund Freud, for investigating mental processes by means of free-association, dream-interpretation, and interpretation of resistance and transference manifestations....Freud considered the cornerstones of psychoanalytic theory to be: the assumption of unconscious mental processes, recognition of resistance and repression, appreciation of the importance of sexuality (and aggressivity), and the Oedipus complex.¹⁴

"Study" will be used in a general sense in this dissertation to include: description, analysis and critique and synthesis of the various methods in question.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Student's Interest in the Subject

This student's interest in the study of the psychology of religion had its beginnings in an introductory course entitled "The Psychology of Religion" taught by Wayne Oates at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in the fall of 1971. This course was instrumental in his decision to change degree programs from the Master of Church Music to the Master of Divinity and to prepare for a more clearly defined pastoral ministry. Further courses in Psychology of Religion and Pastoral Care confirmed a growing sense of direction into a specialized ministry of pastoral care and counseling.

¹⁴Hinsie, Leland E. and Robert Jean Campbell, Psychiatric Dictionary Fourth Edition, p. 608.

After graduation, the student entered advanced training in clinical pastoral education at the Medical College of Virginia and did a special research study in the area of the religious experience of alcoholics. Subsequent pastoral experience at Sunset Hills Baptist Church, Richmond, Virginia led to an awareness of the varieties of religious experience even among Southern Baptists, as he encountered persons in the same congregation with vastly different perceptions and experiences.

Returning to The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in 1976, the student took the Master of Theology degree in Psychology of Religion where his first graduate seminar was an independent study with Edward Thornton entitled "The Psychology of Religious Experience." It was in this seminar, that he was introduced to some of the methodological variances within the field as well as the emergence of transpersonal psychology as a new force to be assimilated. Earlier undergraduate work in mathematics and chemistry, as well as professional experience as staff mathematician, had created an appreciation for empirical studies. The apparent dichotomies between the empirical and phenomenological approaches to religion provided many hours of study and speculations. Preparation for preliminary examinations further emphasized the need for clearer delineation between the various approaches to the study of religious experience.

During the preparation for preliminary examinations, Orlo Strunk's article defining various modes of doing religious psychology primed the pump of interest in undertaking the task of refining some of Strunk's hypotheses. After exploring Strunk's five modes as a theoretical structure for this dissertation, it was decided to delimit the study to a more expansive analysis of just one mode, the psychoanalytic methodology of research in the psychology of religion.

Scholarly Research on the Subject

An intense exploration of the published works in the psychology of religion reveals a stark absence of significant research on method in the psychology of religion. Several brief articles have been published and are listed in the bibliography. None of these articles present a detailed description of method in the field. Several articles point to the problem of a lack of clear delineation of methodological considerations in the study of the psychology of religious experience. The contrast between the phenomenological and the empirical approaches dominate in every theoretical discussion.

A Th.D. dissertation by Jack Tyrus Hanford at Iliff School of Theology entitled "A Review and Critique of Methodology in the History of Psychology of Religion 1880-1960: Search for a Synopsis" was completed in 1974. His conclusions propose a synopsis of the phenomenological

and empirical approaches by evaluating the strengths of both methods and combining the valuable thrusts of each method. He considers the phenomenological and empirical approaches to be the only methods in need of evaluation and uses these two categories as broad umbrellas that cover the whole field of research. It is this student's contention, that Hanford's research does not do justice to some of the finer discriminations of method in the psychology of religion and presents a "synopsis" that is methodologically impure. Furthermore, Hanford's research stops with 1960, excluding several of the major texts in the field as well as consideration of the unique influence of humanistic and transpersonal psychologies upon the study of religious experience.

No relevant research can be located which analyzes the four specific methodologies proposed for this research. Considerable study has been done of psychohistory and the contributions of Erikson to the psychology of religion,¹⁵ though no known research integrates this one methodology with any other methodologies in the psychoanalytic psychology of religion.

¹⁵See especially Donald Capps, et.al. (ed.) Erikson: Historical Interpretation and Religious Biography, and Roger A. Johnson, (ed.) Psychohistory and Religion: The Case of Young Man Luther.

Delimitations

The modern history of the psychology of religion is assumed by most authors to have been inaugurated in 1881 with the publication of G. Stanley Hall's research on religious conversion in adolescence.¹⁶ Two broad delimitations have been chosen to facilitate the analysis of methodology in the psychology of religion.

The theoretical perspective will be delimited to only the psychoanalytic tradition. Secondly, the research will be delimited to contributions made to the psychoanalytic psychology of religion only during the two decades from 1960 to 1980. A summary of the significant issues of method in psychoanalytic theory prior to 1960 will be provided in order to set the context for the research.

A series of finer delimitations have been made to facilitate the management of the research in length and time, while providing a comprehensive understanding of psychoanalytic research. The choice of the methodologies to be evaluated has been limited to the following four individuals and their respective methodologies:

1. The psychohistorical methodology as developed by Erik Erikson;

¹⁶Seward Hiltner, op. cit., p. 7.

2. The dynamic methodology s developed by Paul Pruyser;
3. The clinical methodology as developed by Ana-Maria Rizzuto; and
4. The intuitive-speculative methodology as developed by Ann and Barry Ulanov.

The choice of these four individuals as representatives of the psychoanalytic psychology of religion was made recognizing that several significant pieces of research were excluded.¹⁷

The decision not to include other contributions to the four methodologies chosen was made on the basis of the following considerations. The projected audience of this research is a conservative, Biblically-oriented Protestant group of pastors and students. Therefore, the decision was made to include only those authors whose psychoanalytic perspective was open to considering the positive, functional value of religious experience, and to exclude

¹⁷Psychoanalytic authors not chosen to be studied include: David Bakan, The Duality of Human Existence: An Essay on Psychology and Religion. Anthony DeLuca, Freud and Future Religious Experience. Heije Faber, Psychology of Religion. Erich Fromm, You Shall Be as Gods: A Radical Interpretation of the Old Testament and Its Traditions. Andre Godin, From Religious Experience to a Religious Attitude. Joseph Havens, Psychology and Religion: A Contemporary Dialogue. James Hillman, In Search: Psychology and Religion. Josef Rudin, Psychotherapy and Religion. G. Stephen Spinks, Psychology and Religion: An Introduction to Contemporary Views.

those authors who view religious phenomena only as examples of neurotic and pathological ideation.

Secondly, the research was delimited to offer a sampling of psychoanalytic theorists who are presenting various applications of the case study method in their research. It was felt that Erikson and Rizzuto present two different but extensive applications of case study material, and that Pruyser and Ulanov offered examples of less thorough usage of this significant aspect of psychoanalytic methodology.

Thirdly, the decision was made to delimit the research to those authors who attempt to integrate the current research in object relations theory. This was a subjective decision made with the belief that the current insights of the various studies of the psychology of the self should be included in any adequate psychoanalytic perspective. Consequently, these four methodologies were chosen because of their consistent theoretical dependence upon the work of the British Object Relations School. As a byproduct of this delimitation, it was discovered that the contributions of Donald Winnicott and Ronald Fairbairn of this school appear to be consistent favorites of the current psychoanalytic psychologists of religion.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research for this dissertation has been literary and theoretical. Using selected key representatives of four primary methodologies, the literature in the psychoanalytic psychology of religion has been evaluated. The four methodologies under examination in this research are:

1) the psychohistorical methodology, 2) the dynamic methodology, 3) the clinical methodology and 4) the intuitive-speculative methodology.

Each of these methods has been evaluated to discover and describe the essential ingredients of the author's methodology. The psychological and philosophical or theological presuppositions are determined in order to assess the author's bias towards religious phenomena.

The four methods will be assessed in light of their continuity/discontinuity with psychoanalytic research methodology as well as with similar research in other psychological schools. Each method will be assessed. The manner in which case material is used in research and theory generation will be assessed. A critical methodological consideration for each approach is its application to the empirical/phenomenological debate.

Summary and conclusions will be drawn and recommendations for future research will be considered.

DIRECTION OF THE DISSERTATION

This dissertation will be organized into seven chapters.

Chapter one will introduce the research. It will include a definition of the problem as well as a description of the purposes and objectives of the study. The definitions and delimitations involved in the project will be included. The importance of the study as well as the student's interest in this particular area of study will be given. A general overview of the direction of the dissertation will conclude the chapter.

Chapter two will describe the development of the psychoanalytic psychology of religion prior to 1960. A brief summary of the theory and methodology of key psychoanalytic theorists and the application of their theories to the psychology of religion will be given. Following a summary of methodology in psychoanalytic research and the use of the case study method, the chapter will conclude with an analysis of the empirical and phenomenological debate in the psychology of religion.

Chapter three will begin the analysis of psychoanalytic research in the psychology of religion from 1960 to 1980 by presenting the contributions of the psychohistorical methodology of Erikson. The chapter will begin with a summary of the use of psychohistory as method in

the psychology of religion. A definition of psychohistory will be given and the purpose and goals of this methodology described. Following a brief history of the development of psychohistory, the analysis of the methodological issues within this approach will be given. The uniqueness of Erikson's contributions to this methodology will help set the stage for an analysis and critique of the psychohistorical method and its applications to the psychology of religion.

Chapter four will introduce the dynamic methodology of Paul Pruyser. The psychological and theological presuppositions of the dynamic methodology will be assessed and followed by a description and definition of this method of psychoanalytic research. The chapter will conclude with an analysis of the applications of this method to the psychology of religion.

Chapter five will present the clinical methodology of Ana-Maria Rizzuto. Following an analysis of the psychodynamic and theoretical presuppositions of this method, the description and definition of this method will be given. Because of Rizzuto's primary concern with religious ideation, this methodology will be assessed in terms of both its psychoanalytic continuities and its relationship to other forms of research. The chapter will conclude with a critique of the method and its applications to the psychology of religion.

Chapter six will introduce the intuitive-speculative methodology through the presentation of the research of Ann and Barry Ulanov. This chapter will examine psychological and theological presuppositions of this methodology and continue with a description of the use of intuitive and speculative approaches to research. The chapter will conclude with a critique of the Ulanov's methodology and its applications to the psychology of religion.

Chapter seven will summarize the conclusions of this research. Of special concern will be the manner in which these four methodologies have utilized the case study method, given predominance to the importance of unconscious material in psychoanalytic research and informed the empirical-phenomenological debate. Other conclusions to be drawn will relate to the multi-disciplined approach to research; the utilization of ego and self psychologies; the integration of theory from non-psychoanalytic resources; and the heuristic and therapeutic applicability of these four methodologies. The chapter will conclude the research with suggestions for future areas of study and research.

A FINAL LITERARY DISCLAIMER

One final literary disclaimer is offered. A conscious attempt has been made to eliminate any obvious use

of sexist language in the body of this dissertation. Occasionally, however, for stylistic simplicity, the generic use of the word "he" has occurred. This is by no means an attempt of this author to exclude from consideration the experience of women, but is done to facilitate the smooth reading of the text.

Chapter 2

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE PSYCHOANALYTIC PSYCHOLOGY OF RELIGION PRIOR TO 1960

This chapter will assess the development of the psychoanalytic psychology of religion prior to 1960. This assessment will begin with a brief summary of the theoretical presuppositions of key psychoanalytic theorists and the application of their theories to the psychology of religion. This survey of psychoanalytic theories has been chosen deliberately to include the contributions of three psychoanalytic schools of thought. The three schools of thought are the Freudian, Jungian and British Object Relation Theorists. The discussion has been limited to these three schools, recognizing that there are other psychoanalytic theorists who have been excluded from this discussion, whose contributions to the psychoanalytic psychology of religion are being overlooked. The contributions of Freud and his early disciples, as well as Carl Jung and Donald Winnicott as representative of the British Object Relations School have been chosen because of their significant influence upon the four specific methodologies which will be evaluated later in this dissertation.

Freudian Psychoanalytic Theorists

Sigmund Freud (1856-1939) is the father of psychoanalytic theory and practice. Beginning with the publication in 1900 of his first major work, The Interpretation of Dreams, Freud revolutionized the scientific world and helped to launch the investigation into the meaning and significance of man's deepest and most inner thoughts, emotions, drives, and aspirations. Freudian theory, which has developed into the psychoanalytic school of thought, is commonly defined as the first force in modern psychology.¹ Through an examination of the unconscious dreams and fantasies of his clinical patients, Freud developed a theory of the structure of the human psyche. Throughout his career, Freud attempted to describe human behavior in terms of its neurophysiological origins and hoped to be able to reduce all human behavior to chemical and physical dimensions.² Though rejecting the conclusions and methods of theology, Freud nevertheless did spend considerable time and effort trying to understand how religious experience is involved in the overall pattern of human experience. In fact, Freud devoted a considerable portion of his collected written work to the description and study of

¹Frank G. Goble, The Third Force: The Psychology of Abraham Maslow, New York: Simon and Schuster, 1970, p. 4.

²Ibid. p. 5.

religious experience.³ By the very voluminous and explicit attention that Freud devoted to this subject, he has implicitly recognized the importance of religion in human experience.⁴

Following in their masters' footsteps, all of the major psychoanalytic theorists have had to pay similar tribute to the functional importance of religion in human experience. Pruyser has pointed to the important contributions made by several of Freud's contemporaries and successors. Sandor Ferenczi contributed helpful understandings of the infantile omnipotence of thought, which influenced and helped Freud in his own observations of early childhood fixations.⁵ Theodor Reik integrated his understanding of psychodynamic theory with comparative religion and focused on the relationship of Judaeo-Christian dogmas and ceremonials to the various stages of libidinal development, especially as they were found in the psychodynamics of the obsessive personality.⁶ Otto Rank contributed an understanding of how the concept of deity is related to the psychodynamics of fantasy formation.⁷ Oskar Pfister, a close friend and student of

³Paul W. Pruyser, "Sigmund Freud and His Legacy: Psychoanalytic Psychology of Religion," in Charles Y. Glock and Phillip E. Hammond, Beyond the Classics? Essays in the Scientific Study of Religion, p. 243.

⁴Ibid.

⁵Ibid., p. 278.

⁶Ibid.

⁷Ibid.

Freud's, as well as a Protestant theologian and pastor, provided an important apologetic of Christian thought and practice as understood from a psychoanalytic perspective. Pfister was especially interested in the way in which Christianity helped humanity cope with its inner sense of anxiety and challenged Freud's assumptions by presenting religion as a respectable sublimation of libidinal and aggressive impulses.⁸ In direct contrast to Freud's assumption that religion is an example of the universal obsessive, neurotic compromise to the oedipal complex, Pfister attempted to show that religion contained far more than obsessive compulsive dynamics.

Ernest Jones attempted to expand on Freud's limited treatment of the origin of the father-god, characteristic of monotheism, by applying psychoanalytic interpretations to the concept of the Trinity, the idea of the Holy Ghost, and the Catholic doctrine of mariology.⁹

The British school of psychoanalysis, led by Melanie Klein, and followed by W. Ronald D. Fairbairn, Harry Guntrip, and Donald Winnicott became differentiated from orthodox Freudian thought through their introduction of a pre-oedipal object-relations understanding of human development. Klein, in her book Contributions to Psychoanalysis, published in 1965, provided clinical material

⁸Ibid.

⁹Ibid., p. 279.

that seems to show that the child's sense of omnipotence may be inappropriately enhanced through overidentification with the idea of God, and which may result in the child's inability to discriminate reality from nonsense.¹⁰ Fairbairn, in his Psychoanalytic Studies of the Personality (1954), and Guntrip, in his Personality Structure and Human Interaction (1961), place a very heavy theoretical emphasis on the issue of infantile dependency, as the basic issue underlying all adaptations to human experience. Inasmuch as dependency is also involved in the individual's experience of his religion, dependency becomes a continual concern "with the basic fact of personal relationships."¹¹ Winnicott developed a close theoretical comparison between the mystical experience of religious faith and the role of the transitional object in the infant's ego development.¹² As will be shown later in this dissertation, Ana-Maria Rizzuto relies heavily on Winnicott's understanding of the transitional object in her theoretical statements about the development of religious consciousness.¹³

¹⁰Ibid., p. 280.

¹¹Harry Guntrip, Personality Structure and Human Interaction, p. 383.

¹²Donald Winnicott, The Maturation Processes and the Facilitating Environment, pp. 185-186.

¹³Ana Maria Rizzuto, The Birth of the Living God: A Psychoanalytic Study, pp. 177f.

John Flugel in his Man, Morals and Society (1945) added to Freud's analysis of religion by describing the experience of ecstasy in religion as precipitated through an intrapsychic fusion between the ego and the superego. Furthermore, he found Christianity's placing as much emphasis on the individual's relationship to his brothers as to his father as a way of removing the guilt from humanity's collective experience of the past.¹⁴

Marjorie Brierley in her Trends in Psychoanalysis (1951), explored the possibility that mysticism might be an attempt by the individual to maintain a particularly affectionate relationship with his/her parent throughout life, since "the suckling experience was so satisfactory that no later gratifications approach the same high level."¹⁵ Brierley felt that if basic human needs were satisfied in the relationship with God, the personality might exhibit a very high degree of integration throughout life.¹⁶

Erik Erikson built upon the ego-psychological theories of Heinz Hartmann in America and established that basic truth as supported by parental faith in the infant

¹⁴Pruyser, op. cit., p. 279.

¹⁵Marjorie Brierley, Trends in Psychoanalysis, p. 219.

¹⁶Pruyser, op. cit., p. 280.

becomes the "touchstone of the actuality of a given religion."¹⁷ In a later article, "Ontogeny of Ritualization," (1966) Erikson shows continuity between religious rituals and observances and the early life rituals in the nursery.¹⁸ Erikson's contributions in terms of psychohistory are also noteworthy and will be discussed in a later section in the next chapter.

Sigmund Freud's contributions to the psychology of religion are therefore seen to be crucial in the manner in which they influenced the development of the thought of his colleagues and successors and became a springboard for their own theoretical interpretations about the origin and functional value of religious experience. Pruyser gives an excellent summary of Freud's contributions to the psychology of religion in his article published in 1973 in the book Beyond the Classics? Essays in the Scientific Study of Religion. Pruyser writes that Freud found religion springing from both phylogenetic (cultural) and ontogenetic (personal or individual) origins within the past life history of each individual. Religion becomes one of those "illusions" that enable many individuals to transcend the pain of their own neurotic experience and to resolve the sense of guilt that is generated during the

¹⁷Erik Erikson, Childhood and Society, p. 250.

¹⁸Pruyser, op. cit., p. 281.

oedipal stage of life. As such, religion becomes a means of coping with life, a way of organizing thought and social behavior, and promoting cultural values and social control.¹⁹

A Brief Synopsis of Analytic Psychology

Carl Jung differed from many of his contemporary theorists in his assertion that the psyche should be seen as a phenomenon in its own right and not as an epiphenomenon related to matter. He attempts to describe psychological phenomenon in terms of what he believes to be independent spiritual principles. The psyche is an objective reality, generating knowledge as well as interpreting data picked up from the senses.²⁰

The psyche consists of conscious and unconscious components. The conscious dimension of the psyche is the ego and is that aspect of the psyche which mediates between external reality and the unconscious.²¹

The unconscious is divided in Jung's scheme into a personal unconscious containing contents of a personal nature acquired during the individual's lifetime yet for whatever reason forgotten, denied, or disbelieved and

¹⁹Pruyser, op. cit., pp. 247-277. A more thorough description of Pruyser's assessment of Freud's contributions can be found in this work.

²⁰C. J. Jung, Collected Works, Vol. 10, p. 567.

²¹Ibid., Vol. 7, p. 103.

thereby pushed out of conscious awareness²². The second aspect of the unconscious, which is more autonomous in nature as well as being universal and impersonal in its content, is called the collective unconscious. The contents of the collective unconscious are not limited to personal experiences of the individual's lifetime but are rather experienced as inherited elements of a universal or collective nature, common to all humans regardless of culture and personal history. The collective unconscious organizes the material of consciousness into patterns through its ability to create symbols containing a charged quantity of psychic energy and around which the individual's perceptions of internal and external reality are crystalized. The collective unconscious has a numinous quality because of the autonomous nature of its functioning with respect to ego and conscious awareness.²³

The structural forms of the collective unconscious responsible for the organization of ideas and images are called archetypes. The archetype manifests its presence through symbols which are images charged with emotion. They are the powers of our imagination, and the forces behind mankind's myths, folk tales, and religious stories. Through the symbols and myths, the archetypes blend irrational and eternal dimensions of human experience to the

²²Ibid.

²³Ibid.

rational dimensions of consciousness. It is because of the universal and collective nature of these archetypical themes, that the myths, fairy tales, and religions of all cultures repeat common themes.²⁴

According to Carl Jung, each psyche is attempting to unfold in a forward moving growth process which he called individuation. The process of individuation is unique to each individual psyche, though the broad structural format contains common elements in all persons. Consciousness evolves as the ego, which was originally immersed in the unconscious sphere of the psyche, evolves and grows through contact with external reality to a point where it is no longer totally immersed and capable of standing apart from the unconscious sphere. This process of ego development is the necessary task of childhood and adolescence and enables the individual to develop a sense of mastery and competency within external reality. However, as the ego emerges out of the unconscious, there is a splitting in its relationship to the unconscious elements which continue to be suppressed or repressed from conscious awareness. A fully individuated person requires a sense of wholeness and integration between the ego and the split-off dimensions of the personal and collective unconscious. This task of integration is accomplished

²⁴Ibid., Vol. 7, pp. 141-191.

through a dialogue between the ego and the archetypes of the unconscious. There are several key interchanges between specific archetypes and the ego that are necessary in order to restore the individuating psyche to a state of dialogue between both conscious and unconscious domains.²⁵

The primary archetypes involved in the integration of the ego and the collective unconscious, are the persona, the shadow, the anima or animus, the wise old man/old woman, and finally the archetype of the Self.²⁶ The persona is described by Jung as the social mask with which the ego identifies more or less as the individual attempts to fit into the expectations of society.²⁷ The shadow is the archetype which represents those aspects of the personal and collective unconscious which are considered negative and unfitting and incompatible with the qualities of the persona with which the ego has identified. The shadow is those repressed tendencies which are experienced as weak, inferior, primitive, infantile, angry, and "evil." The shadow is represented in images of the same sexuality as the ego though definitely containing characteristics of the "darker side of our personality."²⁸ Because of its unacceptable nature to the conscious iden-

²⁵Ibid., Vol. 91, pp. 525-626.

²⁶Ibid., Vol. 8, p. 544. ²⁷Ibid., Vol. 6, p. 800.

²⁸Ibid., Vol. 9, Pt. II, pp. 13-19.

tity of ego and persona, the qualities of the shadow are frequently projected onto external objects as a means of coping with the emotional pressure which they create because of their repressed nature. The process of individuation, therefore involves a retraction of these projected qualities of the shadow and an acceptance of their presence and power as an inherent part of the individual's psyche. An inability to integrate one's shadow is one of the primary sources of neurotic experience and the inability to experience true self-acceptance.²⁹

In the process of coming to terms with the shadow, individuation is enhanced by the emergence of a second split-off portion of the individual's identity, a contra-sexual archetype known as the anima/animus. In males the anima is the feminine personification of the collective unconscious and is characterized by a desire for relatedness and relationship. In the female the animus is the masculine personification of the collective unconscious and is characterized by a capacity for reflection and self-knowledge.³⁰ Like the shadow, the contents of the anima and animus are usually projected onto other persons because of their inaccessibility to the ego. Individuation involves the retraction of these projections and the

²⁹Ibid., Vol. 9, Pt. I, p. 513.

³⁰Ibid., Vol. 7, pp. 296-340.

integration of the elements of this contra-sexual dimension of our being into a continuing dialogue with conscious and ego oriented aspects of the psyche.³¹ Jung has described this contra-sexual expression of the collective unconscious as the "soul guide" because it is through the encounter with the anima/animus, that we are pointed in the direction of a deeper center of the personality, the Self.³²

The Self is the center of the total personality much as the ego functions as the center of the conscious personality.³³ The ego has evolved out of the Self as the natural course of psychic development, and yet must also return into relationship to the Self in order for the process of individuation to be complete.³⁴ The presence of the Self as archetype is usually experienced in dreams with the presence of the theme of unity and wholeness and the emergence of a specific symbol, usually visualized as a mandala.³⁵ The Self is not bound by causality of time and space and is in fact the transcendent function in the

³¹Ibid., Vol. 7, p.333.

³²Ibid., Vol. 9, Pt. II, p. 33.

³³Ibid., Vol. 7, p. 399.

³⁴Ibid., Vol. 5, p. 516a.

³⁵Ibid., Vol. 9, Pt. II, p. 208.

human psyche.³⁶ As will be shown in a later chapter, the Ulanovs have pointed to the importance of Christ figure as an expression and amplification of the collective archetype of the Self. It is through the activity of the Self, that wholeness is achieved, and the uniqueness of each individual personality is actualized.³⁷

Though there are many other expressions of archetypical symbols of the collective unconscious, a final archetype of predominance needs to be discussed. The presence of the archetype of the wise old man/woman is another autonomous archetype of the collective unconscious essential in the full process of individuation. The wise old man/woman emerges as the symbol of wisdom and peace and guides the individual's psyche towards the eventual issues of the end of life.³⁸ In Erikson's understanding of developmental growth and progress, the wise old man is the collective experience of humanity's struggle with integrity versus despair. The presence of the wise old man/woman is felt as the psyche attempts to deal with the reality of the limitedness of our creatureliness. It helps to tie our individual experience of our finitude to the common experience of finitude of all mankind.

³⁶Ibid., Vol. 9, Pt. II, p. 45.

³⁷Ibid., Vol. 9, Pt. I, p. 270.

³⁸Ibid., Vol. 5, p. 515.

Another principle of the Jungian understanding of the psyche is known as the principle of opposition or the existence of the polarity opposites. This principle basically refers to the reality that all energy necessarily exists in tension between the polarity of opposites, hot versus cold, light versus dark, good versus evil, etc. Life exists as a union of opposites and without opposites, there would be no existence. Likewise, this principle of opposition accounts for the manner in which psychic energy flows as well.³⁹ A state of higher consciousness occurs whenever energy which has been blocked between the two poles of persona and shadow, or ego and anima, is allowed to become conscious, charged with new energy and allowed to live in the dialectical opposition.

This principle of opposition extends for Jung even to the point of his categorization of personality types. He believes that all personalities can be described in terms of the polarities of: introversion versus extroversion, thinking versus feeling, and sensation versus intuition. Each person can be described by his/her dominance in one polarity in all three of these spectrums. Psychic wholeness is achieved through individuation of these opposites in the personality.⁴⁰

³⁹Ibid., Vol. 7, p. 92.

⁴⁰Ibid., Vol. 6.

The Jungian Interpretation of the Role of Religion
in the Human Experience

For Carl Jung, the presence of the collective unconscious with its archetypes propelling man along this course of individuation, becomes the description of the religious dimension of human experience. Jung refuses to debate the question of belief in God, and asserts that the experience of the numinous in the face of the power of the collective unconscious ascertains the reality of the experience of God.⁴¹ Man is by his very nature and by the inherent constitution of his psyche a religious being and though he may choose to deny the validity of certain historical religions, he will nevertheless find some "ism" in which to invest the energy of this inherent religious nature.

Christianity exemplifies for Jung, the most profound religious interpretation of the process of individuation.⁴² He sees that the concept of the trinity describes the manner in which the ego is given birth from within the Self of the collective unconscious, growing in rationality and morality to the point in which the ego reaches a state of estrangement and alienation from the irrational, non-moral forces of the collective uncon-

⁴¹Ibid., Vol. 11, p. 454.

⁴²Ibid., Vol. 9, Pt. II, p. 125.

scious.⁴³ At this stage of development, in order for individuation to occur, the ego must be sacrificed from its role of preeminence into a subservient and dialogical position with respect to the forces of the collective unconscious, specifically the Self. The trinitarian formulation of Christianity describes this phenomenon in the form of the three persons of God. God indwells the flesh through the incarnation and birth of his son in a parallel fashion to the ego emerging out of the womb of the collective unconscious. The crucifixion and resurrection motifs represent that point of essential psychic growth, in which the ego must surrender its authority in order to merge again with the greater power and authority of the collective unconscious from which it sprang. Jung believes that what Christianity has described as the Holy Spirit in the third position of the trinity, is the theological counterpart to what he sees as the functioning of the centered Self.⁴⁴ For as the ego surrenders its position as the center of consciousness to the Self as the center of the total personality, the individual experiences a new state of peace and higher consciousness which Christianity has historically described as the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

⁴³Ibid., Vol. 22, pp. 169-295.

⁴⁴Ibid., Vol. 22, p. 197.

There is one major essential flaw in the Christian concept of a trinitarian God in Jung's opinion. He feels that the current crisis within Christianity characterized by a loss of power of its symbols, is due to the fact that Christian theology does not allow any room in the godhead for the presence of the demonic. In keeping with his law of opposition, Jung believes that the theological solution to the problem through the creation of a second evil power, satan, has produced a dualism which is inconsistent with the universal principles inherent within the collective unconscious. The consequence for this unwillingness to integrate good and evil in Christian theology into a unity, consistent with these universal principles, is the source of problem of theodicy. Jung's solution to this state of affairs is a reactivation of the symbols of Christian theology which are more fully integrated to this principle of opposition.⁴⁵

Carl Jung believes that religion provides the most effective container for the projections of the archetypes of the collective unconscious as a means of moderating the power and influence of these archetypes in service of the Self as well as in the service of health, growth, and individuation.⁴⁶ The absence of a religious system that can facilitate in this process is one of the signs leading

⁴⁵Ibid., Vol. 11, p. 104. ⁴⁶Ibid, Vol. 8, p. 426.

to the widespread problems of neurotic interaction in contemporary society. Neurosis became a problem for mankind when the symbols of the Judeo-Christian heritage lost their power to contain and direct the forces of the collective unconscious, and it is for this reason that psychotherapy has become essential even to the point of replacing the value of the church in the lives of so many contemporary western people.⁴⁷

Contributions by Other Psychoanalytic Theorists

Another disciple of Freud who soon fell out of the Freudian School was Alfred Adler. Like Jung, Adler differed with Freud about the importance of sexuality in psychic development and felt that sexuality was just one expression of a greater drive, the will to power. This will to power is the urge to find completeness, security, status and superiority in the face of an inner feeling of helplessness and inferiority. For women, this inner feeling of inferiority is compounded by the experience of living in what appears to be a male dominated world and the female drive for power is expressed as the masculine protest.

Stoltz points to two critical aspects of Adlerian theory for religious living. Adler envisions that one of the objectives of Christian culture is to provide the con-

⁴⁷Ibid, Vol. 11, p. 514.

text in which this personal striving for power and security can be socialized. Secondly, Adler's understanding of the masculine protest is answered in part by the Christian understanding of persons which emphasizes the equality of all persons under God and attempts to neutralize some of the friction and competitiveness between the sexes.⁴⁸

Other psychodynamic theorists have impacted the study of religious experience in less dramatic ways. Oskar Pfister, a Swiss Protestant pastor, applied Freud's theories in a manner more sympathetic to religion, and is remembered for his studies in glossolalia and for his research into the causes and cures of religion in emotional crises.⁴⁹ Otto Rank studied the unconscious motives in myths and folk tales and contributed "a first-rate methodological study of religious fantasy and tradition."⁵⁰ Theodore Reik in a collection of essays entitled Das Ritual proposed that ambivalent feelings toward authorities are transferred to religion and evident in various kinds of piety. Reik also hypothesized a relationship between the resistance to letting go of obsessive ideas and the irrational clinging to dogma characterized

⁴⁸Karl Stoltz, The Psychology of Religious Living, p. 164.

⁴⁹Casey, op. cit., p. 64. ⁵⁰Ibid., p. 65.

by some religious personalities.⁵¹ Erich Fromm discussed the relationship between unconscious motives and patterns and the individual's interaction with social forces. Religion, like all social institutions, developed in this interaction between the personal unconscious and the social environment. For example, Fromm suggested that the combination of Jesus the crucified Savior and the adopted Son of God suggests the ambivalence of the infantile conflict of resentment with external authorities and the aspiration and hope of achieving equality in the future.⁵² All of these psychodynamic theorists attempted to understand religion's unique role in the development of guilt, the expression of aggression and the sublimation of sexuality.⁵³

Donald Winnicott's Contributions to Psychoanalytic Theory

Winnicott is the renowned English pediatrician and psychoanalyst whose observations of early childhood development and the relationship between mother and child have profoundly influenced current psychoanalytic theory and practice.⁵⁴ Winnicott's theory is a development of the understanding of the process by which the child's ego

⁵¹Ibid.

⁵²Ibid., pp. 65-66.

⁵³Ibid., pp. 71-73.

⁵⁴Paul Pruyser, Between Belief and Unbelief, pp. 108f.

undergoes various stages of differentiation out of the matrix of the original mother--fetus and mother--neonate symbiosis. In Winnicott's system, the infant "introjects" mental bits from the external world and "projects" mental residues from his inner world in a process that closely parallels the intake of food and elimination of waste.⁵⁵ Initially the child's primitive self is unaware of the boundaries between mother and him and the part representation of the mother's breast is literally an extension of one's own ego. In the presence of the sensation of hunger, the full breast emerges producing milk and a sense of satisfaction. However, as the child's level of mental-cognitive development improves and as the mother's inability to provide instantaneous satisfaction increases, there begins a slow process of differentiation between subjective, pleasure oriented perceptions of a "me" from an objective, reality-oriented "not me" within the infant's consciousness. At this point the child is confronted with the state of ambivalence as mother and other objects are perceived as "good" when they satisfy drives and "bad" when they frustrate drives. Lacking the sophistication of a mature ego, the infant's developing consciousness splits the images of the good mother and the bad mother within an accompanying introjection of a magical, omnipo-

⁵⁵Ibid., pp. 108-109.

tent, good mother and a projection of a frustrating bad mother.⁵⁶

In the internal struggle between the subjectively conceived good object and the objectively perceived bad object, the infant develops a solution to this conflict with the creation of a transitional object. Physical manifestations of the emergence of the transitional object occurs when the infant finds an alternative source of stimulation and satisfaction in a thumb, pacifier, blanket, soft toy, or some other special object which is kept close to the body and often the mouth. These special objects take on an almost sacred relationship to the child which is instinctively acknowledged by mother and the rest of the family. These objects are defined by Winnicott as transitional objects as they intercede between the satisfaction seeking internal objects and the frustrating reality oriented external objects.⁵⁷ In this manner, and in Pruyser's words,

the transitional object is the transcendent; it is beyond the ordinary division we make between the mental image produced by the mind itself and the objective perceptual image produced by the real world impinging upon the sensory system. Illusion is neither hallucination or delusion, nor is it straightforward sense perception.⁵⁸

The transitional object is endowed with a sense of subjec-

⁵⁶Ibid., p. 110.

⁵⁷Ibid., p. 111.

⁵⁸Ibid.

tive reverence and mystery and becomes the "beginning of an infinite playful relation between mind and world."⁵⁹

Winnicott defines an intermediate area of experience between inner and outer reality, suigeneris, and calls it the transitional sphere. It is a zone of reality that is neither purely subjective nor purely objective. It is that sphere of human experience so charged with mystery and in which art, music, and religion are said to be experienced.⁶⁰

Freud's Methodology

Psychoanalysis is the child of Freudian scientific thinking and built, even in its current form, upon the basic foundation of Freud's methodology. Freud's comments on his own understanding of the methodological issues in science are to be found scattered throughout his work and are a reflection of his schooling in the scientific method and thinking of the late nineteenth century. It should be remembered that Freud moved into his explorations into the study of the nature of the human psyche by way of his medical training and practice as a neurologist. His theoretical observations are therefore firmly rooted in this biological and physiological orientation.

Freud's methodology of investigation of the human psyche can be described as empirical in nature and heavily

⁵⁹Ibid., p. 112.

⁶⁰Ibid., p. 113.

rooted in his own observations of the clients that he was working with. In fact, Freud defined his own commitment to clinical observation in a letter that he wrote to Heinrich Lowy in 1930:

When I recollect isolated cases from the history of my work, I find that my working hypothesis invariably came about as a direct result of a great number of impressions based on one experience.⁶¹

In fact, as W. W. Meissner notes, Freud had indicated in an earlier letter to Fliess that he really wished he had the time and opportunity to observe children in the nursery in order to confirm some of his early theories about infantile behavior.⁶²

Freud's approach was basically inductive and his theoretical observations were always related to his clinical experience. This commitment to an inductive and observational methodology set him apart from his earlier colleague and teacher, Breuer, whose theoretical speculations were frequently deductive and based on biological and physiological analogies.⁶³

Part of Freud's unique genius was in his capacity to observe not only the inner process of his clients, but

⁶¹E. L. Freud, ed., 1960, The Letters of Sigmund Freud, p. 396.

⁶²W. W. Meissner, S. J., "Freud's Methodology," The Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association, 19, (2) (1971), 266.

⁶³Ibid.

to observe and scrutinize his own inner process as well. This capacity to transcend his own intrapsychic process at the same time that he was observing his client's attitudes and behaviors, is believed to have been crucial in Freud's capacity to understand and develop his theory of transference.⁶⁴ He recorded his conversations and reactions to his clients with painstaking accuracy and thoroughness, having been trained in the methods of science. He was reported to have been surprised in his observation that his case histories read "more like short stories than scientific reports."⁶⁵

Freud felt that one of the limitations of his new science was that it fell somewhere in the middle ground between the more rigid scientific approaches of medical science and the speculative attitude of the philosophic discipline. He argued vehemently against the critique that his method was entirely speculative, with no empirical foundation. In his own autobiography he stated that he felt this criticism was basically a resistance on the part of the critics to looking through the microscope of their own experience in fear of discovering what their own unconscious mind might be experiencing.⁶⁶ Scientists, he felt, criticized it as purely speculative and refused to

⁶⁴Ibid., p. 267.

⁶⁵Ibid., p. 268.

⁶⁶Ibid., p. 268.

acknowledge its status among the other natural sciences, being unaware of the rigorous and tireless quality of his own commitment to detail. Philosophers found his concepts to be too general and lacking in clarity and precision. To his philosophical critics, he was reduced to defending psychoanalysis on the grounds that it was open to revision and in need of ongoing clinical validation.⁶⁷

Many criticisms have been raised about the Freudian methodology. One of the common complaints is that the psychic apparatus under observation is also employed through the mind of the observer in that observation. Similarly, there is an awareness that psychoanalysis is concerned primarily with the treatment of patients and not with research. In fact, as Freud warned, there is a point in the treatment of each patient in which the demands of technique for research are in direct opposition to the demands of technique for therapeutic purposes.

Cases which are devoted from the first to scientific purposes and are treated accordingly suffer in their outcome, while the most successful cases are those in which one proceeds, as it were, 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.⁶⁸

⁶⁷Ibid., p. 269.

⁶⁸Sigmund Freud, "Recommendations to Physicians Practicing Psychoanalysis," Standard Edition, Vol. 12, p. 114.

He further cautioned against any scientific evaluation or analysis of case material when the case was still in treatment.⁶⁹ The conclusions arrived at by both of these critiques is that psychoanalysis is a very subjective phenomenon and contrary to the normal empirical standards of science.

One of the unique aspects of Freud's methodology is his introduction of the technique of free association as a means of bringing to the surface memories and feelings which have long been forgotten. By introducing the technique of free association as a more durable replacement to the technique of hypnosis, Freud introduced not only a more effective and long-term therapeutic technique, but also what is believed to be his single most important methodological contribution.⁷⁰ The development of his use of free association closely parallels his understanding of the role of resistance in psychotherapy. The presupposition underlying his use of free association was that the material produced by the patient was somehow related to the unconscious psychic processes. Freud felt that it was through free association that the patient's unconscious was able to bring to the surface clues about the content of the unconscious and override the normal

⁶⁹Meissner, *op. cit.*, p. 270.

⁷⁰*Ibid.*, p. 271.

editing process of the ego. Thus, by employing the technique of free association to the content of the patient's dreams Freud was able to override the resistance to insight normally experienced through the editing function of the ego. Again, however, Freud encountered the criticism that his method was both subjective and arbitrary. In a very carefully worded refutation of this, Freud points to the purposive nature of both the dream material and the free association. His evidence lies in the surprising connections that emerge between the elements of the dream as the technique of free association is applied to it. The flow of ideas were therefore seen to have an unconscious purposive direction.

No influence that we can bring to bear upon our mental processes can ever enable us to think without purposive ideas; nor am I aware of any states of psychical confusion which can do so.⁷¹

In answer to the criticism that his technique for dream interpretation was really at the mercy of the arbitrary choice of the interpreter, Freud states in his introductory lectures,

If instead of the interpreter's arbitrary choice you would speak of his skill, his experience and his understanding, I should agree with you. We cannot, of course, do without a personal factor of that kind, especially in the more difficult problems of dream interpretation. But the position is no different in other scientific occupations. There is no means of

⁷¹Sigmund Freud, "The Interpretation of Dreams, The Standard Edition, Vol 4, pp. 527-528.

preventing one person from handling a particular technique worse than another, or one person from making better use of it than another. What in other ways gives an impression of arbitrariness--in, for instance the interpretation of symbols--is done away with by the fact that as a rule the interconnection between the dream thoughts, or the connection between the dream and the dreamer's life, or the whole psychological situation in which the dream occurs, selects a single one from among the possible determinations presented and dismisses the rest as unserviceable.⁷²

One of the ways in which Freud and his followers have attempted to neutralize the subjective nature of psychoanalysis, has been to insist upon the analyst undergoing his own self-analysis, or training analysis. Freud's commitment to the self-analysis is also important from a methodological point of view. He relates the psychoanalytic method to countertransference in very clear terms in the following quote.

. . . We have noticed that no psychoanalyst goes further than his own complexes and internal resistances permit; and we consequently require that he should begin his activity with a self-analysis and continually carry it deeper when he is making his observations on his patients. Anyone who fails to produce results in a self-analysis may at once give up⁷³ any idea of being able to treat patients by analysis.

By undergoing a self-analysis, the therapist controls some of the subjective quality of therapy in his ability to edit out his own therapeutic biases and fixations and to

⁷²Sigmund Freud, "The Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis", Standard Edition, Vols. 15 and 16, p. 229.

⁷³Sigmund Freud, "The Future Prospects of Psychoanalytic Therapy," The Standard Edition, Vol. 11, p. 145.

be consequently more capable of listening unbiased and unsensored to the content of the patient's unconscious. Freud believed that the therapist was able to use his own unconscious fantasies in service of the patient's associations to a degree which is limited by his own self-understanding.⁷⁴

Furthermore, the setting in which free association could be achieved needed to be controlled by two further delimitations. First of all, there must be some guarantee to the complete privacy of the patient and the analyst (the subject and the observer). Secondly, the interviews must come in regular and frequent intervals of a specific length of time over a considerable duration of time. It is with these factors of isolation and of time that Freud felt he might achieve some measure of control over the clinical data from which his generalizations would be made.⁷⁵ Since the purpose of the technique of free association was to eliminate conscious control over thought, the conditions of privacy, frequency and regularity became essential for its success. It is only in the context of seeing another individual frequently and regu-

⁷⁴Meissner, op. cit., p. 280.

⁷⁵E. Pumpian-Mindlin, "The Position of Psychoanalysis in Relation to the Biological and Social Sciences" in the book Psychoanalysis as Science by Ernest R. Hilgard, Lawrence S. Kubie, and E. Pumpian-Mindlin, p. 135.

larly for a considerable period of time, that the client overcomes the barriers of his logical and ego-oriented consciousness in order to proceed effectively with free association.⁷⁶

It can be seen from the above summary of the conditions necessary for effective free association, that free association was really not "free," but rather determined. This interrelationship of determinism, or the belief that there is a relationship between two events or occurrences which follow one another in time, depends upon the ability of the therapist/observer to control the number of variables involved in the experimental situation. With the lack of the ability to control all the variables in the psychoanalytic situation, it is impossible to completely insure that a state of total determinism exists.⁷⁷ The difficulty in controlling the technique of free association, especially in the presence of other observers leads to one of the frequent criticisms of the data of psychoanalysis. It is the existing paradox of psychoanalysis, that it attempts to study and understand the very subjective data of human experience that the other sciences attempt to control or eliminate. For psychoanalysis deals with the realm of the nonrational phenomenon of human experience, which stands in direct contradiction

⁷⁶Ibid., p. 135.

⁷⁷Ibid., p. 136.

to the attempts by the natural and physical sciences to utilize only rational thought and action.⁷⁸

The formation of theory within the psychoanalytic method became essential in order to provide a structure for understanding the observations of Freud's empirical research. Freud attempted to keep an open-minded perspective upon the influence of continuing data in order that he would not limit or concretize his theoretical formulations to the exclusion of his awareness of a continuing verification by the raw data of his experience. He seemed to envision that theory building was like building a scaffold from the raw materials of empirical observation, and that without a specific blueprint to follow ahead of time, the direction and organization of his theory became dependent upon the form and substance of his clinical observations.⁷⁹ Freud testifies on his own behalf about the attempts to be constantly open and available to his clinical data in the following quote:

My 'splendid isolation' was not without its advantages and charms. I did not have to read any publications, nor listen to any ill-informed opponents; I was not subject to influence from any quarter; there was nothing to hustle me. I learned to restrain speculative tendencies and to follow the unforgotten advice of my master, Charcot: to look at the same things

⁷⁸Ibid., p. 137.

⁷⁹Meissner, p. 284.

again and again until they themselves begin to speak.⁸⁰

It can be seen then that as new data and observations challenged older theoretical constructs, Freud began to formulate new hypotheses to account for this data. In response to the critique that his method produced theory that was both vague and inconsistent, Freud responded with the following quote:

. . . we have no other aid than that of translating into theory the results of observation, and we deny that there is any obligation on us to achieve at our first attempt a well-rounded theory which will commend itself by its simplicity. We shall defend the complications of our theory so long as we find that they meet the results of observation, and we shall not abandon our expectations of being led in the end by those very complications to the discovering of a state of affairs, which, while simple in itself, can account for all the complications of reality.⁸¹

This dynamic and dialectical methodology of theory generation was open-ended, incomplete, and therefore frequently unclear.⁸² Some of the unclarity to the casual reader of Freud's collected works is evidenced by apparent and obvious changes and development in hypotheses over the course of his career. Sometimes the shifts in his thinking were subtle, and other times they were more drastic.

⁸⁰Sigmund Freud, "On the History of the Psychoanalytic Movement," The Standard Edition, Vol. 14, p. 21.

⁸¹Sigmund Freud, "The Unconscious," The Standard Edition, Vol. 14, p. 190.

⁸²Meissner, p. 280-281.

Though Freud was willing to draw upon theories from other sciences, such as building his libido theory upon a biological foundation, he nevertheless firmly believed in the necessity of avoiding contamination of the methodology of psychoanalysis from other sciences. Though he drew from biology, anatomy, chemistry and physiology, he was always mindful of the uniqueness of his own methodology and his belief that psychological data could not be used to confirm biological theories or vice versa.⁸³

One of the hallmarks of the scientific methodology is the concept of validation, or the capacity to reproduce in a statistically reliable manner and in statistically acceptable results any data that is considered to be the results of the "scientific method." Historically this problem has plagued psychoanalysis as it has attempted to define itself as an empirical science. Paul E. Meehl describes the tendency to treat the terms "experimental" and "empirical" as synonymous. Meehl's resolution of this difficulty is found in his understanding of empirical as that which is characterized by the taking of publicly observable data and his understanding of experimental as being limited to the sense of laboratory manipulation of all the variables in the experiment. With this delimitation, Meehl describes many of the natural sciences such as

⁸³Meissner, *Ibid.*, p. 293.

astronomy, geography, ecology, and paleontology, as examples of both empirical and experimental, but cautions that psychoanalysis should probably be considered empirical, but not necessarily experimental.⁸⁴ Meehl, in this article, and Harry Guntrip in another article⁸⁵ expound upon Karl Popper and his view that scientific hypotheses should all undergo a process of "falsification."⁸⁶ Popper accurately describes the crisis in modern science brought about by the triumphs of physical science and the resulting "aura of mystical omnipotence, so that all research wishes to claim 'scientific status.'"⁸⁷ The methodology of science, when one is speaking of the physical sciences, has been experimental in nature as attempts are made to fully control the conditions in which the phenomenon is observed. However when science is used to refer to social sciences, such as sociology, economics and psychology, it becomes difficult to apply the same experimental methods. Popper's solution was to apply the same conditions of

⁸⁴Paul E. Meehl, "Some Methodological Reflections on the Difficulties of Psychoanalytic Research," Martin Mayman, ed., Psychoanalytic Research: Three Approaches to the Experimental Study of Subliminal Processes, p. 106.

⁸⁵Harry Guntrip, "Psychoanalysis and Some Scientific and Philosophical Critics," A British Journal of Medical Psychology, 51 (3) (September 1978), 207-224.

⁸⁶Karl Popper, The Logic of Scientific Discovery, 1959.

⁸⁷Harry Guntrip, op. cit., p. 208.

falsifiability, so that the task of the research scientists was not to attempt to corroborate the conclusions of specific scientific theories, but rather to test and retest the hypothesis until it was found to be no longer viable, and therefore, false. On the basis of this definition of falsifiability, Popper believed that psychoanalytic hypotheses could not be falsified and so therefore could not be classified as science.⁸⁸ Sigmund Freud himself was not unaware of this problem of verification, and chose to place his primary emphasis in the verification of theories on their internal consistency of meaning.⁸⁹ This meaning is dependent upon the empirical data, but is ultimately completed and influenced by the analyst's own interpretations and constructions. It was Freud's belief that the consistency of meaning from one case to another would ultimately guarantee the validity of any theoretical construction.⁹⁰ Freud therefore became one of the earliest and greatest proponents of what Allport later

⁸⁸Guntrip, *Ibid.*, p. 208, and Pumpian-Mindlin, *op. cit.*, p. 158. find Popper's thesis of falsification to be unfounded in the social sciences. It is impossible to exercise the degree of control over observations which are required in the exact or natural sciences, and therefore, its hypothesis and principles cannot be expected to have the same specificity and definiteness which need to be demanded of the more exact sciences.

⁸⁹Meissner, *op. cit.*, p. 306.

⁹⁰*Ibid.*

defined as ideographic research in contrast to nomothetic research.

The Case Study Method of Research

Freud's interest and commitment to the use of case material as a basis of his psychoanalytic methodology has been picked up upon and expanded by many of his disciples as well as by individuals outside of the psychoanalytic stream. The case method has been found to be very useful in the study of religious experience because of its compatibility with the subjective nature of religion. Case material is utilized in a variety of different ways, necessitating a clear definition for its use in this work. Case history or case study will be differentiated from the illustrative use of case material. Case history or case study will be defined as a method in the following way:

Case history or study: a collection of all available evidence--social, psychological, physiological, biographical, environmental, vocational--that promises to help explain a single individual or a single social unit such as a family. It is especially used in psychopathology, guidance, and social work. Since it emphasizes the single case or instance, it differs in aim from an experiment and from statistical studies. But the case study often incorporates data from experiments or tests, and a series of case studies may be subjected to statistical study and generalization.⁹¹

Freud utilizes case material much as a detective trying to solve a mystery. He approaches the psychothera-

⁹¹H. B. English and A. C. English, A Comprehensive Dictionary of Psychological and Psychoanalytic Terms, p. 75.

peutic task by attempting to uncover layer after layer of the individual's life history from the present, working backward into the past. The goal of this approach is to eventually uncover the original traumatic experience which is at the basis of the psychogenic symptoms.⁹² Freud then applied the insights from his own introspection to the data uncovered by this case study method. This combination of a psychological excavation in conjunction with introspection became the heart of the classical understanding and use of case method in psychoanalysis.⁹³

Freud applied his case study method to the evaluation of religious experience in the life of his patients as well. He wrote regularly of his belief in an implicit relationship between psychological dynamics and religion. The meaning of the relationship was found within the religious symbols that were studied in the case experiences.⁹⁴

In the famous case of Schreber, Freud utilized biographical material found in Schreber's diary in conjunction with his psychoanalytic method and concluded among other things that Schreber's religious ideation was directly related to unresolved feelings about his

⁹²Jack Tyrus Hanford, A Review and Critique of Methodology in the History of Psychology of Religion 1880-1960: Searching for a Synopsis. p. 161.

⁹³Ibid., p. 163.

⁹⁴Ibid., p. 165.

father.⁹⁵ His case study method enabled him to study closely the relationship between Schreber's delusional ideation and his religious experience. The result of his study of the case of Schreber is perhaps the clearest expression of Freud's theories concerning the nature of pathological religious expression.⁹⁶

It is important to note that psychoanalytic theorists are not the only psychologists of religion to utilize in-depth case study methodology in their study of religious experience. Other noted examples could be given including William James and Anton Boisen. James' classic book, The Varieties of Religious Experience utilizes many personal documents such as letters and diaries to develop his thesis that there are many forms of religious experience and sentiment. The case material in James' analysis are lengthy and represent the more extreme and "purer" examples of religious experience.

Anton Boisen relied heavily on a psychodynamic interpretation of his own case history and recorded his results in two classic works entitled, Out of the Depths and An Exploration of the Inner World. Boisen's contributions, though highly personal in nature, are nevertheless so important that he has been credited as one

⁹⁵Ibid., p. 167.

⁹⁶Ibid., p. 169.

of the primary individuals behind the current frequent use of case material in pastoral care and counseling.⁹⁷

Perhaps the most important psychologist of re-aside from Freud, to help shape the use of the case study method has been Gordon W. Allport. His major contribution has been a refinement of the understanding of the biographical method and the description of ideographic versus nomothetic research. Like Freud, Allport felt that the highly subjective nature of religious experience lended itself to study through personal documents and case methodology.⁹⁸ However, Allport distinguished between the use of personal documents and the case study method by highlighting that personal documents are written in the first person and case studies are the reflections and records of an outsider's investigation of a person or group.⁹⁹ Allport felt that personal documents could be utilized as a methodological bridge between the highly subjective methods of introspection and the more objective approaches of the experimental psychologist.¹⁰⁰

Allport attempted to highlight the advantages of ideographic research within psychology and psychology of

⁹⁷Edward E. Thornton, Professional Education for Ministry: A History of Clinical Pastoral Education, pp. 55-71.

⁹⁸Hanford, op. cit, p. 156.

⁹⁹Ibid., p. 175.

¹⁰⁰Ibid., p. 158.

religion in contrast to the prevailing belief that only nomothetic forms of knowledge were valid.¹⁰¹ While not disputing the significance of nomothetic studies, Allport suggests that there are many advantages to ideographic studies as well. He concludes with Lunberg, that:

The assumed opposition or incompatibility between these two methods is illusory for three principles: 1) the case method is not in itself a scientific method at all, but merely the first step in scientific method; 2) individual cases become of scientific significance only when classified and summarized in such form as to reveal uniformities, types, and patterns of behavior; 3) the statistical method is the best, if not the only, scientific method of classifying and summarizing large numbers of cases. The two methods are not, therefore, under any circumstances opposed to each other, nor is the one a substitute for the other. . . . Thus the only possible question as to the relative value of the case method and the statistical method resolves itself into a question as to whether the classification of, and generalizations from, that data should be carried out by the random, qualitative and subjective method of common observation or through systematic, quantitative and objective procedures of statistical method.¹⁰²

The case study method has had two common usages within the development of psychodynamic theory. The most obvious use has been an illustration of those laws of human behavior which have been extrapolated from nomothetic, cross-cultural statistical studies. In its illustrative use, the case study helps to concretize these laws

¹⁰¹Gordon W. Allport, The Use of Personal Documents in Psychological Science, pp. 54-55.

¹⁰²Ibid., p. 55.

second usage that the case study method has been most important within psychoanalytic theory development as has been illustrated most effectively in the manner in which Freud developed his theoretical systems through the study of the cases of Anna O. and Shreber. As will be shown later in this dissertation, current research in the psychoanalytic psychology of religion continues to utilize case study methodology in both of these ways.

The Empirical Versus the Phenomenological Debate
in the Psychology of Religion

Any study of the methodology in the psychology of religion must include an awareness of the continuing concern between empirical and phenomenological issues. In fact, the history of the psychology of religion prior to 1960 has been reduced to a description of the struggle between these two orientations.¹⁰²

At stake in this debate are the following concerns. The empirical orientation, which is firmly rooted in behavioral and experimental psychology, believes that research data should be limited only to that which can be observed by the five senses. Specific research methods are employed which attempt to elicit "objective facts" which can be verified by subsequent research. These facts are quantified and evaluated under strict procedures

¹⁰²Hanford, op. cit., p. 156.

according to the scientific method. This scientific or experimental method is a five step process including the following:

1. The problem to be explored is clearly defined.
2. Every attempt is made to anticipate obstacles that may be encountered and disrupt or nullify the research conclusions.
3. A research design is implemented that defines effective collecting data.
4. The research design is used to record the objective facts.
5. Conclusions are drawn from the data that either answers the questions inherent in the original problem or draws clearer boundaries for future research. Statistical analysis of the data is the most common form of response to the research data in drawing conclusions to the research.¹⁰³

Underlying the empirical methods are a belief in the mechanistic determinism of cause and effect. Each behavioral/experiential effect of religious experience is believed to have some natural (psychological) cause.¹⁰⁴

Secondly, the empirical approach is characterized by a form of reductionism that believes theory about subject matter from one science may be transposed to another. For example, Freud frequently resorted to physiological explanations as a means of explaining psychological experience.¹⁰⁵

Finally, the empirical orientation is characterized by the principle of operationism. Operationism is defined as a science which "seeks to define its concepts

¹⁰³Ibid., pp. 19-20.

¹⁰⁴Ibid., pp. 19-20.

¹⁰⁵Ibid., 21-22.

explanations as a means of explaining psychological experience.¹⁰⁶

Finally, the empirical orientation is characterized by the principle of operationism. Operationism is defined as a science which "seeks to define its concepts in such a manner that they can be stated and tested in terms of concrete repeatable operations by independent observers."¹⁰⁷ The impact of operationism is to place both the object and the observer under observation. As a methodology for approaching religious experience, operationism is effective in emphasizing religion's external observable functions, but not in analyzing religion's internal or experiential dimensions.¹⁰⁸

One strength of the empirical orientation of research is its ability to address the problem of control of independent and dependent variables. Statistical verification by a large research sampling, provides a greater sense of reliability to the conclusions of the research. The second major strength of the empirical approach is related to this reliability of conclusions for the task of developing adequate theory to describe human behavior and experience. In a society that is greatly influenced by

¹⁰⁶Ibid., pp. 21-22.

¹⁰⁷Benjamin J. Wolman, Contemporary Theories and Systems in Psychology, p. 504.

¹⁰⁸Hanford, op. cit, p. 23.

the scientific method and statistical verification, the empirical approach to research and theory generation finds rapid acceptance.

The empirical method of research has several weaknesses as well. One of the major losses to a psychology of human experience that is strictly behavioral or empirical in its theory and methodology, is the loss of sensitivity to the experience of the self in relationship to the outer world. The reductionism of empirical methods fail to grasp this importance of the subjective nature of human experience. Within the study of the psychology of religion, failing to explore the subjective nature of religious experience, can produce an idolatrous worship of science as a form of religious passion as well.¹⁰⁹

A second weakness within the empirical orientation is inherent within its belief that it is capable of maintaining complete objective control over the research variables. Variations in the personalities, beliefs, and context of the individual researchers make it virtually impossible to guarantee a completely purified research sampling. It is impossible to completely eliminate the subjective influences upon the researcher in order to secure a totally objective environment. This problem is compounded in research in psychology of religion because

¹⁰⁹David Bakan, On Method, Chapter 14, "Idolatry in Religion and Science."

of the curious inter-relationship between personality and beliefs. The resulting confusion about the way in which a personality affects or is affected by religious beliefs leaves the empirical researcher of religious experience caught in the quandary of subjectivity that he has worked so hard to avoid.¹¹⁰

In contrast to the empirical orientation, the phenomenological approach to research stresses the importance of the mind of the experiencer in determining the content and expression of the experience. The phenomenologist attempts to note not only data which is sensory observable and external, but also is committed to understanding the personhood of the experiencer and his inner world of reality. In contrast to the determinism, operationism, objectivism, and reductionism of the empiricist, the phenomenologist stresses consciousness, experientialism, subjectivism, and anti-reductionism.¹¹¹

The phenomenologist believes that experience is primarily the result of consciousness. The phenomenologist looks for the experiential meaning of an event within the life of the research subject. All aspects of the experience are considered important and equally valid for research. The researcher attempts to "bracket in" his own biases in order to discover the

¹¹⁰Ibid., p 101.

¹¹¹Hanford, op. cit, p. 105.

meaning of the event within the life of the research subject.

The phenomenologist is unwilling to yield to the reductionism that excludes this data which is unobservable or is based on theory which has been transferred from one level of science to another.¹¹²

Within the psychology of religion, the phenomenological approach has many strengths. After bracketing in his own biases, the researcher attempts to scrutinize the assumptions and presuppositions in the mind of the experimenter of the religious phenomena. This enables the researcher to deal simultaneously with both philosophy/theology and psychology in his research endeavor.¹¹³

Secondly, the phenomenologist is interested in the "self concept" of the research subject and its relationship to the religious experience. This commitment allows for a dynamic interchange between the data of the religious experience and the self system of the research subject. Religious experience can therefore be perceived as dynamic and changing across time rather than limited to a static demand for consistency and statistical verifiability. Finally, this focus upon the dynamic interchange between self and religious experience, allows the phenomenological approach to be used as a clinical tool as

¹¹²Ibid., p. 108.

¹¹³Ibid., p. 115.

well. In the hands of a phenomenologist, research in psychology of religion moves from a detached observation and recording of data, to a growth-enhancing interchange between subject and researcher.

Several weaknesses can also be noted with the phenomenological approach. Specifically, that which is meaningful to one individual "self" may have no direct applicability to the rest of humanity. As will be noted later in this dissertation, one of the criticisms of the phenomenological orientation of William James has been that he ignored "normal human religious experience" in his choice to study only religious fanatics.¹¹⁴

A second weakness to the phenomenological method lies in the potential of the research to color the data of his research with his own internal responses. In short, it is possible for two different individuals to observe the same behavioral patterns and produce two entirely different descriptions due to their own internal response to the research subject. Consequently, a valid critique is offered by those who are concerned about the "purity" of the research data.

A final problem within the phenomenological method is found in the inability to adequately define terms like "being," "essence," and "freedom" in ways that provide

¹¹⁴See chapter on Paul Pruyser's dynamic methodology for amplification of this critique of William James.

adequate universal norms of understanding. As these terms are essential within the phenomenological frame of reference, they present some difficulty not only to the empiricist, but to the general lay public in fully understanding the conclusions to which the phenomenologist has come.

Hanford has proposed a synoptic orientation to research that attempts to combine the strengths of both the empirical and the phenomenological methods of research in the psychology of religion. He believes, along with Allport, that both approaches are essential to an adequate psychology of religion. He concludes that his synoptic approach allows the researcher to be objective in recording his data without losing the significance of the data within the experience of the research subject.¹¹⁵

This concludes the survey of the development of the psychoanalytic psychology of religion prior to 1960. The theoretical assumptions of key psychoanalytic theorists have been described and assessed in light of psychoanalytic research methodology. The application of psychoanalytic theory and method to the psychology of religion has been explored with a special awareness of the importance of the case study method of research and the issues within the continuing empirical versus phenomenological debate. The following chapters begin the analysis

¹¹⁵Hanford, op. cit, pp. 197-221.

of the four research methods in use with the psychoanalytic psychology of religion during the last twenty years. These methods will be considered sequentially and identified as: 1. psychohistory, 2. dynamic, 3. clinical and 4. intuitive-speculative. Chapter three follows with an analysis of the psychohistorical method of Erik Erikson.

Chapter 3

The Psychohistorical Method of Erik Erikson

Introduction to the Chapter

This chapter begins the analysis of psychoanalytic research methodology in the psychology of religion during the period 1960 to 1980. The previous chapter summarized the history and basic methodological concerns in the psychoanalytic psychology of religion prior to 1960. From this point on, this research will focus on the contributions made by each of the four selected psychoanalytic methods to the study of psychology of religious experience. This chapter will summarize the contributions of Erik H. Erikson as a representative of psychoanalytically-oriented psychohistory whose research has impacted the field of psychology of religion during the last twenty years. This chapter does not purport to be a detailed or comprehensive evaluation of all of the major contributions of psychohistory, but will describe and evaluate the contributions of Erikson whose research methodology has made primary contribution to the development of the field of psychology of religion.

Psychohistory as Method in Psychology of Religion

Psychohistory has grown and blossomed out of the initial work of Erik H. Erikson and his earliest attempt at establishing a new method blending the insights of the

historian with the searching for motivation and meaning of the psychoanalyst in his work, Young Man Luther: A Study in Psychoanalysis and History, published in 1958 by Norton Press. It must be noted that even though Erikson is probably the most well-known of the early advocates of psychohistory, he has indicated clearly that he does not desire to be associated with everything that gets done in the name of psychohistory.¹ Rather, it has been Erikson's explicit task to develop a methodology in which psychology can be used to enrich the art of biography and in which society can begin to understand what the sources of motivation are in the lives of its great leaders. Acknowledging his belief that all biographers function with an implicit psychology, Erikson has attempted to make the psychological perspective explicit in his methodology of psychohistory.² Trained as a psychoanalyst, Erikson felt that Freud's teachings could contribute to an understanding of humanity's obstacles in the past, as well as believing that history might help psychoanalysis define which of its concepts and constructs were truly universal and which were time-bound.³

¹Erik Erikson, Dimensions of a New Identity: The 1973 Jefferson Lectures in the Humanities, p. 12.

²Paul Roazen, Erik H. Erikson: The Power and Limits of a Vision, p. 73.

³Ibid., p. 74.

The publication of Identity: Youth and Crisis in 1968 (New York: W. W. Norton and Company) continues the articulation begun in Childhood and Society, of the development of Erikson's concept of identity formation. Erikson's heavy emphasis upon the concept of identity has become one significant exposition of the post-Freudian understanding of the role of the ego in identity formation. This post-Freudian orientation has been called the ego psychology school, and its difference from traditional Freudian psychoanalytic thought is to be found most explicitly in the definition of the ego as autonomous and no longer limited just by its conflicts (either individual or cultural) with the superego.⁴ It is Erikson's belief that an individual's identity formation enables him from time to time to transcend the conflicts of the ego with the social order as it has been internalized in the form of the superego. Within his commonly understood eight stages of human development,⁵ the traditional Freudian understanding of the development of the superego is found in Erikson's schema in the third stage of "Initiative Versus Guilt." During this stage, the preoccupation is with the

⁴Peter Homans, Childhood and Selfhood: Essays on Tradition, Religion and Modernity in the Psychology of Erik H. Erikson, p. 25.

⁵The eight stages of the epigenetic life cycle of human development are articulated thoroughly in his Childhood and Society.

resolution of the oedipal conflict. This transcending function of the ego in its development is found in the fifth stage of identity formation according to Erikson's schema.

Erikson differs from the other ego psychologists, however, in his unwillingness to limit his theory of the development of consciousness just to the interplay between psychological structures and institutions in the mind, and his desire to find the social and cultural forces with their motivational, moral and literary characteristics that influence the development of the individual's identity.⁶ Erickson's exploration into the impact of the social environment upon the identity of the individual led him to evaluate the character of whole nations and communities and to ask questions about history, ideology, and the relativities of historical change. This interplay between psychoanalytic theory and cultural reflection became most evident in the publication of his book, Young Man Luther: A Study in Psychoanalysis and History.⁷ It was in Young Man Luther that Erikson provided us with the first example of his application of psychoanalytic theory to history and biography which has come to characterize the method of psychohistory.

⁶Ibid, pp. 25-26.

⁷Erik Erickson, Young Man Luther: A Study in Psychoanalysis and History, p. 26.

As Erikson then began to expand his application of psychohistorical method in his study of Gandhi, he became interested in the development of ethical concerns within human identity formation as well. In a prelude to his intensive work on Gandhi, Erikson began to see some important aspects of the development of human ethical awareness that paralleled his earlier epigenetic principle. Erikson proposed that within the stages of man's life cycle, the developing youth is not only struggling with issues of identity and a capacity for fidelity, but is also learning how to take a stand beside certain people for ideological purposes. Again, as in his earlier work, the concept of ritualization emerged as the explanation for how the growing social conscience develops.⁸ Briefly, Erikson sees the child moving through the stages of infancy, early childhood, play age, school age, adolescence and young adulthood while developing a growing social conscience that is initially quite numinous in quality and gradually passes through stages characterized by judicial, dramatic, and culminating in formal ideological constructs.⁹

Definition, Purpose, and Goals of Psychohistory

Psychohistory as it has evolved in its current form, reflects the influence of Erik Erikson. Each indi-

⁸Robert Coles, *op. cit.*, pp. 286-289.

⁹*Ibid.*, p. 289.

vidual psychohistorian has developed his own unique definition of the discipline, and his own particular goals and methodology, but a comprehensive definition of psychohistory, as offered by John E. Mack, reflects the influence of Erikson's method and model. Mack describes the psychohistorian as the individual who is concerned with the relationship of the psychological or intrapsychic systems in interaction with the social systems as they have influenced the individual biography in the group being studied. Mack defines psychohistory as

the study of the interaction of the several systems in the evolution of historical events and change. These include the psychology of the individual being studied; the intrafamilial, cultural, and historical influences upon his development; the individual and collective psychologies of the persons (citizens) he affects; the psychology of the psychologist-historian himself; and, finally, the relation of all these to the reader for whom the work is intended.¹⁰

Lloyd deMause points to the precarious place of psychohistory on the borderland between history and psychology and states that psychohistory becomes the science of historical motivation. Though it may focus on the same historical events that written history covers, its purpose is never limited to describing just what happened one day after another, but rather to focus on why the particular

¹⁰John E. Mack, M.D., "Psychoanalysis and Historical Biography," The Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association, Vol. 19 (1) (1971), p. 177.

event happened.¹¹ Furthermore, psychohistory as a science is to be seen ultimately as "problem centered" while history tends to be limited just to the physical events of a specific historical period. The psychohistorian frequently is found asking questions about the motivation of the individual, questions which are frequently never found in the history books themselves. Within any piece of psychohistorical writing, there is ultimately a heavy concentration of "motivational analysis" sometimes to the neglect of the physical events of history itself.¹²

Weinstein and Platt helped to discriminate the relationship between history and psychology further when they state that both history and psychology are concerned with social conflict as it occurs in its two basic forms: conflict between the individual and society, and conflict between and among groups within society. If the study of competition and conflict in groups is the primary concern of the historian, the study and analysis of conflicts between individuals and society is the primary concern of the psychologist or psychoanalyst.¹³ In the field of psychology, psychoanalytic ego psychology has developed as

¹¹Lloyd deMause, "The Independence of Psychohistory," in Lloyd D. deMause (ed.), The New Psychohistory, pp. 7-10.

¹²Ibid., pp. 8-9.

¹³Fred Weinstein and Gerald M. Platt, "The Coming Crisis in Psychohistory," Of Modern History, Vol. 47, (2), (June 1975), p. 202.

psychoanalysis became concerned with how the individual oriented himself to social objects and to the adaptive abilities by which people began to cope with problems of reality. Ego psychology therefore moved beyond the earlier psychoanalytic emphasis on drives and defense mechanisms in order to begin the process of integrating the intrapsychic and the social levels of analysis.¹⁴ Psychohistory has developed currently as that discipline attempting to add the historical dimension of analysis as the individual biography is considered for unusual individuals attempting to cope with their social environment and their intrapsychic forces.

Erikson has defined the purpose of psychohistory as "an attempt to fit the identity conflicts of a particular leader with the identity problems of an historical era."¹⁵ John E. Mack says this purpose of the psychohistorian is important for diagnostic, clinical, theoretical, and social reasons.¹⁶

Methodology in Psychohistory

Lloyd deMause describes the process of data collection in psychohistory as being somewhat different from

¹⁴Ibid. ¹⁵Paul Roazen, *op.cit.*, p. 83.

¹⁶See John E. Mack, M.D. "Psychoanalysis and Biography: Aspects of a Developing Affinity," The Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association, Vol. 28, (3), (1980), pp. 554-599 for an expansion on the importance of these four uses of psychohistory.

the accumulation of data for other historical studies. Psychohistory begins first of all by defining the problems that are interesting to its own internal development, and then formulating hypotheses or hunches from the very limited available evidence to solve these problems. Traditional historical methodology involves a more patient accumulation of piles of data or facts and then developing categories which describe the themes that the facts seem to point to. The goal of the psychohistorian becomes to test his hypothesis by applying the data of history as it is known to the specific psychological orientation that he is using in his hypothesis about the origin and nature of the motivation of the individual under study.¹⁷ Consequently the psychohistorian is left with the task of not only conforming to the usual standards of historical research, but also attempting to prove the validity of his psychological orientation as well.

It can be seen from this double burden of proof within the methodology of psychohistory, that the psychohistorian must be versed in the full range of tools, not only of historical research, but also of developmental psychology.¹⁸ Furthermore, the methodology of discovery

¹⁷Lloyd deMause, "The Independence of Psychohistory," in The New Psychohistory, Lloyd deMause, ed., p. 12.

¹⁸Ibid.

in psychohistory is different from that of other sciences in its expectation that the researcher will use his own emotional response to both the historical and clinical data as a crucial research tool for the discovery. The researcher's feelings become as much a part of his research equipment as his eyes and hands and his own personal awareness of the degree of his own emotional development will dramatically influence the outcome of his research. For this reason it has been suggested that a personal self-analysis might be considered as a prerequisite in the training and preparation for doing psychohistory.¹⁹

A recent evaluation of the varieties of psychohistorical study to date, has revealed that there are four primary methodologies being used in psychohistorical research. Robert J. Lifton describes these four methodological approaches or "paradigms" as the: 1) prehistorical paradigm, 2) the individual psychopathological paradigm, 3) "the great man in history" paradigm, and 4) the shared psychohistorical themes paradigm.²⁰ The first two paradigms reflect a clear Freudian influence while the other

¹⁹Ibid., pp. 13, 23.

²⁰Robert J. Lifton, "On Psychohistory," in Explorations in Psychohistory: The Wellfleet Papers, Robert J. Lifton, ed. pp. 24-37.

two paradigms tend to move away from pure Freudian assumptions.

The prehistorical paradigm relies heavily on the concept of repetition-compulsion and implicitly denies that anything new occurs in history. This model is heavily mythic and transcendent and is based upon a prehistorical or primeval enactment of Freud's theory of the oedipus complex. Therefore, psychohistorical analysis done from the prehistorical model tends to see into the individual circumstances of each man as re-enactment of this great mythic theme.²¹

Lifton describes the second Freudian paradigm, as those analyses which interpret the outcomes

of major historical events as expressions of the individual psychopathology of a particular national leader . . . (and) when this second paradigm dominates, psychopathology becomes a substitute for the psychohistorical interface.²²

Freud's own psychohistorical work of the lives of Leonardo and Dostoevsky, as well as the collaborative effort with Bullitt on the life of Woodrow Wilson, are seen by Lifton as classic examples of this individual psychopathology paradigm. In essence history becomes the personification of the same intrapsychic struggles that are observed in the psychoanalytic therapy hour, yet as Lifton indicates the temptation to a closed system reductionism may con-

²¹Ibid., pp. 24-25.

²²Ibid., p. 26.

tribute some limited interpretation of history but runs the risk of eliminating any interpretations which see mankind as essentially creative or innovative.²³ The methodology of the individual psychopathological paradigm is based upon Freud's concept of the "return of the repressed," and the assumption that man automatically reveals his personal history as he engages in free association. The psychohistorian using this paradigm reads into the personal biography examples of this tendency to "return to the repressed" and to free associate and reduces history to nothing but recurrence.²⁴

The third methodological paradigm is described as "the great man in history" paradigm and is seen as post-Freudian. Erik Erikson is given as the supreme example of this methodological approach to psychohistory. Erikson has not lost perspective of the importance upon the inner conflicts of the individual--the great man--but has expanded the methodology of psychohistory by attempting to place a special emphasis on the study of the great man within his specific historical content. It is because of this dual focus of analysis that this paradigm is described as the great man in history.²⁵ Erikson's method of psychohistory attempts to define the intersection of

²³Ibid., pp. 26-27.

²⁴Ibid.

²⁵Ibid., p. 27.

the individual and the collective histories at the exact time or turning point in the individual's life. Erikson's two profound contributions to psychohistory, his study of Martin Luther and his study of Gandhi, both attempt to show how each of these great men in their own individual identity struggles, captured the essence of the identity struggle of the collective group of which they were a part. In his own words, Erikson describes his belief that Luther was engaged in a desperate effort to "lift his individual patienthood to the level of the universal one, and to try to solve for all what he could not solve for himself alone."²⁶ This interrelationship between the great man and his society was a theme that even Freud recognized as early as his book Moses and Monotheism (1939) when he said, "The great man influences his contemporaries in two ways: through his personality and through the idea for which he stands"--an idea which may "lay stress on an old group of wishes in the masses, or point to a new aim for their wishes."²⁷ However, Erikson differed from Freud precisely at this point, in his unwillingness to limit his view of the great man as appealing only to instinctual wishes, and with his sense that the great man frequently struggles with how to remake himself and his world.²⁸

²⁶Ibid., p. 29.

²⁷Ibid., p. 28.

²⁸Ibid., pp. 28-29.

The fourth paradigm used to describe some psychohistorical work is that of the shared psychohistorical themes paradigm. The shared themes approach is also based upon a psychoanalytically oriented understanding of individuals. It differs from the great man paradigm in its willingness to move even further outward from the individual into the direction of the collective historical experience. It rejects the simplistic mechanistic understanding of man as hopelessly propelled by instinctive drives and energy, and constantly being held in check by defensive mechanisms.

The shared themes approach attempts to deal with what Lifton calls the "trinity of universality." By this trinity of universality, Lifton is referring to the belief that all shared behavior must be analyzed on the basis of 1) that which is related to the psychobiological questions of all men and all historical epics, 2) the specific cultural emphasis in style or uniqueness of the behavior as evolved by a particular group of people over several centuries, and 3) the significance of the recent and contemporary historical influences of the culture upon the behavior in question.²⁹ In using the shared theme psychohistorical approach, the analyst must be aware that any shared event is a combination of all three of these com-

²⁹Lifton, p. 32.

ponents, which is to say that nothing is purely universal or cultural-historical, or contemporary-historical.³⁰ The methodology of the shared themes approach relies heavily upon adaptations of the interview method, and frequently involves the research taking initiative to move out and to interview large groups of people struggling with a common theme of cultural adaptation, who have not necessarily sought the help of the researcher. The life experiences of these individuals though usually psychologically disturbing have wider significance than any individual incapacitation. The interview method rarely parallels that of the traditional doctor-patient interview, but emerges into a more open dialogue between the researcher and the individual he is interviewing, and becomes more expansive in nature. The methodology is a blending of empirical and phenomenological research. Specific data is combined with speculative theory to produce a sense of the relationship between man and his history while attempting to eliminate some of the artificial boundaries between the two.³¹

In summation, the four paradigms of psychohistorical research began to reflect the Freudian and post-

³⁰Ibid.

³¹Ibid., pp. 31-32. The reader is invited to return the edited volume by Robert J. Lifton entitled Explorations in Psychohistory: The Wellfleet Papers to read several examples of the shared themes paradigm of psychohistory.

Freudian understandings of historical causation. The Freudian paradigms, or the prehistorical and the individual psychopathological paradigms, rely heavily upon a commitment to theory based upon instinctive energies and struggles and oedipal conflicts. Whether limited to a prehistorical generational conflict, or whether interpreted as the psychopathology of a leading historical person, the Freudian biophysical theory of instincts prevails. The two post-Freudian paradigms, or the great man and shared theme approaches, are less reductionistic and more heavily influenced by social psychological theories. The great man paradigm seeks to find historical causation within the individual leader's experience and his attempts to transcend his own intrapsychic conflicts for himself and his contemporaries. The shared themes approach becomes highly abstract with the relationship between cause and effect sometimes becoming virtually indistinguishable.³² Lifton prophesies that due to the increasing level of abstraction as one moves from the first to the fourth paradigm, that there will likewise be seen increasing resistance on the part of those who might criticize the methodology of psychohistory. For as the method becomes more abstract, our understanding of the interrelationships between the forces that make history becomes increasingly complex.³³

³²Ibid., pp. 35-36.

³³Ibid., p. 40.

Erik Erikson's Contributions to the Methodology of Psychohistory

As indicated in the previous section, Erikson's primary contribution to psychohistory is in the establishment of a clear methodological procedure for doing the "great man " paradigm of psychohistorical analysis. Erikson was indebted initially to Freud's understanding of the development of ego autonomy, however, he differentiated his thought from Freud's in describing the effects of ego autonomy throughout the life cycle instead of limiting it solely to childhood. Contrary to Freud, Erikson did not believe there was a single universal psychic content that people expressed in their behavior, but rather described a process of interaction between the developing ego and the various aspects of the social environment.³⁴

Secondly, Erikson differed from Freud in his belief that neurotic disturbances in human personalities are influenced by cultural and historical factors, and are therefore not necessarily constant over the duration of the individual's life.³⁵

Thirdly, due to the changes in society at large, Erikson felt that a continuation of emphasis on the Victo-

³⁴Fred Weinstein, "On the Social Function of Intellectuals: A Consideration of Erik H. Erikson's Contribution to Psychoanalysis and Psychohistory," in New Directions in Psychohistory: The Adelphi Papers in Honor of Erik Erikson, edited by Mel Albin, et. al., p. 9.

³⁵Ibid., p. 10.

rian inhibition of sexual attitudes so prevalent in Freud's theories, was no longer the determinative force in twentieth century society. Consequently the intrapsychic conflict of the ego interacting with social reality was no longer limited merely to the repression of infantile sexuality. It was Erikson's belief that a new theoretical and clinical orientation to the relationship of the personality and the social environment should be built upon an emphasis upon identity formation and identity crisis instead.³⁶

Consequently he developed a schedule of stages in the life cycle that described a process of coming to equilibrium between opposing psychic tendencies with age specific issues to be confronted. Each successive level or stage within Erikson's psychosocial scheme, is affected by but not necessarily limited to the successful resolution of the issues at each previous stage. Each stage presents the growing ego with new challenges and potential vulnerabilities that are qualified in part by the nature of the resolution of the previous stage.

The stages of adolescence and early adulthood achieve a new importance in Erikson's schema because these two stages represent the resolution of the "identity crisis" as the subject goes through the process of the

³⁶Ibid., p. 10.

identity defining choices of vocation and mate selection. In this crisis of late adolescence the conflict and tensions of earlier psychic growth are reworked and redefined in light of the prevailing personal familial, and social environmental factors. Erikson felt that if this stage of identity crisis was more deeply disturbed than the usual throes of adolescent anxiety, it was due primarily to the manner in which one of the parents was interacting with the child. Erikson stated that this type of intense crisis came commonly because a parent "out of an inner affinity and an insurmountable outer distance has selected this child as the particular child who must justify the parent" and who by "an all-pervasive presence and brutal decisiveness of judgment" precipitates the child into a "fatal struggle for his own identity."³⁷

More specifically and decisively, Erikson is responsible for the reversal of the classical drives--reality paradigm. The instincts or drives are important, but must be viewed as subordinate to the more basic problem of social conflict. Social conflict comes when the individual senses that he is threatened by the inadequacy of his behavior in a particular context. Therefore,

³⁷Cushing Strout, "Ego Psychology and the Historian," History and Theory, Vol. 7 (3), (1968), p. 284 and Erik H. Erikson, "The Problem of Ego Identity," in "Identity and the Life Cycle: Selected Papers," Psychological Issues, Vol. 1.

social conflict can and does stimulate unusual and unwellcome drive and affective experiences in people. These experiences not only bring to mind the ineffective solution of earlier crises, but present the opportunity for new solutions resulting in greater personal freedom and changed self-image.³⁸

The Eriksonian framework provides the psychohistorian with several easily identifiable issues

Ideological Turmoil; a Psychic 'Moratorium' or postponement; an overcommitment to a wrong choice; a harking back in the identity crisis to the shame and doubt of an earlier stage of emotional development; a perfectionist conscience that inhibits helpful apprenticeships; and the expression of over-identification with troublesome parental figures. Tracing the course of this crisis, the historian stays alert to the way in which private and public matters intermingle, each inbuing itself to some extent with the nature of the other.³⁹

Furthermore, the psychohistorian using Erikson's psychosocial stages of development finds himself focusing in on four points identified by Erikson as critical aspects of the identity crisis:

- 1) the neurotic ego has 'fallen prey to overidentification and to faulty identifications with disturbed parents';
- 2) a parent of dominating presence who selects a child to justify himself precipitates in the child a struggle for his identity;
- 3) the crisis is often reached when the young person 'half realizes that he is fatally over-committed to what he is not';
- and 4) the resolution of early childhood issues, when shame and doubt are in tension with feelings of auton-

³⁸Fred Weinstein, and Gerald M. Platt, "The Coming Crisis in Psychohistory," The Journal of Modern History, Vol. 47 (2), (June 1975), pp. 215-216.

³⁹Cushing Strout, op. cit., p. 285.

omy will 'determine much of a man's future ability to combine an unimpaired will with ready self-discipline, rebellion with responsibility.' . . . It is necessary, furthermore, to show the specific difficulties in this child's involvement with his parent, to see why this father had these hopes for his child, and to show that the crisis of the symptoms did coincide with the troubled discovery of an overcommitment.⁴⁰

The advantages of the Eriksonian schema over the Freudian quest for "prehistoric" evidence is in the usefulness of the identity crisis concept and the less deterministic way in which it refuses to subordinate the later stages of life to those of early childhood.⁴¹

The first rule of thumb for the Eriksonian psychohistorian is related to the concept of countertransference. Erikson believed that the author of a psychohistorical study must be honest with his own relationship to the portion of history that he is studying and should indicate his motives without undue mushiness or apology.⁴² Erikson felt that psychotherapeutic encounter was best described as "disciplined subjectivity" and sees a very close affinity between the psychoanalyst and the historian. This methodological "disciplined subjectivity" also pervades the work of the psychohistorian.⁴³ Erikson seems to have developed his methodology of psychohistory in

⁴⁰Ibid., p. 287.

⁴¹Ibid., p. 292.

⁴²Paul Roazen, op. cit., p. 74.

⁴³Erik H. Erikson, "On the Nature of Psychohistorical Evidence: In Search of Gandhi," Daedalus, Vol. 97 (3) (Summer 1968), p. 695.

light of his awareness of the subjective nature of the quest, and only began to make his methodology explicit after the publication of his first major psychohistorical work, Young Man Luther. As his next major psychohistorical work developed in his study of Gandhi, he became aware of what he later called the rule of complementarity that describes the interrelationship of four basic conditions under which an historical record emerges.⁴⁴ These four conditions are:

- 1) the importance of the record in the moment of the recorder's stage of life and 2) in the recorder's life history, and 3) the importance of the record in the state of the recorder's community at large, and 4) the importance of the record in the recorder's community's history.

Erikson offers the following diagram to more clearly show the interrelation between individual and community responses at the moment of the time of the record and over the sequence of the individual or community's long term history.⁴⁵ This diagrammatic box describes what Erikson called the "concomitant variability" of the passing moment and long range trend of the individual life cycle and communal development.⁴⁶

⁴⁴Ibid., p. 702

⁴⁵Ibid., p. 702

⁴⁶Ibid., p. 703.

	I. Moment	II. Sequence
I. Individual	in the stage and conditions of the individual (recorder, reviewer, follower, or other historical analogy) life . . .	in the sequence of the individual (recorder, reviewer, follower or other historical analogy) life history. . .
2. Community	in the specific moment of the individual's (recorder, reviewer, follower or other historical analogy) community life . . .	in the life long history of the community of the individual (recorder, reviewer, follower or other historical analogy.)

By this he means the method of psychohistory becomes a study of both individual and collective life using the combined methods of psychoanalysis and history. There are essentially four components of the psychohistorical methodology as this grid of complementarity is applied. First, he examines the life of the subject (recorder) of the psychohistorical study. Secondly, he examines the author (reviewer) of the psychohistorical study, namely, the psychohistorian. Thirdly the followers or community of the subject of this study are studied and fourthly, analogies are drawn from the lives and life events of other people in other historical eras to that of the primary subject of this study. This grid containing four quadrants needs to be drawn in the mind of the psychohistorian in order to understand his own subjective interest in the subject of the psychohistory, and to

understand the importance of the life crisis to both the subject of the study and his followers. Thus, the psychohistorian projects his interpretation of the impact of this crisis in the life of a great man on to the lives and cultures of other great men, and the analogy thus drawn is more clearly understood.⁴⁷ Erikson cautions the psychohistorian with the following words

If all this sounds self-indulgently personal, it is spelled out here only far enough to remind the psychohistorian that his choice of subject often originates in early ideals or identifications and that it may be important for him to accept as well as he can some deeper bias than can be argued out on the level of verifiable fact or faultless methodology. I believe, in fact, that any man projects or comes to project on the men and the times he studies some un-lived portions and often the unrealized selves of his own life, not to speak of what William James called the "murdered self." The psychohistorian may owe it to history, as well as to himself to be more conscious of what seems to be a re-transference on former selves probably inescapable in any remembering, recording, or reviewing and to learn to live and to work in the light of such consciousness.⁴⁸

Analysis of Criticisms of the Psychohistorical Method

Within the history of the development of psychohistory and especially since the publication of Young Man Luther by Erik Erikson in 1958, several major criticisms and limitations have been observed within the psychohistorical methodology. A survey of the major critics of psychohistory reveals that ten major criticisms keep sur-

⁴⁷Ibid., pp. 708-729.

⁴⁸Ibid., p. 713.

facing against the use of psychohistory as a form of both historical and psychological research.

A frequent argument against psychohistory as a tool of historical research is the lack of availability of data of the type normally used in historical research. Psychohistorical method is not good history because it relies too heavily upon subjective interpretations about early life experiences. Accurate data about the individual's early childhood and youth, so essential to the psychological theorizing of psychohistory, is hard to come by.⁴⁹

Similar to the concern about the availability of accurate and objective historical data, is the issue of the adequacy of the data used in psychohistory. This critique points to the necessity of some kind of textual and contextual awareness that is rarely within the expertise of the psychohistorian. The question is raised whether the psychohistorian is guilty of seeing the data through the filters of his own cultural heritage and thereby distorting the data.⁵⁰

⁴⁹See John E. Mack, "Psychoanalysis and Historical Biography," The Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association, Vol. 9 (1) (1971) p. 174 for examples of how this critique has been applied.

⁵⁰See Michael Franz Basch, "Symposium and Review of David E. Stannard, Shrinking History: On Freud and the Failure of Psychohistory." in The Psychohistory Review, Vol. 98 (2) (Winter 1980), p. 137 and John E. Mack, "Psychoanalysis and Biography: Aspects of a Developing

A third criticism offered focuses upon the problems of blending expertise in more than one area of social science in doing adequate analysis of the data. The psychohistorian must be an acknowledged expert in both the research methods of history and psychoanalysis, and be able to selectively interpret the same piece of data within both frames of reference.⁵¹

The empirical and phenomenological controversy is realized in psychohistorical research in the inability to adequately control the researcher's own personality and biases in interpreting the research data. Erikson has attempted to expose this issue and aggressively define the psychohistorian's biases and reactions in his methodology.⁵²

A penetrating critique of psychohistorical methodology focuses upon the lack of unconscious dimensions of the subject's personality, so critical to psychoanalytic method. Without the tools of free association and dreams,

Affinity," The Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association, Vol. 28 (3) (1980), p. 548f. for examples of this critique of psychohistorical methodology.

⁵¹See John E. Mack, op. cit., 1971, p. 174 for expansion of this methodological problem.

⁵²See Weinstein and Platt, op. cit., p. 220 and Cushing Strout, op. cit., p. 295 for examples of this critique.

the heart of psychoanalytic technique is absent from psychohistorical research.⁵³

A sixth critique of psychohistorical methodology is its inability to confirm theoretical interpretations through dialogue with the research subject. Subjective interpretation plays a dynamic role in therapy, but is neutralized in psychohistorical research which does not deal with live patients.⁵⁴

Psychoanalytic theory defines abnormality and deviant behavior in terms of certain cultural determinants. Another critique of psychohistory points to those occasional instances in which the researcher neglects to interpret his data in light of these cultural variances, and superimposes assumptions which are not necessarily accurate to the specific case.⁵⁵

A scathing critique has been offered against psychohistorical studies that are limited only to Freudian psychoanalytic theory. Psychoanalysis has tended to reify

⁵³John E. Mack, op. cit., 1971, p. 174 and Michael Basch, op. cit., p. 138 address this problem most effectively.

⁵⁴See Weinstein and Platt, op. cit., p. 221 for a discussion of this issue.

⁵⁵See Martin S. Bergmann, "Limitations of Method in Psychoanalytic Biography: A Historical Enquiry." The Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association, Vol. 21 (4) (1973), p. 847 for a discussion of this issue as well as the manner in which the tripartite structure of psychoanalytic personality theory influences research conclusions.

clinical observations in a manner that takes assumptions about psychic mechanisms and transmutes them into autonomous entities which is offensive to non-psychoanalytic systems.⁵⁶

Due to its close relationship to psychoanalytic thought, theory and practice, some of the critics of psychohistory have resorted to assessing the value of psychoanalysis as a therapeutic approach. These critics quote studies challenging the overall efficacy of psychoanalysis in comparison to other theoretical orientations.⁵⁷

Finally, psychohistory's relationship to psychoanalysis has been criticized because of the reductionistic aspects of psychoanalytic theory. Using Karl Popper's criteria of "refutation,"⁵⁸ psychoanalysis has been falsely accused of being a closed system, more akin to a religion than a science. The recent additions to the psychoanalytic theory by Heinz Kohut and Otto Kernberg in their description of the narcissistic and borderline personalities, illustrate the manner in which psychoanalysis

⁵⁶See Michael Basch, *op. cit.*, p.140 and Weinstein and Platt, *op. cit.*, pp. 215 and 221 for this critique.

⁵⁷Basch, *op. cit.*, pp. 140-141.

⁵⁸See pages 54, 55 of this text.

has concurred with the Popperian criterion for open-ended growth.⁵⁹

One of the creative outcomes of the dialogue between the critics and the proponents of psychohistory is the proposition by Michael Basch that the future of psychohistory will probably be found in a process that both jettisons those aspects of psychoanalytic technique that do in fact mar psychohistory, as well as the integration of non-psychoanalytic psychology in a re-definition of psychohistory. Basch suggests that the empirically verifiable Freudian personality traits of adults do have some definite explanatory power for the biographer of adult personalities, but may in fact be simplistic or reductionistic when applied haphazardly and randomly to speculations about the adult's early childhood experience. There have been successful attempts to employ alternative theoretical systems like social learning theory and cognitive dissonance theory to the interpretation of past life experiences in more current psychohistorical literature. Basch concludes his assessment by proposing that psychohistorical literature be re-defined as

a form of history which explicitly uses the concepts, principles, and theories of psychology to explain the past. This definition allows an eclectic use of psychoanalytic theory and includes other forms of psychology. This definition has the advantage of claiming psychohistory for history; that is, psychohistory must

⁵⁹Ibid., p. 142f.

share with history a disciplined and critical approach to the past. So defined, psychohistory would exclude the "oracular" and personal psychohistorical quest . . . and would exclude those who seek to use a psychological interpretation of the past as a therapeutic tool for the improvement of the future. And it would exclude exercises in applied psychoanalysis.⁶⁰

John Mack counteracts his assessment of the limitations of psychohistory by also including four major potential contributions of psychoanalysis to biography so that his analysis includes both the strengths and the limits of psychohistory. First of all he believes that psychoanalysis provides a helpful developmental schema which can be brought to bear upon the study of a biographical subject and show how each human life follows in predictable patterns. Psychoanalysis can enrich the study of a human life by pointing to possible influences of family and childhood experiences to activity and decisions made later in life.⁶¹

Secondly, psychoanalytic theory is based on an understanding of the human psyche as the product of conflicting forces. With this conflict orientation, psychoanalysis can be of some value in understanding how each individual attempts to overcome the limitations of life, deal with the painful experiences of life, and master fear in the pursuit of his or her career. The relationship of

⁶⁰Ibid., pp. 149-150.

⁶¹John Mack, *op. cit.*, 1971, p. 175.

unsettled internal struggles to the life choices and actions is clarified by the application of psychoanalytic theory to historical study. The manner in which internal conflicts have resulted in creative activity or impaired functioning is also clearly elucidated in this fashion.⁶²

Mack is joined by Cushing Strout in concluding that the developments of ego psychology have enriched both psychoanalytic theory and psychohistorical methodology through its attempts to provide a clearer understanding of ego development.⁶³ As has already been stated, Erikson's contributions to ego psychology and to psychohistory were most helpful in the manner in which he defined the ego's development in relationship to the social environment.

John Mack concludes his analysis by showing the validity and importance of integrating psychoanalysis with historical biography in attempting to understand the determinants which result in various forms of political leadership. It is his belief that psychoanalysis is most effective in explaining the origins of aggression and hatred, sexuality and object relationships, and the inter-relationship of narcissism and perverted self-esteem. When applied to the study of significant political leaders, psychohistory contributes an understanding in

⁶²Ibid.

⁶³Cushing Strout, op cit., p. 282.

developmental terms of the psychological and social conditions, which bring about a restrictive, destructive, tyranny or, contribute to constructive and creative leadership.⁶⁴

A final observation illustrates psychohistory's importance to researchers and other disciplines in helping them to understand the manner in which their own conscious and unconscious selves react to the subjects that they are studying and thereby, influence their research. If the goal of research in the social sciences is to arrive at a truthful assessment of the life of an individual or group, it is important for the researcher to be aware of the manner in which he is personally reacting to the data he is studying. Psychoanalysis and psychohistory have demanded an awareness of the researcher's own innermost thoughts and feelings. This dimension of self knowledge has only served to enhance the credibility of the researcher and to enrich the product of that research.

Before concluding this section on the critical assessment of the psychohistorical methodology, it is important to consider how psychohistory has been assessed in light of other historical genres. Donald Capps⁶⁵ has

⁶⁴Mack, op. cit., 1971, p. 175-176.

⁶⁵Donald Capps, "Psychohistory and Historical Genres: The Plight and Promise of Eriksonian Biography," in Peter Homans (ed.), Childhood and Selfhood: Essays on Tradition, Religion, and Modernity in the Psychology of Erik H. Erikson, pp. 194-195.

attempted to establish a relationship between psychohistory and narrative history. Aside from the frequent indulgence in clinical rhetoric, which is considered inappropriate in historical narrative, Capps does believe there are some common points of similarity between psychohistory and some forms of historical narrative history. Specifically Capps attempts to differentiate psychohistory from three subgroups of narrative history: special study, family history, and historical biography. Capps states:

The mere pronouncement that psychohistory is not conventional narrative history is not enough. One must proceed beyond this assertion to set forth arguments for the view that psychohistory is not traditional narrative history, but a different genre subject to different criteria. . . . However, there is no real consensus among these proponents as to which genre this is; the most persuasive cases are being made for the special study, family history, and biography.⁶⁶

In comparing psychohistory with "special studies" in narrative history, Capps sees the distinguishing feature of the special study as a concern for methodology.⁶⁷ The necessity of a coherent story line which characterizes conventional narrative history is bypassed in view of the special emphasis upon methodology. Capps refers to Jacques Barzun for his definition of special study:

Special studies take up questions that are of small scope, or obscure, or moot, or time consuming, or requiring uncommon knowledge to pursue. . . . The special study may involve primary research, but it may also be a distillation from well known sources never before interrogated on the subject in question.

⁶⁶Ibid.

⁶⁷Ibid., p. 196.

Hence, a psychohistorical study informed by a psychological theory may organize known biographical facts in a new way. Or it might take two or more pieces of evidence that earlier biographers considered contradictory and show how this evidence, when combined, identifies a previously overlooked psychological conflict in the biographical subject. In these examples, psychohistory functions like any other special study in taking up questions that require uncommon knowledge (usually a psychological concept or theory) to pursue. But, more important than the employment of uncommon knowledge, as such, is the fact that psychohistory emphasizes methodological rather than narrative concerns. While the biographer offers a narrative account of the life in question, the psychohistorian takes a methodological approach, applying a psychological theory to historical data.⁶⁸

Capps continues to use Jacques Barzun's criteria in defining psychohistory as special study:

1) The special student's canons of evidence must equal the historian's in rigor; 2) The conclusion or diagnosis must be in the common tongue or translatable into it; 3) Any comparative treatment of periods, events, or ideas must be warranted by a preponderance of concrete similarities and must not merely play with abstractions or imagery; and 4) any system or method employed in obtaining the results must not be so embedded in them as to compel belief in both or none,-- for example, a special study may use Freudian theory if in the study the elements of description and explanation are readily separable.⁶⁹

The second genre which Capps analyzes in comparison to psychohistory is that of the family history. Considered a "new genre," requiring "different kinds of evidence and different ways of handling sources," the emergence of family history has been characterized by an attempt to find a place of central importance for the family

⁶⁸Ibid., 196.

⁶⁹Ibid., p. 197.

within the study of psychohistory.⁷⁰ Family history is an attempt to find a midpoint between an indepth life history and group history. The unique contribution of psychohistory to family history is in its application of psychoanalytic theory as a way of drawing attention to the universal features within all family situations.⁷¹ The importance of sociological investigations coupled with psychological inquiry is very important in the application of psychohistory as a form of family history.⁷²

Utilizing the work of several current family historians, like Bruce Mazlish and John Demos,⁷³ Capps attempts to show how psychohistory, especially that form used by Erikson, is used effectively in helping to describe the early childhood environment impinging upon the developmental tasks of each person and functioning as a primary socializing agent in virtually every society.⁷⁴

The proponents of the theory that psychohistory is a form of family history tend to place heavy emphasis on the family's role as a social organization frustrating the

⁷⁰Ibid., pp. 199-200.

⁷¹Ibid., p. 201.

⁷²Ibid.

⁷³Bruce Mazlish, "What is Psychohistory?" Transactions of the Royal Historical Society of London, Fifth Series, 21 (1971), pp. 87-88 and John Demos, "Developmental Perspectives on the History of Childhood," in The Family in History: Inter-disciplinary Essays, (eds.) Theodore K. Rabb and Robert I. Rotberg, pp. 133f.

⁷⁴Capps, op. cit., pp. 201-204.

ideals of the larger society. The family becomes that institution which is responsible for introducing the non-rational element into what is otherwise a very rational socialization process.⁷⁵ Capps concludes that if psychohistory is to be viewed as a form of family history, then values take on added importance. Capps appears undecided as to whether or not psychohistory is in fact a form of family history, because so much responsibility appears to be placed upon the family as the instigator of social conflict and frustrated social visions. In his own psychohistorical assessment of Abraham Lincoln, Donald Capps came to the conclusion that in Lincoln's life, the family functioned as a reinforcer of the greater social values of Lincoln's society.⁷⁶

The final form of historical narrative that psychohistory is compared with is the historical biography. For those individuals who find points of similarity between these two genres, the intended goal of both psychohistory and historical biography is to provide an account of the subject's life. The difference is that psychohistory tends to use modern dynamic psychology, especially psychoanalysis, whereas historical biography

⁷⁵Ibid., p. 204.

⁷⁶Donald Capps, "The Myth of Father Abraham: Psychosocial Influences in the Formation of Lincoln Biography," in Encounter with Erikson, (ed.) Donald Capps, Walter H. Capps, and M. Gerald Bradford.

does not attempt to actively integrate any psychological perspective.⁷⁷ It is within this group that John Mack, referred to extensively in the previous section of this analysis, is to be found.

Capps believes that it was the publication of Erikson's book, Young Man Luther that precipitated the debate as to whether or not psychoanalytic ideas are appropriate in biographical studies.⁷⁸ The employment of a very explicit explanatory apparatus, namely psychoanalysis, in the assessment of individual life history, is the discriminating factor distinguishing psychohistory from traditional historical biography. It is believed that this explanatory apparatus in fact controls the direction of the narrative. Capps indicates that no biography is purely descriptive for, "the requirement of a coherent narrative structure necessitates an explanatory apparatus that can account for the continuity of the life over time."⁷⁹ Conventional narrative has an implicit explanatory apparatus, whereas in psychohistorical studies, the explanatory apparatus is explicitly that of psychoanalysis.⁸⁰ The presence of psychological explanatory apparatuses is not determinative for psychohistory unless that apparatus is used to explain the role of

⁷⁷Capps, op. cit., p. 205.

⁷⁸Ibid.

⁷⁹Ibid., p. 206.

⁸⁰Ibid.

psychological conflicts in the formation and development of the subject's life.

According to Capps the psychohistory of individual lives differs from historical biography because of the emphasis upon the recognition and analysis of the "syndrome of conflicts" influencing the development of each individual life. Narrative becomes subordinate to this interpretation of psychological conflict.⁸¹ Because of this subordinate role of narrative, Capps believes that psychohistory is more adequately described as a type of special study or family history rather than as historical biography.⁸²

Critical Assessment of Erikson's Methodology in Young Man Luther and Gandhi's Truth

Many of the criticisms offered of Erik Erikson's two primary psychohistorical works, Young Man Luther and Gandhi's Truth are similar to the assessments made of psychohistorical methodology in general. Roger A. Johnson has edited a volume of collected articles analyzing the strengths and weaknesses of Young Man Luther and its contributions to the psychology of religion.⁸³ Essays by two Reformation historians provide a critical assessment of Young Man Luther from a historical perspective. Two prac-

⁸¹Ibid., p. 210.

⁸²Ibid., p. 211.

⁸³Roger A. Johnson, Psychohistory and Religion: The Case of Young Man Luther, 1977.

ticing and teaching psychoanalysts assess the study in light of its psychological dimensions and contributions to the study of religious phenomenon. Two theologians concentrate on describing Erikson's contributions to historical theology and interpret the basic theological presuppositions inherent within Erikson's assessment of Luther.

Roland H. Bainton is very critical of Erikson's methodology as well as of the entire attempt of psychohistory to speak with any certainty to historical realities. Stating plainly that "the dead cannot be interviewed," Bainton finds little value to applying psychology to any historical attempt.⁸⁴ Acknowledging that there is some propensity for human nature to repeat itself, nonetheless, Bainton believes that the influence of environmental factors or the social milieu must also be considered before any final assessment of human behavior and motivation is claimed.

Bainton believes that Erikson based too many of his assessments of Luther's behavior upon conjecture and then turned and used this conjecture as fact and the basis for further conjectures.⁸⁵ He acknowledges that Erikson made some valid assessments of Luther, but refused to follow through and claim the full significance of his own insights. He gives three examples of where he felt

⁸⁴Ibid., p. 7.

⁸⁵Ibid., pp. 19-20.

Erikson did describe Luther's motivation and behavior accurately but failed to follow through. The first insight was in realizing that Luther's doctrine of justification by faith was related to his shifting internally in his view of God as father-judge, to God as a nursing mother suckling her child.

Secondly, Bainton believes Erikson failed to see the significance of Luther's understanding of faith as refusing to accept the "nay's" of life as the final word of God, but reaching beneath them to the everlasting "yea," and that this faith . . . applies not only to relationships with God, but with human relationships as well.⁸⁶

Bainton's criticisms of Erikson, however, are more pronounced. He finds his critique to be threefold. Erikson's evidence is "scant, late and flimsy" as he attempted to assess the importance of Luther's early life experiences. Secondly, Blainton feels that the projections from childhood to adolescence and maturity are "sometimes false, sometimes unnecessary, and sometimes implausible."⁸⁷ The third critique is that the motives attributed to Luther are invalid.⁸⁸ There follows a rather detailed assessment of specific points in which

⁸⁶Ibid., pp. 20-23.

⁸⁷Ibid., p. 23.

⁸⁸Ibid., p. 23.

Bainton's three critiques are leveled against Erikson. He feels that Erikson relied too heavily upon quotations from Luther's Tabletalk, which was written late in Luther's life and consisted of compilations and sayings attributed to Luther by his students. Though not necessarily hearsay and invalid in its portrayal of Luther's inner thoughts and attitudes, Bainton does believe that it needs to be corroborated by other historical sources.⁸⁹

In the same collection of editorial works by Roger Johnson, a second article analyzes Erikson's relationship to psychohistory and psychohistory's relationship to historical studies in general, from the more positive perspective. Historian, Lewis W. Spitz, in his chapter entitled "Psychohistory and History: The Case of Young Man Luther,"⁹⁰ appears to have a more tolerant attitude to the application of psychology to historical studies than did his colleague Roland Bainton. Spitz places Erikson's study of Martin Luther in the context of other psychological assessments of Luther by Kretschmer, Rohrer, Jung, Preserved Smith, and Paul Reiter.⁹¹ The strength of Erikson's work over those of other psychologists, is found in his application of his own epigenetic schema to the entire life cycle of Martin Luther.⁹² Secondly, Spitz

⁸⁹Ibid.

90

⁹¹Ibid., pp. 62-65.

⁹²Ibid., p. 65.

feels that Erikson's attempt to integrate the intrapsychic data of Luther's life with the total cultural and social process is also a strength of Erikson's analysis.⁹³ Finally, Spitz believes that Erikson's understanding of the interrelationship between subject and observer in both clinical and historical situations has provided the most accurate assessment of the process of doing psycho-history.⁹⁴

Recognizing the realistic problems in trying to psychoanalyze the dead, nevertheless Spitz accepts the necessity for "some comprehensive and systematic psychological theory in the exploration of the past."⁹⁵ He agrees that the

historian must also protest if the psychohistorian's projections wander imaginatively too far away from what the sources indicate or even run contrary to other available evidences.⁹⁶

But he is very optimistic about the subjective process of inquiry into the motivation of early life experiences contributing to the identity crisis of Martin Luther.

The great beauty of Erikson's work as a psychohistorian is that he seeks out awkward data and examines them for the heuristic value, especially where they create difficulties for theory. It would be impossible, of course, to criticize Erikson's neo-Freudian developmental approach from the position of structural and cognitive behavioral psychology, but the modest aim of this paper has been rather to examine his analysis from the historian's point of view.⁹⁷

⁹³Ibid., p. 67. ⁹⁴Ibid., p. 68. ⁹⁵Ibid., p. 7.

⁹⁶Ibid., p. 69. ⁹⁷Ibid., p. 83.

Roger A. Johnson has included an article by himself in the above named work⁹⁸ entitled "Psychohistory as Religious Narrative: The Demonic Role of Hans Luther in Erikson's Saga of Human Evolution." Johnson's task in this article is to evaluate Erikson's psychohistory not only as a methodological tool, but also as a "frame of reference."⁹⁹ Johnson assesses Erikson's psychohistory as a form of religious narrative, with close affinity to theology and philosophy of history. It is Johnson's contention that "Erikson's Young Man Luther needs to be understood as one chapter in his evolving psychohistory of humanity."¹⁰⁰

To achieve this task, Johnson focuses on Erikson's study of Hans Luther, because it is here that Erikson's work has received its greatest methodological attacks. Johnson believes that functionally, Hans Luther serves as a prototype of evil in Erikson's understanding of psycho-social evolution.

In brief, Erikson's characterization of Hans is best understood as an ideological construct--a product of psychohistory in the cosmic sense of that term--and not as a result of the application of psychology to a particular portion of the past.¹⁰¹

It is Johnson's contention that Erikson needed to project a demonic mentality upon Hans Luther as a way of

⁹⁸Ibid., pp. 127-161.

⁹⁹Ibid., p. 127.

¹⁰⁰Ibid.

¹⁰¹Ibid., p. 129.

fulfilling his task of placing Martin Luther within history as an example of mankind's attempt to find an identity amidst the conflicting forces of good and evil. His later significant psychohistorical study, Gandhi's Truth, carries mankind's developmental saga a step further with Gandhi representing for Erikson, another "breakthrough individual" in this cosmic struggle between good and evil.

Johnson points to the historical improbability that Hans Luther was the brutal, sadistic and totally unsympathetic individual that Erikson portrayed him to be.¹⁰² Rather, Hans Luther seems to capture the ideological polarity necessary for Erikson's schema to evolve. (Johnson also points to the psychoanalytic improbability that Hans Luther was the caricature of injustice that Erikson portrayed him to be. His evidence is that Martin exhibited none of the attributes normally witnessed in a product of child abuse, but rather in fact was himself a very compassionate and tender father who abhorred the expression of violence.)¹⁰²

Johnson challenges Erikson's heavy commitment to the thesis of Konrad Lorenz, which portrays mankind as an innately aggressive animal.¹⁰⁴ Drawing upon the ethological studies of Konrad Lorenz, Erikson challenged Freud's

¹⁰²Ibid., pp. 141f.

¹⁰³Ibid., pp. 140-141.

¹⁰⁴Ibid., p. 145f.

understanding of the human species as evolving out of the destructively hostile environment of the animal kingdom. Lorenz describes not only aggressive activity but also "instinctive pacific behavior."¹⁰⁵ Using examples of this ritualized behavior, Lorenz showed the Antler tournament of the Damstag as an attempt to reconcile their aggressive instincts through a wrestling contest which had a victor but not a victim.¹⁰⁶ In his work Gandhi's Truth, Erikson relies heavily on Lorenz's findings as a way of introducing Gandhi's form of non-violent aggression as a historical and cultural breakthrough for mankind. Erikson draw similarities between Gandhi's father and Luther's father and attempts to show how Gandhi finished the personal and cultural resolution of the identity crisis which Martin Luther began.¹⁰⁷

Johnson thereby builds his case for psychohistory in the hands of Erik Erikson as not only an application of psychoanalytic insights to figures and events of the past, but also as an example of religious narrative. Therefore Erikson is free to distort the facts of the past for the sake of presenting a prophetic word for the present.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁵Ibid., p. 146.

¹⁰⁶Ibid.

¹⁰⁷Ibid., pp. 154-156.

¹⁰⁸Ibid., p. 161.

Young Man Luther and Gandhi's Truth are Erikson's testimony to the theological evolution of mankind.¹⁰⁹

Applications of Psychohistory to Psychology of Religion

Analysis of the contributions of psychohistory to psychology of religion tend to draw sharp distinctions between Erikson's contributions and that of earlier psychoanalytic researchers. Paul Pruyser picks an earlier psychoanalytic work by Oscar Pfister entitled Christianity and Fear,¹¹⁰ because of Pfister's attempts to perform a psychoanalytic investigation into the personality of Martin Luther.¹¹¹ Pruyser compares Erikson's study of Luther to Pfister's earlier study of Luther and comes to the following conclusions. Though separated by a span of fourteen years and several creative innovations in the field of psychoanalysis, Pruyser finds several similarities between Erikson's study and Pfister's study of Martin Luther.

¹⁰⁹For an excellent assessment of Gandhi's Truth as a continuation of Erikson's use of psychohistory as religious narrative or biography, see Donald Capps, "Theme and Event: Gandhi's Truth as Religious Biography," Chapter 7 in Encounter with Erikson: Historical Interpretation and Religious Biography, ed. Donald Capps, Walter H. Capps, and M. Gerald Bradford, pp. 141-178.

¹¹⁰Oscar Pfister, Christianity and Fear.

¹¹¹Paul W. Pruyser, "From Freud to Erikson: Developments in Psychology of Religion," in Roger A. Johnson, (ed.), Psychohistory and Religion: The Case of Young Man Luther.

The first and most obvious similarity is that both Pfister and Erikson are psychoanalytic in their perspective, though Pfister's primary identity is that of a Protestant minister with strong pastoral concerns in his analysis, and Erikson's identity is a blending of the clinical psychologist and cultural anthropologist.¹¹²

Secondly, Pruyser finds that the conflict theme is predominant in both analyses of Luther. This too is consistent with psychoanalytic theory which is based in a belief that personality evolves in the interplay of conflicting forces in the psyche.¹¹³

Thirdly, Pruyser notes the mutual interest in Luther's emotional responses to the forces and experiences in his life, although Pfister's study "attempted to focus on one special affect, whereas Erikson's tends to assess broadly the whole gamut of feelings and needs."¹¹⁴

Fourthly, and consistent with their psychoanalytic training, there is a concerted effort on the part of both Erikson and Pfister to use standard psychiatric nomenclature in their analysis of Martin Luther and of his close friends and family.¹¹⁵

Finally, Pruyser feels that both Erikson and Pfister attempted in their psychoanalytic studies of

¹¹²Ibid., pp. 88-89.

¹¹³Ibid., p. 89.

¹¹⁴Ibid.

¹¹⁵Ibid.

Martin Luther to bring Luther's systematic theology under scrutiny as well as his psychology or personality. By that, Pruyser is referring to their mutual attempt to relate Martin Luther, the man, to his work.¹¹⁶

Pruyser believes that there are three significant differences, however, in Erikson's study of Luther from that of his predecessor, Oscar Pfister. It is within these differences, all of which are influenced by the uniqueness of the psychohistorical methodology, that Pruyser believes Erikson's contributions to the psychology of religion are most profound.

Firstly, Erikson's clinical methodology is much more explicit and systematized than Pfister's or other psychoanalytic psychologists of religion. Erikson has made a concerted effort to use the case study method, so integral to the psychoanalytic methodology, and attempt a more thorough analysis of the reciprocal interactions between his subject, Martin Luther, and Luther's social-cultural milieu. As has been noted earlier in this study, Erikson's methodology of psychohistory is unique in his attempts to describe in detail this interface between the personal and environmental forces in the "great man" and his religious experience.¹¹⁷ Though criticized strongly, and perhaps accurately, for its inability to accurately

¹¹⁶Ibid.

¹¹⁷Ibid., p. 90.

psychoanalyze dead men, nevertheless, psychohistory in the hands of Erik Erikson has attempted to scrutinize the historicity of the data used in the analysis of the "great man." For it is Erikson's contention, that though subjectively biased data is used, in the hands of the psychoanalytic researcher, this subjective data is also highly informative about the person of the "great man" himself. For even unreliable information can illuminate the attitudes elicited by that individual which are helpful in coming to a comprehensive picture of who the person is and how he affected those around him.¹¹⁸

The second uniqueness of Erikson's psychohistorical approach in the study of psychology of religion is his shifting away from defining the pathological dimensions of Luther's psychological and religious experience, and dramatically describing the interweaving of the healthy and the unhealthy processes in Luther's attempt to individuate. Contrary to Pfister and other psychoanalytic psychologists of religion, Erikson has provided a valuable model for the description and assessment of how the forces of growth and self-fulfillment interact with the forces of integration and self-destruction within the personal and religious experience of Martin Luther. In doing this Erikson has illustrated how Luther attempted to integrate the "old and the new" in his own personal pilgrimage.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁸Ibid., p. 90.

¹¹⁹Ibid., p. 91.

Thirdly, Pruyser believes that Erikson's contribution has provided a richer articulation of psychoanalytic concepts and has enriched these concepts by blending them with non-psychoanalytic concepts.¹²⁰ As an example of this contribution, Pruyser demonstrates how Pfister relied almost exclusively "on a scheme of drive and inhibition and anxiety and defense, characteristic of the early and middle periods of the history of psychoanalysis."¹²¹ In contrast to Pfister, Erikson provided an analysis based on ego psychology which resulted in a more wholistic and longitudinal cross-sectional view of Luther's psyche.

In conclusion, Pruyser feels that Erikson's major contribution to the psychology of religion is the manner in which he effectively steered away from the more topical analysis of religious experience (i.e., conversion, mysticism, authoritarian personality, etc.). Erikson demonstrated how theology and psychology are inter-related existentially in the life and work of Martin Luther. Luther was truly a "great man" as the integration of psychology and theology ultimately impacted his culture as well as his own individuation.¹²²

Peter Homans has provided us with another valuable assessment of the significance of Erikson's psychohistory

¹²⁰Ibid., p. 92.

¹²¹Ibid., p. 92.

¹²²Ibid., p. 94.

to the psychology of religion by contrasting Erikson's work with that of the earlier work of Sigmund Freud and William James.¹²³ Homans begins his assessment illustrating the various paradoxes that have existed in this century in the psychoanalytic studies of religious experience. Though perhaps the most highly studied aspect of human experience, nevertheless religion has received the most consistent critical evaluation by psychoanalysis of any other aspect of human experience.

Secondly, this rather intense though critical assessment of religious experience by psychoanalytic thought has remained relatively isolated from the multifaceted analyses in other social sciences. Finally, Homans describes the lack of reciprocal discussion between psychoanalytic writers on religion and scholars in religious studies.¹²⁴ Homans believes that Erikson provides the first significant breakthrough in the paradox created by the psychoanalytic study of religious experience. Most psychoanalytic studies of religion dwell upon broad generalizations about the nature of religion or use the particular manifestations of religion to illustrate the heuristic values of psychoanalytic theory. Erikson's work does

¹²³Peter Homans, "The Significance of Erikson's Psychology for Modern Understanding of Religion," in Childhood and Selfhood: Essays on Tradition, Religion and Modernity in the Psychology of Erik H. Erikson, pp. 231-263.

¹²⁴Ibid., pp. 231-232.

not repeat this tendency but in reality transforms the orthodox Freudian theoretical criticism of religion by replacing it with a more complex and generous estimate of religion.¹²⁵ "Noting that all psychologies of religion tend to assess the nature and value of religion in the light of their particular psychological assumptions,¹²⁶ Homans describes how Erikson's psychology of persons differs from both Freud and James. Though owning his debt to Freudian theory, Erikson nevertheless has transformed both Freud's psychology and his psychology of religion. Rather than viewing religion as the cultural neurosis and displacement of unresolved oedipal yearnings, Erikson attempts to understand religion in relationship to his epigenetic principal and especially to the task of trust, identity, and integrity.

Secondly, Erikson has attempted to unite psychological reality with historical actuality, in a manner in which Homans calls "religious actuality." Also Erikson has re-worked Freud's understanding of religion as regression in a manner in which Homans has described as "religion as nostalgia."¹²⁷

Finally, it is the intent of Peter Homans to describe how Erikson has provided an integration of the three

¹²⁵Ibid., pp. 232-233.

¹²⁶Ibid., p. 233.

¹²⁷Ibid., p. 234.

basic perspectives from which religious experience has been analyzed. It is Homans belief that a theological orientation to the study of religious experience usually results in a definition of religion in terms of transcendence. Secondly, a sociological orientation to the study of religion usually defines religion in terms of structure and function or order. And finally a psychological orientation usually defines religion in terms of spontaneity.¹²⁸ Homans believes that Erikson's appeal to students of religion will be in the manner in which he has embraced all three orientations in his psychohistorical methodology.

Like his mentor, Freud, Erikson has developed a personality theory based on an understanding of human development. Unlike Freud's psychosocial view of human development, which restricted development entirely to the resolution of sexual factors in childhood, Erikson's epigenetic thesis describes eight stages of development with specific developmental tasks in each stage. He has de-emphasized the importance of the oedipal conflict and replaced it with a heavy emphasis upon identity formation. Within each Freudian phase there is a heavy emphasis upon fixation of libidinal development resulting only in pathology. Erikson's developmental tasks present the possibi-

¹²⁸Ibid., p. 234.

lity for a positive or healthy resolution in equal potential to a negative or unhealthy resolution.

For instance, in the first stage of Erikson's developmental schema, the child is presented with the options of both trust and mistrust as opposed to the Freudian oral fixation. Homans emphasizes that Erikson has not just given a positive valence to each stage, but has in essence moralized and existentialized each stage and thereby implicitly assumed the presence of an intentional force of will.¹²⁹ Religion becomes another expression of the manner in which the developing psyche is evolving. For example, in the stage of trust versus mistrust, religion may be expressed as faith, or the positive expression of human trust. In this way the phenomenon of religion may be interpreted radically different than the Freudian understandings of obsession, illusion, and return of the repressed.¹³⁰

Likewise, in the middle phase of life, the issue of identity formation may be expressed positively in the formation of a belief system.

Finally, in the last stage of life, or the stage of integrity versus despair, religion may be expressed positively in the experience of self transcendence.¹³¹

¹²⁹Ibid., p. 236.

¹³⁰Ibid., p. 238.

¹³¹Ibid., pp. 238-239.

While placing a positive corrective to the Freudian viewpoint, nevertheless Erikson makes it clear that religion is not an indispensable ingredient for psychological growth. Though religion can serve a positive psychological function, Erikson asserts that other institutions can perform this function just as well.¹³²

Religion contains the possibility of reaffirming from time to time the resources derived from the earliest phase of life, of the experience of trust.¹³³

In subsequent stages of the epigenetic cycle of life, Erikson believes the next major stage relates to the development of the individual's rational and conceptual abilities and differs significantly from the predominantly emotional experience of trust. It is at the stage of identity versus identity diffusion, that religion is experienced as ideology. . . as a system of discreet ideas about the nature and meaning of the contemporary world.¹³⁴ Erikson sees the development of an ideology as the continuation of the experience of trust and Homans states this relationship as "trust and ideology are the psychological infrastructures of faith and doctrine, respectively."¹³⁵

The final stage of life, dealing with the task of integrity versus despair reintroduces the experience of

¹³²Ibid., p. 240.

¹³³Ibid., p. 242.

¹³⁴Ibid., p. 242.

¹³⁵Ibid., p. 243.

self-transcendence and religion becomes the manner in which the existential realities of life transcend the finite and social realities of life. Peter Homans states it this way:

The religious support for integrity engages a realm of knowledge and experience that lies beyond the immediacies of either primitive trust or more discerning ideology. . . . Yet just as ideology was an elaboration of trust, this 'existential' dimension is successor to both. For through the affirmation of a 'super-I'--a commitment that requires both affective and cognitive assets--the individual becomes 'trustworthy.' That is to say, he becomes deserving of the trust of the young. And with this act the individual life cycle not only completes itself but also articulates the cycle of generations, completing it as well.¹³⁶

Another manner in which the Eriksonian model expands upon the Freudian model, is evidenced in the expansion of the concept of psychological reality to the concept of ego actuality. The jump from psychological reality to ego actuality for Erikson involves a willingness to accept the principle that the developing ego must not only adjust to the reality principle, as Freud understood it, but must also adjust to a condition known as "mutual activation." By mutual activation, Erikson is referring to the process of interaction between the individual and the network of relationships that he is a part of. This network of relationships is likewise rooted in the historical cycle of generations. Consequently, ego actuality comes

¹³⁶Ibid., p. 243.

to mean a transcendence of psychological reality through this process of mutual activation and historical awareness.

This concept of ego actuality is important to Erikson's understanding of religion, because religion functions and creates in part, this condition of ego actuality. The presence of trust, ideology, and transcendence within religion helps to create this condition of actualism.¹³⁷ Again, as in the case of his understanding of religion as an example of the positive dimensions of the epigenetic cycle, Erikson hastens to state that

while religions have in the past been the most reliable sources of trust, ideology, and integrity, the modern person may well choose a different mode of access to these processes, so necessary for effective and relatively stress free living.¹³⁸

In the language of symbolic logic, this principle would be stated as the assumption that religion is an adequate but not necessary condition for the experience of actuality.

Homans notes that a third and infrequently mentioned aspect of Erikson's contributions to the understanding of religion is his definition of "religion as nostalgia, or hearkening back on the part of the individual, to the earliest most powerful and impressive

¹³⁷Ibid., p. 246.

¹³⁸Ibid., p. 246.

experiences in the life cycle."¹³⁹ Again Erikson's indebtedness to Freud is evident as well as his reformulation of the basically negative understanding of religion as regression. For though the objects which the individual harkens back to are clearly infantile, for Erikson they are transformed into positive and natural human experiences.

One may say that man, when looking through a glass darkly, finds himself in an inner cosmos in which the outlines of three objects awaken dim nostalgias. One of these is the simple and fervent wish for a . . . sense of unity with a maternal matrix. . . . It is symbolized by the affirmative face of charity. . . . reassuring the faithful of the unconditional acceptance. . . .

. . . In the center of the second nostalgia is the paternal voice of guiding conscious, which puts an end to the simple paradise of childhood and provides a sanction for energetic action. . . .

Finally, the glass shows the pure self itself, the unborn core of creation. . . . This pure self is. . . not dependent on providers and not dependent on guides to reason and reality.¹⁴⁰

Homans identifies the maternal matrix as the source of trust, the paternal voice as the source of ruling ideas and ideology, and the pure self as the seed of transcendence.¹⁴¹

The final contribution of Erikson's psychohistory to the contemporary study of psychology of religion is

¹³⁹Ibid., p. 247.

¹⁴⁰Erik Erikson, Young Man Luther, pp. 263-264.

¹⁴¹Homans, op. cit., p. 247.

identified by Peter Homans as the manner in which Erikson integrates the contemporary theories of religion proposed by the theological and philosophical schools, the sociological school and the psychological school. It is Homans' belief that theological and philosophical studies of religion tend to focus upon the experience of transcendence as the crucial dimension of religious experience. The sociological perspective of religion tends to focus upon religion's function in terms of its capacity to confer order or the functional value of religion within human experience.

The psychological studies of religion have tended to focus upon religion as spontaneity and studied the religious affect as a unique human emotion.¹⁴² Homans suggests that Erikson's understanding of identity provides a paradigm for dialogue with those persons who would tend to see religion as transcendence.¹⁴³

Homans believes that Erikson's concept of religious actuality provides a paradigm for those sociologists who would define religion in terms of its structural and order conferring capacities.¹⁴⁴ He believes that Erikson's concept of religion as nostalgia provides a point of contact for those in the psychological school who

¹⁴²Ibid., p. 249.

¹⁴³Ibid., p. 251.

¹⁴⁴Ibid., p. 176.

are interested in the religious affects, the feelings of joy, peace and devotion, of mystery, wonder and surrender.¹⁴⁵

In concluding his evaluation of Erikson's contributions to the psychology of religion, Peter Homans does indicate that it is his belief that Erikson has not adequately dealt with the problem of "religion as projection." Erikson in assigning a positive significance to religion has recast the understanding of religion in terms of its being a "good projection" but has nevertheless not been able to define religion in a non-projective manner. Homans states

the problem of projection is the most fundamental problem in the classic social scientific approaches to religion. As such, it is a key question in modernity's attempt to come to terms with the possibility of retrieving religious meaning from the past for the contemporary world. It is a problem that receives little or no attention in the psychological sciences. The persistence of this problem in Erikson's psychology signifies a fundamental indebtedness to these modalities of thought.¹⁴⁶

This concludes the evaluation of psychohistory as a methodology in the psychoanalytic psychology of religion. The uniquenesses of this methodology have been critiqued in the light of the work of Erik Erikson and its contributions to research in the psychology of religion have been assessed.

¹⁴⁵Ibid., p. 254.

¹⁴⁶Ibid., p. 260.

Chapter four continues the discussion of method in the psychology of religion by reviewing the dynamic perspective of Paul Pruyser.

Chapter 4

The Dynamic Methodology of Paul Pruyser

Introduction to the Chapter

This chapter will introduce the dynamic perspective to psychology of religion as it has been defined by Paul Pruyser in his two primary works dealing with psychology of religion, A Dynamic Psychology of Religion (New York: Harper and Row, 1968) and Between Belief and Unbelief (New York: Harper and Row, 1974).

Pruyser is the director of education at the Menninger Foundation in Topeka, Kansas, where he has for years been intimately involved in the training of both psychiatrists and clergy. Pruyser is the author of several works in pastoral care, pastoral counseling, and pastoral theology, and these two books represent his own unique and highly significant contributions to the psychology of religion. Reviews of A Dynamic Psychology of Religion hailed it as the most significant book in the field since William James' book The Varieties of Religious Experience.¹

¹Stettner, John W. in book review section of The McCormick Quarterly, Vol 22 (January 1969), pp. 138-142 and Neal, Robert E. in Union Seminary Quarterly Review, Vol. 24 (Winter 1969), pp. 207-211.

It is the purpose of this chapter to describe and analyze the methodology employed by Pruyser and to assess the uniqueness of his work which has set him apart as a pioneer in the field of psychology of religion. The "dynamic" methodology has been defined by Pruyser in A Dynamic Psychology of Religion and has been continued in the sequel, Between Belief and Unbelief. The analysis of this methodology will proceed by 1) defining the primary theoretical influences, both psychological and theological/philosophical, which underlie Pruyser's methodology, 2) proceed with the detailed analysis of the methodology of this dynamic psychology as it is both consistent with and differs from its psychoanalytic heritage, and 3) conclude with a critique of this methodology in its application to the psychology of religion.

Like his gifted predecessor William James, who used the occasion of the Gifford Lectures in Edinburgh as an opportunity to develop the thesis of his Varieties of Religious Experience, Pruyser utilized the appointment to the famous Lyman Beecher Lectures at the Divinity School of Yale University in 1968, to develop the thoughts which he later published in the form of A Dynamic of Psychology of Religion. Though the reviews of this 1968 work were exceptionally positive, one critique provided by Andre Godin in Lumen Vitae was responsible for Pruyser's sequel, Between Belief and Unbelief. Godin's review had pointed

to the failure of the first book to "deal with the contemporary phenomenon of secularization, disaffiliation from religion and religious institutions, disbelief, and unbelief."² His subsequent volume dealing with this important earlier omission emerged as a result of a second distinguished lectureship, the Henry March Pfeiffer Professorship of 1972 to 1973 at the Menninger Foundation.³

In Search for the Roots of the Dynamic Method of
Paul Pruyser

In describing his orientation toward the study of the psychology of religion, Pruyser reiterates a stance that he took in an earlier publication.⁴

In this earlier article Pruyser lauded the contributions of psychoanalysis to both the study of human personality and the psychological implications of religious experience. He felt that Freud's conflict model of the psyche could describe religious experience as well, however the revolution within modern science caused by psychoanalysis had created some specific problems in the development of the field of psychology of religion. He noted how hospitalized and psychiatric patients are

²Paul W. Pruyser, Between Belief and Unbelief, p. xii.

³Ibid., p. xiii.

⁴Paul W. Pruyser, "Some Trends in the Psychology of Religion," The Journal of Religion, Vol. 40 (April 1960), pp. 113-129.

frequently encountered by specialists in a variety of mental health fields, each taking a detailed case history in order to develop a working hypothesis concerning the nature of the psychiatric distress. This team approach to mental health care however, has frequently resulted in a confused understanding of the importance of religious experience in the life of the patient. Furthermore, the impact of the psychoanalytic movement upon psychiatry has brought a shift from pure science to applied science. As the study of psychology has moved out of the traditional academic arena into professional training in the psychiatric hospital, there has been a confusion as to which setting is the most appropriate for the study of psychology of religion.⁵

Finally it is Pruyser's belief that the classical texts in the field of psychology of religion tended to focus exclusively on religious phenomenon experienced by extraordinary persons of unusual genius and to ignore the commonplace pedestrian manifestations of religion found in the grassroots believers of all of the world's great religions. Consequently, religion was evaluated only in terms of experiences which were considered extraordinary and unique. The manner in which these results were reported also tended to follow a predictable pattern,

⁵Ibid., p. 9.

"focused selectively on prayer, mysticism, worship, conversion, cosmic consciousness, or religious development."⁶

Within this "intellectual cul-de-sac"⁷ Pruyser felt that a new perspective to the study of religious experience was necessary. It is the presentation of his dynamic approach to the psychology of religion which he has offered to both attempt to fill the void in the field as well as to spark future research and interchange in an area long overlooked.

Pruyser defines his use of the word "dynamic" in the following way: "a clinical, psychoanalytic psychology which includes considerations of ego psychology and does not shy away from appraising the phenomenon it encounters."⁸ Within this definition he has clearly defined his basic loyalties to the psychoanalytic movement including the extensions to theory offered by ego psychology. He has further described his psychological perspective toward religious phenomenon as a clinical perspective. As such he is using clinical psychology in the following manner:

Clinical psychology is at home with fluid concepts, low-order abstractions, and ad hoc theoretical constructs. It deals with complicated and at times very untidy situations. Therefore, clinical psychology is loathe to impose a conceptual order so neat that the real disorderliness of experience fades

⁶Ibid., p. ix.

⁷Ibid.

⁸Ibid.

out of the picture. It perceives continuities where others would only see discontinuity; conversely, it sees distinctions where others would hold out for sameness. A case in point is the relation between health and illness. There was a time when these two were sharply distinguished. Despite the striking phenomenological differences, clinical psychologists are wont to note the impressive dynamic similarities between the two. Another case is diagnostic nomenclature. Just at the time when 'neurosis,' 'psychosis,' and 'schizophrenia' have become household words taken to mean very specific ailments, many clinicians are ready to abolish them for lack of accuracy. What is more, their work is beginning to convince them that such words, and the images they conjure up, are little more than pseudoscientific monstrosities which impede man's progress in understanding human woes.⁹

For those familiar with other writings of Pruyser, it is apparent that he is defining his dynamic approach as a clinical methodology consistent with the philosophy espoused in his co-authored earlier work The Vital Balance, in which the differences between normal and pathological, healthy and diseased, sacred and secular aspects of human experience were radically reinterpreted by the conclusion that all men are more alike in their nature and experience than they are so different.¹⁰

Primary Theoretical Influences: Psychological Underpinnings

In terms of his understanding of religious experience, Pruyser sees himself and his method of study

⁹Ibid., pp. 19-20.

¹⁰Karl Menninger, M. Mayman, and Paul W. Pruyser, The Vital Balance, 1963.

in religious experience in close kinship to William James. He begins his magnum opus by referring to what he believes to have been James' six primary propositions in his work

The Varieties of Religious Experience:

a) that religious phenomena are continuous with other psychic phenomena; b) that in religion, as everywhere else, the sublime and the ridiculous are two poles of a continuum, with many ordinary, drab, and hackneyed happenings in between; c) that in religion, as in other human endeavors, feelings tend to be more important than thoughts; d) that there is not a single psychic wellspring for religion in the form of a special instinct, sentiment, or disposition; 3) that religion has a human and a divine side and that psychology can study only the former; and f) the people do not simply have a god, but that they use their god and that religion is known by its fruits in behavior. . . .

I believe that James' fourth point--that religion cannot be delegated to one special psychic function--is of major scientific importance. . . . all the psychological part processes may participate in religious experience, and none of them is specific to religion. Instead of raising the wrong question about specificity, let us inquire what the preponderant part processes are and the religious experience of certain people or in certain systems of religion; in other words, let us set forth the varieties of religious experience.¹¹

Pruyser differs from James in his belief that the empiricism of James is limited by which data of human experience is subjected to empirical scrutiny. He says that for James, religious experience centers around the subjective experiences of feelings and de-emphasizes the importance of cognitive states, decisions and acts.¹² Among other things, this view of religious experience does

¹¹Ibid., pp. 3-4.

¹²Ibid., p. 4.

not provide an adequate basis for interpreting those phenomena of religious experience that deal with God, doctrine, or with the nature of the redemptive community.¹³ Pruyser notes that except for Coe and Leuba, none of James' contemporaries really attempted to face the question of the existence and nature of God and that the conclusions drawn by Leuba and Freud took the viewpoint that religion dealt only with that which was illusion.¹⁴

One of the primary presuppositions in Pruyser's theory of religious experience is an extension of the Freudian understanding of illusion. Pruyser states:

religious life involves images, intuitions, concepts, and the human history of all of these about God. But, above all, it involves an object relation with God, and psychology must be interested in all these aspects. I am not sure whether psychology can or should waive the ontological question, as, by the way, some theological systems do, but I am sure that it cannot stop short of man's thinking about God and the forming and obtaining of his image. Beside the feelingful renditions of religious feelings stand the thoughtful renditions of religious thinking.¹⁵

It is precisely within this domain of mankind's capacity to believe in God, that his second work, Between Belief and Unbelief attempts to deal. Written six years later, the second volume reflects a continuing expansion of Pruyser's theoretical foundation to include the influence of three individuals commonly considered to be part of the British objects relations school: W. R. D.

¹³Ibid. ¹⁴Ibid., p. 5. ¹⁵Ibid., p. 5.

Fairbairn, Harry Guntrip, and Donald W. Winnicott. For Pruyser, Winnicott is perhaps the most influential post-Freudian theorist because of his description of the "transitional sphere" of the human psyche as the domain of human thought in which the cognitive assent to the belief or disbelief of God originates.¹⁶

Pruyser's debt to Freud is also evident throughout both works. He seems very comfortable with Freud's concept of religion as illusion and expands upon it further in exploring the relativity and open-endedness of various religious systems and beliefs. By "illusion," Freud was attempting to define religious beliefs not purely as products of a universal reality, but as the interactions of mankind's oldest and strongest wishes with his rational thinking process.¹⁷ Pruyser points out that all knowledge of God is relative and to some degree distorted by the individual perception of the believer because "our psychic organization, our perceptions, our thoughts, our wishes, our moods, participate in the shaping of our beliefs."¹⁸ He believes the apostle Paul was intuitively aware of this phenomenon when he stated in I Corinthians "For now we see in a glass darkly, but then we will see face to face."¹⁹

¹⁶Pruyser, Between Belief and Unbelief, Chapter 10.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 7.

¹⁸Ibid., p. 8.

¹⁹Ibid., I Corinthians 13:12 RSV.

With this belief in the relativity of reality as perceived by the believer, and his basic commitment to the conflict orientation of psychic phenomena, Pruyser concludes that tolerance becomes the highest virtue of any religious believer as he attempts to encounter not only reality as he perceives it but to accept the truthfulness in the reality that others perceive as well.²⁰

At other points, Pruyser transcends some of the reductionism in Freudian thought and embraces the thinking of post-Freudian psychoanalytic ego psychologists like Erikson by seeing the growth enhancing potential in religious experience as well as the regressive potential so clearly identified by Freud. Further elaboration on the specifics of where Pruyser's thought transcends Freud's will be given in later sections of this chapter.

Another psychological thinker of great importance to Pruyser's formulation of a dynamic psychology of religion was Carl Jung. He gives credit to Jung for having come closest of any of the fathers of psychoanalysis to the belief that individuals in some sense define or make their gods.²¹ He feels that imbedded within Jung's concept of archetypes and the process of individuation there was to be found one of the most astute and coherent

²⁰Pruyser, 1974, op. cit., p. 269.

²¹Ibid., p. 10.

descriptions of an interpersonal relationship between man and his god. For in Jung's thought, God was not just the projection of a thought or idea onto another person, but is projected as a person himself. This concept of God as a changing, developing being in relationship to mankind is most appealing to Pruyser's developing thesis that man's religious belief system is in some way a reflection of his individual growth in the capacity for object relatedness.²²

The final psychological theorists to whom Pruyser appears greatly indebted in both of his works are Erik Erikson and Anton Boisen. Erikson's influence is acknowledged more implicitly throughout Pruyser's writing as one of the primary leaders within psychoanalytic thought who has contributed much to our understanding of the developmental process of human personality growth. Like Erikson, Pruyser views each experience and phenomena with the potential of producing both positive or negative outcomes in the life of the believer. In Between Belief and Unbelief, Pruyser underscores the ego's attempt at each stage of human growth and development to establish a level of harmony and equilibrium between the satisfaction of the needs of the "drives" of the human personality and

²²Ibid., p. 11 and Pruyser, 1974, op. cit., p. 46 and 150.

²³Pruyser, op. cit., 1974, p. 48f.

the objects to which those drives are directed.²³ In this area of his theory, Pruyser expands upon Erikson's assumptions that the ego stands developmentally ready to direct and intercede between polar tensions and their ensuing tasks. He describes how the part processes of attention, perception, cognition, emotion, memory, language, action, etc. function as tools in service of the ego and its attempts to maintain contact between environment and the internal household of the individual.²⁴

It is with his keen awareness of the applicability of the part processes of the human psyche to the interpretation and classification of religious experience that his first volume A Dynamic Psychology of Religion was found to be so important. In the sequel, Between Belief and Unbelief, Pruyser has developed even further his theoretical understanding of how the developmental tasks of each stage of life within Erikson's schema, are also opportunities for the genesis of belief or unbelief, and the part processes become further instrumental in this task as well.²⁵

To Anton Boisen, Pruyser is indebted for a very subjective, personal description of the manner in which religion can be simultaneously in the service of psychopathology and psychic wholeness and growth. Though not versed in object relations theory or the theory of the

²⁴Ibid., p. 49f.

²⁵Ibid.

part processes of the human psyche himself, nevertheless in the hand of his interpreter Paul Pruyser, Boisen becomes one who intuitively paved the way towards an understanding of how the processes of disorganization and reorganization are intimately related to those persons, ideas, and things in which we are most invested.²⁶

The Theological and Philosophical Underpinings of
the Dynamic Method

Pruyser's dynamic methodology appears to be influenced by several significant philosophers with whom he seems more than superficially familiar. In keeping with the phenomenological commitment of his orientation to clinical experience, Pruyser's favorite philosophers and theologians are clearly within the existentialist school of thought. Both of the major works under evaluation, are sprinkled with insights from the writings of Martin Buber, Soren Kierkegaard, Rudolf Otto, Friedrich Schleiermacher, Paul Tillich, Gabriel Marcel and Friedrich Neitzsche. Likewise, Pruyser appears to have been influenced by the implicit philosophy in such writers and novelists as Camus, Kafka and Dostoevsky. For his understanding of religious experience and his sensitivity to the mysterious and subjective quality of these phenomena, Pruyser is indebted to Otto and Schleiermacher.

²⁶Pruyser, op. cit., 1968, p. 12.

In both volumes under study, Pruyser returns continually to Schleiermacher and his thesis that faith is the feeling of "utter dependency."²⁷ Though Schleiermacher recognized the difference and degree to which an individual allows him/herself to experience this primordial feeling of dependency, he nevertheless felt that dependency was the "basic definition of man, both in his infancy and during the rest of his life."²⁸ In a manner not that distinct from Carl Jung, Schleiermacher distinguishes between those more feeling oriented persons and those for whom life must of necessity be more rational. This feeling of dependency is more easily observable in those individuals whom Schleiermacher has defined as "feelingful" and for whom a lifestyle characterized by an attempt at emotionally relating themselves to a sustaining cosmic force with personalized, humanized qualities is more dominant. The more rational individual may be less inclined to the personification of a personal "god" and may settle for more abstract concepts like that of a "prime mover or ground of being" though nevertheless giving expression in some manner to this feeling of dependency.²⁹

²⁷Ibid., 1968, p. 17 and op. cit., 1974, pp. 67f.

²⁸Ibid., 1974, p. 68.

²⁹Ibid.

In language very similar to that of Andras Angyal,³⁰ Pruyser describes these two individuals in Schleiermacher's schema as the autonomous versus the heteronomous selves. The autonomous self is the expression of the rationally oriented individual and the heteronomous is the feelingful individual who is more able to express his dependency needs overtly.³¹

Like Schleiermacher, Pruyser sees both personal development and cultural influences affecting this root feeling of dependency. Schleiermacher felt that the aristocratic intelligentsia of his day and time had been so influenced by the heightening of importance of rationality in the era of the Enlightenment, that individual self esteem and scientific inquiry had replaced the importance of humility and religious faith.³² The impoverished environment of the Enlightenment with its lack of awareness of the feeling and non-rational dimensions of life, were for Schleiermacher the epitome of a state of unbelief.³³

Pruyser critiqued Schleiermacher's inability to understand the psychological satisfactions that came with this autonomy so characteristic of the Enlightenment, but

³⁰Andras Angyal, Neurosis and Treatment: A Holistic Theory, 1965.

³¹Pruyser, op. cit., 1974, p. 69.

³²Ibid., p. 69.

³³Ibid., p. 70.

nevertheless felt that Schleiermacher's unsophisticated attempt to describe the importance of object relatedness was nevertheless on target.³⁴

For his deep appreciation of the importance of the mysterious in human experience, Pruyser is indebted to Rudolf Otto. For even as Schleiermacher pointed to man's utter dependency upon his gods as essential for religious faith, Otto provided Pruyser with the philosophical necessity of coming to terms with the meaning which man's dependency upon his gods might have for God. Pruyser states:

Otto's phenomenological analysis is a convincing answer to the fallacious assumption that the psychology of religion deals only with man--it must deal with God, for religion is the establishing, experiencing, and nurturing of a relation between man and his gods. . . . Just as theology deals also with man, psychology must deal also with the numinous.³⁵

Pruyser's understanding of Otto's two-pronged appreciation to both the subjective and the objective poles of the religious experience, is consistent with Gordon Allport's statement:

A narrowly conceived science can never do business with a narrowly conceived religion. Only when both parties broaden their perspective will the way to understanding and cooperation open."³⁶

³⁴Ibid., p. 71.

³⁵Pruyser, op. cit., 1968, p. 17.

³⁶Ibid., p. 17.

For Otto, this awareness of and reliance upon the mystery of the numinous, is described in his phenomenology of the holy.³⁷ This phenomenology of the holy points to its ever present reality, its ambiguity, its capacity to elicit emotions of dread and awe, and its capacity to produce a state of fascination.³⁸ In the presence of the holy, the subject/object dichotomy, creature/creator consciousness defines for each person a subjective experience of "otherness."³⁹ Each individual's capacity for experiences of the holy seem to be related to individual disposition and temperament as well as environmental influences.⁴⁰ Pruyser uses Otto's theological statement of this phenomenology of the holy as the ontological basis upon which Winnicott has described the psychodynamic experience of the transitional sphere. Winnicott's psychoanalytic objects relations theory of the transitional sphere is crucial to Pruyser's conception of the locus of religious belief.⁴¹

Pruyser reflects his indebtedness to the philosophical framework of Spinoza for its capacity to allow him to integrate the traditional, Biblically based Calvinism of his childhood with a system that emphasized the impor-

³⁷Pruyser, *op. cit.*, 1974, p. 103f.

³⁸*Ibid.*, pp. 104-105.

³⁹*Ibid.*, p. 106.

⁴⁰*Ibid.*, p. 107.

⁴¹*Ibid.*, pp. 108f.

tance of willing and thinking in human experience. Within his own religious development, Pruyser felt a need during his third decade of life to provide for a continuing continuity with his earlier religious teaching as well as to embrace the importance of autonomy as it emerged developmentally for him at this phase of his own life. Pruyser states it this way:

But apart from the autonomy of the act, there is also an encounter with the vision of man that allowed for considerable autonomy, largely due to Spinoza's tendency to identify willing of thinking. For me, God remained as large and constitutive as ever, but he lost his anthropomorphic features and became a process in which I could participate not by his whimsy but out of his--and my--necessity. This was an uplifting and invigorating vision--all the more so because its ethics were far from lax and thus gave additional challenge to the integrity of the relations between my ego and my superego. Maybe what fascinated me more than anything else was Spinoza's basic assumption of persistence in everything: "each thing, insofar as it is in itself, endeavors to persevere in its being."⁴²

Two other individuals emerged for Pruyser as primary in the philosophical and theological influences upon his contributions to the psychology of religion. Pruyser acknowledges a debt to Paul Tillich for his interest and contributions in the exploration of faith, courage, doubt, and ultimate concern. Pruyser finds Tillich's emphasis upon the cognitive processes and religion as opening the door to the integration of learning theory with a conflict based psychology to the study of religious experience.⁴³

⁴²Ibid., p. 81.

⁴³Pruyser, op. cit., 1968, p. 19.

Likewise, Pruyser is indebted to William James who provided him with a philosophy of the will which though voiced in 1896, is nevertheless relevant in Pruyser's view to contemporary man's attempt to come to terms with the ultimate realities of his experience.⁴⁴ In his work, Between Belief and Unbelief, Pruyser devotes an entire chapter to the subject of "Coming to Terms With Options," which introduces William James' philosophical pragmatism and the manner in which the human will becomes involved in the process of belief or unbelief.⁴⁵ James is another theorist who proposes the importance of one's environment and early interpersonal experiences as determinative in the manner in which the individual finally embraces his belief system. Pruyser quotes James from his book Will to Believe in pointing to the role that fear, hope, prejudice, passion, imitation and partisanship play in the belief system which each individual embraces. James is quoted as saying "Our faith is faith in someone else's faith," especially in the "greatest matters."⁴⁶

Likewise, James' pragmatism reflects that disbelief is usually for the tenets which no longer have any use to the individual. It is impossible to be indifferent in one's belief system and James believes that the option

⁴⁴Pruyser, op. cit., 1974, p. 124f.

⁴⁵Ibid., Chapter 6.

⁴⁶Ibid., p. 125.

to choose to embrace a particular belief is determined by three qualities: 1) the option must be live in the sense that it is relevant to the individual's personality and cultural setting. 2) The option must be forced in the sense that it can no longer be avoided. 3) Finally the option must be perceived as momentous in the sense that it involves a commitment entailing some risk.⁴⁷ It is because of this risk, that James concludes that religion is a momentous option and a forced option. The religious response is in the moment, sometimes without all the necessary certainty of truth. Nevertheless, it is a choice of risk in which the embracing of a belief is to gain something that is essential for life's coping and finding meaning. The decision of unbelief is to lose this means of coping and meaning.⁴⁸

Pruyser demonstrates that it is out of James' commitment to these options inherent in the process of belief or unbelief that he was led with clinical evidence to his conclusions in the Varieties of Religious Experience in the reality of the divided self. The religion of the healthy minded and the religion of the sick soul emerge as two options expressing the manner in which the religious individual responds to the tensions in this process of belief and unbelief.⁴⁹

⁴⁷Ibid., p. 128.

⁴⁸Ibid., p. 129.

⁴⁹Ibid., pp. 132-138.

The Presuppositions Implicit Within the Dynamic Method

Pruyser states that dynamic is a

short term for the theoretical orientation used: a clinical, psychoanalytic psychology which includes considerations of ego psychology and does not shy away from appraising the phenomena it encounters.⁵⁰

As he has described dynamic, the importance placed upon the inclusion of clinical data in this perspective is spliced throughout both works. Pruyser frequently draws on illustrations from case studies done at the Menninger Foundation.

One of Pruyser's presuppositions is that the clinical case history can inform our understanding of religious experience.⁵¹ In this regard he differs with Walter Houston Clark's text on psychology of religion, for though Clark referred occasionally to vignettes of case histories, he seemed content to limit his analysis of some aspects of religious experience by accepting the data as it was presented without any hard critical analysis. Pruyser pointedly differs from Clark's willingness to limit his research to "soft techniques such as questionnaires and gentle interviews" and Pruyser contends that "science knows no taboos and noblesse oblige."⁵² The psychology of religion in the hands of Paul Pruyser, there-

⁵⁰Pruyser, op. cit., 1968, p. ix.

⁵¹Ibid., p. 14.

⁵²Ibid., pp. 15-16.

fore, reveals an explicit presupposition that all phenomenon of religious experience must be placed through the rigors of the scientific method.

Within the mental health profession, there is a tendency for a plethora of individual "specialists" to define what is normative or pathological in a specific case according to the limited canons of his own specialty. In the past, one of the implications of this procedure has been the unwillingness of secularly trained specialists to interpret the meaning of religious phenomena within a specific case. Pruyser's methodology is build upon the presupposition that any subspecialty within the mental health professions can evaluate religious experience as continuous with other psychic experience under observation.⁵³

Pruyser notes that classical studies of psychology of religion skillfully avoided dealing with the ontological question of the reality of God and therefore any serious or controversial exploration of the nature of the experience of God in believing subjects. While noting that the reality of God cannot be claimed or refuted purely upon the grounds of psychology, Pruyser does suggest that an attitude of "naive realism" can be taken towards God or the object of the religious beliefs under study.⁵⁴ Therefore, in stark contrast to some of his

⁵³Ibid., p. 14.

⁵⁴Ibid., p. 18.

predecessors, Pruyser is quite open to the presupposition of the reality of God as he attempts to study the implications of the experience of religious consciousness in the life of the believer. At points in both works, Pruyser even includes examples from his own religious pilgrimage within liberal Protestantism, reflecting his own open and positive bias toward the reality of the ontological existence of God.

It is important to recognize at this juncture, that Pruyser does not attempt to approach any data of human experience with the preconception of any definitive, universal understanding of reality. Rather, Pruyser states explicitly,

Reality is thus not one single undisputed thing to which all people have equal access. Phenomenologically, reality presents itself selectively to people, and each person in turn takes reality to be thus and so. The result is many different realities. . . . Undoubtedly, each person's experience of reality includes something like a more or less dim vision of total reality, or a more or less vague guess about reality-as-a-whole which stems from his explorations and guides him.⁵⁵

In a similar manner, Pruyser resists the temptation to define certain data of human experience as uniquely "religious." Embracing a polydimensional understanding of human experience, Pruyser states that all data--events, processes, actions, objects, and object relations--have

⁵⁵Pruyser, op. cit., 1974, pp. 222-223.

the potential for religious significance for either the patient or the examiner or both.⁵⁶

With this presupposition in mind, Pruyser then proceeds to challenge another one of the "sacred cows" of classical studies in psychology of religion. He disputes what he believes to be the fallacy of these classical studies which have tended to focus on specific topics of "religious concern." He notes that the ordering mechanism given to most texts in psychology of religion, is to outline the research under the headings of certain clearly defined religious phenomenon (i.e., conversion, mysticism, prayer, healing, etc.). Pruyser's presupposition is that these phenomena may or may not be the common manifestations of religious experience.⁵⁷

Furthermore, Pruyser's methodology attempts to avoid providing a selected and exclusive understanding of religious phenomena by studying only the more extreme and extraordinary displays of "religious data." Pruyser is interested in the "common, simple, pedestrian manifestations of religion in the gray mass of ordinary believers who are neither great saints nor prominent sinners."⁵⁸ Therefore no specific standard is set for the evaluation of whether a particular experience is normative

⁵⁶Pruyser, op. cit., 1968, p. 15.

⁵⁷Ibid., p. ix.

⁵⁸Ibid.

or extraordinary and no particular belief or unbelief is to be defined as normative either.⁵⁹ In fact, one uniqueness of both Pruyser's books is that he avoids giving a simple definition of religion or belief, even though they are topics of concern throughout both works, until the ending chapters of both books. Though somewhat awkward for the reader, this non-traditional attempt to describe the phenomenon before it is defined, provides a more open-ended understanding of what "religion" or "belief" or "unbelief" should be understood to mean.⁶⁰

Though Pruyser's theoretical orientation is clearly psychoanalytic, he employs an eclectic array of various theorists within the psychoanalytic and ego psychology movement. He avoids the exclusive use of any one theorist which might limit his capacity to evaluate any experience or negate his perspective of a clinical psychology as "loathe to impose a conceptual order so neat the real disorderliness of experience fades out of the picture."⁶¹ He moves with comfort and ease through the writings of Sigmund Freud, Ernest Jones, Theodore Reik, Carl Jung, Karl Menninger, David Bakan, David Rapaport, Erik Erikson, Michael Balint, Heinz Hartmann,

⁵⁹Pruyser, op. cit., 1974, p. 54.

⁶⁰Pruyser, op. cit., 1968, p. 19 and 329f; Pruyser, 1974, pp. 245f.

⁶¹Pruyser, op. cit., 1968, p. 20.

Norman O. Brown, W. R. D. Fairbairn, Melanie Klein, Harry Guntrip, Edith Jacobson, Phillip Rieff, and Donald Winnicott. But neither is he limited totally to psychoanalytic theorists. His footnotes reflect understanding of Abraham Maslow, Jean Piaget, Milton Rokeach, Bernard Spilka, and such noted psychologists of religion as Robert Bellah, Talcott Parsons, Theodore Roszak and anthropologists of religion as Levy-Bruhl and Levi-Strauss. Such a knowledgeable array of theorists enables Pruyser's analysis of religious experience to have a comprehensive grasp. He avoids any exclusive intrapsychic point of view in dealing with religious ideas,⁶² and allows himself the opportunity to weave a tapestry of his own select authorities to bring an integrated view to his dynamic methodology.

Another presupposition which Pruyser carries into his research is an approach to the study of religion reflecting his identification with William James' phenomenological approach to religious study. As a man of faith, Pruyser finds it easy to identify himself within the religious perspective and to see the phenomena of religious experience the way the believer does. Pruyser is willing to take his own experience seriously and in situations where adequate data cannot be obtained from the experience

⁶²Pruyser, *op. cit.*, 1974, pp. 54f.

of other individuals, Pruyser has committed himself to the appropriateness of observing one's own reactions and experience.⁶³ In so doing, Pruyser identifies his method as continuous with that of Anton Boisen and removes the results of his methodology as acceptable research to the "pure empiricist."

Again with William James, Pruyser commits his allegiance to the age old cognitive versus experiential debate in psychology of religion by utilizing James' belief in the dominance of the "feelingful" way of knowledge over the analytical reflective approach to knowledge.⁶⁴ However, even in acknowledging the validity of James' commitment to the subjective experience of the feeling dimension of religious phenomena, Pruyser critiques James' total methodology as too narrow and limited in its appreciation of the analytical perspective. Consequently, though Pruyser starts with feelings, his approach is much more cognitive and analytic as he attempts to understand the meaning of the experience of the religious datum of life and attempts to interpret it in light of the functioning of the total psyche.⁶⁵ This presupposition is enlarged by a highly functional perspective, for Pruyser's presupposition is that religion is just one of the pro-

⁶³Pruyser, op. cit., 1968, p. 16.

⁶⁴Ibid., pp. 3-4.

⁶⁵Ibid., p. 5.

blem-solving resources within the human personality. He finds no fault with Freud's understanding of religious beliefs as "illusion,"

if religious beliefs are recognized not as pure products of experience or end results of rational thinking, but fulfillment of the oldest, strongest, and most urgent wishes of mankind. . . .An illusion is not necessarily false, that is incapable of realization or contradictory to reality. The great question is: if illusions are needed, how can we have those that are capable of correction, and how can we have those that will not deteriorate into delusions?⁶⁶

Having stated a basically functional view of religion, Pruyser goes on in the second volume to describe a final presupposition of his dynamic orientation. It is his view that individuals and institutions always exist in a state of tension and therefore the psychologist of religion should focus his attention to the dynamic interchange between belief and unbelief rather than to try to define any short range or long range trends in the development of belief or unbelief.⁶⁷

Definition of Pruyser's Dynamic Methodology

Pruyser describes what he believes to be four alternatives to the methodological problem of studying religious experience. He sees the four options to have evolved historically, consistent with the basic presuppositions and intentions of the researchers in ques-

⁶⁶Ibid., pp. 7-8.

⁶⁷Pruyser, op. cit., 1974, p. 54.

tion. The first option he describes as a theological approach in which the psychologist of religion chooses theological criteria as the manner in which he orders and structures his analysis of religious experience. Within this model, the psychologist of religion has tended to provide psychology as a commentary to theological constructs such as: creation, God, sin, salvation, redemption, the sacraments, etc. Pruyser critiques this mode as trying to force psychological variables under the heading of theological categories.⁶⁸

A second method which Pruyser has seen used historically has occurred when the researcher has attempted to follow the common themes of religiosity and to order or construct his analysis along the lines of these common themes: worship, prayer, confession, church attendance, sacramental performances, mysticism, conversion, etc. Though these categories make the criteria of continuity across the board for religious experience as verifiable within almost any community of faith, Pruyser feels that an analysis following this methodology frequently fails to catch a sense of how the whole is frequently greater than the sum of the parts.⁶⁹

The third methodology described, and characteristic of the earliest studies in the psychology of relig-

⁶⁸Pruyser, op. cit., 1968, p. 179.

⁶⁹Ibid.

ion in America, structured their analysis around those features of religious experience which were commonly held to be most "pregnant, dynamic, or remarkable" and as characteristic of that which was essentially religious in human experience. William James' analysis of the varieties of religious experience falls under this category and as has been noted, was aptly critiqued for its presupposition that religious experience is best defined in its more extreme cases.⁷⁰

The fourth mode which Pruyser describes as a methodology for studying the psychology of religious experience, is the methodology which he himself employs in his two primary works. Operating out of his specialized training as a clinical psychologist, Pruyser utilizes standard psychological concepts as the ordering principle of his methodology. A great variety of religious phenomena are described, analyzed and interpreted under headings and subheadings which are clearly psychological categories of evaluation rather than theological or religious categories. Religious experience is evaluated in terms of the various part processes of a human psyche including perception, intellect, thought organization, language, emotions, the motor system, as well as in the interpersonal and intrapsychic dimensions of human

⁷⁰Ibid.

experience of the self in relationship to things, ideas, other persons and significant love objects.⁷¹ He makes no attempt to actively distinguish between the various orders of religious phenomenon nor any attempt to provide unusual distinction along the lines of qualitative intensity and degree. For instance, Pruyser would attempt to evaluate the experience of the disciplined mystic alongside the experience of the young child learning a prayer by way of imitation, and show how prayer in both instances is a reflection of thought organization, intellectual process, or linguistic analysis. The resulting accumulation of data is very fluid and varying in degree of abstraction and occasionally comparisons are made between various forms of data which on the surface appear to be discontinuous with each other. Likewise, as Pruyser notes, occasionally distinctions are drawn between data which using either of the other three models would ordinarily be seen as very similar.⁷²

Pruyser does not apologize, however, for his choice of psychological categories for it enables him to avoid the temptation to equate religion with any specific behavior or to try to define any specific "essence" of religion. Secondly, he enjoys the freedom which comes in being able to evaluate the experience of all individuals

⁷¹Ibid.

⁷²Ibid., p. 20.

from the same perspective and without undue concern over the saintliness of the believer. As he states, "much of religion is quite simple, habitual, and pedestrian, even trite. These features too must be taken into account."⁷³ He acknowledges that this approach does run the risk of not leaving enough room "for an appreciation of religious experience as a whole"⁷⁴ or perhaps not do full justice to the natural divisions of religion such as prayer, sin, worship, etc.⁷⁵

One specific methodological risk forced Pruyser to take an interlude in the writing of the chapter entitled "Religion and the Motor System" in order to describe how his methodology had provided some limits of debatable value in his ability to assess religious activities. He notes that his decision to evaluate religious action in terms of its energetic, economic, control and developmental aspects does not perhaps do justice to the distinctions between individual and group activities, or between solitary acts and interpersonal acts.⁷⁶ Nevertheless Pruyser chooses to stand by his methodology for the unique perspective of evaluation which it provides.

The same basic method is carried over in his second book, Between Belief and Unbelief, in which he

⁷³Ibid., p. 20.

⁷⁴Ibid., p. 180.

⁷⁵Ibid.

⁷⁶Ibid.

chooses to break down his analysis of belief and unbelief in terms of the psychological categories of alienation, dependency and autonomy, mystery, providence, fantasy, reality, and coming to terms with options (the will).⁷⁷ In this sequel as well as in the first volume, Pruyser's analysis continues from a psychological perspective though exhibiting a willingness to integrate the insights of theology, sociology, world religions, and anthropology whenever they shed light upon his own psychological perspective.⁷⁸

Pruyser's methodology in both books revolves around a rephrasing of the questions inherent in the study of religious experience and of religious belief or unbelief. For instance, in his Dynamic Psychology of Religion, Pruyser points to the fact that with the old questions under examination, the psychology of religion was: within the set of all potentially religious phenomena, which are the significant data of religious experience? He believes that the new question facing the study of psychology of religion should be: which data of experience are of religious significance.⁷⁹ Having rephrased the question by placing the emphasis upon the evaluation

⁷⁷Pruyser, op. cit., 1974.

⁷⁸Pruyser, op. cit., 1968, p. 180 and 1974, pp. 44f.

⁷⁹Ibid., p. 12.

of the significance of the data as religious, Pruyser is acknowledging that potentially all experiences can be interpreted for religious significance or not.

Likewise, in Between Belief and Unbelief, Pruyser again is attempting to shift the study by asking the question of inquiry in a slightly different way than it has historically been asked. He builds his theory upon the Freudian understanding that both religion and irreligion, belief and unbelief are related to man's pursuit of happiness, and that happiness is to be understood in terms of the satisfaction of man's basic needs. Then Pruyser begins to ask corollary questions such as: what satisfaction does religious belief bring and what factors have operated to define this satisfaction for the subject? Likewise, he asks what happens when the objects of mankind's needs no longer satisfy or produce happiness.⁸⁰ The result of these re-phrasing of the questions of inquiry again points to the functional task of Pruyser's methodology, which is the examination of the motivation within mankind's experience of the numinous and of the belief systems to which he clings in order to find meaning in life.

Following in the tradition of both Sigmund Freud and Anton Boisen, Pruyser's methodology includes the

⁸⁰Pruyser, op. cit., 1974.

examination of case material, and personal documents. Utilizing on occasion excerpts from the literature of the world's great religions, theological treatises and personal diaries and biographies as well as the documented case histories of his clients or of the clients of the students which he has supervised, he uses these pieces of personal case material to illustrate the conclusions to which he has arrived. It should be noted, however, that in contrast to the use of case material in Erikson's psychohistorical method as well as in other psychoanalytic psychologists of religion like Ana-Maria Rizzuto, Pruyser's use of case material is in fact illustrative only and not as frequent as one might desire. One reviewer of his 1968 volume counted the frequency of the use of case material and concluded that only about ten different case histories were employed in the entire volume⁸¹ Though unable to produce an exact count, it is this author's opinion that the second volume, Between Belief and Unbelief is equally sparse in the depth and manner in which it uses case material. Most of the material in the 1974 volume, in fact, appears to be footnoted from the writings of other theorists as well as the great works of literature.

⁸¹C. W. Brister, in the book review section of The Southwestern Journal of Theology, Vol. 11 (Spring, 1969), p. 139.

Pruyser's Methodology as an Example of Psychoanalytic Method:

In a previous section of this dissertation, the characteristics of the psychoanalytic method of research as developed by Sigmund Freud and his successors were described.⁸² Several unique characteristics of the psychoanalytic method have been proposed and this section of the dissertation will describe the manner in which Pruyser's dynamic methodology fits into the stream of psychoanalytic studies of psychology of religion.

Freud's empirical methodology was defined as the observation and analysis of the thoughts, feelings, and behavior of the client and the therapist. Freud was not committed to an experimental method that manipulated various variables as in laboratory research. This empirical method which underlies psychoanalytic methodology can therefore be described as inductive and observational in nature. Pruyser's methodology is continuous with psychoanalytic method in his willingness to observe and evaluate all the data of human experience as it flows freely and loosely before the observer's eye. Though he is definitely committed to a theoretical substructure as defined by psychoanalytic theory and practice, Pruyser's concern is for an inquiry characterized by richness rather than

⁸²See Chapter 2, pages 36-45 for the presentation of this material.

purity and he does not need to squeeze the data into any a priori mold. His ordering principle for classification of the data of religious experience within the framework of the part processes of the human psyche, provides considerable fluidity to the task of evaluation of the data of religious experience from a variety of psychological perspectives. Likewise, rather than recording any attempts at experimental control over the subjects of his study. Pruyser has chosen to draw his clinical data from a variety of sources and clinical case histories which provides the richness that he desires at the expense of laboratory purity.

Historically, psychoanalytic research has shown an observable preference for ideographic research and for the value of the case study method as a primary tool in analyzing human experience. As illustrated clearly by H. Newton Malony, this use of single cases in research does not attempt to exclude the importance of large-sampling validation of the results of single case or ideographic study,⁸³ though it does show a willingness throughout the history of the psychoanalytic movement to trust the validity of the individual case to provide criteria in

⁸³H. Newton Maloney, "N Equals One: Methodology in the Psychology of Religion," in H. Newton Maloney, ed. Current Perspectives in the Psychology of Religion, pp. 352-367.

theory generation.⁸⁴ Pruyser's methodology reflects the same commitment to ideographic research. As has been stated previously, Pruyser owns his indebtedness to William James and Anton Boisen as well as Sigmund Freud in his introduction to A Dynamic Psychology of Religion and all three of these mentors reflected a clear preference toward ideographic research.

A third characteristic of the psychoanalytic method is reflected in the obvious commitment to avoid the temptation of contamination from other sciences or the use of deductive analogies that might lead to reductionistic conclusions. In both volumes, Pruyser reflects a wide scope of awareness of research in fields other than his own major field of study, clinical psychology. He attempts to bring in the data from these other fields in a manner which amplifies and expands the conclusions of his research rather than determining his conclusions at the outset. In fact, at points he even expresses his awareness that the data from the other sciences is in conflict to that of his dynamic psychology and it is presented for the specific purpose of challenging his own conclusions.⁸⁵

⁸⁴See Kurt Lewin, A Dynamic Theory of Personality: Selected Papers, 1935, pp. 1-42, for an assessment of this debate and its philosophical underpinnings as a conflict between Aristotelian and Galileian modes of thought in contemporary psychology.

⁸⁵Pruyser, op. cit., 1968, p. 180 presents one example in which Pruyser acknowledges that his decision to

A fourth characteristic of psychoanalytic methodology is its interest in primary process thinking and its belief that the unconscious has an intentional relationship to conscious reality. The tool that Freud and his followers employed to elicit the data about the primary process thinking and to recover this unconscious material was the technique of free association. Psychoanalytic theory is a conflict model of psychic functioning that places a heavy importance upon the non-rational and its determinative value in human motivation. Pruyser acknowledges his own bias in the value of the psychoanalytic method in the study psychology of religion for its capacity to shorten the psychological distance between man and God⁸⁶ and for the heuristic value of the psychoanalytic method because of its emphasis upon the role of conflict.⁸⁷ Pruyser states "religious language is close to the primary process language known from psychoanalysis."⁸⁸ He believes that his analysis of religious experience in terms of the part processes of the human psyche provides

utilize the part process of the motor system in relation to religious experience provides some confusion to an analysis that would include the importance of group and systems issues in an understanding of religious behavior.

⁸⁶Ibid., pp. 6-7.

⁸⁷Ibid., p. 8.

⁸⁸Ibid., p. 12.

an important and distinctive means of evaluating this primary process thinking.

In Between Belief and Unbelief, he restates his basic psychoanalytic understanding of the importance of the ego's attempt to mediate between the pleasure principle and the reality principle through the part processes of attention, perception, cognition, emotion, memory, language, action, etc. towards the end of finding a state of satisfaction with respect to those objects towards which these libidinal forces are driven. It is his contention that the individual's belief system becomes essential in establishing a homeostatic balance between the forces of the pleasure and reality principles.⁸⁹ One notes again the heavy commitment to the identification and understanding of the primary process thinking and the functional value of religious belief in Pruyser's psychology of religion.

It follows from what has been said already, that a psychoanalytic study of religion is a functional methodology that looks for the manner in which religion serves as a problem solving resource within the psyche that is caught in a state of tension and conflict. Perhaps the final illustration of Pruyser's commitment to this functional approach to the study of religion is found in the

⁸⁹Pruyser, op. cit., 1974, pp. 44f.

conclusions to his Between Belief and Unbelief in which Pruyser concludes with Donald Winnicott, that the person's belief system is tied in an ambivalent state of love and hate with one's primary love objects and that religion functions within the transitional sphere between the inner world and the outer reality as a means of interpreting and controlling this ambivalence.⁹⁰ Tolerance of this state of ambivalence is reflected in the individual's capacity to adopt a stance of tolerance to the belief and unbelief of other individuals, and for Pruyser this state of tolerance is characteristic of the highest level of integration and religious functioning.⁹¹

As a natural consequence from its springing out of therapeutic practice, psychoanalytic theory has always been noted not just for its capacity to provide insight upon human thought, behavior and motivation, but also for its therapeutic values as well. The psychoanalytic side of religious experience also evolved out of this two-pronged emphasis. As Pruyser himself notes, it was George M. Stratton, who though himself not a psychoanalytic psychologist, nevertheless recognized as early as 1911 that the psychology of religion offered much of practical value in helping mankind disentangle himself from the various

⁹⁰Ibid., pp. 240 and 148f.

⁹¹Ibid., pp. 262f.

kinds of conflicts of the inner and outer world. This heuristic goal of the study of religious experience as a means of defining which of the problems of human experience are encouraged by religion and which problems are helped by religious solutions, has always been a central goal of the psychoanalytic approach to the psychology of religion.⁹² This is about as explicit as Pruyser becomes in either work in terms of defining himself as about the task of therapeutic insight as well as theoretical insight. However, his identity as psychologist and therapist is implicit throughout both works and he seeks to provide a more thorough understanding of religious experience and its impact upon persons as a means of providing preventive, educational, and therapeutic resources to the Christian pastor.

One of the cornerstones of the psychoanalytic methodology is the observance of one's own countertransference issues as the therapist or researcher attempts to enter the subjective world of his client or subject. This awareness of one's own subjective biases as capable of influencing the data which one is observing has led to the establishment of the principle of the self-analysis as prerequisite to the receiving of one's mantle as a psychoanalytic psychotherapist. Again it must be said, that

⁹²Pruyser, op. cit., 1968, p. 8.

Pruyser's adherence to this principle must be taken implicitly except for a few occasional confessions from his own lips as to how he perceives his own personal history influencing his work.

Finally, this is an American book by a middle-class author, an European immigrant, who is affiliated with a main line Protestant denomination. It thus has an inevitable focus on the author's own tradition which he knows best. Religion at large is infinitely broader than what meets the eyes of the main stream of the white western world. Consequently, there is no pretension to cover all religion, nor apology to those who may feel that some faith group or denomination has been slighted.⁹³

Rather than being afraid lest some of my own beliefs slip through the mazes of scholarly constraints, I have considered it more honest to myself and my readers to show that I am a participant-observer in the issues with which I deal. This will become obvious in the selectivity of my focus of inquiry, in what I have left out, in what I have played up and played down, in the implicit or explicit evaluative comments of the text, and in what I consciously advocate. In other words, I do assume in this book a posture toward my topic. The keen reader will quickly discern it, and be free to judge it from the angle of his own posture.⁹⁴

As Pruyser has thus stated, the "keen observer" is capable of discerning where Pruyser's own subjective commitments lie, though the uninitiated reader with no formal psychoanalytic training, might be led to the conclusion that Pruyser has no awareness of how his own personal history, theoretical assumptions, and methodology is influencing his conclusions. In a later section of this

⁹³Ibid., p. 20.

⁹⁴Pruyser, op. cit., 1974, p. xi-xii.

chapter, a partial critique will be offered shedding some light on how Pruyser's vision has been impacted by his own belief system.

The psychoanalytic methodology is a dialectical approach to theory formation. Its commitment to the case study allows for a theory that evolves rather than remains static. As new data contributes to our understanding of human experience, refinements or contradictions to previous assumptions are clarified and the theory is expanded to embrace these refinements and contradictions. It is difficult to discern just how dialectical Pruyser's methodology is due again in part to the dearth of any thorough case histories. The dialectical interchange may be there, but the reader gets the final synthesis and is all too often uninformed about the thesis-antithesis debate which has produced this synthesis. For at the heart of the psychoanalytic methodology, one always seems aware of just how the case is impacting the old theoretical assumptions and producing a new synthesis of knowledge. Pruyser never presents the full story of just how his inductive reasoning has developed through the years to the conclusions he presents in his research in these two books. The reader is left believing this dialectical interchange has taken place only by trust and faith in Pruyser's obvious credibility as a theoretician and clinician.

Finally, it must be noted that the psychoanalytic methodology shows a unique willingness to search for the internal consistency of meaning to the subject and the observer as one evaluates the impact of any specific piece of data from human experience. This phenomenological sensitivity to the importance that the meaning of the experience has to both the observer and his subject is clearly present in both of Pruyser's works. Perhaps the clearest statement of this underlying phenomenological orientation is found in the concluding chapter of A Dynamic Psychology of Religion in which Pruyser finally attempts to come to terms with what the essence of religion is. He returns to the heritage that he proclaimed earlier in William James, Rudolf Otto, and Friedrich Schleiermacher and their mutual understanding of the religious experience as the experience of the "something more," the "numinous," and the "tremendum." Borrowing an image from Paul Tillich's Systematic Theology, Pruyser describes his phenomenological understanding of religion as the screen upon which projections are made from both sides. Man casts his image on one side and God casts His image on the other. Pruyser states

but what does matter, ontologically and epistemologically, psychologically, and theologically, is the goodness of fit between the two projective images. Are the two shows different or the same? Paul could not answer the question of goodness of fit. Though he was concerned and curious, he kept it open. Living in an era before photography, he could only use the prim-

itive optics of mirrors: "For now we see in a glass, darkly, but then we will see face to face."⁹⁵

Critique and Analysis of Pruyser's Methodology and Its Applications to the Psychology of Religion

Beginning with the obvious strengths of Pruyser's methodology several factors need to be noted. First, in contrast to the classical approaches to the psychology of religion, Pruyser's methodology of utilizing the part processes of the ego as the ordering principle around which he analyzes religious experience, is both timely and appropriate as a methodology in light of contemporary thinking. By the time of the publication of A Dynamic Psychology of Religion in 1968, psychoanalytic theory had reached a level of acceptance and credibility around the world to a degree that the language and constructs of psychoanalytic thinking are relatively commonplace. Most readers therefore will not be put off by his utilization of the constructs of the part processes and integrative processes of the ego. Neither will they be shocked or disappointed by the quantity of references to the defensive mechanisms in his analysis of religious experience. Likewise, as the theories of the British Object Relations School, become more commonly known, his heavy reliance upon Fairbairn, and Winnicott will also be appreciated.

⁹⁵Pruyser, op. cit., 1968, p. 339.

Pruyser's methodology can not only find continuity within psychoanalytic methodology, but his schema for utilizing the part processes of the ego as well as the ego's interrelationship to self, things and ideas represents a fairly common methodological approach to the study of human thought and behavior. The categories utilized by Pruyser in his chapter headings reflect the manner in which any dynamic psychology might attempt to present its data. For instance, any paper or text attempting to analyze the thought process will utilize similar categories for evaluation. It is Pruyser's unique contribution to the field of psychology of religion that he is able to apply the multi-varied aspect of the thought processes of the human mind to an analysis of religious experience.

What seems so exceptional to this reader about Pruyser's methodology is the reality that Pruyser is so comfortable in utilizing the categories of dynamic psychology, that he can give full attention to the uniqueness of the religious thought patterns and experience. The scanning of the footnotes of A Dynamic Psychology of Religion reflects almost minimal need to support his thesis from psychological writers and almost exclusive dependence upon theological works for the authority which he lacks. This fact seems significant when Pruyser's work is compared to the writings of other significant contributors in psychology of religion whose recognized authority is vested in theological scholarship and who feel compelled to seek

footnoted credit from within the psychological disciplines.⁹⁶

As Samuel Southard has noted, Pruyser's evaluation of religion closely parallels the methodology of David Rapaport in the conclusion of his edited volume: Organization and Pathology of Thought.⁹⁷ Rapaport's article entitled "Toward a Theory of Thinking," takes a similar Freudian model in describing the tension between the drives seeking expression of the pleasure principle and society demanding recognition of the reality principle. He describes how the various part processes and defensive mechanisms of the ego are utilized in dealing with this state of tension.⁹⁸

The second strength in its relationship to contemporary thought, is Pruyser's methodological concern to keep the assessment of the issues of religious experience open ended without the obvious heavily negative bias of traditional Freudian thought. He challenges Freud's

⁹⁶The reader is invited to compare this dynamic with a quick perusal of other frequently cited texts in psychology of religion: i.e., Wayne E. Oates, The Psychology of Religion, or Heije Faber, Psychology of Religion, or Orlo Strunk, Jr., Religion: A Psychological Interpretation.

⁹⁷Southard makes this comparison in his book review of A Dynamic Psychology of Religion in the book review section of the Review of Religious Research, Volume 10, (Winter 1969), pp. 119-121.

⁹⁸David Rapaport, "Toward a Theory of Thinking," in Organization and Pathology of Thought, David Rapaport, ed., pp. 689-730.

reductionism and evaluates Freud's own personal unwillingness to accept the validity of religious belief as an example of his own continuing ambivalence in his object relations theory.⁹⁹

Another aspect of the open endedness of Pruyser's methodology is that it helps him accomplish his stated task of avoiding the dichotomy between the sacred and the secular. Choosing purely psychological categories for his evaluation has enabled him to discuss the ingredients of the religious experience along side other aspects of human experience, noting the similarities and the discrepancies without having to make a commitment for or against the truthfulness of the religious phenomenon. It has enabled him to avoid any one-sided perception of any particular religious issue and to utilize his own proposed "virtue of tolerance," by applying a variety of perspectives as he assesses each phenomenon of human experience. Consequently, one of the strengths of his methodology is its consistency within itself. Both works maintain a cohesive interplay between theory and practice in methodology. He concludes in Between Belief and Unbelief, in 1974, that religion emerges from a playful attitude towards the objects within the transitional sphere and his methodology in both works has exhibited the value of such a playful approach.

⁹⁹Pruyser, op. cit., 1974, p. 190.

Another strength of Pruyser's methodology is his willingness to step out of the area of his own specialty, namely clinical psychology, in an effort to integrate his dynamic psychology with insights from theology, cultural anthropology, sociology, and literature. Though experts in each of these other areas can surely detect errors which he brings to the conclusions of his research, Pruyser's expansive knowledge and genius at integrating ideas from across disciplines is remarkable. Even though the psychology of religion has identified itself as a borderland discipline between the boundaries of the behavioral sciences and theology, it is courageous when anyone attempts to tackle the problems of language and philosophical presuppositions in doing this task. As one reviewer pointed out, his willingness to tackle the subject of belief and unbelief is just such a venturing out of the safety of his own discipline and inviting attack on all sides. At all times Pruyser presents himself as up to meeting the challenge of attack through the versatility of his methodology.¹⁰⁰

A final strength in Pruyser's methodology is his choice to utilize object relations theory as an expansion upon the traditional Freudian psychoanalytic dependence

¹⁰⁰Donald Capps, Review of Between Belief and Unbelief in Religious Studies Review, Volume II (2), (April 1976), p.1.

upon the pleasure-reality principle explanations of human motivation. Though basically redefining the concepts of libido from "energy directed towards the satisfaction of pleasure," to "energy directed towards satisfaction through object relatedness," it nevertheless minimizes the criticism of reductionism which has been leveled towards Freud's assumption that all human motivation is wrapped up in sexual and aggressive impulses. Pragmatically, Pruyser has made a decision that undoubtedly will increase the audience in which his theories will gain a positive response.

However, the limits of Pruyser's methodology must also be assessed. The first and most important analysis of his limitations must begin with his choice to entrench himself within the psychoanalytic tradition. As a psychoanalytic theorist, he is subject to all the common criticisms leveled against this school of thought. He is vulnerable to the assertion of Karl Popper and others who have questioned the scientific thoroughness of any psychoanalytic theory which is not vulnerable to the principle of "falsification."¹⁰¹ Pruyser would undoubtedly answer this charge by pointing to the numerous occasions in which he took opportunity to discriminate his own theories from that of classical Freudian analysis. He would also

¹⁰¹See page 54-55 in Chapter 3 for a description of Popper's theory of falsification.

undoubtedly argue that his choice to include object relations theory could be said to exhibit his sensitivity to the need for expansion upon these classical Freudian hypotheses and that just such an expansion is an application of the falsification principle.

Nevertheless, it must be pointed out that Pruyser has embraced the traditional psychoanalytic conflict theory of human motivation with its basically pathological orientation to the description of human experience. In so doing, Pruyser is still balancing precariously over the chasm of reductionism. Any methodology based predominantly upon a conflict view of human motivation has already predetermined the direction in which research will go and the conclusions which will evolve.

Pruyser might have reduced some of the strength of a criticism of reductionism by not relying as heavily as he did upon Freud. For instance, except for a few token observations, Pruyser has chosen to selectively inattent to the entirely different set of theoretical presuppositions of Carl Jung. In so doing, Pruyser has made a commitment to pursue a basic Freudian understanding of the unconscious in negative characteristics and exclude a view of the unconscious as a basically positive, growth-enhancing force in human experience. For even in his expansion of the Freudian thesis with the British Object Relations School, he has continued in a perspective with a

largely negative view of the unconscious and its role in human motivation.

Another limitation related to his choice of psychoanalytic theory is related to the implicit dualism of the psychoanalytic view of reality. Critiqued most effectively by current transpersonal writers like Ken Wilber, this dualistic approach to human experience of necessity must rule out certain data about human consciousness which the theory cannot handle.¹⁰² Other transpersonal writers like Stanislav Grof and Kenneth Ring have also illustrated the limitations of the psychoanalytic view of human consciousness.¹⁰³

Pruyser openly avows his own bias towards a cognitively oriented interpretation of religious experience as well as a personal frustration that religion has not "shed some of its crasser illusory features and moved in the direction of greater rationality and ethical pertinence."¹⁰⁴ Though throughout both volumes he has attempted to affirm the validity of the non-rational in

¹⁰²See Ken Wilber, "The Pre/Trans Fallacy," Revision, Volume 3 (2), (Fall 1980), pp. 51-71.

¹⁰³Stanislav Grof, Realms of Human Consciousness: Observations from LSD Research, and Kenneth Ring, "Mapping the Regions of Consciousness: A Conceptual Reformulation," Journal of Transpersonal Psychology, Volume 2 (1976), pp. 77-89.

¹⁰⁴Pruyser, op. cit., 1974, p. 196.

both religious experience as well as the greater dimensions of human experience, yet his bias in favor of cognitive, rational experience is clearly evident in both works. In so doing, Pruyser does not accomplish the same degree of phenomenological neutrality towards the validity of the nonrational in human experience as did William James.

Finally, it must be said that Pruyser's psychoanalytic perspective is exclusive and limited by its lack of appreciation of the contributions made by learning theorists and systems theorists. Again, though Pruyser gives tacit acknowledgement of the interpersonal aspects of religious experience and even of the interpersonal belief formation, the weight of his arguments are heavily slanted towards an intrapsychic significance of the religious experience and of one's belief system. He has excluded the possibility that anything of substance can be contributed to the analysis of religious experience through an awareness of the systems of which each individual is a part.

For instance, one is stimulated to ask the question if belief can really be reduced to the desire for happiness and satisfaction. More than the influence of one's nuclear family is necessary to produce an attitude of ultranationalism or civil religion. A state of satisfaction with one's narcissistic needs may occur as one

identifies with the course and direction of one's country. This stance may also be related to the individual's desire to express dependency or autonomy upon one's parents, but what about the impact of group psychology and its collective representation in the formation of a belief of supernaturalism? Robert Bellah has analyzed the phenomenon of civil religion with a sensitivity to intrapsychic dimensions, but with an awareness as well of the social and cultural determinants in this phenomenon too.¹⁰⁵

As has already been noted earlier in this chapter, though Pruyser has a clinical orientation in his methodology, his utilization of case material appears very limited. His use of case material is primarily illustrative to the theoretical position he has adopted rather than as confrontive to his theory and producing a new synthesis of understanding. Giving him credit for having utilized the cases in a more theory generative manner, his methodology could have been strengthened by illustrating this process with at least one case done in depth.

Margaret Hall proposes another place in which Pruyser's dialectical methodology could have been presented more clearly. In her critique of Between Belief

¹⁰⁵See Robert Bellah, Beyond Belief: Essays on Religion in a Post-Traditional World and The Broken Covenant--American Civil Religion in a Time of Trial for a sociologist's perspective on the various systemic forces in the emergence of civil religion.

and Unbelief she appropriately stresses Pruyser's inadequacy in addressing how the virtue of tolerance emerges as a synthesis between the thesis (belief) and the antithesis (unbelief).¹⁰⁶

Pruyser's methodology has great heuristic potential. He has taken a clearly functional approach to the religious experience, which though losing some of the qualitative flavor of what makes religious behavior religious, is nevertheless quite effective in analyzing how religion helps people adapt to the problems of life. His assessment of this functional value of religious experience is quite helpful to the clinician who is daily faced with the problem of assessing and interpreting the meaning which religious experience has for people suffering from psychiatric illness. But it is even more valuable in the sense that Pruyser has begun to explicate religion not just in its profoundly pathological experiences, but also in its capacity to provide a daily coping mechanism in the life of the believer who is not necessarily clinically defined as "sick." The richness of detail and expansiveness of his knowledge in fields other than clinical psychology in the end has produced a work of great educational value. For instance, as he has already pointed

¹⁰⁶See Margaret Hall in the book review of Between Belief and Unbelief in The Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion, Volume 14 (Spring 1975), p. 297.

out, parents seem to have an intuitive understanding of the importance of transitional objects as a coping resource for the infant in coming to terms with the frustrations encountered by the external environment impinging upon the infant's unsophisticated needs. But his recognition that these transitional objects are the locus from which the capacity to experience transcendence emerges provides an added special insight not only to parents but religious educators.

Two examples come to mind, one from each volume, which illustrate clearly the heuristic value of Pruyser's methodology. From A Dynamic Psychology of Religion, his evaluation of the three theories of the atonement provides important diagnostic and therapeutic insights for the pastoral counselor. Utilizing just this one contribution, the clinician could establish an assessment grid of the client's preference from each of these three theories of the atonement and the clinician would be provided with an excellent theoretical index for locating the origin of the internal conflict within the client.

Pruyser's clear explanation of the manner in which belief and unbelief are tied in a love/hate relationship to the primary love objects in one's early childhood can also provide the clinician with a handle on where to start exploring and unlocking the client's authoritative belief structure. Pruyser's thesis provides a new dimension for

unlocking this long-term issue in the psychology of religion. Authoritarian beliefs are not just related to intrinsic and extrinsic religious practices, but are ultimately internal objects just like the people they are attached to and must be approached as objects in their own right in therapy.

Several issues emerge as a continuing concern for future research in the psychoanalytic psychology of religion. First of all, Pruyser has side-stepped some of the current thorny issues of the psychology of religion like paranormal healing, psi phenomena, and "out of body experiences." As fourth force transpersonal psychologists of religion add increasing empirical validation to these phenomena of human experience, psychoanalytic theory and research will need to integrate and assess these findings as well.

Secondly, it must be noted that even in Pruyser's own acknowledgements, his dealing with the issues of theodicy and eschatology is very limited. There appears to be something of significance however to his very brief assessment of the role of the demonic, but these theories need to be expanded especially in light of the increasing amount of the public interest and attention given to this subject.

Also, as Seward Hiltner has observed, the pleasure/reality principle interpretation of human experi-

ence has been shown to be inadequate as a description of human motivation and behavior in moments of great trauma.¹⁰⁷ Since religion's goal is to provide another functional resource for coping with the crises of life, further research and analysis need to be done to clarify the theory where this one crucial application of the falsification principle has been applied.

Finally, considerable work needs to be done in relating Pruyser's understanding of belief formation as the playful interaction of transitional objects to the research that is currently being done from the structural developmental perspective of spiritual formation.¹⁰⁸

This chapter has described and assessed the contributions of the dynamic methodology of Paul Pruyser in light of its contributions to the psychoanalytic psychology of religion. The next chapter continues with a similar assessment of the clinical methodology of Ana-Maria Rizzuto.

¹⁰⁷Seward Hiltner, Book Review of Between Belief and Unbelief in the Religious Studies Review, Volume II (2) (April 1976), p. 6.

¹⁰⁸See James W. Fowler, Stages of Faith: The Psychology of Human Development and the Quest for Meaning, for a clear description of this structural developmental understanding of faith formation.

Chapter 5

The Clinical Method of Ana-Maria Rizzuto

This chapter will analyze the contributions of Ana-Maria Rizzuto to the psychoanalytic study of the psychology of religion. Specifically, Rizzuto's clinical methodology integrates the theoretical assumptions of psychoanalytic ego psychology with the detailed clinical case study of four hospitalized in-patient psychiatric cases. The chapter will proceed as follows: following an introductory summary of the primary theoretical influences and presuppositions implicit within Rizzuto's dynamic orientation toward human growth and development, will be an explicit description and definition of Rizzuto's clinical methodology. Her method will be compared in its common features to other psychoanalytic research. Other forms of psychological research that deal with the development of religious ideation will be assessed with the distinctions and uniquenesses of Rizzuto's method in mind. The chapters will conclude with a critique of her method and its applications to the psychology of religion.

Noting the absence of any solid clinical and theoretical studies in the genesis of the "God Representation" or belief in God, Rizzuto states that the purpose of her research is to explore the origin and development of the

"God Representation."¹ Specifically, Rizzuto is curious about the early formation and lifelong modifications of this significant internalized object. She is interested in answering the questions of how and why this special internalized object happens in the absence of any empirically verifiable external object as "God." She deliberately steers clear of dealing with any of the complex questions posed by religion and attempts only to undertake a "clinical, psychoanalytic study of 'postulated super human beings' as experienced by those who do and do not believe in them."² Likewise, she seeks a simple non-scientific definition of religion as the "institution consisting of culturally patterned interactions with culturally postulated super human beings."³ She further delimits her study to the private expressions of belief or unbelief and chooses to exclude from her analysis any public expressions of belief or unbelief.⁴

The Birth of the Living God is the culmination of sixteen years of theoretical research combined with clinical observation in an effort to provide a clearer psychoanalytic psychology of the foundation of belief and

¹Ana-Maria Rizzuto, The Birth of the Living God: A Psychoanalytic Study, p. viii.

²Ibid., p. 2.

³Ibid.

⁴Ibid., p. 4.

pastoral care. Rizzuto is the clinical professor of psychiatry at Tufts Medical School and is also a faculty member at the Psychoanalytic Institute of New England. She is a recent immigrant to the United States from her native homeland of Argentina. As an active member of the American Psychiatric Association's Task Force on Religion and Psychiatry, Rizzuto's theoretical contributions include three articles and papers in the area of the scientific study of religion.⁵

The Birth of the Living God remains the current and culminating expression of Rizzuto's integration of psychoanalytic ego psychology, object relations theory, and religious ideation. The book exists in three parts beginning with a survey of Freud's contributions to object relations theory and subsequent additions and modifications of psychoanalytic theory by other authors. The second part of the book is a summary in detail of four clinical cases of in-patient psychiatric patients in a private hospital in New England which characterize four basic postures of the "God Representation." The final

⁵Rizzuto has two published articles dealing with the relationship between the theory of object-relations and the formation of object representations of God and the devil. They are: Ana-Maria Rizzuto, "Object Relations and the Formation of the Image of God." British Journal of Medical Psychology, Volume 47 (1974), pp. 83-99 and Ana-Maria Rizzuto, "Freud, God, the Devil and the Theory of Object Representation." The International Review of Psychoanalysis, Volume 31 (1976), pp. 165f.

section of the book integrates the clinical histories of these four cases with the theoretical underpinnings of object-relations theory arriving at Rizzuto's conclusions about the genesis and development of the "God Representation" in human experience.

Rizzuto begins the main body of her text by stating "this is not a book on religion."⁶ She skillfully avoids any philosophical and theological statements and maintains a purely psychological orientation to the study of the formation of the image of God within the psyche of the young child and its later modifications throughout lifetime.

The Psychological Foundations of Rizzuto's Theory and Methodology

Rizzuto's intellectual roots are clearly imbedded deeply into Freudian soil. She devotes close to twenty percent of her text in the discussion, amplification and modification of the basic Freudian hypothesis of the psychological genesis of the religious sentiment in human experience. Even at the points where her own theoretical presuppositions differ from mainline Freudian theory, her affection and loyalty to his genius and contributions to the scientific understanding of religion are very evident. She is in basic general agreement with Freud's assumption that religion is a psychological phenomenon that emerges

⁶Ibid., p. 3.

in early childhood in relationship to the primary external objects in the child's world, namely his parents. As the child grows the introjected images of the parent and other significant authorities become the functional basis of the superego which is later amplified into a representation of God.⁷

In Freud's schema there is a clear sexual etiology and the presence of this internalized representation of the divinity ultimately is functionally in service of the resolution of the Oedipus struggle.⁸ Rizzuto notes, however, that one of the limitations of this Freudian hypothesis is its understanding of the inner God purely in the context of a father-son relationship and excluding the significance of the mother-son relationship as well as avoiding the task of defining clearly how God becomes real in the inner life of the parent-daughter triangle.⁹ Freud's only recourse in defining the etiology of religious sentiment in women is a weak description of the cultural transmission of religion.¹⁰

Furthermore, Rizzuto seems bothered by Freud's unwillingness to tackle the question of why and how some people come to believe that gods and demons do exist as well as why these beliefs persist as daily realities long

⁷Ibid., p. 6.

⁸Ibid., p. 15.

⁹Ibid., p. 15.

¹⁰Ibid.

after the Oedipal stage has passed.¹¹ Freud drew heavily upon the current anthropological and evolutionary theories of his day in his construction of the emergence of the idea of God within civilization. Rizzuto has isolated the train of Freud's anthropological hypothesis as it begins with the concept of the patriarchal hordes which is gradually overthrown by the parricide of the father's sons, who then seek to atone for their foul deed and internalize their father's power in the institution of the totem meal. A resulting mnemonic image of the father becomes transformed into a deity and transmitted collectively through each generation in the totem myths, cultural observances and commemorations, and hero worship.¹² Freud believed that this primitive totemic religion was later revived, reinterpreted by Moses and became the foundation upon which monotheism and western religion was built.¹³

Freud's theory continued in attempting to explain the genesis of God and devil representations as a complex interplay between the representation of the father of the primal horde as well as the object representation of the child's actual father. Mobilizing the primitive defense mechanism of splitting, the child activates the image of

¹¹Ibid., pp. 15-16.

¹²Ibid., pp. 16-17.

¹³Ibid., pp. 17-18.

the primal father and the experience of the actual father into two distinct object representations, one good and one evil. The final development of this process yields two images of the deity, God and the devil.¹⁴

Rizzuto sees in this description of the genesis of the god and devil representations the beginnings of a Freudian object relations theory that describes the inner experience of both primeval man as well as contemporary, monotheistic man.¹⁵ Historically, monotheistic religion begins with a regression to the earlier object in its representation with all of its compelling feelings of ambivalence as well.¹⁶ Rizzuto presents a flow-chart attempting to describe the implicit object relations theory within Freud's theory of the role of the collective and individual father representations in creating the god/devil image.¹⁷

Though finding continuing value in Freud's primitive understanding of the origin and development of the religious sentiments in human beings, Rizzuto nevertheless finds herself differing from Freud's conclusions in several key areas. First of all, in contrast to the Freudian understanding of the post-Oedipal identification with the father by the son, Rizzuto points to the differ-

¹⁴Ibid., pp. 18-22.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 23.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 25.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 24.

ence between identification and deification of the father with the god representation. She feels that the Freudian understanding of the re-emergence of the patricidal crime of the primal horde within the Oedipal struggle of the young boy, does lead to identification with the father as the normal resolution of this developmental stage, but does not adequately explain the process by which the father image is ultimately elevated to the status of deity.¹⁸

Secondly, Rizzuto believes that the Freudian system fails to explain the development of non-anthropological abstractions about god. She believes that this is a result of Freud's confusion of three concepts:

1) the name of an object, 2) the material representation of an object, as in a work of art, and 3) the mental representation of a human object. Naming belongs to the order of abstraction of ideas. The material representation combines ideas with symbolic ways of representing them. An object representation is a very complex psychological process, which encompasses a wide variety of psychic functions from perception of physiological changes related to memories to compounded mental, visual, and other representations. . . .

Freud fails to see that there is no causal relation between naming and object representation, though there is, on the contrary, a causal relation between abstract ideas and naming.¹⁹

In short, Rizzuto believes that Freud placed too heavy an emphasis upon the intellectual superiority of the ego in taming the sensual and instinctual processes of the id.

¹⁸Ibid., p. 223.

¹⁹Ibid., p. 27.

Freud's inevitable conclusion leads him to the concept of the fully integrated human being as those persons who have successfully renounced the primary objects of their experience in favor of a "super rational view of the world where even the idea of God is an illusion."²⁰

Thirdly, Rizzuto differs from Freud in her belief that the importance of pre-Oedipal experiences in the genesis of the religious consciousness has been overlooked by Freud's heavy emphasis upon the Oedipal struggle resurfacing the primeval theme of the son murdering the father. She feels that Freud was limited in his understanding of the child's capacity for image formation and symbolization leading him to overlook the importance of pre-Oedipal object representations.²¹

Likewise, Rizzuto believes that the Freudian theory of the genesis of religious experience is limited in its ability to assess or explain the continuing presence of religion in the life of the person long after the stage of Oedipal conflict has passed. She notes that religion continues to be a driving and influential force in the person's life with the potential to lead towards further growth or integration as well as the potential for regression into some form of pathology, long after the struggle with the ambivalent feelings towards the human

²⁰Ibid., p. 28.

²¹Ibid., p. 43.

father has been laid aside. She concludes that the formation of the god representation is not only not dependent upon the Oedipal struggle alone, but that it can occur at any developmental stage,²² and that the god representation is capable of changing as the human being grows and develops throughout life.²³

Rizzuto notes that the Freudian understanding of the god representation is completely dependent upon the father-son relationship with no room for the correlation to other significant intra-family relationships with mother, brother, sister or even oneself.²⁴ She concludes from her own personal experience as well as her clinical practice, that the god representation in many people represents a blending of many significant object relationships of the young child and that the resulting understanding of God may be as much a result of the influence of a significant grandmother in one case as it is the result of a relationship with father in another case.

Rizzuto concludes that the Freudian theory is also limited by its heavy psycho-sexual emphasis and is not open to explaining the non-sexual functions of religion that are of equal importance to the individual throughout his lifetime as the sexual functions are important during

²²Ibid., p.44.

²³Ibid., p. 52.

²⁴Ibid., pp. 15, 43, 209.

the Oedipal stage of development. She points to the many examples of the existential value of religion as providing meaning in life as well as the presence of religion in non-neurotic or non-pathological psychological processes as evidence that Freud's psycho-sexual determinants, though partially accurate, are nevertheless limited in their capacity to describe the full scope of religion in human experience.²⁵

Finally, Rizzuto is concerned by the lack of any cogent explanation for the presence of religion and of a god representation in women and in non-believers. She believes that the interpretation that religion in women is explained by a process of "cross-inheritance" is weak and does not give credence to the variety and power of the individual experiences and god representations within women. Furthermore, she believes that Freud's simple interpretation that non-believers are mature people who have renounced their infantile wishes is simplistic and does not describe adequately the process by which the non-believer chooses to lay aside his god representation and the believer chooses to energize his god representation.²⁶

Finding Freud's theory limited therefore, Rizzuto moves towards other psychoanalytic theorists for the expansion of her own theoretical base. In the third

²⁵Ibid., p. 42.

²⁶Ibid., p. 42.

chapter of The Birth of the Living God Rizzuto moves beyond Freud and into the theories of the psychoanalytic object relations theorists. Her theoretical base is enriched by the contributions of theoreticians in the Kohut-Kernberg traditions as well as the theories of the British Object Relations School of Fairbairn, Guntrip and Winnicott. She is indebted likewise to Melanie Klein, Margaret Mahler, and Selma Fraiberg. She notes her indebtedness to Piaget for his important contributions to a structural understanding of cognitive development. She rounds out her psychoanalytic ego psychology base with contributions from Hans W. Loewald, Heim Stierlin, Joseph Sandler, and Rene Spitz. This highly eclectic group incorporates other less significant theorists, but Rizzuto finds herself gravitating towards the theories of Donald Winnicott as the primary resource for describing the manner in which the young child creates a god representation and begins to interact with it.²⁷

What is of importance in all of these theorists to Rizzuto's presuppositions is their combined contributions to her understanding of object representation. She presents a brief but thorough summary of the primary con-

²⁷Chapters 3, 4 and 10 expand the theoretical base to include the contributions of the other ego psychologists and object relation theorists and concludes with Rizzuto's heavy dependence upon Winnicott's theories as the primary channel in which her thought is flowing.

tributions by each of these theorists and draws the following conclusions as the critical foundation upon which her clinical methodology is based. Object relationships are memory triggered processes related to past and present interpersonal relationships,²⁸ and which help to determine the ego's present adaptive and defensive functions.²⁹ These object representations or memories are indestructible,³⁰ though capable of modification with respect to changes in the on-going relationship with the object.³¹ Freedom for the self occurs when these memories and their attending emotions can be played with in fantasy.³² Psychopathology is likewise symptomatic of the self's inability to integrate memory, present identity and ideals in an ego-syntonic manner.³³ Finally, Rizzuto concludes that there is no representation without object and no object without representation. She argues that it is important to guard against the temptation to make object representations into entities of the mind which would become capable of exerting their own actions autonomously. Object representations are the processes of memory in combination with the capacity to re-evaluate and re-interpret those

²⁸Ibid., p. 75.

²⁹Ibid., p. 76.

³⁰Ibid., p. 78.

³¹Ibid., p. 79.

³²Ibid., p. 82.

³³Ibid., p. 77.

memories in light of the ongoing and changing dimensions of reality.³⁴

The Definition of Rizzuto's Methodology

Rizzuto's methodology is a combination of theoretical speculative inquiry and solid clinical research. She begins with a theoretical base in post-Freudian object relations theory, especially the contributions of Donald Winnicott and his understanding that the "psychic space for theistic religion is found in the transitional space of illusion and play between psychic experience and those whom we love and fear."³⁵ She also concludes that the cultural space of religion is within parental and social structures of belief, myth, ritual, etc. in which the individual is immersed prior to his capacity to perceive a personal need for God.³⁶

Her clinical research project attempts to find a phenomenological and dynamic correlation with her theoretical assumptions. She states that her predominant thesis to be tested is:

. . . that once formed, the representation of God is given all the psychic potentials of a living person who is nonetheless experienced only in the privacy of conscious and unconscious processes. Other so called actions of God and the realities of our lives (His responses to our prayers, His punishment, His indications of what we should do) rests upon our interpreta-

³⁴Ibid., 83-84.

³⁵Ibid.

³⁶Ibid.

tion of events and realities to accord with our state of harmony, conflict, or ambivalence with the god we have.³⁷

To elicit the data necessary to confirm her thesis hypothesis, Rizzuto developed a projective tool of sixty-eight open-ended questions a sketched picture of God, with a description of how the picture portrays a visual representation of their image of God. The questionnaire is broken into two parts, the first part consisting of forty-five open-ended questions about the nature of God and his interaction in the world. This portion of the questionnaire closely resembles the questions which have been used for years in the pastoral diagnostic tool known as the Religious Ideation Questionnaire.³⁸ The second half of the questionnaire consists of twenty-three open-ended questions which give the research subject an opportunity to describe their family of origin, its structure, significant relational dyads, and the feelings engendered in the research subject by the family of origin. The intent in dividing the questionnaire into two parts is to provide responses which the researcher can then use looking for correlations between the parent images and the evolving god representation.³⁹

³⁷Ibid., p. 87.

³⁸Edgar Draper, et. al., "On the Diagnostic Value of Religious Ideation," Archives of General Psychiatry, 13 (September, 1965) pp. 202-207.

³⁹Rizzuto, op. cit., p. 8.

Finally, the clinical research includes additional data extracted from in-depth social histories, diagnostic insights, and therapeutic process reports. This additional data is used to amplify upon the results received in the questionnaire and focused interview of the research subject.⁴⁰ The case histories, process reports and diagnostic interpretations are the result of a multi-disciplined therapeutic interviews providing a comprehensive interpretation of the clinical data.⁴¹

Rizzuto states that her research began as a pilot project at the Boston State Hospital which then blossomed into a final research project involving twenty patients on a psychiatric unit of a private hospital.⁴² The research group of twenty patients consisted of ten women and ten men, ranging over a broad spectrum of diagnostic categories and presenting a broad variety of object relations and religious experiences. The patients were not informed that they were part of a test sampling and since all entering this psychiatric unit were requested to fill out the questionnaires, there was a conscious attempt to edit out any unsolicited attitudes or attempts to please the research team. During the admissions procedure into the hospital they were asked to draw a picture of their

⁴⁰Ibid., p. 8.

⁴¹Ibid., pp. 4, 87.

⁴²Ibid., pp. 6-7.

family including themselves and upon discharge were asked to draw a picture of God.⁴³ Rizzuto acknowledges a conscious delimitation to a research sample representing religious affiliation with Western cultural religion.

As an added control, Rizzuto attempted to carry out a pilot study with a control group including five members of her staff at the hospital. The control group consisted of two males: a minister and fourth year medical student, and three females: nurse, a psychologist, and a social worker. Their ages range from 21 to 40 and Rizzuto reports that the conclusions show that the staff and the patient populations maintain the same kind of representation of God.⁴⁴

Her research methodology is phenomenological in its willingness to accept a reality of God in the mind of the subject⁴⁵ and Rizzuto begins her inquiry with a staunch affirmation of the advantage of the clinical method of research in its capacity to allow the researcher to deal with the most private and secret experience of his subject. She states five specific advantages of the clinical method as follows:

1. it permits the analyst to use the patient's vocabulary to understand the historical roots of his/her belief,

⁴³Ibid., p. 10.

⁴⁴Ibid., p. 181.

⁴⁵Ibid., p. 87.

2. it deals with the patient as a concrete historical being in the here and now,
3. it deals with the patient's experience as it is happening,
4. it permits the use of hermeneutics applied to the internal consistency of the patient's life history, relations with primary objects, relation to God, and the context of the present, and
5. it permits us to understand the private God of each person in its particularity.⁴⁶

She sees the value of empirical studies for this particular kind of study as severely limited for though statistical validation can provide support to psychoanalytic insights, statistical studies lack clinical specificity and do not do justice to the complex and individual significance of the patient's object relationship with its god.⁴⁷

Rizzuto is careful to explain that her research is not attempting to discuss the how and why of symbol formation in its relationship to the inner religious experience but that her study is focusing uniquely on the imagos of the significant love objects in the subject's life and its interrelationship to the formation of the god representation alone.⁴⁸

Rizzuto outlines the following process through which her theoretical assumptions have been impacted by her clinical research and leading to her conclusions about the formation of the god representation. Her meth-

⁴⁶Ibid., p. 5.

⁴⁷Ibid., p. 5.

⁴⁸Ibid., p. 7.

odology begins with Freud and his theoretical assumptions critiquing him in light of the extensions to his theory that were offered by the ego psychology and object-relations theorists. She then moved to her clinical cases attempting to elicit phenomenological data which can be utilized to assess the validity of her theoretical formulations. She returns to her theoretical presuppositions in light of the results of her clinical research and reformulates the theory where needed, providing amplification where her clinical subjects provide new insights. She recognizes the limitations of all theory as ultimately descriptive and extremely limited in its predictive capabilities, though nevertheless reflects the competence within her research that her theoretical structure has provided.⁴⁹

The presentation of her clinical research follows a specific schema aimed at correlating the relationship between psychodynamic growth with religious pilgrimage. She presents the following format for elaborating each of the four types of god representation:

1. Locate the individual's position in relation to belief in God. The positions encountered are four: 1) those who have a god whose existence they do not doubt; 2) those wondering whether or not to believe in a god they are not sure exists; 3) those amazed, angered, or quietly surprised to see others deeply invested in a god who does not interest them; 4) those who struggle with a

⁴⁹Ibid., pp. 10-11.

- demanding, harsh god they would like to get rid of if they were not convinced of his existence and power.
2. Locate the prevailing characteristics of the god representation in the developmental moment when the child is able to form a representation of that type. I will try to present this point from both a descriptive and a psychoanalytic point of view.
 3. Trace the sources of the representation to their primary objects who provided most of its representational characteristics.
 4. Discuss the elaborations and transformations the parental representation has undergone to become a god representation.
 5. Analyze the psychic defenses working to facilitate belief or lack of belief in the individual's private god.
 6. Describe the prevailing uses of the god representation in the process of maintaining psychic equilibrium.
 7. Reconstruct the early life conditions and traumas which contributed to the child's elaboration of a particular god representation.
 8. Establish the possible connections between the god provided by organized religion and the private god representation of each individual.
 9. Show the particular needs each person has in relation to his god, even if the need is that god does not exist.
 10. Provide a diagnosis for each individual according to a) the standard nomenclature of the D.S.M.II of the American Psychiatric Association and b) psychoanalytic formulations of psychodynamic processes.⁵⁰

Features of Rizzuto's Methodology Which are Common to the Psychoanalytic Method of Research

In the second chapter of this dissertation several characteristics of the psychoanalytic method of research were outlined.⁵¹ Rizzuto's orientation is explicitly psy-

⁵⁰Ibid., p. 91.

⁵¹See pages 42-55 for an elaboration of these characteristics of psychoanalytic methodology.

choanalytic⁵² and the presentation of her research validates her continuity within psychoanalytic research.

Rizzuto is explicit in her preference for ideographic or case study research over nomothetic research as noted above.⁵³ As one reads the case histories of the four individuals she has used as illustrative examples of her four typologies of god representations, they reflect a deep sensitivity to the uniqueness of each individual's life experience and the potential she has given to each case in the overall generation of her theoretical conclusions. One gets the feeling that he has encountered the self of the research subject through the eyes of the researcher. Her theoretical presuppositions are explicit at the outset, but her commitment to a phenomenological perspective which encourages the solicitation of the special meanings of the religious experience to the research subject is clearly evident.

This research exhibits a limited attempt to control the research variables though not to the same degree as in other experimental psychological methods. The choice to use a questionnaire and focused interview has predetermined some of the data to be extracted, but the decision to leave the questions open-ended has facilitated its use as a projective tool. Primary process

⁵²Ibid., p. 91.

⁵³Ibid., pp. 4-5.

thinking is elicited in a manner similar to that of free association as the research subject is encouraged to present his own unique conclusions to each question that is asked. The theory of object-relations which Rizzuto upholds is an extension of the psychic determinism of traditional Freudian psychoanalytic thought with some significant modifications. She holds to the belief that the unconscious does have a purposive and intentional relationship with conscious reality. She is committed to the belief that object representations and self representations are related to the individual's past history though also acknowledges that object relationships are also the creation of the individual himself in response to the interpersonal experiences in his environment.⁵⁴ Consequently her theoretical orientation is less deterministic and reductionistic than classical Freudian psychoanalytic thought.

Her attempt to avoid reductionistic contamination is also facilitated by her multi-disciplined approach to data collection and evaluation. Within the very field of psychoanalysis, she has been critiqued both positively and negatively for her choice to use a multi-disciplined, though psychoanalytic approach to data collection.

⁵⁴Ibid., pp. 45f.

W. W. Meissner lauds Rizzuto's contributions to the psychoanalytic psychology of religion and emphasizes in his accolade her attempt to keep a phenomenological purity within the data collection.⁵⁵ However, Howard Stein criticizes Rizzuto for the lack of "purity" and the obvious contamination by her own subjective biases to the results of her research.⁵⁶ It is this author's belief that Rizzuto has produced a methodology which is significant to the research in the psychology of religion precisely because she has attempted to be explicit about what she is and is not concerned with in her research as well as incorporating a multi-dimensional perspective to the persons of her research study.

Rizzuto has adapted well to the functional approach to the study of religion, defining at the outset that her concern is with the study of the private expressions of religion and the functional value of the god representations throughout the lifetime of each of her research subjects.⁵⁷

⁵⁵Review by W. W. Meissner of The Birth of the Living God in Theological Studies, Vol. 40 (Dec. 1979), pp. 778-80.

⁵⁶Review by Howard Stein of The Birth of the Living God in The Psychoanalytic Quarterly, Vol. 50 (1), (1981), pp. 125-130.

⁵⁷Ibid., pp. 3-5.

It is evident that Rizzuto has placed equal value upon the therapeutic as well as the theoretical implications of her research. It is her belief that the results of her research into the genesis and development of the god representation are of both diagnostic and therapeutic value to the clinician⁵⁸ and presents a perspective for therapeutic intervention which has hitherto been neglected.

Rizzuto's methodology is clearly dialectical in its approach to theory formation for she begins with Freud and his successors, interacts with the life experiences of her twenty patients and reaches conclusions which amplify and reformulate her original thesis hypotheses. In so doing, she has met the Popperian criteria of "falsification."⁵⁹

Rizzuto's Method as a Parallel to Other Forms of Psychological Research

Between the time of Freud's hypothesis that the development of the concept of God is intimately tied to the child's relationship to the father, and Rizzuto's current research in the etiology of the god representation as a phenomenon attached to early life object relationships

⁵⁸Ibid., p. 210.

⁵⁹Harry Guntrip, "Psychoanalysis and Some Scientific and Philosophical Critics," British Journal of Medical Psychology, Vol. 51 (3) (Sept. 1978), pp. 207-224.

and found within the created dimensions of the transitional sphere, several researchers have attempted to determine the relationship between the concept of God and parental influences. All of these pieces of research into the conceptualization of god utilized commonly accepted empirical, statistical methods. The following summary is not meant to be inclusive, but to give a sampling of the key published pieces of research dealing with the concept of God and its relationship to parental influences.

Two of the most widely known examples of this research utilized the statistical procedure known as the Q-technique in eliciting responses from varying populations to a series of sixty statements devised to draw comparisons between the emotionally charged images around the respondent's parents and their conception of God. In 1957, Marven O. Nelson and Edward M. Jones studied sixteen Protestant students in a church related liberal arts college. Applying the Q-technique they correlated responses attempting to show the relationships between God and Jesus and the parental images of mother and father. Their conclusions were significant in showing a strong correlation between God and a maternal image, though the research sample was limited and not adequately homogenetically controlled.⁶⁰

⁶⁰M. O. Nelson and E. M. Jones, "An Application of the Q-Technique to the Study of Religious Concepts," Psychological Reports, 1957, No. 3, pp. 293-297.

In 1959, Orlo Strunk duplicated the same essential research done by Nelson-Jones utilizing a research sample of twenty individuals (evenly divided between male and female) but more homogenous in age grouping and spiritual maturity. His subjects all attended a denominational college and were preparing for professional functions in the Protestant ministry. His conclusions showed less of a significant statistical variance between mother and father conceptualization and God representation. This appears to lend some support to the Freudian thesis though Strunk also noted a strong tendency for his respondents to choose a preference of parents of the opposite sex. Likewise Strunk correlated a strong relationship between God and mother in subjects preferring their mother and between God and father in subjects preferring their father.⁶¹

This same study between the relationship of parental images and divine conceptualization, was further duplicated in research by Andre Godin and Monique Hallez in 1963 in Brussels, Belgium, utilizing the same basic research instrument, but employing more sophisticated statistical techniques in the analysis. The sixty statements of the Nelson-Jones instrument were sub-divided into three groups allowing for three responses: positive, negative

⁶¹Orlo Strunk, Jr., "Perceived Relationships Between Parental and Deity Concepts," Psychological Newsletter, Volume 10 (1959), pp. 222-226.

and neutral. The research population included seventy devout Catholics, which were grouped according to sex and age to insure more homogeneity and the respondents were eliminated if they had lost one parent before reaching the age of five. Also included in the research tool was an attempt to elicit a favor-index as a means of further delineating the respondents' feelings towards their parents and God. The conclusions of Godin and Hallez were significant and generally tend to confirm the results of Strunk's research. They conclude:

In spite of the still limited number of subjects that our research adds to those of Nelson-Jones and Strunk, we assert, without too much fear of future contradiction, that certain psychological trends come to light in a Christian population (of Western culture, like our own): a) parental images play a variable but important part in the psychic conditions from which the evocation of God is built up, and in consequence, from whence the psychological attitude to God develops. b) the conditioned link (correlation) appear stronger and more frequent with the maternal image among men and the paternal image among women. c) This structuration of the evocation of God connected with parental images tend to fade out with age, without possibility of discerning whether or not this "purification" of the psychological disposition towards God is due to an increased spiritual maturity or culture (for example, living among contemplatives, nuns, a life of prayer, theological training, etc.), or to a growing non-differentiation of both parental images (idealization of former home conditions through distance from parents or their decease), to both these series of influences combined or to yet other factors, but little controllable up to now (for example, guilt feelings, hardly noticed but active, at the moment of choosing statements which reflect unfavorably against one parent). d) conditioning based on the two parental images is all the stronger when there is a more marked rejection or preference for one of the parents. In this case, the evocation of God can be vigorously drawn toward the characteristics of the parent preferred, or seriously compromised by close relation

with the unfavored parent (this seems to last a long time with some people). This last situation can practically cause a religious crisis as the examination of some individual cases, rare enough in our privileged population, led us to suspect.⁶²

Several researchers have attempted to describe the formation of an idea of God in various stages that parallel human growth and development. A very early piece of research in this area utilizing thousands of pictorial representations of God made by children in adolescence concluded that the development of the God concept passed through three stages including a fairy tale stage, a realistic stage, and an individualistic stage.⁶³ More recently, David Elkind has proposed a four stage process paralleling Piaget's concept of cognitive development. Elkind concludes that religion serves as a very adaptable structure providing answers to each of the developmental stages of cognitive growth from the search for conservation of external objects, to the search for representation through language and signs and symbols, to the search for relations, and concluding in the search for comprehension in adolescence. Elkind's methodology is purely specula-

⁶²Andre Godin, and Monique Hallez, "Parental Images and Divine Paternity," in Andre Godin, ed., From Religious Experience to a Religious Attitude, pp. 88-89.

⁶³Ernest Harms, "The Development of Religious Experience in Children," The American Journal of Sociology, Volume 50 (1944), pp. 112-122.

tive and theoretical and his conclusions are imaginative and helpful.⁶⁴

Finally, Jean-Pierre Deconchy has produced some impressive empirical experimental studies with a research population of over eight thousand children between the ages of seven and sixteen. Utilizing a semantic differential, Deconchy elicited several patterns of connection between linguistic elements revealing several themes associated in the minds of these children with a concept of God. Twenty-nine themes emerged which were scrutinized using several statistical methods and Deconchy concluded that the development of the concept of God passed through three distinct stages during the years from seven to sixteen. The first phase he called the attributivity phase, characteristically peaking between the ages of nine and ten and revealing the child's propensity to think of God by means of attributive data learned at school. These attributes clustered around objective attributes, subjective attributes, and affective attributes, all of which pointed in the direction of describing God's capacity for transcendence. The second phase was defined as a personalization phase, and peaked in its development between the ages of twelve and thirteen. Again three themes relating

⁶⁴David Elkind, "The Origins of Religion in the Child," in The Review of Religious Research, Volume 12 (1) (1970), pp. 35-42.

to the developing child's search for personal relationships clustered around the concepts of sovereignty, redeemer, and fatherhood. The third phase peaking between the ages of fifteen and sixteen was called the interiorization phase and reflected an increased development in subjective attitudes. This stage of interiorization reflected an increasing interest in global problems and the struggle of the adolescent with the issues of trust, fear, and doubt.⁶⁵

Finally, it must be noted that there are several pieces of empirical research which have utilized the statistical procedure of factor analysis in combination with other procedures as a means of describing the manner in which the concept of God emerges within religious experience. One study attempted to study the social determinants within various cultural sub-groups in the development of the various dimensions of the god concept.⁶⁶ This differential research utilizing some sixty-three adjectives concluded that there are four or five factors in the conceptualization of God found common between the two research samples including a homogeneous sample of

⁶⁵Jean-Pierre Deconchy, "The Idea of God: Its Emergence Between Seven and Sixteen Years," in Andre Godin, *op. cit.*, pp. 97-108.

⁶⁶Bernard Spilka, Philip Armatas, and June Nussbaum, "The Concept of God: A Factor-Analytic Approach," Review of Religious Research, Volume 6 (1965), pp. 28-36.

Catholic girls and a second research sample of religious undergraduate students.⁶⁷ A follow-up study was done by Richard Gorsuch utilizing the same sixty-three adjectives of the Spilka, et al. research in combination with an additional twenty-eight adjectives. Gorsuch applied the principle of factor analysis to his results and replicated the Spilka research by demonstrating the importance of the concepts of the omni-ness, deistic-ness and wrathful-ness as three dominant factors in the conceptualization of God. Gorsuch also concluded that there were other important factors including kindness, and eternity, potentially passive which also emerged in his multi-dimensional study. His conclusions were helpful in correlating the conceptualization of God with denominational teaching and frequency of religious practice.⁶⁸

Cline and Richards, produced a study of 154 adult male and female individuals utilizing a thematic apperception projective test, intensive depth interviews, and a sixty-seven item questionnaire and produced a factor analytic correlation between religious commitment and belief and specific behaviors and attitudes of the research sub-

⁶⁷Ibid.

⁶⁸Richard L. Gorsuch, "The Conceptualization of God as Seen in Adjective Ratings," in The Journal of Scientific Study of Religion, Volume 7 (1) (Spring 1968), pp. 56-64.

jects. Both sexual and denominational factors were correlated in their conclusions.⁶⁹

Rizzuto's methodology differs significantly from these other forms of psychological research into the conceptualization of God. The primacy of her focus upon early intrapsychic influences and her avoidance of dealing with the issues of cognitive development and social cultural influences sets her research apart from these others. Likewise, her lack of faith in empirical and statistical procedures must be noted in comparing her results with these other forms of psychological research.

Critique of Rizzuto's Method and Its Applications to the Psychology of Religion

The most obvious assessment that can be made about Rizzuto's work is that it is extremely thorough in both its theoretical and its clinical components. She has done an excellent job of tracing the development of object-relations theory from its beginning in the late Freudian writings and through his successors both in America and in Europe. This synopsis of the key issues in object-relations theory and its application to the psychoanalytic psychology of religion is done concisely and by avoiding any unnecessary excursions through unrelated theory.

⁶⁹Victor B. Cline and James B. Richards, Jr., "A Factor Analytic Study of Religious Belief and Behavior," Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, Volume 1 (1965), pp. 569-578.

Likewise, the presentation of the four case studies are equally thorough yet concise and to the point. Biographical data is added to the diagnosis of the development of the god representation and its relationship to parental imagos, while never presenting more data than is necessary or confusing to the reader.

Rizzuto avoids theological issues while staying within the boundaries of her own professional competency of psychoanalytic psychology, and yet her conclusions are important not just to theoreticians in her own field, but challenge the conclusions of theology as well.

Rizzuto's research implicitly assumes in the ontological reality of God and of her conclusion is that there can be no representation without object. Some reviewers who are antagonistic toward Rizzuto's conclusions that religion is not just regressive, neurotic fantasy, but can be viewed as a positive expression of psychic health, are bothered by Rizzuto's willingness to stray from the classical Freudian interpretation.⁷⁰ Stein concludes

if there be no representation without object, is it for this reason that belief in some kind of god is compulsory? Because religion is, does this imply that it must be? . . . Object-relations theory is just used as a crypto-Jungian basis for a psychoanalytic theology.⁷¹

⁷⁰Howard F. Stein, in the book review section of The Psychoanalytic Quarterly, Volume 50, Number 1, 1981, pp. 125-130.

⁷¹Ibid., p. 126.

It seems that Stein has missed Rizzuto's most basic presupposition of the god representation is a creation within the mind of the individual, blending the ingredients of his most primitive object relations with cultural influences and his own developing need to make sense out of the mystery of his own experience. Though this interpretation of the etiology of the god representation does to refute the ontological reality of an original object-god, the existence of God is not essential to Rizzuto's interpretation of why mankind chooses to believe or not to believe in God as well as how this belief is utilized in coping with the crises of life.

Another strength to Rizzuto's methodology is observed in the manner in which she chose a common context, namely a psychiatric hospital milieu, as the environment in which to carry out her research. This context provided opportunity for ample and intensive study of the individual over a course of time in an environment with some controls though with enough inherent flexibility that the conclusions are not necessarily pre-determined by the context. One of the limitations of Rizzuto's methodology and her choice to focus her research upon psychiatric patients within a hospital setting, is the possibility that her conclusions are limited to a population with severe pathology and may not reflect how the god representation develops and is used within the "healthy person-

ality." Rizzuto does state that she attempted to correlate her conclusions with a control group of "normal" individuals among her professional staff, but she failed to elaborate upon how this correlation confirms her research conclusions.⁷² It is also not clear how her conclusions might have differed if she had attempted her correlational studies with a non-professional control group.

As noted earlier, contrary to many psychoanalytic studies of religious experience, Rizzuto's methodology does allow for the clinical testing of theoretical assumptions as a means of verifying the applicability of the psychoanalytic theory in the evaluation of religious experience. In so doing, her methodology does meet the criteria of Karl Popper for "falsification" as a means of evaluating scientific theory.⁷³

Howard Stein proposes a scathing critique of Rizzuto as a perversion of classical Freudian methodology. He wonders if Rizzuto has inappropriately used Winnicott's concept of "illusion" by confusing it with delusion. Furthermore, he wonders whether consensual feedback from one's peer group or even society at large is adequate in

⁷²The Birth of the Living God, p. 181.

⁷³Popper's criteria is elaborated earlier in this work on pages 54-55.

distinguishing "reality" from delusion.⁷⁴ He maintains with Freud that religion must be viewed as fixation and not as "transition" and believes that the goal of psychoanalysis is to help individuals remove the need to hold onto cultural myths in order to embrace the cold realities of life.⁷⁵ Rizzuto's phenomenological sensitivity to the perceived realities of her research subjects is interpreted by Stein as gross abuse of psychoanalytic technique and attempting to project her own countertransference needs for dependency upon her research subjects.⁷⁶

Stein's argument may be accurate from a psychoanalytic "purist" point of view, and in fact Rizzuto may have found in the beliefs of her research subjects something which resonated with her own need to validate religious experience. Nevertheless, Rizzuto attempts to transcend the thorough reductionism and dualism in Freudian psychoanalytic theory by trying to find a way to interpret experiences which are perceived as "real" though they may not fall within the parameters of the unconscious pre-conscious, conscious perception of reality of classical psychoanalytic theory.

Rizzuto limited her methodology by deciding not to explore the development of cognition and its role in the conceptual modifications of the god representation and

⁷⁴Stein, *op. cit.*, pp. 126-127.

⁷⁵*Ibid.*

⁷⁶*Ibid.*, p. 137.

choosing instead to study only the development of the individual's need for a god representation. Her methodology is thorough in her chosen delimitation and her conclusions can be integrated with the results of other structural theoretical conceptions of belief to provide a more unified understanding of the interaction between the cognitive and affective components of the god representation. However, three limitations must be observed in the manner in which Rizzuto chose to describe the etiology of the god representation. The first critique is offered by Paul Pruyser who asks if it is valid to make the leap from the concepts of: imago, internal object, and self object to the premise of a "living god"?⁷⁷ Pruyser states that he believes Rizzuto's intent is praiseworthy though the title of her book is somewhat metaphorical and stretches the content of the work a bit.⁷⁸

Stein raises two important criticisms of Rizzuto's methodology which must be answered. First of all, he wonders why Rizzuto chose to limit her study to cases within the Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish tradition and avoided studying individuals with non-western religious heritage and ideation.⁷⁹ By her own theoretical presup-

⁷⁷Paul Pruyser in the book review section of The Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion, Volume 19 (March 1980), p. 75.

⁷⁸Ibid.

⁷⁹Stein, op. cit., p. 128.

positions, Rizzuto has affirmed the of importance cultural factors in the determination and development of the god representation⁸⁰ yet she has based her conclusions on a research population which may be limited by its common cultural heritage. Also, Stein asks if the god representation is only a special case of the larger need for ideological "collective representations" that is evident in other groups objectifying beliefs in heroes, national leaders and even the nation itself as a means of creating symbolic transitional objects.⁸¹ Rizzuto has not adequately addressed this issue in this work.

Finally, one must question Rizzuto's choice to present only four case histories. Her research included indepth case analysis of twenty psychiatric patients and her methodology would have been strengthened by including some data from the other sixteen cases as well. The reader is left wondering if Rizzuto's four types of god representations are meant to be a comprehensive scheme that evolved out of all twenty cases and are presented as four characteristic types under which all forms of god representation will be seen to fall.

Rizzuto's methodology has many heuristic implications. Its use as a functional and problem solving approach to the study of religious experience, specific-

⁸⁰Rizzuto, op. cit., p. 8. ⁸¹Ibid., p. 129.

ally the manner in which individuals use the god representation, has been noted. Therapeutically, Rizzuto provides another diagnostic window which can be utilized for assessing the nature of the early life experiences and current object relatedness by listening to the client's use of religious languages and images. Because of the unique nature of a god representation as a transitional object within the creative domain of the human psyche, Rizzuto's clinical methodology can be utilized as a source of therapeutic insight and growth at the same time that it is being applied to the research endeavor. It follows the effective methodology proposed by Woodruff in its utilization of the focused interview and case history as a means by which the researcher can also be involved in the function of pastoral care.

As a recognized minister, the researcher should not attempt to escape his pastoral role. Effective pastoral research not only collects data, it also performs a ministry of concerned listening to and participating in the life of the individual. The pastoral researcher should endeavor to form a faithful friendship with the respondent taking seriously his developmental pilgrimage, and giving him encouragement in his present circumstances.⁸²

Though Rizzuto's research methodology was not intended as an example of pastoral research, the heuristic value of her methodology is seen in its immediate therapeutic

⁸²C. Roy Woodruff, Alcoholism and Christian Experience, pp. 128-129.

implications, which also make it a viable research tool for pastoral research as well.

In like manner, it seems that the nature of the God representation as Rizzuto understands it may be utilized for insight into one's own inner world of objects as well as a medium through which more effective coping and hoping resources can be encouraged in the client. As a transitional object, under the influence of social circumstances, it is capable of being modified in the therapeutic relationship towards an end of more healthy functioning and religious growth.

Finally, its greatest heuristic value is in its use in preventive measures and in teaching encounters as a tool showing parents, religious educators and other interested parties the way in which early life experiences in the home and in the church are crucial to the long term development and spiritual formation of the people of God. Her combination of theoretical summary and clinical example has produced a methodology of research capable of translating smoothly and cogently into preventive and teaching experiences.

In terms of future research, it seems evident that Rizzuto's conclusions need to be applied to a larger cross section of population without the same clearly pathological dimensions of personality structure and without the same limitations to western cultural religions. The same

research methodology could be applied utilizing a multi-dimensional clinical approach to the case study method, attempting to reproduce through the utilization of the same clinical questionnaires and theoretical orientations, data aimed at verifying the potential universality of Rizzuto's conclusions.

This chapter has described and assessed the contributions of the clinical methodology of Rizzuto to the psychoanalytic psychology of religion. The next chapter presents a similar analysis of the intuitive-speculative method of the Ulanovs.

Chapter 6
The Intuitive-Speculative Methodology
of Ann and Barry Ulanov

The husband and wife team of Ann and Barry Ulanov published in 1975 a book entitled Religion and the Unconscious. The purpose of this chapter is to describe and evaluate the intuitive-speculative methodology within the psychoanalytic psychology of religion. The Ulanovs are selected as representatives of this methodology for several reasons. They bring to this work their combined expertise and academic competencies in depth psychology, religion and art, and English literature. They present some theoretical distinctives because their psychoanalytic orientation is a blending not only of Freudian theory, but also represents a special synthesis of the analytic psychology of Carl Jung and the neo-Freudian psychoanalytic ego psychology of the British Object Relations School. Likewise, the Ulanovs present a perspective enriched by years of research and publication in feminine psychology and theology to the task of psychology of religion.¹ Finally, the Ulanovs provide a uniqueness inherent

¹See Ulanov, Ann Belford, The Feminine: In Jungian Psychology and in Christian Theology, and Ulanov, Ann Belford, Receiving Woman: Studies in the Psychology and Theology of the Feminine.

within their theological training and professional functioning which differs significantly from the predominantly psychological orientation of the other theorists studied in this dissertation.

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Barry Ulanov is former Chairman of the Religion Department and currently the Professor of Medieval Literature at Barnard College in New York. Barry's publications include The Making of a Modern Saint: A Biographical Study of Therese of Lisieux (Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1966) and The Two Worlds of Modern Art: The Private and the Popular (The Macmillan Company, 1965) and several other articles.

The content of Religion and the Unconscious deals with the interface between the domains of the psyche and the soul, and the relationship of religion to psychology. This dialectical approach is not new and yet neither is it as clearly one-sided in its focus as other works of psychology of religion. The reader is required to think simultaneously in both frames of reference, utilizing the

concepts of both psychoanalytic theory and theology simultaneously.

The book is divided into three parts, attempting to describe the relationship between conscious and unconscious, self and other, and concluding with an analysis of the process of healing.

This chapter will examine the psychological roots and presuppositions of this intuitive speculative methodology. Secondly, it will provide a definition of Ulanov's methodology. It will conclude with a critique of the Ulanovs' methodology and its implications for the psychoanalytic study of the psychology of religious experience.

In Search of the Psychological and Theological Roots
of the Ulanovs' Methodology

The intuitive-speculative methodology of the Ulanovs has its primary psychological roots deeply imbedded in the blending of the analytic psychology of Carl Jung and the object relations theorists of the Neo-Freudian schools. There are considerable references to Sigmund Freud and his influences upon the psychology of religion, but in most instances, Ulanov has utilized Freud to illustrate the foundation for a psychology of religion which his theory offers, as well as illustrate the manner in which Jung and the Neo-Freudians have departed from him. Like several of the other current psychoanalytic theorists who are making contributions to the psychology

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A second theological influence is noted in the predominance of allusions to the writings and experience of the classical Christian mystics. The Ulanovs make a serious attempt to tie the intuitive dimensions of their methodology to the mystical experiences described by Bernard of Clairvaux, Saint John of the Cross, Julian of Norwich, Theresa of Avila, and Therese de Lisieux.

Finally, the sacramental theology of Karl Barth is clearly evident. Barth's neo-orthodox reliance upon the transcendence of God and the primacy of his high Christology coincide with the clearly Protestant belief of the centrality of the Christ event in the conclusions as well as the methodology of the Ulanovs.²

There is a heavy emphasis upon the importance of the non-rational and subjective experience inherent within the intuitive dimensions of the Ulanovs' methodology. They see common dimensions to the Freudian concept of primary process thinking and the Jungian concept of non-directed thinking as characteristic of the unconscious.³ Religious experience emerges out of the primordial regions of the unconscious characterized by primary process and non-directive thinking. However, in contrast to the Freudian understanding of religion as regressive retreat from reality, the Ulanovs base their presupposition upon

²Ibid., Chapter 6.

³Ibid., pp. 26-27.

the Jungian description of religion as the "container" of this dynamic power of primordial experience. The primary distinction between profound religious experience and the random imagery of psychotic delusion, is that religion serves as a means of providing meaning and order to some of the chaotic imbalances of unconscious experience.⁴

The Ulanovs guard against the inherent temptation exhibited by Freud and other psychoanalytic thinkers, who in the process of guarding against the illusory nature of religion in the favor of the scientific approach to life, did in reality only replace religious faith in God with a faith in science with its own built in illusions and false identification with "ultimate truths."⁵ They showed how Freud fell under the spell of his own primordial experience, even as he was attempting to create a system of thought which he hoped would clarify the nature of primordial experience and remove its spell over man's beliefs and behaviors. The Ulanovs state the following presupposition:

. . . We need to pause to recognize a fundamental fact about the primordial experiences of human beings. They cannot be counterfeited to whatever degree it occurs, each person possesses and is possessed by his own primordial religious experience At bottom, people are arguing over different types of primordial experience, not different sets of intellectual convictions. Thus, Freud, in challenging the basis of traditional religious experience, is really offering a

⁴Ibid., pp. 24-25.

⁵Ibid., p. 44.

different kind of primordial religious experience of his own.⁶

Contrary to Freud again, the Ulanovs point affirmatively to the Jungian distinction between the numinous and the dogmatic as separate but essential elements of religious experience. The numinous experience is essential for its ability to alter consciousness and provide a sense of trust in the world in a manner which is capable of transforming lives. The dogmatic dimension of religious experience with its focus upon creed, church, and ritualistic performances, provides the essential activity of collecting and recollecting the primordial experiences and private symbols of the unconscious and packaging these experiences in conceptual terms that have meaning not only for saints but for ordinary people as well.⁷

Another presupposition is that all psychic phenomenon ultimately are a blending of objective reality and the subjective perception of the individual. The paradoxical state of this objective-subjective dialectic creates the tension and ambivalence by which all human experience is determined. It is impossible to discern any truth which is ultimate and yet it also means that subjective experiences of truth for each individual has

⁶Ibid., p. 45.

⁷Ibid., pp. 51-52.

the potential of pointing to the truth for others.⁸ The details of each subjective experience may be unique, but the outlines of each experience contain unmistakable similarity. Pursuing any subjective path may lead to a greater sense of objective reality. Likewise, pursuing any one subjective path may ultimately point to the necessity of pursuing another subjective path. This presupposition underlines the Ulanovs' belief that both depth psychology and religious experience provide two different and unique subjective paths leading to the ultimate core of reality.⁹

One must consent to paradox. Subjective truth is objective fact and objective fact is subjective truth: God became man. Paradox leads us to a world of hard fact, to the impenetrably dense, yet utterly transcendent, core of reality, the truth of which is all in the living. One comes upon the primordial material of life, that infinitely fertile source of being which fills one with the sense that this is all there is, that this at last is reality. The root to this experience is through the reversal of one's certain small subjectivity into a sense of one's having become the object of a greater subjectivity, a sense that reforms and conforms one's sense of "I am" to the "I am that am." Religious experience achieves an almost perfect balance between subjectivity and objectivity, and the methodologies of depth psychology support it, confirm it,¹⁰ and one way or another prepare one to live in it.

The Ulanovs draw upon Ernst Cassirer and his understanding of the symbolic level of mental functioning as the means by which this subject-object dualism occurs.

⁸Ibid., p. 72.

⁹Ibid., p. 76.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 77.

For Cassirer, the primary process thinking of the unconscious produces spontaneous images and symbols which are pre-logical and therefore precede normal rational thought. Reality cannot be grasped by the mental processes themselves and the mind uses symbols as mediators, though somewhat opaque, between objective reality and the subjective experience of that reality. These symbolic forms, as products of the mind, have the capacity to function in the manner which is also somewhat autonomous and influences the mental processes and their response to the symbols. Consequently, our perceptions are part of what is perceived as objective reality.¹¹ The intuitive dimensions of the Ulanov's methodology is therefore highly dependent upon this philosophical presupposition that human intuition not only receives, but impacts objective reality.

Understanding the presuppositions of the Ulanovs methodology ultimately requires a comprehension of Carl Jung's understanding of the nature of the psyche, its component parts and the process of individuation. Religion and the Unconscious is ponderous reading for individuals who are not initiated into the Jungian psychological system.

¹¹Ibid., p. 64.

Description and Definition of the Ulanovs' Methodology

The methodology employed by the Ulanovs is best described as an intuitive-speculative methodology. Both of these words are used descriptively and to some degree could be applied to research methodology and psychology of religion in general. However the Ulanovs are chosen as representatives of a methodology of research in the psychoanalytic study of the psychology of religion because of the prominence of both intuitive and speculative dynamics in their methodology.

An entire chapter is devoted to the discussion of methodology and religious experience in their work, Religion and the Unconscious. However, the description of their own method is never explicitly defined in this work. The predominantly Jungian influence in both this work and other works by Ann Ulanov, allows us to extrapolate from the methodological approach of Carl Jung to determine the characteristics of the intuitive-speculative approach.

Intuitive will be used in this discussion in a manner which is consistent with the Jungian understanding of intuition. For Jung, intuition is one of the four functions of the psyche. By a psychic function, Jung is referring to a specific form of psychic activity "that remains theoretically the same under varying circumstances and is completely independent of its momentary

contents."¹² The psychic functions are broken down into two rational and two non-rational functions, with the two non-rational functions of sensation and intuition being utilized for the purpose of perception. The rational functions of thinking and feeling are utilized for the purpose of making decisions and judgments about the data perceived by the two non-rational functions. The sensation function perceives things as they are primarily through the conscious apparatuses of the senses of hearing, taste, seeing, touch and smelling. In contrast to the sensation function, the intuitive function relies primarily on unconscious "inner perceptions" of inner and outer reality. The intuition does not see things just as they are, but sees things for the potential inherent within the substance.¹³

Ann Ulanov begins her book The Feminine: In Jungian Psychology and In Christian Theology in a manner which describes the frame of reference by which she approaches the task of integrating psychology and theology.

Questions are doorways. A question gives us access to material by conducting dimly felt intuitions into articulate inquiry. Systematic articulations of thought are differentiated from each other more by the way questions are asked than by the way answers are

¹²Jolande Jacobi, The Psychology of C. G. Jung, p. 11.

¹³Ibid., p. 12.

given. The way issues are conceived shapes their resolution.¹⁴

The analytic psychology of Carl Jung is based on a presupposition that the psyche is an objective reality. The unconscious psyche functions autonomously and dialectically with the conscious, ego-oriented dimension of the psyche. Intuition, as the voice of this autonomous unconscious, is therefore given the same empirical validity as sensation with its consciousness-oriented perception. This means an intuitive methodology places an equal or greater emphasis upon the perception of this autonomous and unconscious dimension of human experience, as it does upon sensorily verifiable phenomena. The presence of common mythic themes within all the world's religions and within the archetypal experience of each individual man is as empirically valid within an intuitive methodology as is statistical correlations to a sensate oriented empirical psychology of religion.

The Ulanovs state that the method used to examine primordial religious experience is determined in the manner in which the symbols of primary process, non-directed thinking are approached. They contrast their methods with this "analytic-reductive" method of Freud who approached the unconscious in terms of consciousness. Interpretation of images, effects, drives, impulses, and symbols for

¹⁴Ulanov, 1971, p. 3.

Freud meant translation into the language of consciousness. The present symbol is translated in terms of its past or genetic origins, and analyzed in terms of the growth stage from that aspect of the past in which it sprang, before its meaning in the present is interpreted. The principle of causal relationships is applied and the results are then interpreted in terms of that which came first as most primitive, inferior, but more real.¹⁵ The result is that the real meaning of any experience is dissected into its component parts, reduced to its simplest terms of libidinal strivings and ultimately evaluated in terms of its primitive primary process mentality.¹⁶ Likewise, unconscious material is looked at with an attitude of suspiciousness and the necessity of unmasking the true meaning which is disguised from personal conscious awareness.

According to Jungian psychological theory, the methodology for exploring and interpreting primordial experience is radically different. Jung assumes a more positive posture towards the unconscious, not as suspicious as Freud, but rather devoted to the task of learning and understanding the language of the unconscious. Consequently, his method which is described as "synthetic-

¹⁵Ulanov, Religion and Unconscious, op. cit., p. 66.

¹⁶Ibid.

constructive" is more inductive in nature as knowledge moves from unconscious primary process thinking into conscious, rational understanding.¹⁷ Instead of attempting to reduce all experience to its most primitive origin, the synthetic-constructive method attempts to look for the purpose behind the various manifestations of the unconscious. Instead of a causal orientation, Jung asks what is the "prospective function" of a specific symbol as it attempts to bring into our awareness some ultimate truth or psychic fact.¹⁸

The Ulanovs also include the philosophical methodology proposed by Medard Boss of the existentialist school. Boss utilizes a phenomenological approach to the unconscious which neither attempts to merely translate the distorted representations of objects in the unconscious or to see the material of the unconscious as stand-ins for aspects of the individual's personality, but rather says that the unconscious must be dealt with and contemplated as a phenomenon in and of itself.¹⁹ For Boss, therefore, the contents of the unconscious should be seen in relationship to themselves just as they are presented without looking for any hidden or ulterior, prospective meaning.²⁰

¹⁷Ibid., p. 67.

¹⁸Ibid., p. 68.

¹⁹Ibid., p. 68.

²⁰Ibid., p. 69.

The intuitive methodology of the Ulanovs seems to blend the synthetic constructive approaches of Jung with the existentialist, phenomenological approach of Boss. They see a dialectical relationship between reality of the external world and the deeply provocative, burning images of the collective inner world.

Reality is both opaque and revealed, touching us and yet remote from us. Our approach is dialectical, oscillating from element to element and from sense to sense, seeing and being seen, listening and hearing by turns. This is the basic rhythm by which we sort out our subjective experience of reality from what is truly there in itself. . . . One can even say that it is the basic motif of the psychotherapeutic encounter--one person tries to convey to another either his multi-faceted investigation and discovery of what is there, or what has blocked reality for him. Through-out such experience we feel the breathing presence of reality as it is just the other side of our words, just beneath our image, reflecting their undersides, out of reach of our sight, it may be true, but not of our comprehension.²¹

Psychic facts are paradoxical because they are composed of mixtures of both the subjective and the objective. For understanding the paradoxical nature of these psychic facts, the Ulanovs rely upon Winnicott's concept of the transitional sphere. It is within this middle kingdom of transitional phenomenon in which reality must be perceived and yet played with, that religious experience helps the individual to learn to lean into life, trusting it in its external realities and its internal depths and helping us

²¹Ibid., p. 71.

to retreat from the temptation to withdraw or flee from the power of these experiences.²²

One of the most brilliant examples of this intuitive dimension of their methodology is found in the discussion of moral masochism and its relationship to true religious submission. The Ulanovs describe a state of being which is common to many individuals believing that they are living out the Christian lifestyle while wearing conventional raiments of morality. Many persons are victims of "moral masochism" which is a peculiarly ingenious defense against genuine openness to self and others. In what appears to be a lifestyle of servicehood to others, is gradually revealed a state of masochistic aggression towards others and towards one's own self.

Moral masochism is therefore a failure of the ego to emerge fully out of the unconscious resulting in what appear to be acts of submission to others but are in fact evasions of the necessary work in developing one's own selfhood.²³ Moral masochism evolves etiologically from an unwillingness of the ego to give up the narcissistic preoccupations of the earliest and most primary stage of psychic development. Caught up in the perspective of primary narcissism, the individual believes that other people are responsible for his hurt and pain and his sense

²²Ibid., pp. 73-74.

²³Ibid., p. 175.

of revenge for this pain results in elaborate projections of guilt.²⁴ A state of moral masochism is ultimately the result of the lack of love on the part of the individual either for himself or for others and his inability to receive love from other people. It is love alone that provides the necessary context for growth from dependency to autonomy without disputing the needs for dependency nor destroying the sense of autonomy by extending dependency for too long.²⁵ Masochism is a defense against a threat of total separation from the loving other and the feeling of nothingness and despair in the face of being left by another.²⁶

The Ulanovs distinguish between what has been commonly considered religious submission but is really an insidious expression of moral masochism, and the truer forms of religious submission of the mystic. They say:

The language of devotion to God often acts as bait for persons arrested at the first stage of ego development, where there is no independent ego. They create a pseudo identification with God before they have a self with which to achieve any kind of relationship with being, human or divine, and they heap artificial suffering upon themselves, making mockery of ascetical exercises and sometimes of the whole religious vocation.²⁷

The true experience of the saints of history, occurring in states of submission and even suffering, are really a

²⁴Ibid., pp. 178-179.

²⁵Ibid., p. 181.

²⁶Ibid., pp. 183-184.

²⁷Ibid., p. 186.

process of disidentification, with the ego which can only occur after the ego has been allowed to evolve and become autonomous. The experience of the encounter with the Self while on the surface appearing to be similar to these states of false religious submission of the masochist, are in fact quite different. What is happening in this stage of disidentified ego is that the individual has dissociated himself from the demands of the reality oriented needs of the ego and its secondary process mechanisms of verbalization, rationalization, and imaging, and has allowed itself to be penetrated by the primary process, non-directed thinking of the unconscious. Love is what makes possible the letting go of consciousness without regression as the ego senses the living presence beyond itself, beckoning it into an encounter of true submission and resulting in a state of quietude, peace and unity.²⁸

The speculative methodology in the psychology of religion is one of the oldest and most common research methodologies. Speculation is a process of "pondering a subject in its different aspects and relations."²⁹ Within the mainstream of science, speculation has always been described in contrast to a more positive empirical method-

²⁸Ibid., pp. 190-191.

²⁹David Bakan, "Speculation in Psychology," The Journal of Humanistic Psychology, Volume 15 (1) (Winter 1975), p. 17.

ology. Speculative research is characterized by its philosophical and inductive characteristics in comparison to the positivistic approach to science which is limited to observable facts and to deductive conclusions derived from these facts.

David Bakan notes that a second more economic definition of speculation can be given by comparing it to the understanding of speculation within the business world. He notes that in the world of economics, speculation is considered to be risky business out of the ordinary, with the potential for great profit and the long term impact of dampening excessive price swings within the marketplace.³⁰ Bakan concludes that the economic analogy can also be applied to the scientific enterprise in the following way. He noted that speculation within science is also risky, for at the same time that it offers the theorists the opportunity of great acclaim and professional success, it also holds the potential of humiliation and ostracism. Speculation removes science from a "business as usual" with its built-in redundancies, and offers science the opportunity to move closer to truth by providing alternative hypotheses to be explored.³¹ Even when new speculative hypotheses are later shown to be incorrect, they have added to our body of knowledge by eliminating possibilities which hitherto had been unexplored.

³⁰Bakan, *op. cit.*, p. 17. ³¹*Ibid.*, pp. 17-18.

Bakan concludes that there are three characteristics of speculation as it applies to the science of psychology. First of all, he notes that "speculation is based on the assumption that the manifest is but the barest hint of reality."³² This assumption is descriptive of the limits of our body of knowledge as well as the potential that can be achieved by pushing each hypothesis to further and deeper conclusions.

The second characteristic of speculation in psychology is that it is profoundly empirical. By empirical, he is not meaning experimental, but is referring to the interaction between propositions and experience.

The method of speculation entails exposing oneself to phenomena and then allowing the thought processes to ponder them to see what they may suggest--as contrasted with rigidly holding to a single hypothesis and suppressing the generation of alternatives. . . . Speculation ties the unfamiliar with the familiar. Phenomena are brought into the realm of the ongoing experience of the observer through speculation.³³

Finally, Bakan characterizes speculation in psychology as erotic. In the sense that with new discovery comes great pleasure. Speculation is generative and he notes how many words connoting erotic imagery are used in describing the process of knowledge enhancement:

Ideas are "conceptions;" some ideas we characterize as "pregnant," we attend "seminars" and "disseminate"

³²Ibid., p. 20.

³³Ibid., p. 22.

knowledge, and some minds are more "fertile" than others, etc.³⁴

Ian Mitroff has noticed that scientists can be discriminated into three typologies on the basis of their willingness to speculate and construct highly imaginative conceptual theories. The first type of scientist are conceptual theorists who enjoy creating patterns from disparate data scattered amongst a variety of fields. The second type of scientist is represented at the other end of the continuum and is characterized as the technician who disdains speculation and finds his joy in precision and experimental confirmation. In between these two types Mitroff notes a third type capable of doing good experimental work, yet speculating occasionally as well. According to Mitroff, the most brilliant and highly renowned scientists fall within the first category, given to free expressions of speculation, though at times held in questionable repute by their colleagues until their hypotheses have been confirmed.³⁵

As Orlo Strunk has noted, speculative research in psychology of religion is largely literary, rationalistic, and synthetic, and occasionally opinionative. It contains

³⁴Ibid., p. 23.

³⁵Ivan I. Mitroff, and Ralph H. Kilmann, Methodological Approaches to Social Science, pp. 21-22.

little "hard data" or first hand material and is frequently described as "arm chair" research.³⁶

The methodology of the Ulanovs is best described therefore as intuitive-speculative because of the predominance of emphasis upon exploring the unconscious contextually rather than statically with a willingness to listen predominantly to the archetypal images that emerge out of the depths of the primordial experience so characteristic of religious experience. Secondly, their methodology is clearly speculative, relying primarily upon the theories of Carl Jung and the British Object Relations School as they are juxtaposed to traditional Freudian psychoanalytic theories concerning religious experience. Their attempts to bridge the boundaries between psychoanalytic understandings of primordial experience and religious interpretation of the same phenomenon are characterized by literary, philosophical/theological synthetic analogies.³⁷

Their applications of this intuitive-speculative methodology to the study of the relationship between soul and psyche, the person and figure of Jesus, implications for history and ethics, as well as the relationship of religion and psychotherapy to the process of healing are

³⁶Orlo Strunk, Jr., "Modes of Doing Religious Psychology," The Review and Expositor, Volume 76 (2) (Spring 1979), p. 157.

³⁷Ulanov, Religion in the Unconscious, pp. 74-75.

described in depth and become the main focus of their research. Their conclusions though profound are not examined through the eyes of clinical material or quantitative verification. This is not their intent for their goal is clearly to produce a different perspective as a hypothesis to be tested for validity by their readers.

The intuitive-speculative methodology of the Ulanovs contains the essential characteristics of the psychoanalytic scientific methodology. It is empirical in its broadest sense due to its inductive and observational approach to the symbolic manifestations of the unconscious. There is clearly a preference for ideographic research with a willingness to trust the veracity of the individual case.

An explicit attempt is made to avoid reductionism and contamination from other sciences, though there is a willingness to use the method of analogical thinking. Psychological theory is synthesized with literary examples and the products of cross cultural studies of mythology.

A clear and explicit bias exists in favor of primary process thinking as well as a belief that the unconscious has a purposive and intentional relationship to conscious reality.

This methodology reveals a strong commitment to therapeutic values as well as theoretical insights and implicitly throughout the work, the private practice of

pastoral psychotherapy has informed the writers' commitment to their theoretical hypotheses.

The methodology is dialectical and phenomenological. Theory evolves as the internal meaning and importance of an experience is intuitively elicited and speculatively refined.

Critics of the intuitive-speculative methodology may find it to be too subjective because of its explicit willingness to "play" with the images of the collective unconscious.

The Critique of the Ulanovs Methodology and Its Applications to the Psychoanalytic Psychology of Religion

Critiquing the Ulanovs methodology presents some interesting problems. As shown in the earlier section in the definitions of intuitive and speculative, this methodological approach to the psychoanalytic psychology of religion by its very definition rules out much of what is considered necessary in the methodology of science. However, it also presents some unique opportunities to stretch the limits of conceptual understanding of the nature of religious experience because of its methodological willingness to place a heavy emphasis upon the non-rational dimensions of human experience as well as its willingness to fly in the face of the standard scientific axiom of "falsification." Therefore, the ambiguity that is felt in critiquing the Ulanovs' methodology is quite

simply that those factors which are considered to be assets on the one hand might equally be considered a liability when observed from a different perspective. This critique of their methodology will therefore attempt to describe this paradox from several different vantage points.

The Ulanovs' methodology is clearly phenomenological in its basic commitments. Its focus is to help ascertain all the dimensions of a particular psychic experience utilizing both a psychological and theological as well as cross-cultural literary and anthropological insights. This method therefore builds to a crescendo those aspects of the whole which are simultaneously in harmony with each other as well as in conflict with each other. The focus of standard empirical research in contrast to this methodology, is more interested in discerning the clearest precise description of the various parts of a particular experience, hopefully filtering out those aspects of the experience which provide it with some of its phenomenological uniqueness and ultimately stripping the experience bare of its conflictual elements. The intuitive-speculative methodology as proposed by the Ulanovs is committed to generating a theoretical perspective for viewing primordial experience without concern for focusing purely on the lowest common denominator of these experiences.

One of the strengths therefore of the methodology as it is proposed by the Ulanovs is its preference for the analytic psychology of Carl Jung as opposed to the biological and mechanistic view of the psyche from Freudian psychoanalytic theory. Analytic psychology allows for the ambiguity of the symbols of the unconscious, finding fascination in the richness and variety of mental process which they represent. Freud's basic dictum of "where there was id, let ego be" betrays his methodological bias towards rationality and particularity as the highest goal of psychoanalytic introspection. This ultimately led Freud to distrust religious experience and to describe it in pathological terms because religious experience consistently interrupts the pilgrimage towards rational mastery of consciousness.

As established in several instances earlier in this dissertation, such a blatant favor of phenomenological over empirical approaches to the study of both psychic and religious experiences rankles much of the scientific community with their preference for statistical validation as quantitative confirmation of one's hypothesis. The Ulanovs offer no such data to satisfy those colleagues who would be skeptical of their intuitive and speculative insights.

In utilizing the theoretical system of Carl Jung as the basis for their speculative theories about the

relationship of religious experience to the structures of the psyche, the Ulanovs are open to the same critique of gnosticism that Jung's theories have experienced.³⁸ The gnostic heresy involves the development of a "higher knowledge of reality" that differs dramatically from the common beliefs and presuppositions of the masses. Jung's criticism of Christianity's trinitarian doctrine as conceptually inadequate for understanding the reality of evil, has met with consistent critiques of heresy within orthodox theological circles.³⁹ The conclusions to which the Ulanovs have come utilizing their Jungian presuppositions will most likely be considered heretical within some orthodox circles as well.

One of the uniquenesses of the intuitive-speculative method to the contributions of the psychoanalytic psychology of religion is its heavy emphasis upon the evaluation of the non-rational dimensions of primordial experience as the deep current from which religious experience springs. Although this brings a richness of theoretical understanding of the positive dimensions of unconscious interaction with conscious reality in religious experience, the Ulanovs can be critiqued appropriately for their relative lack of consideration to the

³⁸H. L. Philip, Jung and the Problem of Evil, pp. 235-236.

³⁹Ibid.

cognitive/rational development of the individual as well. There is no reference to the contributions of learning theory nor any appreciation of intellectual growth and development as having any influence upon religious experience. As the title of their book indicates, they are dealing only with religion and the unconscious and a major contributor to the psychology of religion of the caliber of Jean Piaget or Lawrence Kohlberg is beyond the scope of their concerns. Likewise, their research was done before the current contributions of James Fowler and his provocative structural/developmental approach to the understanding of the development of stages of faith.⁴⁰

One of the common characteristics of psychoanalytic contributions to the psychology of religion, has been the utilization of clinical case material within the research methodology. The Ulanovs for the most part have chosen not to use case material even in an illustrative manner as any significant part of their methodology. Except for the record of a couple of dreams of clients in private practice of Ann Ulanov, the text is noticeably missing the personal quality which case material lends to the study of psychology of religion.

The lack of case material is compensated by frequent references to religious imagery recorded in the

⁴⁰James W. Fowler, Stages of Faith: The Psychology of Human Development and the Quest for Meaning.

literature of the great religions of the world. This is done in a proof-text manner, but it does represent the invaluable contributions of Barry Ulanov's area of professional expertise to this integrative task. As David Bakan has indicated speculation offers science the potential for a continuing robust theoretical expansion⁴¹. The Ulanovs have contributed to a robust psychology of religion by their willingness and their unique ability to span the width and breadth of a variety of related disciplines. The resulting text is ponderous and beyond the understanding of the average reader without the assistance of some elaborate footnotes.

This methodology has many heuristic implications to the psychology of religion. One of the most noticeable facts on the contemporary scene of the psychology of religion is the lack of any significant contributions by theologically trained individuals. Most of the research being done by theologically oriented psychologists of religion such as James Fowler, Orlo Strunk, Donald Capps, Lewis Rambo, and Edward Thornton is research outside of the boundaries of psychoanalytic theory. Contributions by these other individuals tend to fall mostly within social psychology, transpersonal psychology and the history and philosophy of science. The Ulanovs have provided a major

⁴¹Bakan, op cit.

contribution of heuristic value by attending psychoanalytic theory, in the form of Jungian analytic psychology, with Christian theology.

For example, they provide a helpful discussion of the importance of Jesus Christ as both a symbolic and sacramental figure. The importance of this phenomenon is his representation of a symbol of the "realm of the non-ego." As a religious symbol, Christ is able to bring into balance both the conscious and the unconscious aspects of the personality.⁴² Most importantly, is the characteristic of Christ and His capacity to stir unconscious associations, the repressed unused aspects of the personality. As such His symbolic value serves as a bridge reuniting the aspects of the personality that have been split into conscious and unconscious.

One of the key conclusions that the Ulanovs come to in their analysis of Jesus as a figure and person representing symbol and sacrament, is their recognition that there are both good and bad aspects of the symbolic approach. The symbol has the power of opening up unconscious dimensions which have been shut out of consciousness. As such, they have the creative potential of rescuing consciousness from lifelessness by enlivening consciousness with feeling, fantasy, and activity from the

⁴²Ibid., p. 98.

non-ego realm of the unconscious.⁴³ However, symbols if taken as the ultimate goal in and of themselves, can lead to despair for they block us from embracing the full meaning that the symbols are only pointing to.⁴⁴

Christ blends the strengths of both symbol and sacrament as a powerful symbolic figure because he unleashes the libidinal energies of the unconscious. As a sacramental figure, he brings the world of the divine into close relationship with our own human history.⁴⁵ The Ulanovs stress the importance of blending both sacramental and symbolic understandings of the Christ figure:

The symbolic saves us from becoming mere shells of persons; the sacramental roots the person in us to ultimate reality and gives us an assured continuity of being.⁴⁶

One review of their book has highlighted this attempt to emphasize theological insights within the psychology of religion and has concluded that the Ulanovs have blurred the distinction between religion and theology in a very positive way.⁴⁷ Ultimately, the intuitive-speculative dimensions of this methodology has brought new life to the question of whether psychology and religion can dialogue effectively in understanding the interrela-

⁴³Ibid., p. 111.

⁴⁴Ibid., p. 112.

⁴⁵Ibid., pp. 112-113.

⁴⁶Ibid., p. 115.

⁴⁷See the review by Dorothy and J. Louis Martyn in the Union Seminary Quarterly Review, 32 (Winter 1977), pp. 122-125.

tionship between psychic process and religious phenomenon. This has been an explicit good in the writing of Religion and the Unconscious and appears to be a very successful contribution to this endeavor. Peter Homans says the new model within the psychology of religion is exemplified by a blending of psychology and theology but with the predominant focus upon the theological perspective. Homans shows how the work of Paul Tillich can be applied to the psychoanalytic theories of Sigmund Freud and thereby extend Freud's insights to a more wholistic perspective on human experience. Homans believes theology addresses the ultimate questions of human experience and psychology assists this endeavor by helping to explicate some of the penultimate dynamics within ultimate concern.⁴⁸

John Carter is another contemporary theorist who is concerned with the secular and sacred components of the study of man. Utilizing the results of Paul Vitz⁴⁹, he suggests that one of four contemporary models describing the interrelationship between psychology and religion should be entitled "Psychology Integrates Religion."⁵⁰

⁴⁸Peter Homans, "Toward a Psychology of Religion: By Way of Freud and Tillich," in Peter Homans (ed.), The Dialogue Between Theology and Psychology, pp. 53-81.

⁴⁹Paul Vitz, Psychology as Religion

⁵⁰John D. Carter, "Secular and Sacred Models of Psychology and Religion," Journal of Psychology and Theology, Volume 5 (3) (Summer 1977), pp. 197-209.

The Ulanovs have succeeded in providing a text which captures this integrative task between psychology and theology and satisfies Homans' and Carter's criteria.

Donald Capps proposes three pedagogical approaches to the study of psychology of religion as it is being taught in most university and seminary courses and concludes that the presuppositions within these pedagogical approaches reflect either a prophetic, priestly, or mystical orientation. The Ulanovs represent what Capps would refer to as a multi-dimensional pedagogical model reflecting their basically mystical orientation to the study of the unconscious process. The multi-dimensional model is characterized by a more conscious attempt to grasp the wholistic implications of religious experience and it is approached through a study of the mythic components of world religions.⁵¹

Finally, it must be noted that one of the uniquenesses of the intuitive-speculative methodology of the Ulanovs as well as a significant contribution to the psychology of religion is the concerted attempt to provide insights from the psychology of religion to the study of history and ethics. For example, the Ulanovs conclude that history must be perceived in a different perspective

⁵¹Donald Capps, "Research Models and Pedagogical Paradigms in Psychology of Religion." Review of Religious Research, 21 (2), (Spring, 1980), 218-227.

after the discovery of the unconscious and its influence upon human behavior. They cautioned against replacing historical determinism with an equally deterministic view of the unconscious. Rather they propose that a more accurate perspective employs an awareness of the historical and social forces interacting in society with an awareness of the intrapsychic forces and their influence on human behavior. The resulting dialogue can produce a more accurate and wholistic understanding of human history.

Another important aspect of religious experience is placed under scrutiny by the Ulanovs. The manner in which ethics is understood has changed drastically since depth psychology has begun the exploration of the role of the unconscious in human experience. Accusations of guilt, right or wrong, good or bad, which were made with academic certainty are no longer open and shut issues in light of the reality of the centrality of the unconscious in human experience. Since Freud, human behavior can no longer be evaluated strictly in terms of conscious decision making. Rather, the determinative influence of unconscious wishes and impulses must now be considered.⁵² The result is that authoritarian absolutism has been replaced by relativism, contextualism, and subjectivism. Depth psychology has shown the importance of assessing any

⁵²Ibid., pp. 141-142.

morality in light of the struggles between subject and object, consciousness and unconsciousness.⁵³

This methodological uniqueness of critiquing history and ethics from the perspective of psychoanalytic psychology of religion must be affirmed. No other work has undertaken this task nor provided such provocative encouragement to seeing the application of the study of the psychology of religious experience to other areas of concern.

This concludes the study of the contributions of the Ulanovs intuitive-speculative method to the psychoanalytic psychology of religion. The next chapter will attempt to summarize the contributions of the four major methods within the psychoanalytic study of the psychology of religion during the last two decades.

⁵³Ibid., p. 144.

Chapter 7

Summary and Conclusions

This chapter will summarize the conclusions reached by this research. Four specific psychoanalytic methodologies have been studied in light of their contributions to methodology in the psychoanalytic psychology of religion. Several common issues have emerged through this analysis, describing the manner in which the methodology employed in research, influences conclusions that are reached. This chapter will evaluate these common issues and point to areas for future research.

The Use of Case Study as a Methodology

It has been established that the case study method is at the heart of psychoanalytic methodology.¹ The case study method has been used in varying degrees of importance in the establishment of psychoanalytic theory, ranging across a spectrum from simple illustration, to a purely inductive, generative approach. The four methods chosen for evaluation in this research, accurately depict four different perspectives in the use of case study in the psychoanalytic psychology of religion.

¹See chapter two of this research, pp. 56-61.

The clinical methodology of Rizzuto illustrates most clearly the manner in which case study can be utilized to generate new theory, or to expand and amplify upon already existing theory. The Birth of the Living God presents Rizzuto's conclusions that four specific God representations can be extrapolated from the twenty cases she studied. Her method was clearly established as a combination of psychoanalytic object relations theory, questionnaire and focused interview utilizing an expansive religious ideation questionnaire, and multi-disciplined team evaluation of in-depth case history. Though several methodological concerns were noted, Rizzuto has reaffirmed the significance of the case study method for theory-generative research within the psychology of religion.

The psychohistorical method of Erikson presents another alternative to generative use of case study in the psychology of religion. Psychohistory is not a purely psychological method, for historical and social-cultural determinants of human behavior are also analyzed in this methodology. The focus of Erikson's exploration has moved away from traditional psychoanalytic drive theory and into the study of identity issues as the key struggle underlying human epigenetic growth and development. Erikson has utilized the individual case as the foundation of his research methodology in both Young Man Luther and Gandhi's Truth, while sifting through the biographies of both

Luther and Gandhi looking for data to confirm his identity crisis hypothesis. The phenomenological subjectivity of the researcher's investment is evident in Erikson's "great man" approach to psychohistory and is built into his research methodology in a very explicit acknowledgement of his use of "disciplined subjectivity" and the rule of complementarity.² It has been shown that psychohistory is a unique methodology of research within the psychoanalytic psychology of religion, and its uniqueness is due in part to the primacy given to the study of the individual case.

The dynamic methodology of Pruyser represents an illustrative use of case material in the psychoanalytic psychology of religion. Pruyser brings in case material to illustrate his theoretical assumptions in both A Dynamic Psychology of Religion and Between Belief and Unbelief. At no point has Pruyser shown how he finds case study useful in a generative manner in his own research, though he affirms this method as an important aspect of psychoanalytic tradition.

The intuitive-speculative method of Ulanov as defined in Religion and the Unconscious presents no visible application of case study at all. Though the theoretical orientation of the Ulanovs is clearly Jungian, they

²See pp. 80-82 of chapter three for a description of these principles within the Eriksonian methodology of psychohistory.

never develop their thinking with clinical case material as Jung did. Religion and the Unconscious is an example of intuitive and speculative theorizing which is completely literary and limited to "arm chair" analysis of religious experience.

The Place of the Unconscious in Psychoanalytic Method

The four methodologies that have been presented vary in the interpretation and priority given to unconscious material within the psychoanalytic psychology of religion. The degree of emphasis given to unconscious data is directly proportional to the theoretical attitude towards the unconscious implicit within their presuppositions.

The intuitive-speculative method which is anchored in Jungian analytic psychology, has an open and positive perspective towards the unconscious as the locus of numinous and transcendent religious experience. Of the four methods, this method accords the most transcendent authority to the unconscious with its adherence to the principle of the autonomous, collective unconscious. The intuitive dimensions of this methodology has been shown to be highly dependent upon this autonomous unconscious in dialogue with the ego, rational and sensorily oriented conscious reality.³

³See chapter 6, pp. 195,158 and 200.

The dynamic method of Pruyser and the clinical method of Rizzuto come next in line in terms of the priority given to unconscious data. In both of these methods, the transcendent dimension of human experience is believed to be located within the borderland between inner and outer reality. This locus of the transcendent is described theoretically utilizing Winnicott's concept of the transitional sphere with its transitional objects.⁴ The Freudian attitude towards the unconscious as the repository of undesirable memories, attitudes and drives is embraced more clearly by Pruyser than Rizzuto. However, Pruyser leans towards a more hopeful outlook for the manner in which religion is defined as "illusion,"⁵ by modifying his Freudian heritage with some awareness of Jung's more positive view of religion.⁶

Rizzuto's challenge of the Freudian concept of the sexual etiology of religion, by her belief in a pre-Oedipal object-relations basis of religious ideation, gives her methodology a more positive perspective towards unconscious material than does Pruyser. Nevertheless,

⁴See pages 119 and 170 for the discussion of how Winnicott's concept is utilized by Pruyser and Rizzuto.

⁵Pruyser, A Dynamic Psychology of Religion, p. 7.

⁶Ibid., p. 10.

Rizzuto retains a deterministic attitude towards the role that the unconscious plays in all of human experience.⁷

Erikson's psychohistorical methodology has shifted the emphasis off unconscious determinants of human experience and replaced the sexual/libidinal instinct theory with an emphasis on the ego's pursuit of an identity. The unconscious is seen as subordinate to the ego's interplay with the social environment and the three forces of environment, unconscious and ego provide the context in which human experience is evaluated.⁸

Continuing the Empirical and Phenomenological Debate

The historical struggle between empirical and phenomenological perspectives continues to plague the psychoanalytic psychology of religion. Each methodology studied in this research fails to satisfy the criteria of either the empirical or phenomenological orientations, as well as failing to meet the synoptic compromise offered by Hanford.⁹

Rizzuto's clinical methodology emerges as the most hopeful compromise to this debate by combining empirical

⁷Rizzuto, The Birth of the Living God, p. 23.

⁸Confer with page 90 of chapter three of this dissertation.

⁹Jack Tyrus Hanford, A Review and Critique of Methodology in the History of the Psychology of Religion 1880-1960: Searching for a Synopsis.

tools of questionnaire and focused interview with phenomenological case study method. However, the choice to report a sampling of twenty cases, all taken from inpatient psychiatric illnesses, and a visibly pro-religious bias has disturbed many individuals needing more empirical, statistically quantified, objective results.¹⁰

Pruyser's dynamic methodology is defined as that of the clinical psychologist utilizing the part-processes of the ego to describe the phenomena he encounters. His mentors, James, Boisen and Schleiermacher reflect a phenomenological tendency to evaluate the subjective meaning of the religious experience in the life of the research subject. Pruyser tries to straddle the fence between the empirical and phenomenological orientations, but his inability to offer any clinical, or empirical input betrays his sound phenomenological bias.

The psychohistorical method is clearly phenomenological with its emphasis on the "great man" as representative of his culture. Erikson's awareness of cultural determinants of human behavior impacting the individual, his social group, and the researcher has produced a methodology of research that explicitly analyzes the meaning of an event in the life of all three of these social units. Erikson's method has the potential for empirical

¹⁰See critique of Rizzuto by Howard Stein summarized on pages 224-225 of this dissertation.

validation if the method were systematically applied to larger and larger subgroups, but to date, the method has been utilized only for individual case studies. As long as the method places primary emphasis on the researcher's subjective identification with his research subjects, the method will maintain a clear phenomenological perspective.

Ulanov offers no empirical data in the intuitive-speculative method. By default, it must be assumed that phenomenology is the only "pure" perspective in the study of religious experience within this methodology.

Orientation Towards Religious Experience

Religious experience is evaluated primarily through the insights of psychoanalytic, dynamic psychology in all four of these methods. However, each method appraises religious phenomenon with a unique perspective that reflects a personal openness to the functional efficacy of religion within human experience and within their own religious tradition.

Erikson approaches religious experience from the heritage of a German Jew. The theoretical perspective he employs is psychoanalytic ego psychology informed by sociology, cultural anthropology and history. Religion is viewed as one means by which the "great man" resolves the issues of identity facing himself and his social group.

Rizzuto is a devout Roman Catholic whose methodology of research focuses explicitly upon religious ideation. Her positive bias towards the functional value of religion is evident though she states explicitly that her work is not a book about religion. She maintains that the God representation an individual possesses can inform the mental health professional about the early life object relationships with primary caretakers as accurately as any diagnostic procedure.¹¹

Pruyser's dynamic method is informed by both his background in clinical psychology and his religious heritage in Calvinistic Protestantism. His utilization of the part-processes of the ego as ordering principles for his methodology reflects his belief that religion is an integral part of human experience with the same potential for healthy or pathological expression as any other subsystem.¹²

Ulanov's intuitive-speculative method reflects the most positive orientation towards religious experience of the four methods studied. For Ulanov, whose own religious heritage is in Neo-Orthodox Protestantism, religion can be the most effective container of the numinous contents of the unconscious. The primordial nature of this experience

¹¹Rizzuto, op. cit., p. 210.

¹²Pruyser, op. cit., p. 12.

can be segregated from conscious, ego-oriented experience when religion offers "false containment" or it can yield an experience of oneness with the ego in "true containment."¹³ The intuitive-speculative methodology attempts to utilize the insights of both psychology and religion equally in evaluating human experience.

The Multi-Disciplined Approach Towards Methodology

Donald Capps has identified three research/pedagogical paradigms within the psychology of religion. These paradigms are: the bi-polar model and prophetic orientation, the multi-dimensional model and priestly orientation, and the open-ended model and mystical orientation. He concludes that the research model, pedagogical paradigm and personal religious orientation of the researcher are all related. As one moves along the spectrum from bi-polar to open-ended orientations, the attitude taken towards religious phenomena become more open, loosely structured and phenomenological.¹⁴

The methodologies within the psychoanalytic psychology of religion prior to 1960 tend to be more bi-polar and prophetic in their orientation. Historically, there

¹³Ulanov, op. cit., p. 25.

¹⁴See Donald Capps, "Research Models and Pedagogical Paradigms in Psychology of Religion," Review of Religious Research, Vol. 21 (2), Spring, 1980, pp.

has been a clear bias against the positive functional value of religion within the Freudian school of psychoanalysis.

Pruyser and Rizzuto are more obviously influenced by this Freudian perspective in their methodologies. Pruyser's use of the part-processes of the ego has limited his definition of religious experience to the structural components of the human personality. The dynamic method takes a functional perspective of evaluation of religion through the eyes of the clinical psychologist that has an implicit "moral" evaluation that favors

one form of religiosity against another, considering the one to be pure, genuine, real, or mature and the other contaminated, spurious, illusory, or immature.¹⁵

Though Pruyser has attempted to describe the religious phenomena without subjective and judgmental bias, his dynamic approach has a clear prophetic response.

Rizzuto has utilized a multi-disciplined team approach to the evaluation of the cases she studied which has lended her results less inherently subjective and biased than Pruyser. However, the bi-polar nature of her description of the healthy and pathological object relations of her research subjects has resulted in conclusions that carry a bi-polar and prophetic intent. Though

¹⁵See Capps' definition of the bi-polar orientation with its prophetic judgments, *Ibid.*, p. 220.

explicitly more sympathetic to the positive functional potential within religious experience than Freud, she nevertheless is experienced as prophetic and dichotomous in her orientation as her mentor.

The more open stance of Erikson's and Ulanov's methods has contributed to a psychoanalytic psychology of religion that is multi-dimensional and less judgmental of religious phenomena.

Erikson has brought a multi-disciplined approach to his methodology, but even more importantly, his utilization of the "rule of complementarity" has established the religious factor as part of the social system as well as the personality structure. This qualifies psychohistory as a methodology with an orientation to the "systems of significance" within human experience that give "order and stability to man's subjective life and outward behavior."¹⁶ Capps utilizes this criteria in his definition of the multi-dimensional orientation to the psychology of religion.

Like Erikson, Ulanov also transcends bi-polar characterizations of religious experience and moves even further than Erikson with her mystical orientation. Capps defines the open-ended model of research as "designed to probe subjects' thoughts and feelings about matters of

¹⁶Ibid., p. 222.

ultimate concern."¹⁷ The open-ended model "seeks to transcend socially transmitted religious ideas and to probe man's 'higher' and more 'universal' religious insights."¹⁸ Ulanov's use of Jungian theory helps her methodology achieve this open-ended and mystical orientation. However, again it must be noted that Ulanov has not given clinical or empirical support to her conclusions. Therefore, though her theoretical orientation is open-ended and mystical, its purely intuitive and speculative dynamics fail to provide enough verification of precisely how man's religious insights "transcend their social influences."

Utilization of Ego and Self Psychological Theory

All four methodologies in this research have moved away from Freudian psychobiological reductionism in order to utilize the insights of ego psychology and the emerging "self" psychology within psychoanalytic theory.

Erikson's psychohistorical methodology employs the epigenetic theory of ego development which he formulated. As has already been stated, this theory traces the development of the ego in terms of eight stages of growth, with specific tasks of ego development towards identity at each of these stages.

Pruyser and Rizzuto have been greatly influenced by the object relations theory of Winnicott and the other

¹⁷Ibid.

¹⁸Ibid.

British Object Relations Theorists. Rizzuto and to a lesser degree Pruyser, believe that religion has its earliest determinants in pre-Oedipal experiences with primary caretakers. The developing self of the child is formed in these early relationships through the internalization of external interactions as internal objects. The identification of one's "self" as good or bad is the result of the mirroring of pleasure or displeasure from the eyes and behavior of the nurturing caretakers. This principle undergirds the theory by which Pruyser and Rizzuto evaluate the development of religious consciousness as well. Utilizing the concept of the transitional object, both Pruyser and Rizzuto find the relationship with one's "God" to be heavily influenced by these early life object relationships as well.

Furthermore, both Pruyser and Rizzuto find Erikson's epigenetic scheme helpful in showing how the developing ego continues to find confirmation of one's worth or non-worth within the religious system as well.

Ulanov has no theoretical commitment to pre-Oedipal concerns and pursues the evaluation of religious experience after the emergence of a mature ego. The numinous, or the religious, is then perceived as "other" and is characterized by the interaction of the ego with the symbols and the archetypes of the unconscious. The ego psychologists, including Erikson, and object relations

theorists like Winnicott are subsequently on the periphery of this theoretical approach.

Integration of Theory with Insights from Non-Psychoanalytic Sources

One of the consistent critiques leveled against all four of these methodologies, is the absence of concern with any non-psychoanalytic, though developmental theorists. Though contemporary to much of the insightful work by Jean Piaget in cognitive/learning theory, Lawrence Kohlberg in moral development, and James Fowler in faith development, the attempts at dialogue with the theories of these important researchers is negligible.

Erikson's epigenetic schema includes psycho-social stages of development, but fails to integrate how cognitive development proceeds within this psycho-social development. Since Kohlberg's stages of moral development are based on Piaget's understanding of cognitive development, Erikson has neglected moral development as well. Fowler's stages of faith follow a structural approach based on cognitive and moral development, and are therefore excluded as well.

Rizzuto's seven stage development of the god representation is built on an awareness of emotional and cognitive development informed by Piaget and object relations theory but neglects Kohlberg's and Fowler's contributions. Furthermore, the stages of emotional development

are defined almost exclusively by the child's narcissistic object relationship with his parents, and can be faulted by this exclusive limitation of primary relationships to the parented diad.

Pruyser's study of belief/unbelief acknowledges emotional and cognitive dimensions of growth and development but is not even as detailed as Rizzuto, while presumably utilizing the same studies by Piaget and the British Object Relations School. Again, as with Rizzuto, Pruyser's work reflects no awareness of the major contributions by Kohlberg and Fowler.

Ulanov neglects most Freudian and neo-Freudian thinkers, so that lack of integration with insights from non-psychoanalytic thinkers is not surprising either. There are no references to Piaget, Kohlberg, Fowler or any other structural or cognitively based theory.

Heuristic and Therapeutic Applicability of the Methods

All four methods have been shown to have considerable heuristic potential. Each of the four methods takes a slightly different theoretical orientation towards the phenomena of religious experience, so that the conclusions reached by each theorist offers a different piece of the psychoanalytic interpretation. Taken together, all four methods provide a comprehensive psychoanalytic perspective in understanding the problem-solving, functional potential within religious experience.

Erikson's work offers the clinician and student of psychology of religion the potential of understanding the way in which religion resolves issues of trust, identity and integrity. As Homans states, the psychohistorical study of religious experience provides a potential integration of theological, sociological and psychological perspectives. Religion's capacity to give expression to the individual's need for transcendence, spontaneity and social order have been affirmed.¹⁹

Pruyser's unique heuristic contribution is in the ability to describe the phenomena of religious experience in the secular perspective of clinical psychology. His ordering principle of the part-processes of the ego help the clinician and the student of psychology of religion, begin to perceive the phenomena of religious experience as another dimension of the ego's attempt to provide order and stability between inner and outer realities. Religious language used by the client in psychotherapy is more easily translated into symbolic expressions of intrapsychic conflict with Pruyser's help.

Rizzuto's contributions to heuristic and therapeutic concerns are quite evident. Of all four theorists, her work provides immediate diagnostic value utilizing her

¹⁹Confer with Peter Homans, "The Significance of Erikson's Psychology for Modern Understandings of Religion," pp. 247-254.

contributions to the understanding of religious ideation. She has shown how the four types of God representation are usable in understanding the inner object relations of the client, and the questionnaire she has developed provides an excellent resource for intake assessment in psychotherapy. Her seven stage schema for the development of the God representation is the most detailed psychoanalytic formulation to date. Most importantly, the clinical dimension of her methodology lends her contributions to follow up confirmatory research with greater facility than the other theorists studied.

Ulanov's method has provided a helpful framework for envisioning the relationship between individuation and the spiritual concepts of salvation and redemption. The mystical character of her approach lends this method to use with those clients whose needs are more accurately described by the concept of spiritual formation and pilgrimage than psychotherapy. The healthy adult with adequate ego functioning in pilgrimage to further growth and self-awareness is more adaptable to this conceptual framework than is the individual with obvious pathological concerns. The highly abstract dimension of her theory and method renders it less accessible to any comprehensively clinical use.

The Relationship Between Personal Agenda and Research Methods

This analysis of four research methods has shown that concern must be given to the personal biases, beliefs and experiences of the researcher in any evaluation of research methodology. All four theorists studied have picked theoretical systems and research tools that are congruent with their own biases regarding religious experience. If religious experience is tied to the numinous qualities of unconscious contents as they all believe, then the researcher's own unconscious continues to be an unknown factor in the results of each research endeavor.

Only one of these four methodologies has been explicit in its awareness of how the researcher's own identity and biases can be used within the research methodology. Erikson's psychohistorical method has defined one procedure by which the researcher's responses to the data he is observing can be both bracketed in and incorporated into the final conclusions. Erikson is explicit in his decision to utilize countertransference reactions within the researcher as one stage in his four stage research methodology.²⁰

²⁰Erik H. Erikson, "On the Nature of Psychohistorical Evidence: In Search of Gandhi," Daedalus, Vol. 97 (3) (Summer, 1968), pp. 702ff.

Rizzuto is aware of the importance countertransference responses had in the research of Freud,²¹ yet fails to actively and explicitly protect against the same dynamic in her own research. For instance, the reader is left wondering how much Rizzuto's own personal history led her to reject Freud's Oedipal basis for religious experience, in search of an earlier, object relations etiology for religious phenomena.

It is the conclusion of this research that the more intuitive and speculative dynamics are found as the basis of the research methodology, the more danger there is for infection of research conclusion by the researcher's own countertransference reactions to the data. Utilizing the methodologies studied in this research, one is left with the conclusion that certain conditions can be considered within the psychoanalytic method, that will still allow for more control over countertransference influences of the research data.

First, the researcher can utilize a thorough integration of theory that is both favorable to religious experience and critical of religious experience in developing the theoretical base of the research. By doing this, the theory undergirding the research will more effectively define the questions and agenda that the

²¹Rizzuto, The Birth of the Living God, p. 42.

research hopes to examine. Furthermore, at this stage of the methodology, it is important to consider all relevant and current theory that applies to the subject. Rizzuto and Pruyser strengthened their theoretical base by attempting to integrate recent theory from within object relations theory.

Following Erikson's lead, the most effective means of integrating the personal agenda of the researcher as part of the data of the research, is to be explicit in recording how the researcher's own reactions and biases have influenced his relationship to the research subject. This step in the research methodology embraces the psychoanalytic dependence upon clinical observation, while acknowledging that the observer's subjective reactions have influenced any subsequent theoretical reflections²²

Thirdly, the control of personal agenda can be facilitated by a richer use of the case study method. None of the methods evaluated in this research have really embraced the full potential of the case study as it has historically been used in psychoanalysis, to elicit pure, unfiltered unconscious data. The inclusion of free association, and dream/fantasy material in the data of reli-

²²Confer with chapter 2, p. 51 of this work for clarification of the relationship between clinical observation and theoretical reflection in psychoanalytic methodology.

gious research could amplify the methodology at the same time it kept the focus more on the research subject.

Finally, the methodology should return to the theoretical presuppositions with an explicit dialogue between the theory and subsequent research data. At this state of the methodology, the presence of personal reactions of the researcher can be bracketed in to inform, but clearly not determine the research conclusions.

In What Direction is the Psychoanalytic Psychology of Religion Headed?

Some projections can be made on the basis of this research relating present and possible future research in the psychoanalytic psychology of religion. There seem to be five key areas uncovered in this research which merit obvious follow-up within the psychoanalytic psychology of religion.

Psychohistory has become a well established discipline since Erikson's pioneering work in methodology. Both within psychological and historical circles, the problems of method are being discussed and continuing psychohistorical studies are being produced. Expansion beyond the theoretical limits of psychoanalytic theory is also occurring.

Secondly, it appears that further dialogue between the psychology of religion and sister disciplines such as the anthropology of religion, sociology of religion and

world religions is in order. Erikson and Ulanov have provided the pioneering force to establish the appropriateness of this endeavor and the bridge between the various scientific approaches to the study of religion is well under way through such groups as the Society for the Scientific Study of Religion.

Thirdly, the impact of object relations theory and the various psychologies of the self upon the psychology of religion has been clearly established in Rizzuto's and Pruyser's research. Other writers are beginning the same kind of dialogue between the psychology of religion and the theories of Heinz Kohut and Otto Kernberg.²³

Fourthly, there appears to be a continuing methodological shift away from evaluating religious experience in terms of standard categories of mysticism, prayer, conversion, etc. in favor of evaluating religious experience as continuous with other psychological phenomena. Pruyser was the most explicit about this choice in methodology, but the other theorists have also avoided this approach in favor of a psychodynamic understanding of the whole emotional/spiritual system.

Finally, Rizzuto has reopened the study of religious ideation and religious history as an important tool

²³See articles by Randall C. Mason and Joachim Scarfenberg in Arnold Goldberg (ed.), Advances in Self Psychology, pp. 407-437.

in psychoanalytic research. As noted previously, her research begs for further testing of her conclusions utilizing other control groups and is the kind of research that is likely to be challenged in future research.

Though it has not been within the bounds of this research to evaluate the interface of psychoanalytic theory with other approaches to the psychology of religion, a final and brief postscript is offered as hypothesis. This author feels that the next twenty years will show the psychoanalytic psychology of religion augmented more thoroughly with insights from the other three forces of psychology, especially the humanistic and transpersonal forces. The conflict model upon which psychoanalytic theory rests needs to be expanded by the growth models which these two forces uphold. As this dialogue between analytic theorists and transpersonalists continues, the theories of Carl Jung will continue to be a bridge between them.

The Continuing Dialogue between Psychology and Theology

As stated in the first chapter of this research, the identity crisis within the psychology of religion has been due in part to an unwillingness for theological faculties to accept the merits of behavioral understandings of persons, and of psychology departments' lack of trust in anything except empirical research. The pros-

pects for dialogue in the future have improved as a result of the contributions of the four methodologies studied.

Though somewhat suspect by empiricists, the intuitive-speculative method has shown that psychological and theological language can be used together in evaluating religious experience. Faculties more open to the phenomenological approach have added examples of the relevancy of study of religious experience as a result of these theorists' contributions.

Rizzuto has scored an important victory for acceptance of psychoanalytic research by theologians, by affirming the value of religious ideation as diagnostic data which can be taught to the pastor doing "the spiritual care of souls."

As Peter Homans has already shown, the psychohistorical methodology is valuable for its integrative capacity within the three basic perspectives of transcendence (theology), structure and function (sociology) and spontaneity (psychology).²⁴ It seems that both Pruyser and Rizzuto have also proposed methodologies which achieve this same integrative potential.

Historically, theological education has attempted to define the pastor's task through the discipline of

²⁴Peter Homans, "The Significance of Erikson's Psychology for Modern Understandings of Religion," in Childhood and Selfhood, p. 234f.

pastoral theology. The contemporary American expression of pastoral theology has been in the clinical pastoral education movement which has been influenced heavily by psychoanalytic, conflict orientations to the study of persons. The future hope for pastoral theology offered by this research is to be found in psychoanalytic applications not just to crisis pastoral care and counseling, but to applications in religious education and preventive pastoral care. The methodologies of Pruyser and Rizzuto will be of special importance to this educational challenge.

ISSUES FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

There are several points at which this dissertation points towards future research endeavors.

The first area of need for future research is in the integration of the methodology of psychoanalytic psychology of religion with the theory and methods of the cognitive learning theories like Piaget and the closely related theorists of Kohlberg (moral development) and Fowler (faith development).

Secondly, the rise of Transpersonal Psychology has encouraged the study of states of consciousness that transcend the tripartite conceptions of human personality so integral to traditional psychoanalytic theory. Psychoanalytic theory has been critiqued by transpersonalists for its time-space boundedness and its implicit reduc-

tionism.²⁵ For psychoanalysis to continue to grow and satisfy the Popperian critique as a science, it must integrate the insights generated by its new sister psychological discipline.²⁶

Peter Homans has suggested that the growing edge within psychology of religion is in the dialogue between psychology and theology.²⁷ Ulanov is the only current psychoanalytic theorist who is seriously endeavoring to build a bridge between the two disciplines and show how the language of both disciplines can be utilized to describe religious experience.

One delimitation of this research was to focus only on those theorists within the psychoanalytic tradition who attempt to evaluate religious experience in light of its positive functional value. All those theorists who chose a pathogenic orientation to religion need to be considered before a final comprehensive statement about the contributions of psychoanalysis to the psychology of religion can be made.

Finally, this research has not thoroughly demonstrated to what degree all four methodologies utilize

²⁵See Ken Wilber, "The Pre-Trans Fallacy," Revision, Vol. 3 (2) (Fall, 1980) for just one of these articulate critiques.

²⁶See Harry Guntrip, "Psychoanalysis and Some Scientific and Philosophical Critics," British Journal of Medical Psychology, Vol. 51 (3) (Sept. 1978), pp. 207-224.

intuition and speculation. Obviously, any psychoanalytic theory of personality will have its intuitive-speculative dimensions, and this research has demonstrated how the degree to which the research is dependent upon this method determines the degree of clinical applicability. A more thorough analysis of this dynamic might yield further clarification to the problem of method in the psychology of religion.

SUMMARY

This chapter concludes the analysis of the study of psychoanalytic method in the psychology of religion during the last two decades. The conclusions have focused on the manner in which the four methodologies of psychohistory, dynamic, clinical and intuitive-speculative has expanded upon the psychoanalytic methodology of research into religious experience.

The conclusions drawn indicate that the psychoanalytic psychology of religion is alive and well and still evolving in an attempt to keep up with new theory and continuing clinical observation of human behavior.

²⁷Peter Homans, "Toward a Psychology of Religion: By way of Freud and Tillich," Chapter 3 in The Dialogue Between Theology and Psychology, ed. Peter Homans, 1969.

Some projections towards future growth have been suggested and a hopeful outcome to its adolescent "identity crisis" has been forecasted.

It is the hope of this researcher that further analysis of methodology in the psychology of religion will be encouraged through this attempt and that a clear delineation of the methods of research in this science will ultimately enhance the continuing growth of the discipline.

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ABSTRACT

A STUDY OF METHOD IN THE PSYCHOLOGY OF RELIGION:
PSYCHOANALYTIC CONTRIBUTIONS FROM 1960 TO 1980

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The purpose of this dissertation was to provide a description, analysis, synthesis and critique of the contributions of four specific methodological approaches to the psychoanalytic psychology of religion. The four methodologies chosen were: 1. the psychohistorical methodology as developed by Erik Erikson; 2. the dynamic methodology as developed by Paul Pruyser; 3. the clinical methodology as developed by Ana-Maria Rizzuto; and 4. the intuitive-speculative methodology as developed by Ann and Barry Ulanov.

The research methodology was literary and theoretical. Using selected key representatives of four primary methodologies, the literature in the psychoanalytic psychology of religion was evaluated to discover and describe the essential ingredients of the authors' methodology. Issues explored include: the psychological and philosophical/theological presuppositions; continuity/discontinuity with psychoanalytic research methodology; the heuristic and problem-solving capabilities in the exploration and interpretation of religious experience; the use of case study as a methodology; and the manner in

which the methodology has expanded the empirical and phenomenological debate.

The dissertation was divided into seven chapters. After establishing the context for the development of the psychoanalytic psychology of religion prior to 1960, the dissertation examined the four methodologies of Erikson, Pruyser, Rizzuto and Ulanov in depth. The final chapter presented summary and conclusions of the research and future trends in the psychoanalytic psychology of religion.

Vita

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