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Pluralism, Religious Bias and Pathologizing: The Interpretation and Use of D.W. Winnicott's Theories in the Psychoanalytic Study of Religion

© By Daniel F. Berg

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Arts,
University of Ottawa,
as partial fulfilment of the requirements
for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy in Religious Studies

Written under the direction of
Professor Naomi R. Goldenberg
of the Department of Religious Studies
and approved by

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Abstract of the Thesis
Pluralism, Religious Bias and Pathologizing: The Interpretation and Use of D.W. Winnicott's Theories in the Psychoanalytic Study of Religion

By Daniel F. Berg
Thesis Director: Professor Naomi R. Goldenberg, Ph.D.

This thesis is a close analysis of the work of five scholars in psychology of religion, scholars who have incorporated elements of D.W. Winnicott's psychoanalytic object relations theories into their own work. In this group of five there are three who pioneered the use of Winnicott in psychology of religion and two whose work is more recent. The point of my research is to demonstrate how religious bias affects the interpretation and use of Winnicott by scholars of religion, or more positively, to assess to what degree these scholars can appreciate the experiences of those whose values and religiosity differ from their own. I demonstrate that the religious psychologists who pioneered the use of Winnicott tend to pathologize those experiences and groups that diverge from their own ideals and I argue that this tendency contaminates their interpretation of his theories. Fortunately I have not found this tendency in the work of the other two more contemporary psychologists of religion.

The political use of pathologizing is not new to analytic circles: Analysts of the psychoanalytic movement show how readily proponents of a new stream of interpretation or the establishment that resists the new approaches get pathologized: reformers are pathologized by the mainstream and vice versa. In psychology of religion, psychoanalysts who are also committed members of mainline denominations pathologize people from other religious groups, whether they be alternative Christian groups or non-Christian religious groups. What I am seeking is an approach to helping that does not pathologize because of religious differences, but rather seeks to release the healing potential within the individual and his or her own system of belief.

I am not the first to diagnose religious bias in the work of psychology of religion scholars. In response to the prevalence of what he calls "religious psychologists" in psychology of religion, and the corresponding problems of religious bias, Benjamin Beit-Hallahmi has pioneered the use of the label "ethnocentric," an anthropological term arising from the evaluation of anthropologists' work with people from other cultures, as a word to describe how religious bias affects scholarly activity in psychology of religion. Beit-Hallahmi like others who have identified this type of problem recommends that biographical factors and the scholar's religious affiliation and definition of religion be used as analytical tools for better comprehending a psychologist of religion's theories. In keeping with this recommendation and perhaps new trend in psychology of religion, I, as a means to better contextualize these five scholars' use of Winnicott, pay close attention to the biographical material that can be obtained for each of them as well of course as for Winnicott himself. In my interpretation of Winnicott, I find his approach to be the antithesis of ethnocentric, religiously biased pathologizing, both in his life experiences when he himself was subject to this kind of political analytical denigration, as well as in his clinical and theoretical approaches. I find Winnicott to be a pluralist, one who believed that the cultural creations of humankind are infinitely varied and not subject to classification. Unfortunately, several psychoanalytic scholars of religion have introduced pathological distinctions into Winnicott's interpretations of the human condition, and it is the work of this thesis to carefully analyse these innovations situating them in their religious contexts. Fortunately, there are also more pluralistic and less ethnocentric uses of Winnicott's theory, and building on these and my own analysis of Winnicott I conclude with suggestions for a more humane and enriching psychoanalysis of religion.

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Chapter

Introduction: The Task

This is a thesis on the subject of how D.W. Winnicott's psychoanalytic theory is being used in psychology of religion to interpret religious phenomena. Winnicott's object relations approach has made it more possible to psychoanalyze religious phenomena in a neutral or even sympathetic manner and thus a growing number of psychoanalytic commentators on religion are taking recourse to his theories. However, the resultant interpretations of religious phenomena have often been disappointing. Too often, scholars of religion have imposed categories of healthy and unhealthy religion onto Winnicott's tolerant and pluralistic theory of transitional phenomena with the result that the religious experiences of many people are disparaged, denigrated and pathologized. It is my argument that these normative distinctions are the result, in part at least, of religious bias, what Benjamin Beit-Hallahmi has called the ethnocentric attitudes of religious psychologists.[1]

In psychology of religion today there is a growing trend to analyze the analysts, to look at salient biographical details of the scholar in question, to consider how he or she defines religion in order to comprehend what values and biases inform his or her analyses of religious phenomena. A complementary second trend is that of self-disclosure on the part of the scholar. Recognizing the link between personal and political, between biography and theory, between relationship and analysis, has led some scholars to make autobiographical comments as part of their own scholarly presentations. This thesis is a contribution to psychology of religion based in the space between these two trends. To appreciate how Winnicott's theory is being used in psychology of religion today I will analyze the life and work of those who use his theory in order to contextualize my interpretations or critiques of

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[1] Benjamin Beit-Hallahmi, *Prolegomena to the Psychological Study of Religion*, (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press; London and Toronto: Associated University Presses, 1989). A religious psychologist, for Beit-Hallahmi is a psychologist of religion who is committed to the furtherance of his own religious group.

their work. Further, I will, in advancing my own interpretation of Winnicott, do an in-depth analysis of his life and work. As such this thesis is intended to be a step forward in the understanding of Winnicott's theory, in better understanding the dynamics of religious psychologists, and in helping shape a more pluralistic approach to doing psychology of religion based in Winnicott.

This thesis then unfolds in two main sections: The first is a summary of the aspects of Winnicott's theory that have been or may be useful for analyzing religious phenomena. In this thesis the use of the word religious in "religious phenomena" is not meant to denote the popular usage which differentiates between spirituality and religion or spiritual and religious. An example of this religion/spirituality dichotomy is found in the metaphor of the banana employed by an Indian Spiritual Master, Sri Sri Ravi Shankar: the banana skin is (religion) while the fruit is (spirituality).[2] Rather, in this thesis, religious phenomena is a wide term meant to include, as Robert W. Crapps has said,

> ...the entire panorama of experience that individuals and groups confess as their means for giving life coherence and meaning.[3]

The first chapter then will include aspects of Winnicott's theory that have been or could be applied to anything within this wide and inclusive field of religious phenomena.

However, this thesis will not be limited to the study of new psychoanalytic concepts which can be useful for shedding light on the intrapsychic dynamics behind people's experiences, for Winnicott's contributions are not simply in the area of naming this or that experience and its antecedents. Rather, this thesis, based as it is in Winnicott's approach to therapy, teaching and

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[2] Sri Sri Ravi Shankar, unpublished address given to the UN on the occasion of the celebration of its fiftieth anniversary, October, 1995.

[3] Robert W. Crapps, *An Introduction to Psychology of Religion*, (Macon, Georgia: Mercer University Press, 1986), p. 30.

research, will include a close examination of analytic practice as it has been modified by Winnicott, and the ramifications I see for understanding and even shaping professional activity in psychology of religion.

In order to substantiate my interpretation and analysis of Winnicott's theory, I will do an analysis of Winnicott's life and work and their interconnections. Here I will focus on the personal factors that affected the development of Winnicott's theories rather than attempt a sustained examination of the sources of his ideas.[4] This is necessitated in part by the fact that it is extremely difficult to trace these sources because he seldom gave them credit: he had the habit of ignoring things he didn't like and rewriting the things he did. Also, a study of a psychoanalyst appropriately uses psychoanalytic methodologies for shedding light on its subject. This methodological approach is common in psychoanalytic writings and is increasingly seen in Psychology of Religion. In fact most of the scholars I survey analyze biographical factors in shedding light on some aspect of the theory of one or more of the psychoanalysts they discuss, and more, some explicitly state assumptions like "the themes of one's life are mirrored in one's work."

Although I will consider factors like Winnicott's relationships with his analysts James Strachey and Joan Riviere as well as his relationship with Melanie Klein, I will not do a close theoretical study of just how and where he diverges from Freudian or Kleinian psychoanalytic theory and practice. This

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[4] For the reader who desires to know how various theories have evolved and their relation to each other without specific reference to religious phenomena the classic text is Jay R. Greenberg and Stephen A. Mitchell's, *Object Relations in Psychoanalytic Theory*, Cambridge, Mass. and London England: Harvard University Press, 1983. More recently Stephen A. Mitchell and Margaret J. Black have completed *Freud and Beyond: A History of Modern Psychoanalytic Thought*, (New York: Basic Books, 1995) and although their contribution is not as detailed as the above cited work, they are able to bring the reader up to date and in a manner which is accessible to most. The one drawback is that they rarely cite their sources for comments attributed to certain psychoanalysts or where in a scholar's work they found certain points, choosing only to reference specific citations.

is a thesis on Winnicott's theory and its use in the psychology of religion, and the reason for going deeper (analytically speaking) into his theory is to establish a sound basis for evaluating how it is being or could be used in psychology of religion.

The second section (Chapters II-VI) is a survey and analysis of American psychologists of religion who have used Winnicott's theory. This thesis is focussed on the use of Winnicott in psychology of religion, rather than "pro-Winnicott" versus "anti-Winnicott" trends in this field. The informed reader of psychoanalysis might wonder at this choice, since in psychoanalysis, especially in Britain, there has been much factionalism and controversy.[5] However, psychology of religion is for the most part American, and thus British controversies have not been a factor in this field. So when Winnicott surfaces in Psychology of Religion it is generally because scholars are finding aspects of his theory helpful.[6] Thus this survey of the field is an analysis of how Winnicott's theory is being used in Psychology of Religion.

The approach I will take therefore in reviewing the use of Winnicott in psychology of religion will be to focus on selected scholars who in their efforts are arguably representative of how Winnicott is generally being used in the field.[7] In fact, taken together, they have published the only monographs

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[5] In the British Psychoanalytic Society there has been a great divide between the Kleinians, Anna Freud's group and the middle group--the independent object relations theorists informally headed by Winnicott. (Cf. Ch. I below for a more extensive discussion of BPS politics)

[6]Those like Stanley Leavy or Hans Loewald who find something to criticize do so because they are constructing something of their own which differs either with some aspects of Winnicott's theory, or with how he is being used to analyse religious phenomena. These authors will be addressed from time to time, but not in the in-depth manner with which I am treating those who utilize Winnicott in their psychology of religion writings.

[7] They are also the major authors in the field, each of them having produced one or more monographs as well as a number of articles.

in psychology of religion that make substantial use of Winnicott's theories. In each case I will first look at who they are as revealed in their biographical data, self-statements, use of language, religious affiliations and their definition of religion, and then how they have used Winnicott, to what end and with what result. Thus, I hope to move their theories from the realm of intellectual objects floating somewhere in the history of ideas to something grounded in a particular vision and experience of the world.

These analysts will be examined with a view to seeing whether their incorporation of Winnicott's theory has been a generative use of the object (his theory) or a sterile abuse of the same object.[8] Or to put it differently, I will be doing a close examination of how these scholars and therapists use Winnicott's theory, with a particular interest in how they theorize the religious experiences of people whose religiosity is quite different from their own. A number of these scholars have imported healthy/unhealthy criteria into Winnicott's transitional realm--his understanding of how individuals idiosyncratically shape their worlds and worldviews--with the result that a wide range of religious experiences are pathologized. This is an unfortunate use of Winnicott, and, I will argue, one that does not take into account Winnicott's approach to being a professional, his non-hierarchical way of relating to students and clients, and his fierce opposition to imposing interpretations on people. It will be in the last section, chapter VII, that I will more fully present my case for the potential that is as of yet unrealized, the potential that Winnicott represents for a more humane psychoanalytic study

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[8]For this word usage I am indebted to Dr. W. Clifford M. Scott, who in a telephone conversation, upon hearing my tentative title "the use of an object" responded by saying why not "use and abuse of an object." He went on to explain that the abuse of an object connotes masturbation--a jerk being somebody who jerks off(personal communication, Sept. 29, 1994). As much as I appreciate the advice, writers of dissertations are perhaps better being circumspect rather than cutting. Even if some of the ways Winnicott has been used do seem to fit Dr. Scott's connotation (i.e., massaging the group ego rather than generative intercourse with others) I will not continue to use this language.

of religion.

Finally, in Chapter VII I will conclude by elaborating a number of themes found both in Winnicott and those psychology of religion scholars who have used his theories as my contribution to assessing the usefulness D.W. Winnicott's theories for the psychology of religion. Emphasized will be Winnicott's revisions of Freud as well as programmatic suggestions for a psychology of religion based in Winnicott's theory and approach. While the scholars I survey have in varying degrees used Winnicott's concepts to shed light on religious phenomena, I have yet to see them use his non-hierarchical, non-dogmatic and respectful approach to other people's religious experiences. In the end I see Winnicott not only contributing a new epistemology, and new therapeutic concepts but also a different way to be a psychoanalyst, a different way of dealing with clients, students and research subjects. It is with Winnicott's contributions to a humane and pluralistic psychoanalysis of religion that I conclude this thesis.

In summary, my methodology involves a close reading of any of the analysts I am presenting, in essence an analysis of the analysts. As an analysis of the relationship between what we know of their lives and their published work, this analysis will involve both some recognition of intrapsychic factors as well as of their social locations. Questions that will be answered for each of the scholars/analysts I will survey include:

1.To whom is this work addressed?
2.To what religious group does the author belong?
3. What is his or her definition of religion?
4. What are the links between this work and the author's significant life themes? In other words what personal issues (discernable in biographical and auto-biographical material as well as a limited psychoanalytic reading of their texts) can be found in the theories they create and the conclusions they draw about the religious experiences of other people.

These questions are necessary because when psychologists of religion, each of whom have their own

religious convictions, affiliations and loyalties, analyze the religious experiences of people whose religious convictions, affiliations and loyalties may well be at odds with those of the therapist, teacher or researcher--what results is anything but "pure" psychoanalysis. As Ana-Maria Rizzuto, among others has pointed out, analysts need to have analyzed their own religious issues before they try to deal with those of their clients, students or research subjects. My hope is that through analyzing both the analysts and their theories, that a new depth may be achieved in the effort to understand other's religious experiences.

Chapter I
Psychoanalysis, Psychology of Religion and D.W. Winnicott: Introductory Comments

Psychology of Religion has traditionally had a strong component of psychoanalytic theorizing, beginning with Freud and continuing up to the present time. However, the nature of psychoanalytic inquiry into religious phenomena has been transformed since the time of Freud and his first circle of disciples. For that generation of psychoanalysts, religion was either viewed with suspicion or deemed largely irrelevant.[9] In fact if a client was religious, their religion was often viewed as a barrier to be overcome in therapy.[10] This attitude is still characteristic of many analysts today as Naomi Goldenberg has pointed out with her observation that many analysts and analysands have an implicit agreement to leave religion aside:

> Much Freudian-type analysis probably proceeds without extensive interrogation of a patient's religious affiliation or sentiments. Religion may well be a domain for plea-bargaining in many an analysis--it could be a subject that a good number of analyst/patient pairs agree not to touch.[11]

Goldenberg highlights another aspect of contemporary psychoanalytic attitudes towards religion when she describes how she was invited to speak to training analysts about psychoanalysis and religion, a

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[9]Ana-Maria Rizzuto, for example, in her *The Birth of the Living God: A Psychoanalytic Study*, (Chicago and London, University of Chicago Press, 1979) comments, "Except for brief reports . . . no systematic analytical clinical study of religious experience exists"(p. 4). By way of explaining this state of affairs Rizzuto describes Freud's formative influence on generations of psychoanalysts:

> Freud...insisted that people should not need religion, called it a cultural neurosis, and set himself up as an example of those who could do without it (p. 4).

[10]Alphonse Calabrese (with William Proctor) in *RX: The Christian Love Treatment* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1976), includes in his description of elements of his training the fact that it was considered good practice to encourage clients to engage in pre-marital and extra-marital sexual activity so that they could resolve their sexual problems, and if religious reservations were raised they were deemed to be unimportant. Calabrese and others trained at that psychoanalytic institute thus routinely advocated a form of morality antithetical to most religious beliefs(pp. 15-20).

[11] Naomi R. Goldenberg, "Psychoanalysis and Religion: The Influence of Theology on Theory and Therapy," *Pastoral Psychology*, 40, (1992), p. 345.

subject they were eager to hear, but one which had not been included in any trainings to that point.[12]

Although psychoanalysis like the larger field of psychology is still largely suspicious of, or reticent to speak about, religion[13] there have however been some significant changes brought about by second and third generation psychoanalysts,[14] changes that have been appropriated by a small group of religious psychoanalysts[15] with the result that a new genre of writing in psychoanalysis and

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[12] (personal communication, April, 1996) This was, according to Dr. Goldenberg, the first time they had issued such an invitation, and although it is encouraging that analysts are starting to look at religion, however tentatively, it shows how influential still today is their Patriarch's attitude to religion.

[13] Benjamin Beit-Hallahmi, in his *Prolegomena to the Psychological Study of Religion*, outlines a number of factors that substantiate this picture of psychology as ignoring or denigrating religion including: religion is rarely mentioned in psychology textbooks, rarely included in psychological trainings, and a significantly higher proportion of psychologists are irreligious as compared with the general population.

[14]For example, Heinz Hartmann, the founder of American Ego Psychology introduced the concept "regression in the service of the ego." Erik Erikson conceived a developmental psychoanalytic psychology in which religious experience had normal developmental substrates. Object Relation Theorists, D.W. Winnicott foremost among them, departing from a drive theory of human nature instead saw the fundamental core of human experience as relational, paved the way for psychoanalysts to consider religious relations as simply another type of relation which could be analysed with reference to early childhood relations.

[15] The first psychologists of religion to utilize Winnicott were A.-M. Rizzuto, W.W. Meissner and P.W. Pruyser. One can see in their references and bibliographies, an increasing number of object relations theorists or analysts whose work is complementary to theirs, i.e., Klein, Balint, Fairbairn, and Guntrip as well as Mahler and Bowlby. It seems that while Kernberg and Modell have been influential American object relations theorists and their influence predated the discovery of Winnicott, object relations theory has become more influential in American Psychology of Religion largely because of Winnicott. Thus the tracing of Winnicott's influence in American psychology of religion entails a recognition of the prior influence of Hartmann, Erikson, Kernberg and Modell, as well as the concurrent emergence of Heinz Kohut's Self Psychology and the continuing integration of material from other object relations theorists.

religion has begun to grow since the 1970's.[16] For scholars such as these, religion, or for some at least certain sorts of religious phenomena, have moved from being considered primitive, psychopathological, and immature to being considered an integral aspect of human development.

The object relations theorist who, in Britain at least, has arguably been at the forefront of this transformation of psychoanalytic theory and practice is D.W. Winnicott, who until his death in 1971, was the acknowledged leader of the Independent School of British Object Relations Theorists. While other object relations theorists like Harry Guntrip or W.R.D. Fairbairn paid more explicit attention to religious phenomena,[17] the pivotal moment, the paradigmatic shift, in British psychoanalysis' approach to religion was Winnicott's elucidation of transitional objects and phenomena and the intermediate area of experiencing in which they and all subsequent cultural and religious phenomena exist.[18]

It is interesting to note that Winnicott's contributions were for the most part posthumously

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[16]Meissner, Pruyser and especially Rizzuto's work has been extended by John McDargh, Mary-Lou Randour, J.W. Jones and others.

[17]Bruce L. Smith points to the fact that prior to Fairbairn having taken a medical training he had been trained in philosophy and theology. He further points out that Fairbairn's extender, Guntrip was a man of the cloth and often chided classical psychoanalysis for not developing a theory that adequately addressed the spiritual aspects of man. Cf. Bruce L. Smith, "Winnicott and the British Schools," in *The Facilitating Environment: Clinical Applications of Winnicotts Theory*, Eds. M. Gerard Fromm and Bruce L. Smith, (Madison, Conn.: International Universities Press, 1989), p. 46.

[18]I am not alone in this assertion. For example J.W. Jones, in his *Contemporary Psychoanalysis and Religion: Transference and Transcendence* (New Haven Yale University Press, 1991), although he also reviews Fairbairn and Guntrip, says, "Winnicott's epigram 'There is no such thing as a baby' stands for a major epistemological shift that has profound implications not only for the categories with which psycho-analysis approaches religion . . . but . . . for the very definition of the psychoanalytic approach itself (p. 112).

recognized.[19] In psychology of religion at least, in America, Winnicott was not discovered until the middle or later part of the decade in which he died, and since then his influence has grown to the point that quite a few monographs and many articles have been published that utilize his theories to analyze religious phenomena.[20]

Setting the Context:
D.W. Winnicott and the British Psycho-Analytical Society

D.W. Winnicott, a member of the British Psychoanalytical Society (BPS), was part of a group of people whose inquiry can be summed up with the question, "Why are we the way we are?" Its members in the early years were characterized by liberal humanistic education and leanings--including members of the Bloomsbury group.[21] In fact, Winnicott was a Cambridge graduate, as was James Strachey his first analyst, and Cambridge was the birthplace of the Bloomsbury Group.[22] For liberal intellectuals, Cambridge in the early decades of this century was a stimulating, exciting place to be, a fit place for psychoanalytic theories to take root.

These psychoanalytic pioneers were a group of cultured late-Victorians, creative,

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[19]W. Clifford M. Scott quotes Winnicott has having said, "They will never pay attention to what you say until you are dead . . ." (Personal Communication, Sept. 28, 1994) There is some pathos to this comment by Scott, since he was 92 at the time of the conversation and certainly has never gotten much recognition, while Winnicott who died in 1971, has since become quite popular.

[20]In fact for each of the above cited religious psychoanalysts, (Rizzuto, Meissner and Pruyser) Winnicott has proved to be a highly significant thinker, and it may not be too much to say that their best work emerged subsequent to discovering and integrating his theories.

[21] Masud Khan, "Introduction," in *Through Paediatrics to Psycho-Analysis*, (London: Hogarth, 1975), p. xiii.

[22] Cf. Meizel and Kendrick, "Introduction" in *Bloomsbury/Freud: The Letters of James and Alix Strachey, 1924-1925*, Eds. Perry Meisel and Walter Kendrick, (New York, Basic Books, 1985), p. 44.

idiosyncratic, and themselves subject to a fair degree of pathology.[23] As such, they were attracted to Freud's humanistic[24] view of the human condition, a view that was dominated by the sexual tensions inherent in what he came to call the oedipus complex. Thus the inquiry into pathology often centred around the age of five. Although he and his first generation of disciples also came to recognize oral and anal phases of development with their concurrent problems, the oedipus complex remained central, with the problem being formulated in terms of how to civilize unruly drives. For Freud and his orginal disciples, the roots of the problems they faced in their clients most likely were to be found in sexual tensions and their lack of resolution.

Melanie Klein, invited to the BPS by Ernest Jones in 1926, a child analyst who had been analyzed by the first generation analysts Ferenczi and Abraham, moved the analytic lense from the later relationship with the father and its oedipal issues, to the earlier and foundational relationship with the mother. At the same time she maintained Freud's insistence on drives, thus locating the problems in the child, specifically in the fantasy life of the child. Klein theorized a split in the early

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[23]Gregorio Kohon, in his historical introduction to the collection of essays he edited entitled, *The British School of Psychoanalysis: The Independent Tradition*, (New Haven and London, Yale University Press, 1986), quotes Riviere's obituary for James Strachey: "We came from the same middle-class, professional, cultured, later Victorian, box"(pp.46-7). Kohon recognized that many of these psychoanalysts, coming as they did from this particular background, were people with a certain degree of psychological disturbance, but who in some cases were also people of 'outstanding personality'(p. 47). . . . many of them had a certain degree of psychological disturbance, which still seems to be an important element in creative thinking; they all shared an immense, greedy intellectual curiousity, without which psychoanalysis could not, and cannot, survive; and, lastly, they lacked moralistic judgements, which did not in any way exclude an ethical commitment to professional standards(p. 48)."

[24]Dennis Klein, *Jewish Origins of the Psychoanalytic Movement* (New York, Praeger, 1981) has pointed to the liberal, humanistic values characteristic of Freud's education and circumstances in late 19th century Vienna, and has argued that for Freud first science, and then psychoanalysis was the great liberator that could lift people beyond their barbarism--i.e., the virulent anti-semitism Freud endured--and restore liberal humanistic values to the polis.

infants' organization of its experiences: early good experiences like a satisfactory feed give rise in the child to fantasies of a "good breast," while early "bad" experiences like colic or being hungry as giving rise to a fantasized "bad breast." Thus the infant could not only feel terror or rage in relation to the bad breast but also omnipotently fantasize its destruction. For Klein, rather than the sexual drive being the main conflict and source of pathology, it was instead an aggressive drive, the desire to hurt, damage and destroy that had to be tamed.

While Freud's resolution of the oedipal conflict led to a stoic acceptance of what civilization imposes on us, that is choosing not to satisfy our primitive desires, Klein's resolution came in the depressive realization that both good and bad, love and hate are found in and experienced towards the same person and the subsequent desire to repair real or fantasized injuries. What Freud and Klein have in common that differentiates them from the independent members of the British School of Object Relations is an intrinsically conflicted child and a depressing normal state of affairs in adulthood--a rather pessimistic view of human nature.[25]

In the end, the pessimistic underpinnings of both Freud's and Klein's work, i.e., the death instinct, would not suit the temperament of many of the native Britons among the BPS. The development of the independent school of object relations can be seen in part as the native optimism of analysts such as Winnicott, coming through in a more positive, hopeful view of human nature.[26]

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[25] This pessimism seems natural enough for eastern European intellectual Jews of that anti-semitic and disastrous period during the first half of this century.

[26] M. Gerard Fromm, in his "Winnicott's Work in Relation to Classical Psychoanalysis and Ego Psychology" in *The Facilitating Environment: Clinical Applications of Winnicott's Theory*, Eds. M. Gerard Fromm and Bruce L. Smith, (Madison, Conn.: International Universities Press, 1989), makes a similar conjecture about the failure of Klein's theory to attract support in American psychoanalysis:

> . . . a possible source of the antipathy that Kleinian and object relations concepts have generated in this country is their incompatibility with the optimistic, progressive, and

It was into this context that Winnicott the analyst was born, a group of British psychoanalysts characterized by, as Kohon has put it,

> The contradiction between a true need for independence of thought and a fervent wish to respect the main teachings of Freud . . .[27]

He was analyzed originally by James Strachey, one of Freud's first generation, and then by Joan Riviere who was by that time one of Klein's leading disciples. However, neither of his analyses were satisfying, and by extension, neither of the theoretical substrates of these analyses.[28] In the end Winnicott fashioned his own theory and found his own cure.

He did so in a climate of tension and conflict for by 1936, Anna Freud and her father, the patriarch, had with more than thirty other analysts arrived in Britain as refugees from Eastern Europe. Melanie Klein had not done well while she was in Eastern Europe and was regarded with a great deal of antipathy by the Freuds and their followers. However she had had by this time a decade to get well-established in London, and the BPS had been much taken with her theories and practices. The Patriarch died in 1939 and shortly thereafter began the infamous controversial discussions as to whether or not Klein's teachings accorded with those of Freud. Two sectarian groups formed and in

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achievement oriented perspectives that have dominated American society in this century (p. 28, n. 2).

[27] *The British School*, p. 20.

[28] Winnicott, in his "A Personal View of the Kleinian Contribution," in *The Maturational Processes and the Facilitating Environment*, (London, Hogarth Press, 1965), tells how he came to see certain deficiencies in the classical oedipal diagnosis by virtue of his two long analyses as well as his paediatric practice in which he applied analytic insights to young children on the basis of what he could glean from their mothers about "the early history of their children's disorders"(p. 172). However, when he met Klein, he went from being a pioneer, (in his own assessment) to "being a student with a pioneer teacher."(p. 173) It was many years later that he finally established himself as being a pioneer in his own right.

the end the BPS realized there would be no resolution to these differences. So in a typically diplomatic resolution the BPS incorporated both teachings into its training structure.

Winnicott's relation to Melanie Klein is well known, he analyzed her son, was in supervision with her (although not on the analysis with her son as she requested) and was, as mentioned above, analyzed by one of her leading followers, Joan Riviere. In fact he was counted in the Kleinian camp during the first years of sectarian warfare in the BPS. Winnicott however in later years would not say that Klein was more significant than Anna Freud but rather that she had simply arrived earlier and thus already established herself by the time Anna Freud arrived. In "A Personal View of the Kleinian Contribution" he begins by giving Anna Freud credit for her tremendous influence in North America. He continues by saying:

> Now Anna Freud was not so important in England as she has been in the United States, simply because of the very great developments that took place in London in the twenty years after the end of World War I, before Miss Freud came over with her father, refugees from Nazi persecution.[29]

Further, in a 1954 letter to Anna Freud, Winnicott expressed the intention to correlate his ideas with those of Kris and Hartmann ". . . as I feel what they have recently written that we are all trying to express the same things."[30] In fact, M. Gerard Fromm finds many significant parallels between Winnicott's theories and Ego Psychology, the largely American school that grew up under Anna Freud's influence:

> Winnicott shares with his ego psychology contemporaries in American a common data base in the direct observation of children and parents as well as a common set of interests: the psychoanalytic reconstruction of the environmental corollary to distorted development, the

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[29] "A Personal View of the Kleinian Contribution," p. 171.

[30] *The Spontaneous Gesture: Selected Letters of D.W. Winnicott*, Ed. F. Robert Rodman, (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1987), p. 58.

> healthily developing personality, the genesis of psychotic conditions, the development of creativity, and the various forms of regression in the service of the ego. Winnicott's work thus seems to us to parallel and be fully consonant with the work of Hartmann, Kris, Lowenstein, Rapaport, Erikson, Spitz, Bowlby, and Mahler.[31]

In finding his own cure and developing his own theory, Winnicott had many ideas and theories from which to borrow or to incorporate into his own observations, experience and theorizing.

In this Winnicott was typical of the other members of the middle group. The middle group was originally that group of analysts who did not want to affiliate with either of the sectarian groups, but who ironically held the balance of power being the largest of the three groups. They finally became a group in the 1960's and after the reorganization of training program in 1973 the group became known officially as the 'Independent Group.' They were not politically active, did not proselytize, and some like Balint and Winnicott refused to be identified as belonging to any sectarian faction.[32]

Many of the members of the middle group were like Winnicott, native Britons and according to Masud Khan, the British were people for whom ". . . facts were the reality, theories were the human stammer towards grasping the facts."[33] Thus they were in the end well suited to, as Paul Roazen has put it, to mediate between "the warring continentals" (the Freuds versus the Kleinians).[34]

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[31] "Winnicott's Work in Relation to Classical Psychoanalysis and Ego Psychology," p. 8.

[32] *The British School of Psychoanalysis: The Independent Tradition*, pp. 49-50.

[33] Masud R. Khan, "Introduction" p. xi.

[34] Paul Roazen, *Freud and his followers*, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1971) p. 487. Meisel and Kendrick take Roazen's suggestion a step further when they point out how true this meditation was of Winnicott himself. Referring to Winnicott's "Mirror-role of Mother and Family in Child Development" in *Playing and Reality*, (New York: Basic Books, 1971) they saw Winnicott "linking classical ego analysis with the more revolutionary notions of Jacques Lacan" (*Bloomsbury Freud: The Letters of James and Alix Strachey*, p. 44).

Winnicott, like his fellow Britons, caught in the political conflicts of their newly arrived Eastern European comrades, insisted on searching for, finding and then calling attention to the "facts" that arose from his clinical and supervisory practices, whether or not these facts accorded with or fit within either of the sectarian ideologies prevalent at that time.

Winnicott's first major theoretical contribution was his presentation to the BPS in 1947 of "Hate in the Countertransference"[35] a paper which showed both his theoretical roots in Klein as well as his own innovations, innovations which at base radically challenged Klein's approach to therapy. Although he recognized the reality of destructive and aggressive urges in children, rather than placing aetiology within the child, he turned his attention to the nurturing environment, and how environmental deficits marked a person for life. If he was to speak of an inherent drive, it was the drive to obtain "unit status" or what humanistic psychologists might call a drive toward self-actualization.[36]

Winnicott, as early as 1931, had already shown a tendency to focus on environmental deficits in childhood and adult pathology rather than the various intrapsychic factors favoured by the

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[35] D.W. Winnicott, "Hate in the Countertransference" in *Through Paediatrics to Psycho-Analysis*. In choosing this paper as Winnicott's first major piece I am in agreement with Gerald Schoenwolf, who in *Turning Points in Analysis: From Winnicott to Kernberg*, (Northvale NJ: Jason Aronson, 1990), who believes that Winnicott with this essay dramatically changed the prevalent views of both countertransference and mothering(p. 2). In psychology of religion circles, this paper receives little attention but I will argue that this is one aspect of Winnicott's theory that can contribute much to our field. Adam Phillips in *Winnicott*, (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1988) has chosen "Primitive Emotional Development" as Winnicott's watershed paper, but it may be that the paper under discussion made more of a mark. Certainly, Phillip's choice bears in it the seeds of most of Winnicott's original ideas.

[36] John McDargh, in his "God, Mother and Me: An Object Relational Perspective on Religious Material," in *Pastoral Psychology*, 34, (1986), situates himself in Winnicott's approach to drives now calling them "needs:" "The human person is born with a *primary and irreducible need for the confirmation and affirmation of relationship*(p. 255).

Freudians of his time or those favoured by Melanie Klein, already in London for the past five years. Of course, Winnicott himself was at this time like his colleagues, a Freudian who was increasingly influenced by Melanie Klein. Nevertheless, from the beginning in his earliest writings Winnicott drew his audience's attention to breaks in maternal care as significant aetiological factors in a host of physical and anxiety disorders.[37] This he did with little support and even "polite disregard" from his colleagues at the British Psycho-Analytic Society(BPS)[38]

So while he was aware that the baby's environment was a key aetiological factor and that drives alone could not account for the illness he was seeing in infants and young children, it would be quite some time before he adequately theorized his observations, or for that matter made much of an impact on the BPS.[39] By 1942, his "long struggle with this problem" as he called it culminated in an intuitive flash, an excited exclamation in the middle of a BPS meeting, "There is no such thing as a baby!"--an exclamation to which he hastily added observations about there always being a "nursing couple" not just a baby.[40]

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[37]Cf. "A Note on Normality and Anxiety" and "Fidgetiness" both written in 1931 in *Through Paediatrics to Psycho-Analysis*.

[38]Masud Khan, in "Introduction" in *Through Paediatrics to Psycho-Analysis*, describes Winnicott's position in this 1931 publication as being "unpopular and revolutionary."(xiii) Further, he characterizes Winnicott's reception by his colleagues as "being politely disregarded."(xiv)

[39] Winnicott in "A Personal View of the Kleinian Contribution"says of himself that he,

> . . . gave many tentative and frightened papers to colleagues from the mid-twenties onwards pointing out these facts, and eventually my point of view boiled up into a paper (1936) which I called 'Appetite and Emotional Disorder.' In this I gave samples of the case histories that had to be reconciled somehow with the theory of the Oedipus complex as the point of origin of individual conflicts. Babies could be emotionally ill(p. 172).

[40] D.W. Winnicott, "Anxiety Associated with Insecurity," in *Through Paediatrics to Psycho-Analysis*, p. 99.

The other members of the middle group, on this point, were unanimous in their opposition to Klein's placing of aetiology within the infant. Further evidence of this is seen in John Bowlby's exclamation at a BPS meeting, an exclamation that for him marked a personal breakthrough: "But there *is* such a thing as a bad mother."[41] In fact, according to Mitchell and Black, the major figures in this middle group, W.R.D. Fairbairn, D.W. Winnicott, Michael Balint, John Bowlby, and Harry Guntrip, while they all built on Klein's vision of an infant wired for human interaction, they all yet broke with Klein's premise of constitutional aggression deriving from the death instinct. They variously argued against the presence of a "death instinct" and instead maintained that infants were wired for harmonious interaction and nontraumatic development but thwarted by inadequate parenting.[42] Winnicott, the pediatrician and psychoanalyst would become one of the main proponents of this position, although he would never use language like a "bad mother."

There were of course, other key figures exploring early childhood aetiology. Melanie Klein and Anna Freud were both child analysts. However, both used play therapy with children older than those Winnicott, a pediatrician, routinely encountered. Also, Winnicott (and Bowlby) worked with children evacuated from London during the Blitz. During his war-time experience, Winnicott was to witness first-hand the effects of deprivation on both healthy and unhealthy children. He also, in his pediatric consultations was able to get to the earliest stages of mother-child relations by utilizing his "spatula technique,"[43] and his facility of being able to get mothers to recall the earliest difficulties their

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[41]Stephen A. Mitchell and Margaret A. Black, *Freud and Beyond: A History of Modern Psychoanalytic Thought*, p. 114.

[42] *Freud and Beyond*, p. 113-14.

[43] Winnicott during a consultation would routinely hand a spatula to the babe-in-arms and then make keen observations on how the infant or toddler responded to being offered this new experience

children had experienced. All of these clinical experiences together form the cumulative basis from whence comes Winnicott's key insight, an insight that differentiates him from both Freud and Klein, and that is that pathology is often a result of environmental deficits, of failures in maternal (or primary infant care) provision, although of course there could be inherited factors that precluded normal development.

No analysis of childhood aetiology and its theorization during those years at the BPS is complete without discussing John Bowlby. Roughly contemporary with Winnicott (nine years younger and commenced activities at the BPS a decade after Winnicott), Bowlby as cited above also drew attention to deficits in maternal care as a significant factor in aetiology. In fact in his article published in 1940, "The Influence of Early Environment in the Development of Neurosis and Neurotic Character" he laments, "the very meager attention given to the role of environment in analytic literature."[44] By environment, Bowlby means simply the mother and her behaviour, in essence good mothers produce healthy children but disturbed children are frequently produced by bad mothers:

> It seems probably that most mothers are reasonably good but that the mothers of neurotic children are frequently bad, in the sense that they have very strong feelings of hatred and condemnation towards their children, or else make inordinate demands from them for affection...it would be sentimental to shut our eyes to their existence or to think that they do not have a damaging effect upon their children.[45]

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or object. Over the course of his career Winnicott evolved other such techniques like the famous "squiggle technique" in order to quickly enter a space in which he and the young child could make contact and significant factors quickly emerge. By the end of his career he had done over 60,000 such consultations.

[44] John Bowlby, "The Influence of Early Environment in the Development of Neurosis and Neurotic Character," in *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis*, 21, (1940), p. 154.

[45] "The Influence of Early Environment," p. 178.

With language like "bad mothers" and blaming the mothers for childhood problems and adult problems, it is no wonder that Bowlby has been castigated by feminists as having contributed to misogyny as well as having been responsible for the closure of childcare facilities for working women in Britain after WWII. However, Susan Riley, in her *War in the Nursery: Theories of Child and Mother*, has made the point that one cannot blame psychoanalysts for these social developments since on the part of the government if not the culture there was a major move to get women out of the factories back into the homes after the war, so that the men could have the jobs.[46]

This being said, it is still worth noting that Winnicott was not one to blame mothers, in fact he was extremely sympathetic to their situations, at one point (1954) writing to Bowlby expressing concern that daycare might be abolished, in part because of how his (Bowlby's) research was being used. He wrote hoping to get Bowlby to publicly distance himself from those using his theory and by means of persuasion pointed out that closing Day Nurseries wouldn't put more mothers at home with their children, it would instead put their children into the care of unregistered and unqualified babysitters. He went on to cite an example of a woman who was not good with her own children who had had 52 children pass through her care. Winnicott also complained that Day Nurseries were only available to those with full-time employment and that those with part-time had to make do with

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[46] Susan Riley, in *War in the Nursery: Theories of Child and Mother*, (London: Virago Press, 1983) while she gives explicit detail of how Bowlby, very much a product of his times gave support to the movement to keep women in their homes with their children, nevertheless sees "Bowlbyism"--the theory that mothers must be full-time with their children for at least the first three years--as more of a social phenomenon and that theoretically at least, Bowlby was not in complete accord. He had elsewhere given room for carefully planned absences(pp. 92-108). In the end Riley argues that a,

> . . . full account of this all assigns to psychology only a marginal role in closing the nurseries--and must refer also the needs of a particular economy to speed up the temporary flow of female labour, and to internal governmental politics, . . . the requirements of industrialists, the position of the unions, the role of local authorities . . . and the role of professional nursery movement supporters(p. 116).

babysitters.[47] Winnicott's diplomatic and tolerant approach to the realities of mothering and the need to work is also evident in the phrases he coined such as "good-enough mothering."

Winnicott, rather than using language like "bad mothers," repeatedly asserted that mothers were generally "good-enough" and that environmental breakdowns often had to do with factors beyond their control, such as a death in the family, the dislocations of war,[48] and other tragedies or difficulties. Winnicott found that even those mothers, (and it was usually mothers who were responsible for the care of young children) who had a child with difficulties, oftentimes had other children in the family that had fared well-enough--the difficulties had had their root in some particular unfortunate circumstance. Thus although there is a tendency with some writers to lump him in with other mother-blaming analysts,[49] Winnicott, after a deeper reading is a pediatrician with a remarkable empathy for mothers and the many real problems they encountered in trying to provide that "good-

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[47] Cf. *The Spontaneous Gesture*, pp. 65-66.

[48] Winnicott was in charge of providing care to children in his region displaced by Britain's wartime policy of moving children out of London. This was where he met Clare Britton, later to become his second wife. She was the psychiatric social worker who was in charge of the administration of five hostels for delinquent children--the ones who because of behaviour or disturbance could not be accommodated in foster homes. Winnicott was the psychiatrist in charge of their care. Cf. Clare Winnicott's "Introduction" in *Deprivation and Delinquency*, Eds. Clare Winnicott, Ray Shepherd and Madeleine Davis, (London: Tavistock, 1984), p. 2.

[49] Cf. Shari Turner's "Changing Conceptions of the Good Mother in Psychoanalysis" in *Psychoanalytic Review*, 80, (1993), an excellent review of the psychoanalytic portrayal of mothers from Freud to the present. My only point of divergence withTurner is that she brushes aside what she recognizes as Winnicott's efforts to make mothers believe that they were naturally good-enough by focussing instead on his comment that psychosis is an "environmental deficiency disease." (p. 534) This is a rather trite and superficial criticism, since recognizing the roots of psychosis in serious and repeated breakdowns in care is not the same thing as blaming mothers or making them feel guilty. As mentioned above, Winnicott was not one to blame, but rather to see a whole manner of circumstances, including the mother's own pathology that frustrated her natural desire and ability to care for her infant.

enough" environment, one which if the conditions were right they would naturally be able to provide.

Thus Winnicott, with his emphasis on the environment-infant set-up, his careful observation of mothers and their babies, and his attempts to provide his clients with what he had been unable to get from his own series of mothers[50] developed a theory and practice that has had a major impact in many fields and locales, not the least of which is psychology of religion. He and the other members of the Independent British School of Object Relations have developed an optimistic, humanistic vision of human nature as inherently relational: human beings are born into a network of relationships, as they develop they internalize these relationships and then later reproduce these relationships in the many facets of their lives. These internalized patterns of relating get played out with significant others, friends, enemies, and as Pruyser has argued, even beliefs can be the objects of such relational dynamics.[51] In such a relational view of the human condition, the relationship to the divine[52] becomes simply a normal part of human life as open to analysis as any other relationship, that is once the analyst's own religious issues have been analyzed sufficiently.

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[50] Cf. pp. 27ff. below for an analysis of Winnicott's "too many mothers,"and the connections drawn between this fact of his biography to his development of a practice as a mothering analyst.

[51] Paul W. Pruyser, *Between Belief and Unbelief*, (New York: Harper and Row, 1974).

[52] My usage of "the divine" is simply a convenient shorthand for whatever it is that any individual relates to in a religious or spiritual framework. My emphasis is not on getting the category right, i.e., coming up with an inclusive (or not) definition, but simply with the fact that people are relating to whatever they relate to in a religious or spiritual context. Some scholars prefer "the transcendent" or the "the sacred" but I am using "the divine" because to my knowledge it has not been the subject of limiting definitions as has been the case with "the transcendent" (what about the immanent) or Rudolph Otto's "the sacred."

D.W. Winnicott:
The Interplay Between his Life and his Work

To this point, we have been setting the context, becoming familiar with the environment in which Winnicott's theoretical innovations took place. But in Winnicott's theory, in order to understand someone, whether that person is a client, student or psychoanalyst, one must examine as well a whole range of personal factors that together shape his or her way of interacting with that context, that shape his or her creative work. The psychoanalytic imagination not only looks at what can be garnered about early childhood to understand key features of an adult's life but it also reverses the lenses by looking at key features of an adult's life and speculates about what particular factors in childhood would have contributed to such formations. This is particularly true for Winnicott and those he influences.

Winnicott believes that we are born with a primal creativity which depends on the quality of the facilitating environment in order to achieve its potential in a fully human meaningful life. In his view, before good and evil (oedipal conflict) there is the dependent relation. And of course, given the preeminence of the facilitative analytic setting in Winnicott's theory and practice, for analysands, the dynamics of the analysis and the personality of the analyst are also significant formative factors. In fact, Simon Grolnick, a Winnicottian scholar goes so far as to say,

> In a field where psychoanalytic genealogies search for linkages with Freud the Father, and where one's personality and one's ultimate psychoanalytic political fate are sometimes determined by one's analyst, one's second family can vie for importance with the first.[53]

Thus one informed by Winnicottian theory would expect, in analysing the writings of a psychoanalyst, to find significant connections between on the one hand, his theories of pathology and cure, and on

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[53] Simon A. Grolnick, *The Work and Play of Winnicott*, (Northvale, NJ: Jason Aronson, 1990), p. 11.

the other, the conflicts and successes he experienced with his two "families."

It comes then as no surprise then that Winnicott has been analysed in this manner by scholars who have been influenced by his life and work. In fact it is a common governing assumption in the work of Philips,[54] Goldman,[55] and Grolnick that Winnicott's theory is inescapably linked with his formative experiences in his two "families." Goldman explains it thus:

> . . .Winnicott's theory in some way mirrors the pattern of his own subjectivity. He creates and discovers his theory because it in some way speaks to his own condition . . . . theory forms an externalized symbolic structure that mirrors the structure of the theorist's own self.
>
> This is not to say that the truth or heuristic value of Winnicott's ideas cannot be assessed, evaluated, or analyzed on their own merits . . . . the argument advanced here is that the objective face of theory is not its only face. The method employed, in other words, is not to offer an introduction to Winnicott's theory or to evaluate its scientific status, but to demonstrate what that theory has to do with Winnicott. Ideas can sometimes be more fully appreciated when the subjective aspect of theory formation is taken into account. One way of understanding Winnicott's theory is to see it as part of his personal struggle to discover what feels real to him.[56]

In keeping with this tradition of interpretation I will supplement these speculations with a few of my own. Although at this point no one has written a biography, there are scholars who have related his life to his work, and this material when combined with anecdotal references, material from Winnicott's letters, Clare Winnicott's biographical comments and my own interpretative connections between his theory and life will provide the substance of my introduction to Winnicott the man.

This psychoanalytic play of the imagination yields interesting fruit but it should be not judged as Goldman points out solely by objective criteria. Winnicott, himself made a similar observation

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[54] Adam Philips, *Winnicott*, (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1988).

[55] Dodi Goldman, *In Search of the Real: The Origins and Originality of D.W. Winnicott*, (Northvale, NJ: Jason Aronson, 1993).

[56] Goldman, *In Search of the Real*, p. xxi.

about the work of historians, how despite their best efforts, they have never progressed beyond the writing of myth:

> No doubt a very great deal was lost of the early civilizations, but in the myths that were a product of oral tradition there could be said to be a cultural pool giving the history of human culture spanning six thousand years. This history through myth persists to the present time in spite of the efforts of historians to be objective, which they never can be, though they must try.[57]

In his view, all of our creations involve an interplay between subjective creativity and what we find in the world. For my part I will reflexively participate in the creation of an analytic myth of Winnicott's life, a myth that is as true to Winnicott as possible, a myth that sheds light on the human condition, and a myth that facilitates better understanding of people whose experiences are different from our own. As such it is an elaboration of the hypothesis that our creations are not *ex nihilo* nor are they simply culturally determined, but they are also idiosyncratically shaped by the interplay of particular factors in our facilitating environments.

Finally, I will take up Winnicott's invitation to pick up what I can from the chaos that surrounds him. Marion Milner relates a comment he made to his students just before a lecture: "What you get out of me, you will have to pick out of chaos."[58] Winnicott was not a systematic theorist although something approaching a system can be gleaned from his writing. As such I will not attempt a systematic presentation of his theory, but the rather focus on the potential I see in aspects of Winnicott's theory for a new way of doing psychology of religion, a potential I have picked out of Winnicott's chaos.

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[57] "The Location of Cultural Experience" in *Playing and Reality*, p. 99.

[58] Marion Milner, "D.W. Winnicott and the Two-Way Journey," in *Between Reality and Fantasy: Transitional Objects and Phenomena*, Eds. Simon A. Grolnick and Leonard Barkin with Werner Muensterberger, (New York: Jason Aronson, 1978), p. 37.

Winnicott's First Family: "Too Many Mothers"

Donald Woods Winnicott was born in 1896 in Plymouth, and for a time sunk his roots deep into the red soil of Devon. He was the youngest of three children, the other two being sisters five and six years older than him. He lived in a comfortable and respected family complete with cook, nanny, governess and an aunt who lived with the family for a good portion of his formative years.

His father, Frederick Winnicott, was a well-to-do and well-respected merchant and while Winnicott was well provided for by his father in a material sense, his stories and reflections about his father contained in a late autobiographical fragment are quite ambivalent about other aspects of his paternal provision. His earliest recollection is one in which Phillips sees a threat to Winnicott's masculine identity:

> ...I took my own private croquet mallet (handle about a foot long because I was only 3 years old) and I bashed flat the nose of the wax doll that belonged to my sisters and that had become a source of irritation in my life because it was over that doll that my father used to tease me. She was called Rosie. Parodying some popular song he used to say (taunting me by the voice he used)
>
> Rosie said to Donald
> I love you
> Donald said to Rosie
> I don't believe you do.
>
> ...so I knew the doll had to be altered for the worse, and much of my life has been founded on the undoubted fact that I actually *did* this deed, not merely wished it and planned it.
>
> I was perhaps somewhat relieved when my father took a series of matches and, warming up the wax nose enough, remoulded it so that the face once more became a face. This early demonstration of the restitutive and reparative act certainly made an impression on me, and perhaps made me able to accept the fact that I myself, dear innocent child, had actually become violent directly with a doll, but indirectly with my good-tempered father who was just then entering my conscious life.[59]

Philips comments on this passage that Winnicott took a "determinedly benign view of his

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[59] Clare Winnicott, "D.W.W.: A Reflection,"(in *Between Reality and Fantasy: Transitional Objects and Phenomena*, pp. 22-3.

father,"[60] and in this passage and the ones that follow, despite this determinedly benign view, one can see other aspects of the reality Winnicott experienced leaking through his positive construction.

> Now my sisters were older than I, 5 and 6 years: so in a sense I was an only child with multiple mothers and with father extremely preoccupied in my younger years with town as well as business matters. He was mayor twice and was eventually knighted, and then was made a Freeman of the City (as it now has become) of Plymouth. He was sensitive about his lack of education (he had learning difficulties) and he always said that because of this he had not aspired to Parliament, but had kept to local politics--lively enough in far away Plymouth.

Frederick Winnicott was a merchant in women's corsetry[61] and his only son lived in a household dominated by women, a household from which his father was usually absent. It is thus perhaps no surprise that Winnicott went on to develop a theory, not on how the father comes into the relationship between the mother and child(Freud's foundation), but on the earlier space between mother and child, a theory in which little account is taken of fathers.

However, the elder Winnicott's contributions to his son are not limited to the threat to his masculinity Phillips diagnoses in the "Rosie" episode,[62] nor his absence from his son's life in his early formative years. Frederick Winnicott was a member of the Wesleyan Methodist tradition, a nonconformist group sharing with Wesley a strong emphasis on plain language and personal experience.[63] Winnicott recounts the following episode, an episode which probably occurred on

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[60] Philips, *Winnicott*, p. 27.

[61] Ibid., p. 23.

[62] Ibid., p. 27.

[63] Ibid., pp. 23-5.

one of his Sunday morning walks with his father on their way home from church:[64]

> My father had a simple (religious) faith and once when I asked him a question that could have involved us in a long argument he just said: read the Bible and what you find there will be the true answer for you. So I was left, thank God, to get on with it myself.[65]

This would to prove to be an ongoing dialectic for Winnicott, the pull of on the one hand wanting to follow a leader like his father, i.e., Darwin, Lord Horder and Freud, and yet his militant distrust of dogma, the determination to find out for himself the facts of the matter as exemplified by the nonconformist approach to tradition, in the end "getting on with it himself."

One more contribution his father made, if somewhat belatedly, was his intervention in the raising of his son at age twelve.

> But when (at 12 years) I one day came home to midday dinner and said "drat" my father looked pained as only he could look, blamed my mother for not seeing to it that I had decent friends, and from that moment he prepared himself to send me away to boarding school, which he did when I was 13.
>
> "Drat" sounds very small as a swear word, but he was right; the boy who was my new friend was no good, and he and I could have got into trouble if left to our own devices.[66]

Clare at this point interjects to say that this problematic relationship was ended and that this "show of strength" on the part of Winnicott's father was "a significant factor in Donald's development."[67] Winnicott's comment was:

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[64] Clare described how Winnicott had the privilege of walking home with his father Sunday mornings after church in her "Interview with Clare Winnicott, June 1983" (in Peter Rudnytsky, *The Psychoanalytic Vocation: Rank, Winnicott and the Legacy of Freud.* New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1991, pp. 180-193), p. 180.

[65] "D.W.W.: A Reflection," p. 23.

[66] Ibid.

[67] Ibid., p. 24.

> So my father was there to kill and be killed, but it is probably true that in the early years he left me too much to all my mothers. Things never quite righted themselves.[68]

Here then, even in Winnicott's "determinedly benign" view of his father, is the evidence of a crucial lack of paternal presence. Authors such as Phillips and Goldman have recognized that what Winnicott was likely referring to here as "never righting themselves" was an inability to identify with his father, to become a virile man, even to separate out from his family and become his own man.[69]

Winnicott found it difficult to do anything that disappointed his father or mother. For example, at age sixteen he had resigned himself to following in his father's footsteps, to one day take over the family business, even though he had for some time dearly wished to become a doctor. He even felt repulsion at the idea of telling his father he wished to be a doctor. However an older friend of his not only told him that he should do what he himself wanted to do but offered to broach the subject with the elder Winnicott. Once he did so Winnicott was able himself to write his father in order to convince him to allow him to become a doctor.[70] This reluctance to take an initiative that would disappoint his father extended so far into Winnicott's adult life that he was not able to divorce his mentally unstable first wife until after his father died.[71] Finally, the year his

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[68] "D.W.W.: A Reflection," p. 24.

[69] Dodi Goldman, in his *Search for the Real: The Origins and Originality of D.W. Winnicott*, gives the most complete account to date of Winnicott's problems with sexuality, beginning with the first year of his marriage being without consummation, Winnicott referring to himself as an inhibited young man when he entered analysis, and his commentary on Winnicott's analyst James Strachey's letters to his sister Alix, in which allusions are made to these problems(pp. 68-75).

[70] "D.W.W.: A Reflection," p. 26.

[71] Philips, *Winnicott*, p. 96.

father died, 1948, was also the year Winnicott had his first coronary.[72] The fact that "things never quite righted themselves" has left a clear imprint on a theory which is focussed on pre-oedipal dynamics between mother and child, with both fathers and sexual issues rarely coming to the fore in his writing.

It is ironic that Winnicott gives as much time to telling us about his father as he does when in his theory fathers are at best peripheral.[73] What makes this irony even stronger is the fact that while the figure of the mother is absolutely central to Winnicott, neither he nor anyone else has said anything of substance about his own mother. Clare's description of his parents is so idealized as to be of little use:

> There is no doubt that the Winnicott parents were the center of their children's lives, and that the vitality and stability of the entire household emanated from them. Their mother was vivacious and outgoing and was able to show and express her feelings easily. Sir Frederick Winnicott (as he later became) was slim and tallish and had an old-fashioned quiet dignity and poise about him, and a deep sense of fun [the above incident with Donald and Rosie comes to mind]. Those who knew him speak of him as a person of high intelligence and sound judgement. Both parents had a sense of humour.[74]

Now Winnicott was himself a good-humoured, humourous person who inherited strengths from both his parents, but what life experiences are at the basis of a life long commitment to psychoanalysis?

Adam Phillips presents us with the beginning of the answer to this question. In the course of his research he was given a poem entitled "The Tree" written by Winnicott at age 67, a poem

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[72] Philips, *Winnicott*, p. 96.

[73] Adam Philips, in *Winnicott*, drew my attention to this irony with his repeated mentions of the peripheral role of fathers in Winnicott's theory versus the centrality of the mother, as compared with the little he says about his mother and the relative wealth of detail available about his father.

[74] "D.W.W.: A Reflection," p. 21.

that he had included in a letter to his brother-in-law with the following words:

> Do you mind seeing this . . . hurt coming out of me. I think it had some thorns sticking out somehow. It's not happened to me before and I hope it doesn't again . . .

Mother below is weeping
weeping
weeping
Thus I knew her

Once, stretched out on her lap
as now on dead tree
I learned to make her smile
to stem her tears
to undo her guilt
to cure her inward death
To enliven her was my living.[75]

In this poem one can see the origins of Winnicott's quest for the "good enough mother," his theory of the false compliant self versus the true hidden self, his emphasis on "holding" and "reliability" in the mother's provision of care, and so on. The painful, even chilling image of lying on her lap like he was lying on a dead tree, his energy and life being committed to making his mother happy rather than following his own natural course of development, the recurrent nature of his mother's condition, all give substance to the "dead wood" connection mentioned by Philips: Woods was her maiden name[76] and D.W. Winnicott's middle name--that deadness was something for which he would try to compensate all through his life.

In fact Winnicott's strengths and gifts bear the deep imprint of this requirement to enliven his mother. He was a real entertainer and he was known to say that if he hadn't become a

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[75] Phillips, *Winnicott*, p. 29. This was an excerpt of the original poem, and the tree refers to a dead tree in the back yard in which Winnicott liked to do his homework.

[76] Ibid., p. 30.

psychoanalyst he would have liked to have been a "comic turn in a music hall."[77] His first wife was from most accounts a deeply troubled woman, who he only divorced once he thought she could stand it.[78] And the style of therapy he evolved was one of meeting needs that he seems to have needed met at a crucial time, that of being reliably, consistently held--held in such a way that his spontaneous gestures can be recognized, received and reflected back to him.

Winnicott believed that once there was such a failure of maternal provision and a false self was constructed that if the child were not too badly damaged that he or she would then seek a nurturing environment in which to free again the natural developmental drive to wholeness. Winnicott, it would seem, although he found a reliable surrogate in his Nanny to whom he was very attached,[79] and had a number of mothers[80] and environments[81] of which he made use, nevertheless was to continue his search for a good-enough environment for a long time.

It should come as no surprise then that Winnicott's vocation, a vocation he retrospectively recognized, a vocation intertwined with his own search, was to speak to mothers:

> I suppose that everyone has a paramount interest, a deep, driving propulsion

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[77] Phillips, *Winnicott*, p. 31.

[78] Goldman, *In Search of the Real*, pp. 68-9.

[79] Clare describes Winnicott as having been devoted to his Nanny and recounts an incident where on their first trip to London in 1950 he immediately sought her out to make sure "she was all right and living comfortably." Evidently the attachment had been mutual for they found that the most important person in her life was still her nephew "Donald" ("D.W.W.: A Reflection," p. 21).

[80] Two older sisters, his aunt, the governess and the cook were also available for his use.

[81] Another environment in which he could be himself at this age seems to have been the kitchen. Clare points to how at home Donald always made himself in the kitchens of any places they visited and she mentions that his mother complained that as a child, he spent more time with the cook in the kitchen than he did in the rest of the house(Ibid., p. 22).

> towards something. If one's life lasts long enough, so that looking back becomes allowable, one discerns an urgent tendency that has integrated all the various and varied activities of one's private life and one's professional career. As for me I can already see what a big part has been played in my work by the urge to find and to appreciate the ordinary good mother . . . for me it has been to mothers that I have so deeply needed to speak.[82]

And out of the depth of his need came a theory rich in understanding just what it is mothers (or the earliest caregivers) give to their children. But the path from his "too many mothers" to finding the environment he needed to be himself, to be creative is a path through many other significant influences and environments.

Winnicott's Fathers: Those He Followed

Winnicott, like many young men, was for a long time a follower. He was inspired and set himself to become like a number of father figures: First Darwin, then Lord Horder and finally Freud. Clare tells us that Winnicott met Darwin when he was at Cambridge, and avidly read and collected his books:

> . . it was a revelation to him. It changed his whole life. It really changed his attitude to religion--began to change it. And he just felt, "There's a scientific way of working and that's where I am. That's what I want to do. I want to make discoveries and I want to understand them."[83]

It was probably his fascination with Darwin that led him to study biology as his preparation for medical school.

Once in medical training the mentor Clare gives most credit for having had a profound

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[82] Phillips, *Winnicott*, pp. 125-6; citation from D.W. Winnicott, "The Mother's Contribution to Society"--the postscript to his published radio lectures in *Home is Where We Start From: Essays by a Psychoanalyst*, Eds. Clare Winnicott, Ray Shepherd and Madeleine Davis, (New York: Norton, 1986), p. 123.

[83] "Interview with Clare Winnicott," p. 182.

influence upon him was Lord Horder, a physician who taught him to listen to his patients and learn from them rather than relying on his expertise and plying them with questions.[84] While Horder's example would be telling in Winnicott's development of his own professional identity, his greatest discovery was of Freud. However, both Darwin and Horder would very much mark his use of Freud: From Darwin would come his attention to the facts and careful inquiry, and from Lord Horder would come the respect for, and the willingness to learn from, his patients.

Winnicott, on finding himself unable to dream found Freud's *The Interpretation of Dreams*, a discovery which enthused and captivated him as can be seen in this excerpt from a letter to his sister Violet:

> May I explain to you a little about this method which Freud has so cleverly devised for the cure of mind disorders? I am putting this all extremely simply. If there is anything which is not completely simple for anyone to understand I want you to tell me because I am now practising so that one day I shall be able to help introduce the subject to English people so that who runs may read.[85]

And in fact this was no passing enthusiasm, as Winnicott devoted the rest of his career to explaining the Freud he found to whoever would listen, in the early years seeing himself very much as a pioneer.

At the other end of his career, Winnicott prefaced what Khan has called his testament of faith, "The Location of Cultural Experience"[86] with the following quote from Tagore: *On the seashore of endless worlds, children play.*[87] He goes on to say,

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[84] "Interview with Clare Winnicott," p. 189; and "D.W.W.: A Reflection," p. 28.

[85] *The Spontaneous Gesture*, p. 2.

[86] D.W. Winnicott, "The Location of Cultural Experience," in *Playing and Reality*.

[87] "The Location of Cultural Experience," p. 95.

> The quotation of Tagore has always intrigued me. In my adolescence I had no idea what it could mean, but it found a place in me, and its imprint has not faded.
>
> When I first became a Freudian I *knew* what it meant. The sea and the shore represented endless intercourse between man and woman, and the child emerged from this union to have a brief moment before becoming in turn adult or parent. Then as a student of the unconscious symbolism, I *knew* (one always *knows*) that the sea is the mother, and onto the seashore the child is born. Babies come up out of the sea and are spewed out upon the land, like Jonah from the whale. So now the seashore was the mother's body, after the child is born and the now viable baby are getting to know each other.
>
> Then I began to see that this employs a sophisticated concept of the parent-infant relationship and that there could be an unsophisticated infantile point of view, a different one from that of the mother or the observer, and that this infant's viewpoint could be profitably examined. For a long time my mind remained in a state of not-knowing, this state crystallizing into my formulation of the transitional phenomena. In the interim I played about with the concept of 'mental representations' and with the description of these in terms of the operation of the mental mechanisms of projection and introjection. I realized, however, that *play is in fact neither a matter of inner psychic reality nor a matter of external reality*.[88]

Winnicott's elusive and playful comments on the changing meanings he found in this Tagore citation reveal and conceal his discovery process. Tagore's phrase intrigued him, he did not at all understand it, but it stayed with him. This is the kind of experience that any religious or psychological tradition worth its salt will be able to interpret from within its own worldview. So it is not surprising that when he became a Freudian, as is typical of new adherents to belief systems (at least those systems with some depth) he suddenly *knew* what it meant, an interpretation consistent with this new world of thought presented itself to him. As he further explored the unconscious, whether he is referring to Jungian symbolism or not is not clear, his interpretation deepened.[89] But then he came to the limits of his belief-system, and realized that something from

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[88] "The Location of Cultural Experience," pp. 95-6.

[89] It seems that perhaps Jung had a great influence on all of the members of the Object Relations school and thus on psychoanalysis itself. Klein's insights into "splitting," Klein's and Fairbairn's theories of the depressive and schizoid positions, Winnicott's naming of a realm of human experience different from purely subjective or objective, all could be argued as having been more or less directly

his experiences as a pediatrician was not fitting this highly sophisticated point of view and he entered a creative period of "not-knowing." And Kleinian concepts in the end did not solve his dilemma. Eventually out of this creative suspension of belief, came a new insight, one which would change psychoanalysis but one which would also have been impossible without his first having drawn from its pool of wisdom.

Not only do we see Winnicott's sense of his theoretical ancestry but also implicit in it, and inseparable from it, are his experiences with his "second family." While Winnicott gained much from his "fathers," the main focus of his theory and therapy, and the search that would take up most of his life was for a "good-enough mother." It would take him years before he would be able to realize that this was what he was searching for, and it was very much his experiences with his "second family" both good and bad which were the basis for this eventual realization.

Winnicott's "Second Family:"

Winnicott entered analysis at age twenty-seven, the year he was married, and it was evidently not one of the better years of his life.[90] On the advice of Ernest Jones, then president of the BPS, he entered what was to become a ten-year analysis with James Strachey. Strachey was a close follower of Freud, but at one point in the analysis he suggested to Winnicott that he talk to Melanie Klein, who was at that time just starting to make an impact on the BPS. Winnicott, like many of the other members of the BPS, once having entered her orbit, found it very difficult to pull out again. He analysed her son Erich, although he refused Klein's request to supervise the

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influenced by Jung, even if, at the same time, they are all quite critical of his theories.

[90] Cf. op. cit. n. 69, p. 30.

analysis, and he entered into a five-year analysis with Joan Riviere, one of Klein's closest disciples. Despite all that he learned from both these analyses and from being in Klein's circle something still was missing. Winnicott still had not become himself.

From very early on in this period, Winnicott had been trying to draw psychoanalysts' attention to the importance of "the environment" in infant and child psychopathology. Klein was the leading light at the BPS, and of course her emphasis was on the infant and child's intrapsychic dynamics, and so Winnicott's efforts were ignored. But there are two dynamics in this Klein-Winnicott relationship during this period. One, is what some commentators on psychoanalytic politics have called the master-disciple relationship, and the other is on Winnicott's failure to find what we needed to cure himself in either of his analyses.

Melanie Klein and Her Disciples

François Roustang is representative of a number of other commentators on psychoanalytic politics when he describes the sort of master-disciple dynamic typical both of Freud's circle and Lacan's.[91] Roustang compares Freud's analyses of the Church and the army in "Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego" to his project for a psychoanalytic society in "On the

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[91] François Roustang, *Dire Mastery: Discipleship from Freud to Lacan*, Trans. Ned Lukacher, (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1982); George Pickering, in his *Creative Malady: Illness in the Lives of Charles Darwin, Florence Nightingale, Mary Baker Eddy, Sigmund Freud, Marcel Proust and Elizabeth Barrett Browning*, (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1974), says this, ". . . extraordinary relationship between Freud and his younger followers is unlike any situation with which I am acquainted in science. It belongs more to religion and the implicit acceptance of and obedience to revealed truth. In fact, Freud's relationship with his disciples was not unlike that of Mrs. Eddy with hers(pp. 224-5);" Most recently, Peter Rudnytsky, (*The Psychoanalytic Vocation*), asserts that Freud had a tragic flaw in his personality, a flaw exhibited most clearly in his relationships with his male followers. Fleiss, Jung and Rank mattered the most to him but he imposed upon them the choice between subservience and rebellion--no intellectual creativity on their part was permitted, especially if their new ideas contradicted the those of the founder(p. 2).

History of the Psychoanalytic Movement," and identifies a strange relationship between the two papers:

> . . . loyalty to the founder, allegiance to one leader, adherence to one doctrine, rejection of dissidents, and other aspects. All these features defining the new society can be explained in psychoanalytic terms only by an identification with the leader as the object of love, as the ego ideal. It is as if Freud, who radically criticized the foundations of two societies typical of our culture, was unable to find another model on which to base a society composed of supporters of a practice, a technique, and a theory aimed at dismantling some of the structures essential to the functioning of Western civilization . . . . For if *every* psychoanalytic society reproduces the Church or the army, if by its very structure it passes on to its members the influences and the ill effects of identification and love, then psychoanalysis itself is certainly threatened or subverted, and its fine edge is blunted[92].

Roustang goes on to describe in some detail the transference relationships between Freud and his disciples as well as Lacan and his disciples, how they quote their master's words like they are scripture, and so on.[93] There are many indications that Melanie Klein's relationship to her disciples was of a similar cast.

Phyllis Grosskurth, in her biography, *Melanie Klein: Her World and Her Work*, says of Klein that she demanded total allegiance from her followers or cut them off.[94] She also relates how many British Analysts consider Klein ruthless in the way she discarded people if they did not subscribe wholeheartedly to her person and her ideas. Her discards included Paula Heimann, John Rickman, Winnicott, Joan Riviere, Eva Rosenfeld, and Clifford Scott.[95] Finally Grosskurth also quotes John Bowlby who said by 1950, "it was as clear as a pikestaff that it was advantageous to

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[92] Roustang, *Dire Mastery*, p. 17.

[93] Ibid., pp. 22-3.

[94] Phyllis Grosskurth, *Melanie Klein: Her World and Her Work*. (Toronto: McCelland and Steward, 1986), p. 396.

[95] *Melanie Klein*, p. 424.

be a Kleinian."[96] He compared the group to a religious sect in which, once one had espoused the doctrine, one was welcomed to the fold. If one deviated, if one did not subscribe totally to the doctrine, one faced the terrible threat of excommunication.--particularly terrible if one was not a physician--because of the lack of referrals. Such was the Kleinian group to which for a time, Winnicott belonged. This was also the context for his second analysis.

The Dominating Countertransference

Joan Riviere was during Winnicott's second analysis one of Klein's closest disciples. This caused particular problems for Winnicott who was struggling to elucidate his own convictions about the importance of the quality of the environment for early development. Goldman believes that during that time the BPS had an unhealthy situation with its training analyses, in which personal analyses became tainted by issues of theoretical loyalty or disloyalty.[97] Goldman quotes from Limentani's *Between Freud and Klein*, to make this point more precise:

> In training there is an unavoidable contamination of the analytic relationship by the more complex clan or "extended family" relationship of the Institute as well as with fellow candidates. Thus there is an actual psychoanalytic family situation to be lived out, which causes untold repercussions in the transference.[98]

The repercussions that Winnicott struggled with came to a head when he told Riviere during a session that he was intending to write a book on the environment. John Padel relates the story how Winnicott said to him,

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[96] Grosskurth, *Melanie Klein*, p. 428.

[97] Goldman, *In Search of the Real*, p. 78.
Training analyses are personal analyses that are undertaken while the candidate is in training.

[98] Ibid., p. 78; Limentani, A. *Between Freud and Klein*. (London: Free Association, 1989), p. 74.

> I said to my analyst, "I'm almost ready to write a book on the environment." She said to me, "You write a book on the environment and I'll turn you into a frog!" Of course she didn't use those words you understand, but that's how what she did say came across to me.[99]

Despite feeling that he had "gained a tremendous amount" from his five years of analysis with Riviere, Winnicott had to wait a long time before he "could recover from her reaction."[100] What was worse, Riviere consistently interpreted as symptomatic of his personal difficulties Winnicott's refusal to accept all of Klein's formulations and his insistence on stating theory in his own language.[101] It would take Winnicott a long time to cure himself of these latest mothers, Klein and Riviere.

In a 1952 letter to Melanie Klein, his one-time mentor, Winnicott, in criticizing an analyst who had presented a paper to the BPS, described how different Kleinian theory and therapy was in his opinion from what was needed:

> . . . he simply bandied about a lot of that which has now come to be known as Kleinian stuff without giving any impression of having an appreciation of the processes personal to the patient. One felt that if he were growing a daffodil he would think he was making the daffodil out of a bulb instead of enabling the bulb to develop into a daffodil by good enough nurture.[102]

Grolnick's comment on this passage is, "Here was Winnicott at his best, taking on the tyranny of

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[99] John Padel, "The psychoanalytic theories of Melanie Klein and D.W. Winnicott and their interaction in the British Society of Psychoanalysis" in *The Psychoanalytic Review*, 73, (1991), p. 336.

[100] D.W. Winnicott, "Postscript: D.W.W. on D.W.W." in *Psychoanalytic Explorations*, Eds. Clare Winnicott, Ray Shepherd and Madeleine Davis, (Cambridge Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1989), p. 576. (Goldman discusses these same passages in *In Search of the Real*, pp. 78-9).

[101] Goldman, *In Search of the Real*, p. 79.

[102] *The Spontaneous Gesture*, p. 35.

a dominating transference and language and selling facilitation to the heathen."[103]

One of the significant characteristics that sets apart Winnicott from Freud, Klein and for that matter Lacan, is that these innovators became dominators, whereas Winnicott remained a facilitator, one who facilitated an atmosphere in which he, his students and colleagues could safely make discoveries. The innovators' discoveries, on the other hand, hardened into dogma and their relationships with their students had all the characteristics of master-disciple relationships--i.e., unexamined transferential ties between leader and followers, the requirement to be orthodox--never to deviate from the leader's teaching, and so on.[104] Still today, for those with a well-established transference, Freud's words are quoted like scripture, or if the analyst or scholar is a Kleinian or Lacanian then it is Klein's or Lacan's words that get this reverential treatment.[105]

Some years after ending his last analysis with Riviere, Winnicott in his paper "Hate in the Countertransference" comments,

> Psycho-analytic research is perhaps always to some extent an attempt on the part of an analyst to carry the work of his own analysis further than the point to which his own analyst could get him.[106]

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[103] Grolnick, *Work and Play*, p. 20. (Note the religious language--Winnicottians like any other group can be quite enthusiastic.)

[104] It must be admitted that the development of a school of thought has hazards whichever way it is done. The master-disciple approach is found in many cultures throughout much of recorded history. It obviously serves the "paranoid" needs of idealization, identification and having an opposition onto which to project the more disagreeable aspects of ourselves (I am we/I am not they). It remains to be seen whether or not it is humanly possible to enable a sufficient number of people to transcend these paranoid tendencies, such that a different sort of interaction is possible in our pluralistic and multi-cultural world.

[105] Beneath the skin of every skeptic, at least in the study of religion, one will find a devotee: although they not be theists, they each have a shrine at which they worship.

[106] "Hate in the Countertransference," p. 196.

This paper is a case in point, as it contains some of the key developments which would mark out his position as differing from Klein's, positions which he worked out in his treatments and self-analysis. But in Winnicott's theory, one of the key positions he marked out, a position that fundamentally clashed with Klein's was the importance of the facilitating environment both for early development as well as healing in the analytic setup. Winnicott had come to realize that the quality of the therapeutic environment mattered as much or more than the psychoanalytic interpretations so prized by Freud and Klein. Psychotherapy according to Winnicott,

> . . . is not making clever and apt interpretations; by and large it is a long term giving the patient back what the patient brings. It is a complex derivative of the face that reflects what is there to be seen. I like to think of my work this way, and to think that if I do this well enough the patient will find his or her own self, and will be able to exist and to feel real.[107]

As Goldman has put it, for Winnicott, "psychotherapy was essentially a complex derivative of mother's face, affording the opportunity to experience oneself as alive and real."[108] Clearly this was not what Riviere provided him with. If his analysis with Riviere was in the end unsatisfying, perhaps even an impediment to his moving forward, then who provided the environment he needed in which to become himself, and to create his own theory?

Clare and Donald: Mirroring and Play

As I have already alluded to above, Winnicott was finally successful in finding that environment which could facilitate his growth and from which he could be creative. He did so in the person of his second wife, Clare Britton, a psychiatric social worker, who became his

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[107] D.W. Winnicott, "Mirror-role of mother and family in child development" in *Playing and Reality*, pp. 137-38.

[108] Goldman, *In Search of the Real*, p. xx.

"mirroring mother," his "playmate," the one with which he could truly be himself.[109] In a 1946 letter to her, three years before he divorced his first wife and five years before he married Clare, he said:

> In odd moments I have written quite a lot of paper for the Psychoanalytical Society in February, and I spend a lot of time working it out. My work is really quite a lot associated with you. Your effect on me is to make me keen and productive and this is all the more awful--because when I am cut off from you I feel paralysed for all action and originality.[110]

And in fact Winnicott's psychoanalytic writing, the writing in which he of his own accord developed his own point of view was all created with her as his friend, confidant and finally wife.[111]

Why was Clare so important to his work? What was it about her and their relationship that enabled Winnicott to be creative? She gives some further clues, recounting a letter she received from him in 1950, in which he describes the love he has for her as being in part the love he had for

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[109] One of the few Winnicottians to comment on the connection between Winnicott's creativity and his relationship with Clare is Madeleine Davis, who in her tailpiece to *Boundary and Space: An Introduction to the Work of D.W. Winnicott*, (New York: Brunner/Mazel, 1981) entitled "Appendix: The Writing of D.W. Winnicott," comments, "His obvious enjoyment of life during these years, along with the extraordinary surge of freedom and originality in the area of his work, I am sure owed much to his second marriage, to Clare Britton . . ." (pp. 190-91).

[110] "D.W.W.: A Reflection," p. 32.

[111] Philips refers to Winnicott's 1945 paper "Primitive Emotional Development" as a "watershed" paper which provided the groundwork for all his later speculation(*Winnicott*, p. 76). Winnicott met Clare through his work as Psychiatric Consultant to the Government Evacuation Scheme in County Oxford, a job he began in 1940. Thus it was only after working with Clare for five years that he published his first original paper. The only other paper he lists in his first collection, Through Paediatrics to Psycho-Analysis was "The Manic Defence," the paper he presented to the British Psychoanalytical Society in 1935 during his analysis with Riviere in order to qualify for membership(*Winnicott*, p. 55)--a paper he was pushed into writing before he felt ready.

his "transitional object"--a girl doll.[112] One aspect, therefore, of their relationship was that in her "good-enough mothering" she made herself available to be recreated in the image of his desires and needs in a way that she not only did not challenge, but that she actively encouraged. He also used her for what seems to have been near perfect "mirroring" as can be seen in her comments on how she was shown all of his "squiggle" productions, the drawing game in which his unconscious feelings could be manifested:

> There were his *endless* squiggle drawings which were part of his daily routine. He would play the game with himself and produced some very fearful and some very funny drawings, which often had a powerful integrity of their own. If I was away for a night he would send a drawing through the post for me to receive in the morning, because *my part in all this was to enjoy and appreciate his productions*, which I certainly did, *but sometimes I could wish that there were not quite so many of them* [emphasis added].[113]

It would seem that it could sometimes be a bit tiresome being Winnicott's "good-enough mother."

However, they did play a lot together, in a reciprocal, careless and carefree manner because as Clare said, they could disagree with each other in their play of ideas or rearranging their home because they "... were strong enough not to be hurt by each other." She goes on to say, "In fact the question of hurting each other did not arise because we were operating in the play area where everything is permissible."[114] This playfulness so marked the character of their relationship that a friend of theirs described them as "two crazy people who delighted each other and delighted their friends."[115]

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[112] "D.W.W.: A Reflection," p. 31.

[113] Ibid., p. 30.

[114] Ibid., p. 29.

[115] Ibid., p. 30.

Notwithstanding the "play" or peer quality of their relationship, just how pronounced was his use of Clare as "good-enough mother" is revealed in these other two anecdotes she relates:

> Early in our relationship I had to settle for the idea that Donald was, and always would be, completely unpredictable in our private life, except for his punctuality at meal times, and the fact that he never failed to meet me at the station when I had been away.[116]

> I think that the only times Donald actually showed that he was angry with me were on occasions when I damaged myself or became ill. He hated to have me as a patient, and not as his wife and playmate. He showed this one day when I damaged my foot and it became bruised and swollen. We had no crêpe bandage so he said he would go and buy one and I was to lie down until he returned. He was away for two hours and came back pleased with a gold expanding bracelet he had bought for me--but he had forgotten the bandage.[117]

It is apparent why Winnicott never scorned "dependence" but saw it as normal, for he certainly depended on his wife in a very primitive (young) fashion. He was consistent in that his interactions with his wife were structured around his own needs whether they were for environmental provision (food and mirroring) or for a playmate. It is quite evident that she was a (perhaps the most important) key to his stability and productivity. His self-analysis continued all his life she says, through dream interpretation and his squiggle games, but I believe it was her fulfilling her role in "enjoying and appreciating his productions" that was central to his success.

But what of his analysts--those people who in his theory are supposed to provide a facilitating environment such that the injured person can take up again their developmental task of self-expression and integration. Unfortunately both his analysts failed him in this respect, and these failures contributed to some of his key theoretical and therapeutic innovations. Winnicott

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[116] "D.W.W.: A Reflection," p. 30.

[117] Ibid., p. 31.

himself, in a long 1952 letter to his mentor Melanie Klein,[118] accuses her along with both his analysts of failing him in their most crucial task:

> What I was wanting on Friday undoubtedly was that there should be some move from your direction towards the gesture that I make in this paper. It is a creative gesture and I cannot make any relationship through this gesture except if someone came to meet it. I think that I was wanting something which I have no right to expect from your group, and it is really of the nature of a therapeutic act, something which I could not get in either of my two long analyses, although I got so much else. There is no doubt that my criticism of Mrs. Riviere was not only a straightforward criticism based on objective observation but also it was coloured by the fact that it was just exactly here that her analysis failed with me.[119]

Thus James Strachey, a Freudian[120], and Joan Riviere, a Kleinian, and Melanie Klein herself all failed Winnicott in their inability or refusal to provide him with the responses he needed to his creative, spontaneous gestures.[121] And it was just here that his second wife, Clare, met his need, and enabled him to achieve as much of his potential as he achieved. She was able to be that "good-enough mother" mirroring and appreciating his spontaneous gestures through which he

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[118] In fact his relationship with Klein may have had significant parallels with that of his mother. Klein was well known to be quite depressed for much of her career and Winnicott was always being nice to her, keeping her consulting room filled with fresh flowers every day. Taking the centrality of depression in Klein's life and theory, her non-responsiveness to Winnicott's creativity, and her continuing demand for compliance from him would have replicated significant debilitating conditions from his childhood. However, with Clare's assistance he seems to have freed himself from his own compliant "false self" response to this "mother" and insisted on maintaining his own space and creative thinking.

[119] *The Spontaneous Gesture*, p. 34.

[120] Grolnick interprets Strachey as a Freudian intellectual whose major work was translating rather than creating. Grolnick also says that Strachey was to some extent influenced by Klein but in the end stays with calling him Freudian, even to the extent of wondering how much Strachey's Freud transference affected his countertransference with his patients (*Work and Play*, p. 17).

[121] Cf. Grolnick's and Goldman's discussions of these analyses and their failure (*Work and Play*, pp. 17-21; *In Search of the Real*, pp. 66-81).

discovered more and more of himself.

The therapeutic and dogmatic practices he would attack were those that led to some of his key theoretical and therapeutic innovations. First with his "spatula game" and then with his "squiggle game" Winnicott created ways in which the child was allowed to express her or himself through spontaneous play in a safe, warm environment. His technique was a marked contrast to one of the dangers of analysis he often warned of, what he called "false-self analysis" or intellectualized analysis where theory predominates and the true inner self of the analysand never sees the light of day. Rather than the clever interpretation, the analyst playing saviour by her or his deft management of the individual, Winnicott provided the environment where both analysand and analyst could be surprised by the discoveries and insights of the analysand.

Thus in broad outline, whereas Winnicott's illness, as it was termed dismissively by Klein and Riviere, certainly provides the basis for his insights into the compliant versus the true self it is evident that the failures of his two long analyses, combined with the ideological polemics in the BPS, focussed Winnicott's critiques of Kleinian analytic theory and practice. Then with the support of Clare he was able to construct his own original middle position, and construct, elaborate and sell his gospel of facilitation, in the process continuing his own analyses through both his work and his life with Clare.

Having now met the man, and understanding something of the dynamics of his discovery process, how he found his cure while creating and elaborating his theory, one task remains before considering how Winnicott's theory is being used in psychology of religion. I will first introduce the reader to those aspects of Winnicott's theory that could be or already are being utilized to help scholars, teachers and therapists grapple with religious phenomena.

Winnicott's Theory in Relation to Psychology of Religion:
Holding, Good-enough Mothering, The Facilitating Environment

Winnicott used many different terminologies (primary maternal preoccupation, holding, facilitating environment, good-enough mothering) to refer to original infant-mother setup. He defines "holding" as follows:

> This goes for the physical holding of the intra-uterine life, and gradually widens in scope to mean the whole of the adaptive care of the infant, including handling. In the end this concept can be extended to include the function of the family, and it leads on to the idea of the casework that is at the basis of social work. Holding can be done well by someone who has no intellectual knowledge of what is going on in the individual; what is needed is the capacity to identify, to know what someone is feeling like.
>
> In an environment that holds the baby well enough, the baby is able to make personal development according to inherited tendencies. The result is a continuity of existence that becomes a sense of existing, a sense of self, and eventually results in autonomy.[122]

As can be seen from the reference to casework, if later in life a child or adult is to try to overcome some developmental deficits, they will again need such a "holding environment." This was Winnicott's role as he saw it, and that was to provide the "holding" or "facilitating environment" that clients needed so that they could follow their own natural growth processes, processes that had been blocked by some earlier trauma or environmental deficit. They would do so by a regression to dependence, a regression that allowed them to revisit the trauma and pick up the developmental trajectory that had been blocked at that point.

To characterize the analytic space as a "holding environment" was a revolutionary development in a tradition of therapy where the right interpretation at the right time had been the keystone of analytic practice both for Freud and Klein. Peter Rudnytsky, in his *The*

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[122] "The Concept of the Healthy Individual" (1967) in *Home Is Where We Start From*, pp. 27-8.

Psychoanalytic Vocation: Rank, Winnicott and the Legacy of Freud, comments that,

> . . . Freud's classical technique differs from the empathic technique derived by object relations theorists from Ferenczi and Rank in tending toward authoritarian closure rather than dialectical openness. In this regard, Melanie Klein remains much closer to Freud than to Ferenczi [the latter being one of her analysts]. . . [It is Klein's belief] that the essential prerequisite for conducting an early analysis--and, indeed, a deep-going analysis of older children--is certainty in grasping the material presented.[123]

This divergence in understanding what cures in psychoanalytic therapy between on the one hand Winnicott and on the other Freud and Klein is further elaborated by Winnicott's notion of the True Self and the False Self, and how the True Self is freed to develop by the provision of good-enough care in the analytic setting.[124]

True Self/False Self

Winnicott had a Rousseau-like vision[125] of the nature of the human child. Good-enough parenting was simply maintaining a stable and reliable environment in which the child could grow and achieve its potential. Traumas or "impingements" could, in Winnicott's view radically change a child's developmental trajectory. In one of his earlier papers he explains early childhood

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[123] Rudnytsky, *Psychoanalytic Vocation*, p. 3.

[124] It is beyond the scope of this thesis to analyse theoretical convergences between Ferenczi and Winnicott as contrasted with those between Freud and Klein. It is worth noting however, that in Phyllis Grosskurth's opinion, (*Melanie Klein: Her World and Her Work*), that Winnicott like Ferenczi was a "mothering" analyst. (Grosskurth also mentions that Ferenczi came from a large family and his overworked mother was unable to give him the attention he needed(p. 234). Although Klein benefited both from Ferenczi's "mothering analysis" and Winnicott's help analysing her son Erich, she admitted "that she was not a natural-born mother" (p. 233) and in Grosskurth's view certainly was not a "mothering analyst."

[125] Goldman, *In Search of the Real*, p. 112.

development in the following manner:[126]

> . . . before object relationships the state of affairs is this: that the unit is not the individual, the unit is an environment-individual set-up. The centre of gravity of the being does not start off in the individual. It is in the total set-up. By good-enough child care, technique, holding, and general management the shell becomes gradually taken over and the kernel (which has looked all the time like a human baby to us) can begin to be an individual . . . . The good-enough infant care technique neutralizes the external persecutions, and prevents the feelings of disintegration and loss of contact between psyche and soma.
>
> In other words, without a good-enough technique of infant care the new human being has no chance whatever. With a good-enough technique the centre of gravity of being in the environment-individual set-up can afford to lodge in the kernel rather than in the shell. The human being now developing an entity from the centre can become localized in the baby's body and so can begin to create an external world at the same time as acquiring a limiting membrane and an inside. According to the theory there was no external world at the beginning although *we as observers* could see an infant in an environment. How deceptive this can be is shown by the fact that often we think we see an infant when we learn through analysis at a later date that what we ought to have seen was an environment developing falsely into a human being, hiding within itself a potential individual.[127]

Winnicott would not fully elaborate the true self/false self concepts for almost another decade,[128] but the kernel of this theory is present in outline. Simply put, when the caregiver can be present reliably and effectively enough from the beginning, the infant is able to move from being at one with its environment to being able to notice when its environment responds to its needs, desires and gestures. At the beginning this adaptation on the part of the caregiver is ideally total, the infant's needs are anticipated and say, the breast is presented, just as the infant was hallucinating

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[126] I am using the full citation, because it gives the flavour of Winnicott's humanistic approach, i.e., the kernel that grows with the right conditions, and, because this is the clearest such example. Most of Winnicott's papers were originally talks, and he was always coming up with new ways to say things, he wasn't trying to build and establish a systematic or dogmatic language as were innovators like Melanie Klein or W.R.D. Fairbairn.

[127] D.W. Winnicott, "Anxiety Associated with Insecurity," pp. 99-100.

[128] D.W. Winnicott, "Ego Distortion in Terms of True and False Self" in *The Maturational Processes and the Facilitating Environment*.

its arrival. This ideal adaptation leads to a necessary period of infantile grandiosity or omnipotence in which the infant can conjure up what it needs when it needs it. Later, as the caregiver naturally becomes more aware of other priorities and the infant is able to signal its desires, communication starts up, and if there are no impingements, the infant's development continues undisturbed.

Impingements are those sorts of phenomena that arise when the caregiver is not sufficiently attuned to its infant's needs so that the infant for survival's sake (or so it can seem to it) must become precociously aware of the character of its environment and make the suitable adjustments to win from its environment what it needs.

> The baby quickly learns to make a forecast: 'Just now it is safe to forget the mother's mood and to be spontaneous, but any minute the mother's face will become fixed or her mood will dominate, and my own personal needs must then be withdrawn otherwise my central self may suffer insult.'[129]

Habitual impingement either by unresponsiveness or by mother-centred activity leaves the infant as a "watcher" and "compliant provider of mother's needs" rather than a being growing out of its own urges, needs and proclivities. The infant's centre of gravity becomes focused on the shell, or how it appears to its caregiver and vice-versa rather than on following its own desires and processes. Thus the false self is constructed and the true self is hidden and protected from impingement by the false self, becoming in severe cases, an isolate, unreachable.

When it comes to psychoanalytic terminology Winnicott's language is one indication of his independent thinking. His use of the word "self" is a good example. "Self" was a word not much used by psychoanalysts but rather by the analytic community (Jung's followers). However,

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[129] "Mirror-role of Mother and Family in Child Development," p.113.

Winnicott was unapologetic about this sort of usage, preferring commonly understood language to technical language.[130] In traditional psychoanalytic language[131] what Winnicott is describing here in the process of forming a false self is a crippling of the ego through dissociation: the formation of a false self (social ego) that is able to interact with the impinging but needed other leaves a weakened but somehow inviolate true self core protected.

This dissociation is also a dissociation between what Winnicott called the psyche and soma, which occurs when the natural rootedness in desire, feeling, and bodily experience is broken and life is lived through a split-off psyche or mind. This emphasis on the body in Winnicott[132] has been fruitfully used by contemporary feminists such as Goldenberg[133] as further

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[130]For example, in a letter to Fordham, one of Jung's British followers, he defended using self or self-conscious because they have generally accepted meanings in everyday language (*Spontaneous Gesture*, p 88). However, when it came to using explicit terms like ego Winnicott argued that they should stick with original meaning in order to avoid confusion, in the process criticizing Jung for taking over Freud's word with a different meaning. Ironically, Winnicott himself was guilty of this kind of confusion in the way he transformed the meanings of some of Freud's language. Greenberg and Mitchell, *Object Relations in Psychoanalytic Theory*, comment:

> . . . Winnicott preserves tradition in a curious fashion, largely by distorting it. His interpretation of Freudian and Kleinian concepts is so idiosyncratic and so unrepresentative of their original formulation and intent as to make them at times unrecognizable. He recounts the history of psychoanalytic ideas not so much as it developed, but as he would like it to have been, rewriting Freud to make him a clearer and smoother predecessor of Winnicott's own vision.(p. 189)

[131]This particular language is drawn from M. Gerard Fromm's "Winnicott's Work in Relation to Classical Psychoanalysis and Ego Psychology," pp. 7, 12 and 13.

[132]Cf. M. Gerard Fromm, "Winnicott's Work in Relation to Classical Psychoanalysis and Ego Psychology," pp. 7-8, who asserts that Winnicott's theory of the body ego is consonant with Freud's, "his description of the early true self is fundamentally body experience" and psyche-soma integration is integral to normal human development.

[133]Cf. Naomi R. Goldenberg, *Returning Words to Flesh: Feminism, Psychoanalysis and the Resurrection of the Body*, (Boston: Beacon, 1990).

advancing a necessary corrective to a western society characterized by too much split-off intellectual functioning.

Therapy, in Winnicott's view, for such people is to create the environment in which they can relax, where watchfulness can cease. This means not making demands and setting expectations or too easily analysis can become a partnership between the compliant false self and the analyst. With such an unholy alliance no real progress is possible. Rather, the Winnicottian analyst creates those conditions under which the true self can safely emerge. By providing warmth and empathy without expectations the analyst recreates the "holding environment" thus facilitating "spontaneous gestures" which then can receive appropriate responses. As Winnicott says, "The spontaneous gesture is the True Self in action."[134]

Even though Winnicott would never himself get the benefit of this kind of "holding environment" in his fifteen years of analysis, he followed his own need to understand what mothers and mothering analysts provide, and he learned from his patients and students as he gave them space to pursue their needs. In so doing he was able to dramatically change prevailing notions of pathology and cure, as well as the understanding of what makes for health in the first place, as in "the capacity to be alone."

The Capacity to be Alone

The capacity to be alone is one of the key developmental achievements granted by a good-enough holding environment. The presence of a reliable loving caregiver and later the introjected presence of the same, give the infant and child the ability to be lost in absorbed play--free to be.

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[134] "Ego Distortion in Terms of True and False Self," p. 148.

To the extent that this first environment is unpredictable or dangerous, to that extent the infant and child comes to internalize a haunting or persecutory introject, and reverie is lost to the need to keep a watchful eye on the environment (i.e., first the caregiver, then the family and finally the world). In Winnicott's approach, cure can be found for such people by regression to dependence, where the analyst by providing the good-enough holding environment, and not retaliating when this environmental provision is tested by neediness or rage, enables the analysand to take up the developmental task long since abandoned and again begin to grow and flower.

The capacity to be alone, or as McDargh says, "to have an inner world"[135] is a developmental achievement given by the nurturing other, hopefully at the appropriate time, but perhaps also by caring others later on, whether they be analysts, therapists, or even religious or support groups.[136] This ability to "hold" and the life-giving results it produces has been incorporated by one of Winnicott's extenders, Christopher Bollas, into what he calls the *transformational object*--that person and internalized presence who was the condition for the many normal transformations of childhood development, and which, especially in times of crisis, is sought after as the condition for transformations in adult life.[137] It is I believe a useful analytical

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[135] John McDargh, "The Deep Structure of Religious Representations," in *Object Relations Theory and Religion: Clinical Applications*, Eds. Mark Finn and John Gartner, (Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 1992), p. 10.

[136]Will Adams in "Revelatory Openness Wedded with the Clarity of Unknowing: Psychoanalytic Evenly Suspended Attention, the Phenomenological Attitude, and Meditative Awareness," in *Psychoanalysis and Contemporary Thought*, 18, (1995), has drawn attention to this capacity of religious institutions and architecture as well as support groups to provide this "holding environment" which is the prerequisite for transformative insights.

[137]Christopher Bollas, *The Shadow of the Object: Psychoanalysis of the Unthought Known*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1987).

question to inquire into the extent to which religious objects, religious groups, or for that matter support groups, provide such a "holding environment" or "transformational object," a place or experience where one feels safe enough to make a needed transformation.

The informed reader will remember that one of the classic criticisms of religion is that it keeps people in a state of infantile dependence, this because the prevalence of monotheism in a society gives rise to a state of affairs in which there is a projected parent in the heavens who takes care of its children keeping them safe and in the status quo. We see here I believe the possibility for another way of envisioning dependence in the religious sphere, i.e., as a safe resting place where earlier traumas can be revisited and developmental tasks reappropriated as people, to use Winnicott's language, find their true selves. Now the sorts of dependence, if any, encouraged by religious beliefs, institutions and groups is certainly an interesting question for psychology of religion. Dependence has also changed in meaning since feminists, especially feminists who take recourse to object relations theory, began talking about the value of interdependence as opposed to the androcentric ideal of independent, separative self-sufficiency.[138] But one of the most interesting provocative aspects of Winnicott's approach to dependence was his theory of the "use

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[138]There are a number of feminist writers working with relational models of the self who use Winnicott. Cf. Catherine Keller's *From a Broken Web: Separation, Sexism and Self*, (Boston: Beacon, 1986); Nancy Chodorow, *The Reproduction of Mothering*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978), *Feminism and Psychoanalytic Theory*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989) and "Toward a Relational Individualism: The Mediation of Self Through Psychoanalysis," in *Reconstructing Individualism: Autonomy, Individuality, and the Self in Western Thought*. Eds. Thomas C. Heller, Morton Sosna and David E. Wellbery, (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1986, pp. 197-207); Jane Flax, *Thinking Fragments: Psychoanalysis, Feminism, and Postmodernism in the Contemporary West*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990); and Jessica Benjamin, *The Bonds of Love: Psychoanalysis, Feminism, and the Problem of Domination*, (New York: Pantheon Books, 1988).

of the object," how an analyst (or parent, spouse or group) by permitting themselves to be used contribute to health and healing.

The Use of an Object

One of the most controversial of Winnicott's theoretical innovations is included in a late and difficult paper whose theme is,

> "... the patient's ability to use the analyst .... [and] the development and establishment of the capacity to use objects and to recognize a patient's inability to use objects, where this is a fact.[139]

Winnicott, showing his Kleinian roots, postulated that an infant can only use an object if first it destroys it. It is the mother or caregiver's capacity to withstand aggressive attacks without retaliating (thus making the object more real than the omnipotent rage of the infant, freeing the infant to use it without fear or reservation) that makes herself/himself available to the infant for constructing a world other than simply through their own omnipotent fantasizing.

There is however, a significant difference between how Winnicott and Klein viewed aggression. Winnicott found Freud's death instinct, the basis for Klein's view of aggression, unuseful: "... I simply cannot find value in his idea of a Death Instinct."[140] For Winnicott, aggressive impulses are there from the beginning, even as early as kicking and punching in the womb:

> A baby kicks in the womb; it cannot be assumed that he is trying to kick his way out. A baby of a few weeks thrashes away with his arms; it cannot be assumed that he means to hit. A baby chews the nipple with his gums; it cannot be assumed that he is meaning to

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[139] "The Use of an Object and Relating through Identifications" in *Playing and Reality*, p. 87.

[140] "A Personal View of the Kleinian Contribution," p. 177.

destroy or to hurt.[141]

This excerpt from a paper first given at a symposium with Anna Freud in 1950 is quite evocative and shows clearly his deviation from Melanie Klein. Aggressive impulses, for Winnicott, are instead connected with the natural impulse to move, to make contact, to push against:

> . . . in every infant there is this tendency to move and to get some kind of muscle pleasure in movement, and to gain from the experience of moving and meeting something.[142]

As Bruce Smith has pointed out,

> [for Winnicott] . . . aggression begins in the body and the experience of the body, and is not inherently destructive or angry. It is synonymous with activity and with the need to contact that which is external to the self . . . . Winnicott asserts that the random kicking, thrashing, biting acts of the infant are only destructive or aggressive when they include a destructive *intent*.[143]

And with Winnicott this intent only forms out of experiences with the environment, it is not inherently present in the fantasy life of the child as Klein postulates. Thus the use of an object does not presuppose a Kleinian destructive intent when the object is being destroyed, but rather a pushing against it, an attempt to move it, and also of course if they are present, hostile intentions that have already emerged from the mother/child relationship.[144]

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[141] "Aggression in Relation to Emotional Development" in *Through Paediatrics to Psychoanalysis*, p. 204.

[142] *Deprivation and Delinquency*, p. 93.

[143] Bruce L. Smith, "Winnicott and the British Schools," pp. 38-9.

[144] It would be an error to suppose that destructive rage only comes from lapses in parental care. There are of course many unfortunate occurrences in everyone's life, everything from colic and the other illnesses during infancy, teething, as well as normal impingements from the caregiving environment. Klein's insights into the destructive rage of children are still the basis for Winnicott's and most other object relations theorists' work, where they diverge from her is on her insistence that this destructive rage is innate to the child despite the environmental conditions. In this aspect, Klein went against her mentor Ferenczi who was one of the first to draw attention to environmental deficits,

To return to the infant and the object, the object becomes real because of having survived destruction:

> The subject says to the object: 'I destroyed you,' and the object is there to receive the communication. From now on the subject says: 'Hullo object!' 'I destroyed you.' 'I love you.' 'You have value for me because of your survival of my destruction of you.'[145]

In this manner, Winnicott sees himself transforming the reality principle. Now instead of development meaning moving from relating to internal fantasized objects to relating with external (real) objects, it now means for Winnicott moving from unintegration[146] to relating with "subjective objects" which are being fantastically destroyed while remaining external to the infant. This is a complex and difficult formulation, but what emerges as "useful" is the concept of "being present" as caregiver as ultimately necessary for the dependent one in order that they can begin to relate in a full way to others. Seen in this manner, this is yet a further extension of Winnicott's basic insight into the "holding environment" but one which now incorporates Klein's view of destructive action as normal to infant development. This "use of an object" also emerges in Winnicott's approach to theory and tradition: "Mature adults bring vitality to that which is ancient, old and orthodox by re-creating it after destroying it."[147] In fact Mitchell and Greenberg picked up on this comment of Winnicott's saying, in their circumspect manner, that he could have

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but Balint, Winnicott and the other members of the Independent Group in time restored that original insight.

[145] "The Use of an Object," p. 90.

[146] "Unintegration" for Winnicott is not the same thing as disintegration. It is the natural state preceding integration and infants have integrating moments and then fall back into unintegration in an effortless manner, when held by a good-enough environment. "Going-on-being" another of Winnicott's coined phrases thus begins in a state of unintegration.

[147] D.W. Winnicott, *The Family and Individual Development*, (London: Tavistock, 1964), p. 94.

been describing his own approach to psychoanalytic tradition when he made the above comment.[148] This certainly was Winnicott's approach to psychoanalysis as much of Freud and Klein's theory is unrecognizable in how Winnicott presents it, and yet his theory is very much a development beyond but based in their work.

Perhaps the most evocative rendering I have found of this concept "the use of an object" is Mitchell and Black's characterization of Winnicott's vision of adult love:

> Adult love, in Winnicott's vision, entails periodic mutual object usage, in which each partner can surrender to the rhythms and intensity of his or her own desire without having to worry about the survivability of the other. It is a firm and solid sense of the durability of the other that makes a full and intense connection with one's own passions possible.[149]

This destructive, yet discovering and often generative use of the loved object (whether in the sense of procreation or in the sense of self-discovery through the other), this unselfconscious play, is a fit metaphor for the excitement, passion, discovery and generativity of creatively destroying a vibrant intellectual/ meaningful tradition.[150] In this sense to become a Winnicottian means to destroy Winnicott, but in destroying, to extend, and in extending, to deepen and enrich psychoanalytic and human knowledge.[151]

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[148] Greenberg and Mitchell, *Object Relations in Psychoanalysis*, p. 189.

[149] Mitchell and Black, *Freud and Beyond*, p. 129.

[150] For some, intellectual systems and beliefs are the subjects of intense feelings both positive and negative. Cf. Paul W. Pruyser's *Between Belief and Unbelief*, (New York: Harper and Row, 1974), for a discussion of beliefs as love and hate objects.

[151] It would be a mistake to suppose however, that any use of Winnicott is an extension of his thought, an enrichment of his basic approach. Destroying and recreating his theory is not the same thing as a license to use it in whatever way one wishes. As we will see, Winnicott did not want his transitional phenomena classified, and I believe he would roll over in his grave if he knew analysts were dividing up transitional phenomena into healthy and pathological categories or on the basis of his theory imposing pathological labels on other's experience.

A closely allied insight to the "use of an object" is Winnicott's understanding of countertransference, and here again the holding environment is central, but accented this time is the non-retaliatory and yet reality checking use of the mother or analysts' feelings--those feelings stirred up by the infant or client's anti-social or destructive activity. Winnicott's theory of countertransference is also a theory of how a psychoanalytic expert most appropriately and effectively relates to his clients, students or research subjects, and as such has an as yet unrealized contribution to make to psychology of religion.

Transference and Countertransference:

Transference, or the projection of repressed feelings and patterns of relating from early childhood relations onto other objects, be they analysts, gods or whatever, has since Freud, been a familiar theory within psychology of religion. But transference, like illusion, has changed in meaning since Freud's time. While transference has remained key to all schools of psychoanalysis, how to interact with the transference in therapy is where differences have emerged. Winnicott and other members of the independent group evolved an approach to the treatment of severely affected clients--the psychotics, borderline clients , and clients with pronounced false self features. As members of the independent group struggled to help this class of clients--ones that Freud and his original group had not encountered--new understandings of transference resulted.

For Freud and classical analysts, the transference was the main focus of therapy: it was analyzed and interpreted in an effort to make conscious this unconscious way of shaping relationships. The countertransferences--the therapist's own feelings--were viewed with suspicion, as an impediment to the neutral screen function of the analyst, a sign that the analyst likely needed

more analysis. For Klein and her followers, the transference and its interpretation was still key, but the countertransference became an important, even key, source of information. As Bruce Smith puts it:

> . . . the concept of projective identification leads Kleinian therapists to lean heavily on their own affective experiences as indicators of the patient's experience. Countertransferences are seen not as impediments to treatment but as the most important sources of clinical data in the analytic situation.[152]

However, as we have already seen above, a key clinical difference between Winnicott and Klein is that rather than using intrusive interpretations, which in effect could become a dominating countertransference, Winnicott saw his role as providing a facilitating environment in which clients could then find their own way. For Winnicott, the emphasis was not so much on interpretation as curative, although interpretations were still crucial, but to management or care until the patient was well enough, had matured in his or her regressed developmental process to be able to benefit from interpretations. Winnicott's analyst, rather than being the classical father figure, providing sage interpretations on life, is instead the good-enough mother, providing that stability, warmth and care needed by the traumatized client, enabling him or her to leave aside the false self interactions and risk a true self spontaneous gesture. Once the true self has begun to live and establish itself, at some point she or he will be able to benefit from interpretations, but interpretations too soon are likely to again lead to false self compliance with the analyst with no real progress as a result.

Once the non-impinging environment had been provided and reliability had been established and regression to dependence had been accomplished, at this point the

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[152] Bruce L. Smith, "Winnicott and the British Schools," p. 47.

countertransference became particularly important. As Masud Khan puts it,

> Winnicott was fully cognizant of the relentless ingratitude in the patient at the point of regression to need, which in the countertransference can be met not by compassion or interpretations but by dosed hate.[153]

Patients, who out of need had regressed to such a primitive stage, like a baby could have no idea how they were impacting on their analyst, what kind of feelings they were stirring up there. Only later, when they had been able to relate to their analyst as separate from them, as a person, might they reach out and ask for hate, in order to be reassured that the love (warmth) from the analyst was also real,[154] or as described above, might they discover the object by its destruction.

While the stamina, commitment and self-awareness of such an analyst is admirable, when it comes to the usefulness of Winnicott's theory for understanding religious phenomena, his understanding of countertransference has more to offer us. Winnicott, at the beginning of the above cited paper "Hate in the Countertransference"[155] cites two other sorts of countertransference which are very relevant for psychologists of religion: First, is the emergence of repressed feelings (either positive or negative) that contaminate professional interactions--something to which most people are susceptible, even those who have had a lot of analysis, therapy or who have practiced meditative forms of awareness; second, is the personality and preferences of the analyst (or scholar) and how they shape their professional activity. An

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[153] M. Masud R. Khan, "Introduction," p. xxv.

[154] Winnicott made just this point in "Hate in the Countertransference:"

> . . . in certain stages of certain analyses the analyst's hate is actually sought by the patient, and what is then needed is hate that is objective. If the patient seeks objective or justified hate he must be able to reach it, else he cannot feel he can reach objective love(p. 199).

[155] "Hate in the Countertransference," p. 195.

understanding of countertransferences of this sort is particularly important for studying those who are quite different than we are, an insight familiar to anthropologists but foreign to most in our field.[156]

Ana-Maria Rizzuto adds to this application of theories of countertransference to working with religious people, saying that for analysts who have not analyzed their own feelings about God, that countertranference becomes an issue:

> As in many other areas, if the analyst's personal analysis has not helped him come to terms with his religious beliefs or lack of them, there is a risk of unchecked countertransference reactions in this realm.[157]

This of course, will also be an issue for psychologists of religion who are studying or teaching people whose religiosity diverges from their own, or who come from a religious group to which they once belonged.

As scholars of religion who in our professional capacity interact with individuals and groups in order to advance our knowledge, the question of transferences and countertransferences are key. However, it is not just what transferences can we diagnose in our subjects--since Freud psychologists of religion have been making such speculations. Following Winnicott's example means cultivating an awareness of how one's own feelings and beliefs about one's clients, students or research subjects are impacting them and unconsciously shaping our interactions with them. It also means becoming aware of how we as scholars, teachers or therapists are being impacted by their feelings or beliefs, and thus what unconscious factors are shaping our efforts to

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[156] Benjamin Beit-Hallahmi with his *Prolegomena to the Psychological Study of Religion* is the happy exception to this rule. He has elaborated a whole typology of "ethnocentric responses" on the part of researchers to those who are culturally, racially, or religiously different from themselves.

[157] Rizzuto, *Birth of the Living God*, p. 210.

understand, help or teach. Striving to make conscious these unconscious dynamics and their impact on our work certainly seems to me to be a worthwhile goal for professionals in the field of psychology of religion, a necessary addition to speculating on the unconscious dynamics behind other people's religious experience. It is in Winnicott's view the only way to ensure we as psychoanalytic experts are not just projecting our own transferences onto those we work with.

One thing is clear, that whether one is speaking of dependence or transference that object relations theories provide alternative ways of conceptualizing reality, and perhaps the clearest example of this is Winnicott's transitional objects and transitional phenomena, a theoretical innovation that has made its mark in psychoanalysis, British culture, as well as psychology of religion. This developmental achievement, (the creation/discovery of transitional objects or transitional phenomena) for Winnicott, as must be clear by now, like any other developmental achievement depends upon a secure "holding environment," and yet, it is Winnicott's theory of transitional objects, illusion and cultural experience that has become the most popular aspect of his work. Perhaps this is in part because while it was a revolutionary development to focus so much attention on the maternal environment and its effect on developmental outcomes, Winnicott's theory of transitional objects and phenomena resonated deeply with a culture that was characterized by a large gap between parents and their children. As Kohon puts it,

> . . . the flourishing of important schools of child analysis, which revolutionized attitudes and policies in British society, occurred in a culture that was characterized (at least, in its middle and upper classes) by a distinct and clear distance between parents and their children.[158]

It was this gap that Winnicott a paediatrician observed thousands of times being filled by the all

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[158] Kohon, "Introduction: Prefatory Remarks" in *The British School of Psychoanalysis*, pp. 22-3.

sorts of phenomena (blankies, teddies, rags, and so on), and it was this experience that resonated so strongly through British culture when Winnicott introduced his theory of transitional objects.

Transitonal Objects, Illusion, and Cultural Experience

D.W. Winnicott first introduced these concepts with his 1951 publication of "Transitional Objects and Phenomena."[159] In this his seminal work he brought together his observations and theories about "not-me possessions" and "transitional objects."[160] A much later rendition of the same theory shows the integration of Winnicott's other key concepts with this moment in development:

> A baby is held, and handled satisfactorily, and with this taken for granted is presented with an object in such a way that the baby's legitimate experience of omnipotence is not violated. The result can be that the baby is able to use the object, and to feel as if this object is a subjective object, and created by the baby.[161]

There is an interesting but subtle distinction between this and his first portrayal of the discovery of a transitional object: originally Winnicott discussed the child's "finding" of the object but in this scenario the child is presented with an object. This distinction reflects the social reality that Winnicott's theories became so popular that in fact many mothers did "present" their children with these objects--just as many parents in our culture present their children with soothers.

Winnicott, as I have already stated, believed that the infant's initial experience of life was of a undifferentiated union with the mother. He theorized that it was only as this infant began to

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[159] D.W. Winnicott, "Transitional Objects and Transitional Phenomena," in *Playing and Reality.*

[160] Winnicott in "Transitional Objects and Transitional Phenomena" stated that the developmental relationship between the first not-me experience and the later transitional object was the subject of his paper(pp. 1-2).

[161] "Mirror-role of Mother and Family in Child Development," p. 112.

become dimly aware that the mother might be "not-me" that the phenomena he observed would make their appearance. In a 1962 letter to Dr. Benjamin Spock, who was to America what he was to Britain, Winnicott gives a concise, clear statement of how he saw the developmental sequence:

> When we speak of a transitional object we are thinking of an infant of at least 5 months and probably of a year or two old, and by this age in the infant's development there is an internal version of the mother in the healthy infant, and this can be re-exported in terms of the transitional object. In this way if the mother disappears over a long period of time, first of all the internal version of the mother dies and the child has a depressed mood, and following closely on this the transitional object and all derivatives from it lose meaning. So we have to say that if the infant is well enough, (and by this we mean that the mother is good enough as well as referring to the personal state of the infant) the fist and the thumb and the objects that are held and used enable the child to get the control over objects that are beginning to be recognized as 'not-me.' This gradually becomes a more obvious thing when it is thought of in terms of the anal stage and the control of feces . . [162]

In this same letter Winnicott differentiates between the fist-thumb and a true transitional object saying that the latter is richer than the former but both are at the internal/external boundary.

With his conceptualization of transitional objects and transitional phenomena which are neither internal nor external but existing at the internal/external boundary, Winnicott has taken Klein's language of internal and external objects and radically altered it, breaking down the Freudian dichotomy which Klein had maintained, the dichotomy between internal fantasy and external reality. For Winnicott, human nature is not simply the two worlds of inner and outer but also includes an

> ...intermediate area of experiencing, to which inner reality and external life both contribute. It is an area that is not challenged, because no claim is made on its behalf except that it shall exist as a resting-place for the individual engaged in the perpetual human task of keeping inner and outer reality separate yet interrelated.[163]

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[162] *The Spontaneous Gesture*, p. 135.

[163] "Transitional Objects," p. 2.

Although Winnicott uses words "intermediate area" he does not want this area to be interpreted as a static phenomenon, the emphasis here is on the "intermediate area of *experiencing*" as can be seen in the following excerpt from a letter to Roger Money-Kyrle:

> You will remember that the word intermediate was handed to me by yourself during the discussion of the paper on transitional objects and phenomena. The word intermediate is certainly useful but the word transition implies movement and I must not lose sight of it otherwise we shall find some sort of static phenomenon being given an association with my name . . . . Experience is a constant trafficking in illusion, a repeated reaching to the interplay between creativity and that which the world has to offer.[164]

Winnicott was proved right in his concern, as can be seen in the work of the first psychology of religion writers to appropriate his theories. Rizzuto and to some extent Meissner both concretized God into being a transitional object, being focused as they were on transitional "objects" rather than the nature of the "experiencing" of transitional objects and phenomena.

Winnicott clarifies just how transitional phenomena and experiencing are related in the following excerpt from a letter to Victor Smirnoff, the french translator of "Transitional Objects and Transitional Phenomena." In this excerpt he is clarifying what he means by the "basis of initiation of experience"--which he says is a phrase in which he is trying to relate experiencing to the transitional phenomena:

> I am implying that actual experiencing does not stem directly either from the individual's psychic reality nor from the individual's external relationships. This sounds rather startling but you can perhaps get my meaning if you think of a Van Gogh experiencing, that is to say, feeling real, when painting one of his pictures, but feeling unreal in his relationships with external reality and in his private withdrawn inner life. I think that this idea badly needs working out but it is this sort of thing that I am trying to convey that is giving you trouble here.[165]

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[164] *The Spontaneous Gesture*, pp. 42-3.

[165] Ibid., p. 124.

There are for Winnicott clearly three areas of human experiencing, private inner reality, external reality and this in-between area of transitional experiencing,

Winnicott's creation of an intermediate area of experiencing or potential space in which subjectively-conceived external objects such as blankets or teddy bears are discovered, manipulated and played with thus radically alters the epistemology and metapsychology of psychoanalysis. Just as young children have personified objects such as "blankies" or "teddies" through which they negotiate their relationship with their parents and others, so too older children and adults also have their ways of shaping reality which in polite society are not challenged, but tolerated, even respected. In Winnicott's view, art, religion, culture, even creative scientific work (like his own) are all denizens of this intermediate area, this resting place from the strain of keeping internal and external reality separate yet related.

> . . the task of reality-acceptance is never completed . . . no human being is free from the strain of relating inner and outer reality...relief from this strain is provided by an intermediate area of experience which is not challenged (arts, religion, etc.). This intermediate area is in direct continuity with the play area of the small child who is 'lost' in play.[166]

What Winnicott has constructed here, as can be seen from the above quote, is his own theory of human nature, his own metapsychology, one that establishes *a way of being* in which cultural and other subjectively conceived realities are necessary and normal to human functioning.

One of the metapsychological or epistemological implications of this "intermediate area of experiencing" is the transformation of the meaning of "illusion," a key concept in Freud's analysis of religion:

I am therefore studying the substance of illusion, that which is allowed to the infant, and

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[166] "Transitional Objects," p. 13.

> which in adult life is inherent in art and religion, and yet becomes a hallmark of madness when an adult puts too powerful a claim on others, forcing them to acknowledge a sharing of illusion that is not their own. We can share a respect for illusory experience, and if we wish we may collect together and form a group on the basis of the similarity of our illusory experiences. This is a natural root of grouping among human beings . . .[167]

Illusion according to Winnicott is natural, healthy and necessary. Where Winnicott identifies psychopathology, rather, is in the case of one who would impose their transitional or illusory experiences on others--Melanie Klein being one who immediately comes to mind. Now instead of calm rationality being the hallmark of sanity and well-being, with everything else (except art) being at least somewhat suspect, Winnicott has established as fully human and valuable a whole range of cultural experiences.

Winnicott was critical of traditional psychoanalysis because, while it did well enough at getting at what made some people sick, it had little to say about life in its richness, what make life meaningful or worthwhile. On this point, in "The Location of Cultural Experience," he takes on classical psychoanalysis:

> Starting as we do from psychoneurotic illness and with ego defenses related to anxiety that arises out of the instinctual life, we tend to think of health in terms of the state of ego defenses. We say it is healthy when these defenses are not rigid, etc. But we seldom reach the point at which we can start to describe what life is like apart from illness or absence of illness.
>
> That is to say, we have yet to tackle the question of *what life itself is about*....We now see that it is not instinctual satisfaction that makes a baby begin to be, to feel that life is real, to find life worth living. In fact, instinctual gratifications start off as part-functions and they become *seductions* unless based on a well-established capacity in the individual person for total experience, and for experience in the area of transitional phenomena. It is the self that must precede the self's use of instinct; the rider must ride the horse, not be run away with....When one speaks of a man one speaks of him *along with* the summation of his cultural experiences. The whole forms a unit.[168][*emphasis* in the original]

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[167] "Transitional Objects," p. 3.

[168] "The Location of Cultural Experience,"pp. 98-99.

For Winnicott, the answer to the meaning of life was located in the "intermediate area of experiencing," "the place where we live,"[169] that which began as the potential space between mother and baby, a space that evolves with the child whereby culture is mediated to the child through the family, and finally into that "place of rest" where adults can find refreshment, can play, can "go on being:"

> The potential space between baby and mother, between child and family, between individual and society or the world, depends on experience which leads to trust. It can be looked upon as sacred to the individual in that it is here that the individual experiences creative living.[170]

In reading the above two quotations from "The Location of Cultural Experience," one can see why Masud Khan referred to it as Winnicott's "testament of faith."[171]

Yet what Winnicott saw as sacred was not what everyone saw as sacred, something Winnicott recognized. This can be seen in the distinction Winnicott drew between his own area of "infinite possibility" and those whose "infinity" belongs in either intrapsychic or external reality:

> Infinity for...[mystics] is at the centre of the self, whereas for the behaviourists who think in terms of external reality infinity is reaching out beyond the moon to the stars and to the beginning and the end of time, time that has neither an end nor a beginning.

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[169] D.W. Winnicott, "The Place Where We Live," in *Playing and Reality*, was a later restatement for a different audience of "The Location of Cultural Experience."

[170] "The Location of Cultural Experience," p. 103.

[171] M. Masud R. Khan, "Introduction," p. xxxxvii.
It is of interest that one of the authors Winnicott cites for illustrating his understanding of the relationship between trust and creativity, or trust and the intermediate space, is Fred Plaut, a Jungian theorist. "The capacity to form images and to use these constructively by recombination into new patterns is--unlike dreams or fantasies--dependent on the individual's ability to trust."* Winnicott, a nonconformist at heart, was not one to stay within the narrow canons of what his peers considered to be acceptable, but read and used the work of Jungians as well as that of Jacques Lacan, who at that time was the Melanie Klein of France. (*The citation was from a 1966 paper given by Plaut and is found in "The Location of Cultural Experience," p. 102.)

> I am attempting to get in between these two extremes. If we look at our lives we shall probably find that we spend most of our time neither in behaviour nor in contemplation, but somewhere else.[172]

And, of course that somewhere else was "The Location of Cultural Experience," the "Place Where We Live." Meaningfulness, for Winnicott, resides in creative human play in this intermediate space, this potential space between mother and baby, between family and child, and finally between people and culture and religion.

Small wonder then that religious psychoanalysts[173] like Rizzuto, Meissner, Pruyser, McDargh and Jones as well as literary scholars like Schwartz, Rudnytsky and Bollas fell in love with Winnicott's way of seeing the world. The following excerpt from Murray M. Schwartz's introduction to an issue of the 1992 *Psychoanalytic Review*, an issue devoted to the usefulness of Winnicott's theories in a variety of areas, creatively contrasts Winnicott's and Freud's achievements. Winnicott added to Freud's psychopathology of everyday life what Schwartz calls, "... the aesthetics of everyday life, the play space of cultural experience in its broadest conception."[174] This was perhaps Winnicott's greatest contribution, to add to the psychoanalytic weltanschauung the analysis or appreciation of what makes life worth living. And although it may prove troublesome to try to discern exactly what he meant by contrasting his intermediate area with pietistic or autistic and behaviourist or mechanistic ways of being in the world, i.e., what

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[172] "The Place Where We Live,"pp. 104-5.

[173] "Religious" when attached to psychologist or psychoanalyst means a professional "committed to the furtherance" of their own religious group (Cf. op. cit. n. 1, p. 1).

[174] Murray M. Schwartz, "Introduction: D.W. Winnicott's Cultural Space," in *Psychoanalytic Review*, 79, (1992), p. 172. Cf. as well Gilbert J. Rose, "The Creativity of Everyday Life," in *Between Fantasy and Reality: Transitional Objects and Phenomena*, who also illustrates how Winnicott's theory has transformed the psychoanalytic understanding of everyday life.

forms of religious being-in-the-world would constitute "play in the transitional realm," nevertheless his theoretical establishment of a third area between objectivity and subjectivity provides a much needed advance in psychoanalytic interpretations of religion and culture.

We have seen in Winnicott's theories an approach to human nature that differs markedly from that of Freud and Klein. That difference is the difference between an optimistic humanism, a belief that parents normally get it right, that they are naturally equipped to produce good-enough results with their children and a thorough-going pessimism that sees human beings at root as conflicted, torn between their hate and love. That difference is between a view of culture as being the result of necessary compromises we make in denying our natural impulses, or, as being the issue of a desire for reparation, to atone for injuries imagined or real, as contrasted with Winnicott's vision of culture as arising from our ability to subjectively reshape the external world as we play and work in the potential space between infant and caregiver, child and family, adult and loved objects (significant others, ideologies, religions, art). While Freud's and Klein's theories were focused on pathology, and for them health meant not too pathological, Winnicott's theories tried to account for what makes life meaningful, what makes life worth living. As such, Winnicott has done much to prepare the ground for a new psychoanalysis of religion, based in insights both about our relationships and how we consciously and unconsciously create them as well as how creative living and meaningful existence naturally evolve. From this basis, religious phenomena like any other human phenomena might be understood as relational, and valued as part of what makes life worth living.

This far the interpreters of Winnicott I will survey have progressed with Winnicott's theory, but there is more that they for the most part have not yet grasped. That more is the radical

change that Winnicott has wrought in what it means to be an expert. Anathema for Winnicott is the clever interpreter imposing his/her interpretations, such interpretations are better seen as "dominating transferences." The psychoanalytic expert, in Winnicott's theory and practice, is not the holder of truth, the classifier of transitional phenomena, the arbiter on healthy or unhealthy beliefs. Winnicott grew into a "mothering" analyst, one who provided the conditions in which others could find themselves, could discover their own truth. Winnicott also, as the psychoanalytic and medical expert, thrived on a non-hierarchical discovery-based approach to therapy and education with his patients and students.[175]

Winnicott's contributions are not limited to a new set of categories to be placed on top of religious phenomena, although that too can be helpful. What Winnicott teaches is that in the expert versus patient/student/research subject relationship, there are three components to be kept in mind at all times: the intrapsychic dynamics and social location of the expert, the intrapsychic dynamics and social location of the patient/student/research subject, and the relationship between the two of them. His most crucial contribution in my view is his deep respect for his patients, students and research subjects, the way he created a space in which they could be safe to explore, the way he made himself available to be used, the way he de-emphasized the importance of his interpretations (he was happy to be found wrong in an interpretation--it made him for his patients more human and less omniscient). All of these point to a way to be "the expert" in psychology of religion, a Winnicottian way that operates from a deep respect for those helped, taught or studied, a way that facilitates learning on both sides of the professional--client/student/research subject relationship.

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[175] This aspect of his personality and practice will receive more attention in Chapter VII.

Chapter II
Ana-Maria Rizzuto
God representations and Transitional Phenomena

Of the scholars who are utilizing Winnicott's theories in the psychological study of religion perhaps the best known is Ana-Maria Rizzuto. Rizzuto is a Roman Catholic psychoanalyst and psychiatrist trained initially in Argentina, and then in Boston, where she continues to live and work. In the preface to *The Birth of the Living God*, her foundational study, Rizzuto tells us that while she was still in Argentina she was asked to teach a course for the students of the Pontifical Seminary on "the psychological foundations of belief and pastoral care." She was given complete freedom to teach whatever she

> . . . thought was pertinent and relevant for men who would spend their lives dealing with people's struggles with God and their fellow men.[1]

Even though she could find little in the psychoanalytic literature on which to base such a course she did in fact did teach it constructing some original but untested hypotheses in the process. In 1964 she began her psychiatric practice at Boston State Hospital and as much out of intellectual honesty as anything else, began first a pilot study and then a full-fledged study to substantiate her hypotheses.[2]

Rizzuto, as part of her preparation for her study also read and critiqued methodology and psychology of religion,[3] and in fact the definition of religion she uses is anthropological:

> . . . an institution consisting of culturally patterned interactions with culturally postulated

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[1] Rizzuto, *Birth of the Living God*, p. viii.

[2] Ibid., pp. viii-x.

[3] For example Rizzuto presented a paper "Critique of the Contemporary Literature in the Scientific Study of Religion," at the annual meeting of the Society for the Scientific Study of Religion in New York, 1970 (unpublished).

> superhuman beings.[4]

She also allows the assumption of religion including "a Godhead" to stand:

> Debate about whether or not there can be a religion which does not include a Godhead will be left to others.[5]

Knowing something of the methodological debates in Religious Studies she nevertheless focuses on the material appropriate for a psychoanalyst: ". . . the private . . . secret and personal experience each believer has with his or her God."[6] As for those who do not believe, she " . . . studied the history of their lack of belief in a God who they are able to describe."[7] For Rizutto, these beliefs and unbeliefs are treated as real phenomena, they must be described and respected in their "pristine manifestations."[8]

Rizutto then is a Roman Catholic psychiatrist and psychoanalyst whose definition of religion is "institutional, cultural and related to the Godhead." As a psychoanalyst her interest is in intrapsychic experience, and this is what she will define more carefully, in fact her book is a sustained theorization of, and argument for, the reality of the God representation[9] within each individual

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[4] Rizzuto, *Birth of the Living God*, p. 3; Quotation from M.E. Spiro, "Religion: Problems of Definition and Explanation," in *Anthropological Approaches to the Study of Religion*, Ed. M. Banton, (London: Tavistock, 1966), p. 96.

[5] Ibid., p. 3.

[6] Ibid., p. 4.

[7] Ibid.

[8] Ibid.

[9] Rizzuto is not so naive to think of this "God representation" as being a worldwide phenomenon. Rather she explicitly limits her discussion to that which she knows, that is late 20th century monotheistic western culture. Other cultures, especially the "eastern religions" will need another type of research tool and conceptualization(Cf. p.221, n.2[ch.1]).

whether these individuals believe in God or not. This is a very Roman point of view--they all get baptized and therefore are saved whether they like it or not. Comparable here is Rahner's notion of the anonymous Christian, a notion which manages to bring into the fold those who do not believe, have not been baptized but lead exemplary lives. It is easier to see a Roman Catholic coming up with such a psychoanalytic innovation then say a Baptist for whom relationship to God normally comes through an adult, conscious decision.[10]

Rizzuto takes a very positive approach to theistic religion, she sees it as an integral part of human life, a part that in her mind as yet has not received the consideration it deserves in psychoanalytic theory and practice. But while her project is to get psychoanalysts to consider the religious dimensions of their analysands and thus at some level to have psychoanalysis explicitly come to terms with religion, she yet insists that what she is studying is not religion itself, but rather "the possible origins of the individual's private representation of God and its subsequent elaborations."[11] The religious reality that the psychoanalyst can deal with is the reality of the God representation itself.

More recently, Rizzuto has further nuanced this position describing how an object relations

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Rizzuto also for the course of this work refers to God ". . . in the customary way, i.e. in the masculine gender and with a proper name." She goes on to point out though that the God representation is comprised of both female and male representations and that by this label she is referring to the private creation of the individual and not the God of the theologians and philosophers(Cf. p. 221, n. 2[preface]). This is another indication of Rizzuto's audience and priorities.

[10] Again, I am relying on Beit-Hallahmi's research and conclusions when I assume that anyone involved in doing psychology of religion is most likely from a Christian background and that this background will influence the manner, method and content of their studies. Thus the speculation about how different ways of being Christian would effect how one psychologically conceptualized religious phenomena.

[11] Rizzuto, *Birth of the Living God*, p. 3.

theorist should conceptualize the study of religious phenomena:

> . . . the student of object relations must restrain his conclusions to the boundaries of the field, that is, the subjective experiences of individual persons with their objects of belief. Religion, with all its social, anthropological, cultural, mythological, philosophical, theological, artistic, and political implications, extends far beyond the realm of object relations to encompass the entirety of the human mind and experience. In my opinion, the object relations theorist must refrain from using the word "religion" as a noun. The adjective "religious," as applied by a person to qualify as experience of relatedness, best describes the object relations theorist's field of specific competence.[12]

This is a methodological point that demonstrates Rizutto's competence in the psychological study of religion; although a psychoanalyst, she has taken the literature on the scientific study of religion seriously. The definition of religion she accepts from Spiro is anthropological. She adopts a phenomenological approach. And as we will see, she includes social psychological methods in her study of the God-representation. Thus she demonstrates both a comprehensive[13] psychoanalytic

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[12]Ana-Maria Rizzuto, "Afterword," in *Object Relations Theory and Religion: Clinical Applications*, p. 156. Of interest here is the fact that this collection along with Mary Lou Randour's *Exploring Sacred Landscapes: Religious and Spiritual Experiences in Psychotherapy*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993) are explicit attempts to consider the religious dimensions of intrapsychic reality, pathology and development, attempts that have been inspired by Rizzuto's work. As such they represent a creative cross-fertilization between psychology of religion and psychoanalysis because in the former case, theory is based in clinical evidence instead of simply in a religio-psychological guru's vision of human nature, and in the latter, finally, psychoanalysts are being given tools to work with the religious dimensions of their clients experience. Furthermore, the inclusion of religious experiencing in psychoanalytic consideration does not imply an assumption about how these object relations must be reformed, contrary to the established assumptions of classical psychoanalysis. In other words a religious person can undergo psychoanalysis with every aspect of his or her experience being considered and still emerge as a religious person once they have completed their treatment. As we will see in my discussion of Rizzuto, it is Winnicott's theorization of the intermediate area on which such a development rests.

[13] "Comprehensive" is a concept borrowed from David M. Wulff, *Psychology of Religion: Classic and Contemporary Views*, (Toronto: Wiley, 1991):

> A comprehensive understanding of the field requires systematic knowledge of diverse kinds: of a great variety of psychological theories, principles, and methods as well as essential aspects of neighbouring fields such as neurophysiology and sociobiology; of the history of religions along with elements of theology and philosophy; and of the history of psychology

approach as well as the wisdom to limit what a psychoanalyst should or should not include in their studies and findings. As we will see in the following synopsis of her theory of the God representation, Rizutto is that sort of psychologist of religion who wants to explain religious phenomena, but she does so in a more comprehensive and respectful manner than many psychologists. On the whole she steers clear both of psychologism and religious apologetics[14] but instead takes a sympathetic, yet rigorous approach.[15]

Rizzuto's stated concern is that the religious needs of analysands get met in a psychoanalysis that traditionally is silent about, even silencing of, religious material in the analysis. Rizzuto points out that Freud, " . gave the world several generations of psychoanalysts who, coming to him from all walks of life, dropped whatever religion they had at the doors of their institutes."[16] She goes on

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> of religion itself, and of the lives of its chief contributors . . . . even if mastery of the field as a whole is out of the question, aspiration to genuine psychological understanding of religion in all its complexity impels us to draw on insights from every possible quarter (pp. viii-ix).

[14] David M. Wulff, in "Psychological Approaches," in *Contemporary Approaches to the Study of Religion*, vol. 2, Ed. Frank Whaling, (The Hague: Mouton, 1984), uses these terms: apologetics denotes pro-religious and therefore unacademic while psychologism denotes anti-religious and therefore unacademic.

[15] Rizzuto, in the above quoted "Afterword," takes issue with Beit-Hallahmi ("Between Religious Psychology and the Psychology of Religion" in *Object Relations Theory and Religion: Clinical Applications*, for complaining that these clinical studies were examples of "religious psychology:" "In many cases, one cannot ignore the faint, sweet aroma of apologetics that hangs over the writings, and in most of those, the authors do not hide their strong commitment to religion" (p. 121). Rizzuto argues that Beit-Hallahmi, in his critique of religious psychology, begins to stray away from the necessary agnosticism of being a psychological scholar of religion, in the process coming to "close to the dangerous edge of psychological discourse," i.e., discussing the reality of God, rather than sticking to psychological realities (p. 157). It would seem that no matter how even-handed or comprehensive an author tries to be they will in the end finish up plumping either for (in Beit-Hallahmi's categories) religious psychology or psychology of religion.

[16] Rizzuto, *Birth of the Living God*, p. 4.

to point out that those who refused to do so managed to dissociate their beliefs from their analytic training and practice, with the sad effect of having an important area of their own lives untouched by their training. Finally, Rizzuto says, if these analysts in training dealt with religion during their own analyses, ". . . that was the beginning and the end of it."[17] Of course, as Rizzuto points out, not dealing with religion during a training analysis leads to countertransference problems.[18] If we give credence to Winnicott's position that religion like other cultural phenomena is a normal part of a meaningful life then with Rizzuto, we can say that analysts that are not trained to deal with religious phenomena in the analysis except in terms of psychopathology are likely not only prejudiced but also projecting their own unanalyzed "stuff" into their clients (the ultimate although too common sin for psychoanalysts).

Ana-Maria Rizzuto, then, is a Roman Catholic psychoanalyst and psychiatrist who has familiarized herself with methodological questions in the study of religion in order to conduct an in-depth study of how people's relationships with God come to be and evolve. But in order to conduct such a study, Rizzuto had to take forward the theory of self- and object-representations in order to better appreciate the God-representation. Working from a foundation in Freud's "imagos," a foundation she accepts and then critiques and revises, she constructs an original and well-researched theory of what she calls "The Birth of the Living God." Her use of Winnicott comes later in the development of the God representation as well as in her (ill-fated) attempt to parallel the God representation with Winnicott's transitional object.

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[17] Rizzuto, *Birth of the Living God*, p. 4.

[18] As she says later in this work, " . . . unexamined God representations leads to countertransference problems for analysts"(Ibid., p. 210).

Rizzuto's Theory of the God representation

Rizutto builds her theory of the God representation, that is the representation of God that each individual carries within, on Freud's theorization of God and devil representations. Freud theorized that each child unconsciously constructed both a God and devil representation from aspects of that child's relation to his or her father:

> Psycho-analysis has made us familiar with the intimate connection between the father complex and belief in God; it has shown us that a personal God is, psychologically, nothing more than an exalted father.[19]

In other words each and every child[20] acquires a conviction of the reality of an idiosyncratically shaped God and devil, and this unconscious representation becomes the basis for the child's and then adult's feeling for God and/or the devil.[21] For Freud such creations were based on the fulfilment of

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[19]Rizzuto, *Birth of the living God*, p. 18; (Freud, 1910, p. 123).
Rizzuto faithfully details the whole extent of Freud's theorization of the God representation, including the anthropological approaches Freud took along with the object relational. However, she only uses the object relational material, preferring to leave anthropology to the anthropologists (Cf. p. 41), and for the purposes of this survey, the object relational material more than suffices.

[20] Later in the same work Rizzuto summarizes this point:

> It is a central thesis of this book that no child in the Western world brought up in ordinary circumstances completes the oedipal cycle without forming at least a rudimentary God representation, {this is what God is like and how I feel about God} which he may use for belief or not. The rest of developmental life may leave the representation untouched as the individual continues to revise parent and self-representations during the life cycle (Ibid., p. 200).

[21] Freud, as quoted in Rizzuto, did not have as much to say about the devil representation as he did the God representation. However he did locate this duality in the child's ambivalence.

> We . . . know from the secret life of the individual which analysis uncovers, that his relation to his father was perhaps ambivalent from the outset, or, at any rate, soon became so. That is to say, it contained not only impulses of an affectionate and submissive nature, but also hostile and defiant ones. It is our view that the same ambivalence governs the relations of mankind to its Deity (1923c, p. 85).

Freud continues

> It does not need much analytic perspicacity to guess that God and the Devil were originally

wishes, and as such were illusions to be outgrown. But, as Rizutto points out, Freud in other places talks about the everlasting nature of these imagos[22] and nowhere accounts for what happens to them after the adult renounces his or her so-called childish wishes. She goes on to speculate about Freud's own childhood, as is the fashion with many psychoanalytic writers, and how his own early experiences shaped his rejection of his God representation (his atheism).[23]

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identical--were a single figure which was later split into two figures with opposite attributes (Rizzuto, *Birth of the Living God*, p. 21; Freud, 1923c, p. 86).

[22]Rizzuto quoting from Freud's "Some Reflections on Schoolboy Psychology"(1914b):

> The nature and quality of the human child's relations to people of his own and opposite sex have already been laid down in the first six years of life. He may afterwards develop and transform them in certain directions, but he can no longer get rid of them. The people to whom he is in this way fixed are his parents and his brothers and sisters. All those whom he gets to know later become substitute figures for these first objects of this feelings . . . . These substitute figures can be classified from his point of view according as they are derived from what we call "imagos" of his father and his mother, his brothers and sisters, and so on. . . . All of his later choices of friendship and love follow upon the basis of the memory-traces left behind by these prototypes(*Birth of the Living God*, p. 30).

Of course for Freud it was only the father imago that became the God representation, and here, Rizzuto proves Freud wrong because while one parental imago is usually dominant in the God representation, in no cases did she find one in which there was only one parent represented, but rather both parental imagos as well as the wished-for, or feared, parents of fantasy. Also siblings or grandparents and so on often contributed something as well (Ibid. p. 44).

[23] Rizzuto's speculation centres around the incident with Freud's beloved Nanny:

> . . . {she} was devoted to God and frequently took the child to mass with her. She was fired and greatly devalued; this may have destroyed a possibly grandiose imago of her which Freud, the child, could have used to form his God representation. We also know that he amused his mother with his preaching about God. One may wonder if a mother who obviously reflected her son's grandiose self and provided a grandiose birth myth for him, failed to show equal mirroring for his religious enthusiams (we know that she was uninterested in religion.) Both experiences seem to have affected his ability to elaborate the God representation, led him to deny God's existence, and prevented him from reaching the depth of maturity in that area of human experience he achieved in others (Ibid., p. 229, n.8).

Here the mature/immature typologizing of American psychologists of religion is brought to bear on the founder himself. It is this normalizing and therefore political use of pathologizing language that is my central complaint with much of psychology of religion writing--where religious bias reigns unchecked.

Rizzuto calls the formation of the God representation during childhood and its modification and uses during the entire course of life the "birth of the living God."[24] This God representation comes to birth in much the same manner as do internal objects and object relationships. That is they are memorial activities in which the infant and child identifies with and internalizes aspects of his or her mother, father and other important people.

An object or "felt sense of presence of the significant other" is the first such mentative creation and in fact, according to Rizzuto, our whole life is object-related:

> . . . any single corner of our bodies, any of our organs, any of our most hidden wishes or fantasies, any of our impulses, any of our encounters with any aspect of reality is object-related . . . We have never experienced life out of the context of objects. In the course of our historical development as human beings, we have been storing endless, complex memories (including our fantasies) of objects that form part of the memory's reservoir. Thus memories will inevitably be called to unconscious or conscious experience whenever we deal with any aspect of ourselves that is object-related. Inasmuch as there is no aspect of ourselves not object-related in some way, we cannot wish, feel, fantasize, or even live without memories of our objects.[25]

While objects are our first mentative creations, others follow including representations.

A representation differs from an object in that it is the emergence into the conscious or pre-conscious of an aspect of the unconscious object--it is the internal representation of an object. God representations then are constructed partially of these unconscious contents, aspects of the significant others of the child's family. These aspects combine in the child's intrapsychic world with the found God, or the God of the family.[26]

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[24] Rizzuto, *Birth of the Living God*, p. 41.

[25] Ibid., pp. 76-7.

[26] It is at this point, in talking of the found God or the God of the family that Rizzuto shows her dependence on Winnicott's formulations. (Cf. pp. 86ff. below for further discussion.)

This begins to happen around age three, when the infant enters the "why?" stage, which according to Rizzuto, is typically a causal chain of questioning that usually, in our culture, ends up with a supreme being as the first cause. As the child begins to intellectualize about the nature of this God who, for example, made the wind he or she begins to wonder, "Is God a she?" "Does God pee?" And then, at the appropriate time (for that child), bits of objects and the god of the family coalesce into a first God representation:

> The type of God each individual produces as a first representation is the compounded image resulting from all these contributing factors--the pre-oedipal situation, the beginning state of the oedipal complex, the characteristics of the parents, the predicaments of the child with each of his parents and siblings, the general religious, social and intellectual background of the household.[27]

But in order to account well enough for the development and utilization of the God representation Rizzuto must first advance the psychoanalytic understanding of representations in and of themselves.

In her understanding each of us develops an inner relational world of object representations, self representations and of course, God representations. These representations " . . . are compound memorial processes . . . processes {which} involve the objects and the person representing them in dynamic interaction with each other."[28] These normally repressed representations under specific conditions return to awareness and according to Rizzuto there are two main ways these "interlocked memories of others and oneself as representations"[29] do so:

> (1) A present condition of *felt disharmony* between what the person feels he should be and what he is now . . .
> (2) A present condition of *felt disharmony* between the object's actual behaviour and what

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[27] Rizzuto, *Birth of the Living God*, p. 45.

[28] Ibid., p. 54.

[29] Ibid.

> the interacting object of the present should be, say, do, or give to elicit a feeling of well-being, safety, and appreciation in the subject.[30]

According to Rizzuto, the person experiences this disharmony with anxiety: ". . . it is experienced as a threat of loss of love, and as a potential loss of the object."[31] The representation called up serves to remind the person of a similar predicament through which he or she made it safely, and so either a newly recovered sense of self, or of the significant other, or of the relationship between the two is remembered as the person creatively represents to himself or herself a recovered sense of self.

As a developmental theorist Rizzuto, basing herself in Piaget and Erikson, repeatedly makes the point that these memories are formed at different points of one's development and so can manifest the perceptual focus and ability of that stage:

> Visceral and procioceptive memories of our objects may find their historical roots in factual and fantasized events in which our critical experience with our objects involved our organs and body. Our body will find its historical roots in exchanges with primary caretakers, although specific memories may be registered neither as image nor as perception or concept, but as an organic or bodily sensation.[32]

And these memories, whether they are body memories, moods,[33] or conceptual memories,[34] have

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[30] Rizzuto, *Birth of the Living God*, p. 55.

[31] Ibid.

[32] Ibid., p. 84.

[33] Christopher Bollas, in *The Shadow of The Object: Psychoanalysis of the Unthought Known*, (New York: Columbian University Press, 1987), has drawn attention to the phenomenon of moods, and how they signal the unthought presence of an object relationship, or the feelings evoked by the memory or felt presence of that person or circumstance (pp. 99ff.).

[34] Rizzuto gave this name to the following example: a woman who felt she was not "sophisticated" the way her mother had been. This concept of "sophisticated" was a representation of her mother, an object-representation which functioned to make her feel ashamed whenever she didn't measure up. (*Birth of the Living God*, p. 59)

multiple and complex points of origination and emendation: this representational process is a lifelong activity:

> ...object representations are an essential part of memorial processes constantly utilized by the individual in the process of remaining himself. He must integrate his historical life with others, both by his exchanges with people in his present situation and by his updated understanding of himself. None of these memorial processes or "conceptions" of new objects occurs in isolation; they belong to multiple nets of recalling, reconstructing, and interpreting, that is, they encompass the whole individual, including his habitual defensive and adaptive manoeuvres.[35]

We are doing traffic with our objects and representations right up to our last breath.

To this point I have maintained a focus on the intrapsychic dynamics of object, self and God representations without much regard for the familial, social and cultural influences on the child's creation of their God representation. And it is in these latter areas where Rizzuto's reliance on Winnicott is most crucial. For while the God representation is a creation of the child, a good part of it coming from "imagos" or objects and their representations, the rest is comprised of aspects of the God of the family, culture and where relevant, the church. It is Winnicott's elaboration of the intermediate space, transitional sphere and transitional objects that provides the material for Rizzuto's theorization of this aspect of representation formation.

Rizzuto's Use of Winnicott

Rizzuto acknowledges that Winnicott " . . . rarely, if ever, dealt directly with a theoretical conception of object representations"[36] but she then discusses his complementary concept of how the child "creates" the mother:

In health the infant creates what is in fact lying around, waiting to be found. But in health the

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[35]Rizzuto, *Birth of the Living God*, p. 75.

[36] Cf. pp. 92ff. below for a discussion of the use Winnicott did make of representational language.

> object is created not found . . . . a good object is not good to the infant unless created by the infant. Shall I say, created out of need? Yet the object must be found in order to be created.[37]

Winnicott's achievement, according to Rizzuto, is that he is the first psychoanalyst,

> . . . to have a child of a single mind, a child for whom external and internal reality are integrated, correlated, mutually influenced. For him the external world does not have to be transported to the "inner" mind, because what is external is simultaneously created by the child. The area for that creation is the intermediate area of illusions and play . . . [38]

And it is this achievement on which Rizzuto relies to good effect. She introduces her clinical research with the following summary:

> Both for the individual and the society at large he {God} is a psychically created object (Freud, 1909) who is also "found" (Winnicott, 1953). The psychic "space" for theistic religion is the transitional space of illusion and play between psychic experience and those whom we love and fear. The cultural space for religion is the area of parental and societal structures (with their beliefs, myths, rituals, and liturgies)* in which we are immersed before we have developed to the point of needing a God.[39]

While ascribing the dual sources of her foundational ideas to Freud and Winnicott it is in fact a Winnicottian language that dominates her further elaboration of both parts. For it was Winnicott who along with other object relations theorists elaborated the pre-oedipal world in such a way that it has

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[37] Rizzuto, *Birth of the Living God*, p. 72, (Winnicott, 1966, p. 181).

[38] Ibid., pp. 72-3. Actually Rizzuto is not quite right on this point, because in fact Winnicott does sometimes use a language of export and import, for describing transitional object activity:

> When we speak of a transitional object we are thinking of an infant of at least 5 months and probably of a year or two old, and by this age in the infant's development there is an internal version of the mother in the healthy infant, and this can be re-exported in terms of the transitional object. (from a 1962 letter to Benjamin Spock found in *The Spontaneous Gesture*, p. 135).

Rizzuto is right when she says that what is external is simultaneously recreated by the infant (or adult for that matter) but the fact is that Winnicott retains three worlds, and as a matter of fact Kleinian notions of import and export are implicit, and in at least one case explicit, in his theory of the transitional object.

[39] Rizzuto, *Birth of the Living God*, p. 87. (*Note the roman catholic audience.)

become the dominant focus for understanding the vicissitudes of our developmental journeys. Winnicott and others have shown just how much we have to achieve in order to even make it to the oedipal crisis.[40] And of course it is in this pre-oedipal period that the first images of God[41] that later coalesce into the God representation are, according to Rizzuto, "created" and even elaborated.[42]

But while it is Winnicott's theory of the intermediate area and transitional phenomena that undergirds Rizzuto's theorization of the God representation, her study is also a validation of his theory, as she concludes,

> The entire study suggests that Winnicott was accurate in locating religion--and God--in what he called the transitional space. That is the space for illusion, where art, culture, and religion belong. That is the place where man's life finds the full relevance of his objects and meaning for himself.[43]

Despite my agreement with her conclusions, I also find that unfortunately Rizzuto is in places perhaps a little too enamoured with Winnicott's theory. Up to this point her utilization of Winnicott

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[40] Melanie Klein was the leader in eclipsing the Oedipal conflicts with the preoedipal period with her theorizing of the schizoid and depressive positions and the necessity of achieving the latter in order to be healthy. Many others, whether they stayed with Klein or joined the independent group later headed up by Winnicott, continued the elaboration of preoedipal dynamics. They included Balint, Fairbairn, Guntrip, Scott and Milner, as well as analysts from other schools of thought such as Mahler and Bowlby. Similarly in North America the development of American object relations theories as well as developmental psychoanalysis moved the oedipus complex off centre stage for the majority of the psychoanalytic community.

[41] According to Rizzuto, images of God can be created in an object-representational process at any level of development. They may correspond to different objects (parents, grandparents, siblings, etc.) and be coloured by the affective and ideational impact of the moment of their creation (*Birth of the Living God*, pp. 44-5).

[42] According to Rizzuto, the oedipal period is still crucial to the development of the God representation, as are other later developmental crises, for it is at this time that the God representation along with the other significant objects and representations undergoes repression (Ibid., p. 44).

[43] Ibid., p. 209.

enhanced and fleshed out her conception of the God representation, but she makes what I believe to be a mistake in calling her God representation a transitional object.[44] Now the God representation in my view certainly belongs in the transitional sphere or intermediate space, and it shares some characteristics with Winnicott's transitional object, but in order to make the two concepts fit she has to change the nature of a transitional object. Furthermore, the resulting "blended concept" is more confusing and less enlightening than her original concept of the God representation taken on its own. In the following quotation of her first two theses, notice how representations are now transitional objects:

> 1. God is a special type of object representation created by the child in that psychic space where transitional objects--whether toys, blankets, or mental representations--are provided with their powerfully real illusory lives . . . .
>
> 2. God, like all transitional objects (Winnicott, 1953), is located *simultaneously* "outside, inside and at the border" (p. 2). God "is not a hallucination" and "in health . . . does not 'go inside' nor does the feeling about it necessarily undergo repression. It is not forgotten and it is not mourned"(p. 5).[45]

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[44]I am not alone in this assertion. A careful reading of David M. Wulff's reporting on Rizzuto's work is quite revealing. He mentions that Rizzuto was deeply influenced by Winnicott *after* her initial psychoanalytic formation (and thus her course given at the seminary and likely her development of the theory of the God representation preceded her Winnicottian period). Like many analysts whether in Britain, Argentina or any other society influenced by the British Psychoanalytic Society, it seems that Rizzuto had an original Kleinian formation--the dominant discourse in BPS training (personal communication Carlos Featherstone, Ottawa, 1995--an Argentinian psychoanalyst now practising in Ottawa) and then later found Winnicott. Also Winnicott appears rather late in her book which includes earlier papers as chapters or portions thereof. Whatever may be the case, Wulff's discussion of her theory of the God representation does not include even one mention of transitional objects. (Cf. *Psychology of Religion: Contemporary and Classic Views*, pp. 341-44).

[45] Rizzuto, *Birth of the Living God*, pp. 177-8; the bracketed citations from "Transitional Objects and Transitional Phenomena," in *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 34, (1953).

It is of interest to note that nowhere does Winnicott call God a transitional object, and in fact Winnicott shies away from naming transitional objects preferring to speak of transitional phenomena and the transitional sphere without beginning to people it with specific entities. What we have here in these quotations is Rizzuto's addition of representations to the list of transitional objects, and then ascribing transitional object qualities to God as a transitional object, but in a way that almost suggests

Representations are different mentative creations than transitional objects, and while they may have some characteristics in common, they are different in other ways. Rizzuto acknowledges this difference in calling representations "special" transitional objects in the following thesis statements while admitting that the God representation is unlike transitional objects in these specific ways:

> 3. God is a special transitional object because he does not follow the usual course of other transitional objects because unlike teddy bears, dolls, or blankets made out of plushy fabrics, he is created from representational materials whose sources are the representations of primary objects.
>
> 4. God is also a special transitional object because he does not follow the usual course of other transitional objects. Generally, the transitional object is "gradually allowed to be decathected, so that in the course of years it becomes not so much forgotten as relegated to limbo . . . . It loses meaning . . . because the transitional phenomena have become diffused . over the whole cultural field"(p. 5).
>
> God, on the other hand, is increasingly cathected during the pregenital years and reaches his most appealing moment at the peak of oedipal excitement . . . .
>
> Instead of losing meaning, God's meaning becomes heightened by the oedipal experience and all other pregenital events that have contributed to the reelaboration of his representational characteristics.[46]

What Rizzuto keeps calling characteristics of a "special" transitional object seem rather to be characteristics that make it clear that a representation is not a transitional object. Representations are mentative creations formed from internal object material whereas transitional objects are usually physical objects.

The significance to Winnicott of the physicality of the transitional object is exemplified with the following quotations from "Transitional Objects and Transitional Phenomena"[47]--the source of

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that this was the way Winnicott saw it.

[46] Rizzuto, *Birth of the Living God*, p. 178. Again note the quotations of Winnicott which suggest that God as transitional object is consonant with if not part of his theory.

[47] In D.W. Winnicott, *Playing and Reality*; also in *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis*, 34, Part 2 (1953), the source of Rizzuto's quotations.

Rizzuto's transitional object quotations:

> Yet it {the transitional object} must seem to the infant to give warmth, or to move, or to have texture, or to do something that seems to show it has vitality or a reality of its own.[48]

Taken on its own this quotation could be argued as fitting Rizzuto's theory, i.e., God really does seem to exist, he is "found" in the family, and thus seems to have a reality all his own. But the following quotations bring out the physical nature of the transitional object:

> In relation to the transitional object the infant passes from (magical)omnipotent control to control by manipulation(involving muscle erotism and coordination pleasure).[49]

and again from a later paper ("The Fate of the Transitional Object"):[50]

> the infant's use of an {transitional} object can be in one way or another joined up with body functioning, and indeed one cannot imagine that an object can have meaning for an infant unless it is so joined.[51]

What was a mental process, i.e., the hallucination of the breast, is now a process in which physical interaction becomes part of the baby's relationship to external reality, and, according to Winnicott it is inconceivable that this object can have meaning without being connected to the body in some way. On the other hand, God-representations of course are mentative phenomena, and they therefore obviously can have nothing to do with "muscle erotism," "coordination pleasure" or body

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[48] *Playing and Reality*, p. 5.

[49] Ibid., p. 9.

[50] D.W. Winnicott, "The Fate of the Transitional Object," in D.W. Winnicott, *Psycho-Analytic Explorations*, Eds., Clare Winnicott, Ray Shepherd and Madeleine Davis, (Cambridge Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1989); The editors have written up Winnicott's notes of a 1959 presentation to The Association for Child Psychology and Psychiatry).

[51] *Psychoanalytic Explorations*, p. 55.

functioning.[52]

I have already made mention of Rizzuto's admission that Winnicott did not say much about representational phenomena but I believe it is instructive to consider at this point at least one place he did mention them. In his introduction to "The Location of Cultural Experience,"discussed above, Winnicott includes a biographical section on the development of his theorizing.[53] Immediately preceding the following quotation Winnicott stated that he had entered into a period of "not-knowing" after realizing that the infant's point of view on the infant-mother relationship could profitably be examined: he then made the following comment on this interim period:[54]

> In the interim I played about with the concept of 'mental representations' and with the description of these in terms of objects and phenomena located in the personal psychic reality, felt to be inside; also, I followed the effects of the operation of the mental mechanisms of projection and introjection. I realized, however, that *play is in fact neither a matter of inner psychic reality nor a matter of external reality*.[55]

So while Winnicott worked with mental representations and other mental mechanisms to try to understand the nature of an infant's experience, in the end these concepts were superseded in

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[52] It may have been the necessary physicality of the transitional object that led Winnicott to be cautious in his evaluation of Joseph C. Solomon's article "Fixed Idea as an Internalized Transitional Object," in American Journal of Pyschotherapy, 16, (1962), "I am not sure how far I am in agreement with Dr. Solomon, but the important thing is that with a theory of transitional phenomena at hand many old problems can be looked at afresh" (*Playing and Reality*, p. xiii). Solomon attempted to cast fresh light on the "fixed idea" of obsessional/compulsive neurotics, a purely mentative phenomena which again although it shares some qualities with the transitional object, nevertheless cannot command Winnicott's assent. On the other hand, Rizutto did identify specifically physical sources for representational material (Cf. pp. 85-6 above) however this is not the same as having a physical object that carries memorial contents, physical or otherwise.

[53] *Playing and Reality*, pp. 95-96.Cf. Chapter I, pp. 35ff. above for a discussion of the full passage.

[54] Ibid., p. 96.

[55] Ibid., p. 96. (Italics added for emphasis.)

significance for him by his discovery of transitional objects and transitional phenomena, the basis for and the beginning of the infant and child's ability to play. The few times that Winnicott uses representational concepts to discuss a case history, he does so in a way that betrays an interpretation of them similar to Rizzuto's. However, in my interpretation of Winnicott, especially when the infant is concerned, representational activity is subsumed within transitional processes, as a part of that process, in a similar way to how Winnicott initially subsumed Klein's internal and external objects to his transitional object.[56]

There are several other problems that Rizzuto has created for herself by attempting to blend her God representation with Winnicott's transitional object. On a pragmatic level, Rizzuto wants to maintain the ubiquity of the God representations in the intrapsychic structure of westerners, and, tying her concept to the transitional object, while at first glance strengthening her case, actually weakens it. It is now admitted by some Winnicottian scholars that the transitional object is not only not ubiquitous, i.e., found with a minority rather than a majority of infants, but also that a link is being stressed between the addiction to such objects and backwardness in development, the converse to Winnicott's supposition.[57] This ethnocentric limitation of Winnicott's is not a reason for concern for

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[56] In the original paper, Winnicott described the relationship between his transitional object and Klein's internal and external objects in the following manner:

> This first possession [the transitional object] is related backwards in time to auto-erotic phenomena and fist- and thumb-sucking, and also forwards to the first soft animal or doll and to hard toys. It is related both to the external object (mother's breast) and to internal objects (magically introjected breast), but is distinct from both (*Playing and Reality*, p. 14).

[57] Cf. for example, Madeleine Davis and David Wallbridge's *Boundary and Space: An Introduction to the Work of D.W. Winnicott*, (New York: Brunner Mazel, London: Karnac Books, 1987), who in their summarizing statements refer readers to Sylvia Brody's "Transitional Objects: Idealization of a Phenomenon"(*Psychoanalytic Quarterly*, XLIX, October, 1980) as the source of this development in understanding of transitional objects (pp. 59-60). Cf. as well, Abraham, H. Wolff and Betsy Lozoff's "Object Attachment, Thumbsucking and the Passage to Sleep" (in *Journal of American*

these Winnicottians because the transitional object was simply the most readily observed of those phenomena that are part of the infant's beginning to separate out external reality through the subjective recreation of it. My point of contention with Rizzuto is simply that it would be better to refer to the God-representation as one of many denizens of the transitional sphere, along with transitional objects (where they exist), and other imaginative creations of childhood whether the found portion of them is physical, mentative or both.

In keeping with the above point that transitional objects may in fact be indicators of pathology, there is a significant difference in developmental stages that also bears on Rizzuto's decision to call the God-representation a transitional object. Winnicott says that transitional objects typically make their appearance anywhere from five or six months old to a year or so, even two. Rizzuto on the other hand speaks of the God-representation only being fully formed around age five, this process cannot even begin until the child begins asking "why" questions around age three. It is only by blurring theoretical distinctions and blending concepts that are better left separate that one can call the God-representation a transitional object.

While Winnicott can sometimes be less than systematic in his use of his own conceptual language, at other points he is clear and concise:

> This first possession {the transitional object} is related backwards in time to auto-erotic phenomena and fist- and thumb-sucking, and also forwards to the first soft animal or doll and to hard toys. It is related both to the external object (mother's breast) and to internal objects (magically introjected breast), but is distinct from both.
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> Transitional objects and transitional phenomena belong to the realm of illusion which is at the basis of the initiation of experience. This early stage in development is made possible by the mother's special capacity for making adaptation to the needs of her infant, thus

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Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, 28, (1987) in which they report that the children who fell asleep with their parent(s) present, were less likely to use attachment objects such as dolls or pacifiers in order to soothe themselves, one of the main functions of transitional objects.

> allowing the infant the illusion that what the infant creates really exists.
>
> This intermediate area of experience, unchallenged in respect of its belonging to inner or external (shared) reality, constitutes the greater part of the infant's experience, and throughout life is retained in the intense experiencing that belongs to the arts and to religion and to imaginative living, and to creative scientific work.
>
> An infant's transitional object ordinarily becomes gradually decathected, especially as cultural interests develop.[58]

There is ample place in Winnicott's theory of transitional phenomena and how that kind of experiencing develops into an adult's relationship to arts, religion and other enriching and necessary aspects of imaginative living for a mentative creation and possession like the God-representation. But from a developmental point of view it arises in the potential space between the child and the family rather than the earlier one of infant and mother, and it is a part of that process of decathection whereby the transitional object loses meaning so that others can become significant.[59] On the basis of my reading both of Winnicott and Rizzuto I believe it is more accurate to say that God-representations are located in the transitional sphere and share some qualities with transitional objects, qualities that shed light on how people relate to their God(s).

Now it is important to keep in mind here Rizzuto's comments about her own theory-making, that side by side there are great insights and serious mistakes, but that is how it is when one works

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[58] *Playing and Reality*, p. 14.

[59] The following quotation from Rizzuto illustrative of her developmental sequence is a good example of how what she's discussing is a later series of phenomena than the preodipal transitional object:

> As soon as their representational abilites (object constancy) permit, most children fantasize overtly about objects created in their minds. They populate the transitional space generously with fascinating creatures--God among others. The process encompasses the entire period that starts with object constancy and does not cease until adolescence, when new phenomena appear, integrating the old with the new. In this process there are several stages with more or less chronological sequence of characters, among whom God always appears (*Birth of the Living God*, p. 190).

with complex realities and tries to account for them by creating new languages. Her synthesis of Freud's God representation and Winnicott's transitional objects is both brilliant and yet flawed, for as I have already demonstrated, it contradicts Winnicott's theory in an important way, and, Winnicott's "transitional object" is not the best cornerstone on which to erect an universal understanding of human nature. But these flaws are not, in the end, important. For, as she says, theory makes it possible to discuss realities heretofore not even named, it does not matter whether they are right in every respect. In this she is correct: whether or not one should call God a transitional object or rather speak only of people's experience of God as happening in the "intermediate area of experiencing" is not important. What is important is that Rizzuto has forged ahead, synthesized Freud and Winnicott on how individual God representations are created and continue to have an intrapsychic existence. Her theory is based in clinical evidence and is a useful approach to directly dealing with "religious objects" in a psychoanalytic framework, and yet in a way that recognizes the specificity and particularity of each person's creations.

Just as Winnicott's theory enabled Rizzuto to take Freud's theory of God-representations forward into an object relations theory of the formation of the God-representation, Rizzuto's theory has now made possible developments like Randour's differentiation of the rationally conceived God of culture of the secondary processes from the emotionally-laden God-representation created by primary processes.[60]

Rizzuto has on the basis of her theory and research transformed psychoanalytic interpretations of belief in God. Instead of anthropological speculations which are a materialistic kind

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[60] Mary-Lou Randour, "Introduction," in *Exploring Sacred Landscapes: Religious and Spiritual Experiences in Psychotherapy*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), p. 2 for a more elaborated version of Rizutto's concepts (Cf. *Birth of the Living God*, pp. 47-8).

of theologizing--a rather crude attempt to furbish the scientistic vision with a mythic substratum--she instead ushers in a way of talking about God that is specific to psychoanalysis' expertise:

> . . . we can no longer talk about God in general when dealing with the concept in psychoanalytic terms. We must specify whose God we are talking about, at what particular moment in that person's life, in what constellation of objects, and in what experience of self as context. The God representation changes along with us and our primary objects in the lifelong metamorphosis of becoming ourselves in a context of other relevant beings. Our description of a God representation entitles us to say only that this is the way God is seen at this particular moment of a person's psychic equilibrium.[61]

This is a welcome addition to how psychoanalysts can consider religion. Rizutto's clinical approach, treating God representations as part of the whole interiority of her clients is a welcome improvement on the ideological, anti-religious approach of the first generations of psychoanalysts. However, her phenomenological approach breaks down in places when it comes to giving precedence of psychoanalytic categorization over clients' own interpretation of their experiences. Whether or not a psychoanalyst in the end can truly take a dialogical or non-reductive approach remains an open question.

What I am calling "breakdowns" occur when Rizutto's American Psychoanalytic influences come through.[62] With both Developmental Psychology and Ego-Psychology comes a tendency to categorize and pathologize according to what must be seen as a highly intellectual understanding* of what is normal or abnormal, mature or immature in human functioning.[63] Below is an extended

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[61]Rizzuto, *Birth of the Living God*, p. 52.

[62] Rizutto, having been trained in Argentina but then spending her residency and career in the Eastern United States naturally shows American influences in her theorization.

[63] There will be a fuller description of ego psychology below when I discuss Meissner's work, as he is an avowed ego-psychologist, although nowhere will it get an exhaustive discussion as it would distract to much from the focus of this thesis which is of course how Winnicott's theory is being utilized in psychology of religion. Meissner also gives a fuller account for a stages of faith

quotation which gives the flavour both of her ego-psychology as well as what happens to religious experience when it is categorized by a pathologizing psychology of religion.

> Two conclusions emerge from this presentation. One is that we engage in constant dialectical reshaping of our self- and object-representations to attain psychic balance. When some of the representations, wishes, or impinging reality create more conflict than is tolerable or modifiable through defensive maneuvers, drastic defensive movements are resorted to in the emergency and symptoms may ensue. Some of these are dramatic, like persecutory delusions, belief in direct communication with God or of having been given a mission by him, or, at a lesser level of disorganization, overwhelming guilt, conversion, religious excitement, and the like. In all cases a careful tracing of the events connected with relevant objects, the object representations from early years, the type of God representation, and the narcissistic balance of the sense of self in connection with the object representation now in focus can provide a more or less clear picture of the internal drama involved in apparently inexplicable events. To the person, however, the conscious religious experience with God will seem intensely real. It will have many qualities of a powerful interpersonal exchange between two people as unequal as God and the believer. The unconscious roots in the past or the present of that particular religious experience may remain not only unknown but unnoticed.[64]

Here we see the effects of an "equilibrium" psychoanalytic or ego psychological analysis of dramatic religious experiences. If in fact, psychoanalysts as self-understood members of the scientific community really did "truly" understand the nature of the universe and for that matter, human beings, than they could safely make these pronouncements. However, in reality, we have only many competing worldviews, ways of being human, and thus this sort of generalization is as much a barrier to understanding as it is a source of understanding the wherefores and whys of religious experience. One of the questions I will be addressing throughout this thesis is "How can we shed light on religious experience without Procrustean reductionism?" or again, "How can we analyze without

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development and thus I will save my commentary on developmental psychology and religion for my review of Meissner. (* I say "highly intellectual" because the standards they apply are suitable perhaps to highly educated people, but are of questionable use in evaluating people whose culture or education differ significantly from the theorists'.)

[64] Rizzuto, *Birth of the Living God*, p. 89.

using language that suggests we have the whole of this person's experience in our analysis, especially when our analysis directly contradicts our analysand's point of view?" It was just this sort of analysis that Winnicott was criticizing when he spoke of "dominating transferences."[65] I am hoping that psychologists of religion, American or otherwise, can learn to be like Winnicott in this respect: that they can become willing even eager to learn from their subjects, willing even eager to be surprised by new insights, and thus less likely to routinely pathologize others' most significant and formative experiences.

To conclude, we have seen here a Rizzuto whose use of Winnicott in part has advanced the psychoanalytic understanding of clinically observed religious phenomena. This is a tremendous step forward for a psychoanalysis that to this point has for the most part seen religious phenomena as evidence of pathology. Rizzuto's enunciation and elaboration of the theory of self- and object-representations also is an advance, especially her careful pioneering work on the God-representation. While there are some technical flaws in her use of Winnicott, these in the end do not detract much form her contributions. And while her pluralistic approach as seen in her recognition of the idiosyncracies of our God-representations (or whatever the equivalent might be in other cultures) is somewhat marred by her influences from equilibrium psychology, this is not as elaborated, and

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[65] Winnicott is referring to how analysts project their own unconscious wishes/feelings/fears /complexes onto their clients in such a way as to dominate the client's sense of self. In the religious sphere, then, should not one be cautious in pathologizing religious experiences such as "hearing God's voice" and "feeling called by God" without looking any further? Obviously some people who hear voices or feel called are quite clearly disturbed and deluded but there are many otherwise sane and functional people who also have had such experiences, and they do not always come in times of crisis. Since as Rizzuto has pointed out, religious matters rarely make it into analysis, and even more rarely get a balanced treatment, is it not sensible to advocate extreme caution on the part of psychoanalytic experts when they are tempted to make generalizations about religious phenomena? There will be much fuller discussions of these issues in the chapters that follow.

therefore as problematic as it is in the work of her colleague, W.W. Meissner, the subject of the following chapter.

Chapter III
W. W. Meissner, S.J., M.D.
Illusion and Reality, Freud and Winnicott,
Transitional Experiencing and Religion

William W. Meissner, psychoanalyst, psychiatrist, Jesuit and professor of psychoanalysis[1] is a prolific author both in psychoanalysis as well as in psychology of religion. On the psychoanalytic front one of his major psychoanalytic monographs relevant to this thesis is *The Paranoid Process*,[2] an enlightening albeit exploratory analysis of paranoid processes observable in social groupings in arenas such as politics, ideologies, ethnic conflict and religious groups. When it comes to applying psychoanalysis to religion Meissner has made a significant contribution to the field with his utilization of Winnicott's theory of illusion. It would seem that both Meissner and Rizzuto encountered Winnicott subsequent to their original psychoanalytic formations[3] and both have made use of his theories to make significant contributions to psychology of religion in their own particular ways.

While, as we saw above, Rizzuto was very much a clinically oriented theorist, buttressing her clinical observations and theoretical innovations with social-psychological testing,[4] Meissner, on the

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[1] In 1981, Meissner's credentials list ran as follows: ". . . Associate Clinical Professor of Psychiatry at the Harvard Medical School, Boston, Massachusetts, and Instructor at the Boston Psychoanalytic Institute. . ." ("About the Author" in W.W. Meissner, *Internalization in Psychoanalysis*, (New York: International Universities Press, 1981). By 1990 he had become a "Training and Supervising Analyst" at the Boston Psychoanalytic Institute and University Professor of Psychoanalysis at Boston College.

[2] W.W. Meissner, *The Paranoid Process*, (New York and London: Jason Aronson, 1978).

[3] However, their formations differ. Meissner is a thoroughly American psychoanalyst with a sprinkling of Winnicott (1984) and later other British Theorists (1987). Rizutto, as I have already mentioned, received a largely Kleinian Argentinian training, which was later supplemented with American theories.

[4] A quick glance at some of the "about the author" information available about Rizzuto shows a career development track that backs up my characterization of her. In 1981, Rizzuto was a training and supervising analyst at the Psychoanalytic Institute of New England, East, her psychiatric training was at Boston State Hospital, (1964ff.) (*Birth of the Living God*, pp. ix-x). By 1991 Rizzuto was not only still a training and supervisory analyst at the Psychoanalytic Institute of New England, East but

other hand as we will see in the following section, disdained the use of social-psychological instruments, and actively pursued a dialogue between theology and psychoanalysis. In fact, as we shall see below, his intended audience seems to be Roman Catholic Priests, heads and members of religious orders, and Bishops--in short all those with responsibility for education and pastoral care within North American Roman Catholic Communities. This audience and his dialogical rather than a more careful observational approach leads to, I will demonstrate, on the one hand a sensitive analysis of the necessary and life-giving role of illusion in mainstream religious life and on the other hand a religiously-biased approach, in which "scientific" theology in an unholy alliance with psychoanalytic pathologizing will combine to denigrate people whose way of being religious differs from the Christian mainstream. I will be arguing that this is not how to use Winnicott, to baptize one's own spirituality with a language of life giving illusion, and yet with the same language of transitional phenomena, denigrate others' spirituality as pathological.

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had also in the meantime become "clinical professor of psychiatry at Tufts University, School of Medicine in Boston." Cf. A-M. Rizzuto, "Religious Development: A Psychoanalytic Point of View," in *Religious Development in Childhood and Adolescence. New Directions for Child Development*, no. 52, Summer, (1991), Eds. Fritz K. Oser & W. George Scarlett, (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Inc. Publishers), p. 60. It would be fascinating to know whether or not Meissner who was her senior ever analysed or supervised her. But this question must remain unanswered, at least in this work. What can be affirmed however, is that they were obviously familiar with each other's work as can be seen in their citations, that they were both practising Roman Catholics and psychoanalysts, and that they spent their careers in close geographic proximity to each other. However, the impression I'm left with after a close reading of both their works is that for all these similarities they in fact were quite different from each other, Meissner being preoccupied with the dialogue between theology and psychoanalysis--an apologetic project, whereas Rizzuto was more of a clinical researcher who was concerned that psychoanalysts acquire the willingness and the clinical tools to effectively include their analysand's religious objects and representations in their analyses.

W. W. Meissner, the man and his audience

In his foundational psychology of religion work, *Psychoanalysis and Religious Experience*,[5] Meissner announces his project as being the setting forth of "tentative hypotheses" that can be the basis for a "more deeply searching and profoundly understanding psychoanalytic approach to religious phenomena."[6] The theoretical foundations for these hypotheses are found in both current psychoanalysis and current theology:[7]

> The hidden assumption of this approach is that the shape of the faith experience as it evolves developmentally is contingent on and reflects, as well as conditions, the developmental vicissitudes of both narcissism and object relations.[8]

The faith experience being what it is means that both psychoanalytic and theological insights are necessary for an adequate exploration and articulation of it.

Despite his theological approach, Meissner is also a mainstream psychoanalyst,[9] in fact an ego psychologist whose main sources for the above-quoted approach are Erikson (developmental psychology), Kohut (narcissism) as well as Kernberg (American object relations).[10] As such he is a

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[5] W.W. Meissner, *Psychoanalysis and Religious Experience*, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press), 1984.

[6] Meissner, *Religious Experience*, p. xi.

[7] Meissner's core theological assumption is:

> . . . *gratia perficit naturam* [grace perfects nature] and that the core of human religious experience under grace has to do with specifiable aspects of man's subjective experience, unconscious as well as conscious . . . (Ibid., p. 9).

[8] Ibid., p. xi.

[9] Meissner's *The Paranoid Process* and *Internalization in Psychoanalysis* are just two of his many psychoanalytic publications.

[10] In Chapter 6 of this same work, these are the three authors that are most substantively used. Rizzuto is the source of his God-representation section and Winnicott also appears briefly in the

thoroughly American psychoanalytic thinker, who likely somewhat later came upon Winnicott's work.[11] Thus this American psychoanalyst cum Jesuit theologian with his theological principle of *gratia perfecti naturam*, subordinates God's activity to supporting the ego--as sanitized a version of psychoanalytic or theological anthropology as one is likely to find. Meissner is not alone in seeing psychology and theology as good bed companions,[12] for James Forsyth and others have made the same point, i.e., psychology and theology work with the same data--interior experiences.[13] However,

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object relations section--but Meissner's main use of Winnicott is his concept of "transitional experience:"

> In a further effort {beyond the above-mentioned developmental, narcissism and object relations approaches} to focus the conceptual terms in which psychoanalysis can approach religious phenomena, I have attempted to bring to bear the genial insight of Donald Winnicott, especially his theory about the transitional realm of experience....it seems to me that this fundamental formulation has not been brought to bear on our understanding of religious phenomena with the degree of elaboration or emphasis it deserves . . . . the concept provides a kind of breakthrough that allows us to move in new and, I think, stimulating directions. (*Psychoanalysis and Religious Experience*, p. xi.)

As we will see below in my discussion of Meissner, these new directions are away from Freud's dichotomy of objectivity-reality versus subjectivity-illusion towards a new understanding of illusion as both subjectively and objectively influenced, not reduced to one or the other, and, vitally important to human functioning and creativity.

[11] For example, Meissner, in his first monograph, *Group Dynamics in the Religious Life*, (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1965) does not mention British object relations at all, nor does he have any of their works in his bibliography. At this point he uses a blend of social psychology and American psychodynamic principles.

[12] Occasionally words like "companions" will appear where a word like "fellows" would have been expected. My apologies if this attempt at inclusive language is a bit less elegant or resonant. Meissner, on the other hand, retains a patriarchal language to this day. In his latest (1992) publications he is still using "mankind": and "a man and his" type of generalizing language rather than humankind and other less patriarchal word uses.

[13] James Forsyth's *Freud, Jung and Christianity*, (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 1989) is based on such an assumption as is Don M. Browning's *Religious Thought and the Modern Psychologies*, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987.) Browning makes the point: ". . . traditional religion and modern psychology stand in a special relation to one another . . . both of them provide concepts and technologies for the ordering of the interior life."(p. 2)

it is not a psychoanalytic audience he is addressing when he is asking them to accept the premise "grace perfects nature" as a valid truth about God and us. No, it is more likely that Meissner is writing to a priestly, theologically educated audience.

This can be seen in a much clearer way through a close reading of a portion of his introduction(below): it reveals his intended audience as well as his political context. He spends some time outlining the history of the struggle between science and religion in our society. First, he gives the state of the question:

> It took another century before the fundamental ideas had been sufficiently worked through to allow for an amplified understanding that there were no inherent contradictions between the religious and the scientific views and that the respective conceptual systems could coexist with mutual respect and even reinforcement . . . .This enlightened view has by no means achieved universal acceptance.[14]

This comes as no surprise since the psychological community is well-known to score high on scales of irreligiosity. As Rizzuto[15] and Beit-Hallahmi[16] pointed out above, mainstream psychology/psychoanalysis has no time for religion whatsoever, and for the most part practitioners are irreligious, even anti-religious. Meissner is clearly here addressing a theologically educated religious community.

The groups that Meissner identifies as being problematic however are not anti-religious psychoanalysts but both the fundamentalists who oppose the teaching of evolution within the schools as well as the majority of the clergy who remain "antithetical to any psychiatric, psychological, or psychoanalytic intervention." Those of whom he speaks approvingly on the other hand, include:

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[14] Meissner, *Psychoanalysis and Religious Experience*, p. 4.

[15] Cf. Chapter II, pp. 79-80.

[16] Cf. Chapter I, p. 9.

"Thoughtful religious men . . . [and women]" who have realized that there is no necessary connection between Freud's "scientific thinking and his religious persuasions,"[17] as well as the "good" psychoanalyst and the "open-minded psychoanalytic community:"

> The psychoanalytic community is strikingly--I would even say amazingly--open-minded. By and large, practising clinical psychoanalysts keep open and often surprisingly accepting minds regarding religious thoughts, feelings, beliefs, fantasies, and convictions. They are respectful of their patients' religious beliefs and values, more out of a sense of psychoanalytic ethics than because of any regard for religious ideas as such. The good analyst knows his place, knows that it is not his role to shape, modify, or mold the patient's beliefs or values; rather, it is his function in the psychoanalytic situation to help the patient to explore the roots, causes, meanings, and implication of whatever beliefs, values, convictions or attitudes he holds.[18]

This is quite a contrast from the psychoanalytic community that Rizzuto described, those analysts who either left their religion outside of their personal analyses thus not analysing an important part of their lives. Or, if they brought their religion in, that was "the beginning and the end of it."[19] Rizzuto further points out that often "...unexamined god representations leads to countertransference problems for analysts."[20] In Rizzuto's view, analysts are not trained to deal with religious phenomena in the analysis except perhaps as evidence of psychopathology and thus they may well not only be prejudiced but also projecting their own unanalyzed material into their clients as well(the ultimate although too common sin for psychoanalysts).

It is interesting that the author of *The Paranoid Process*, should avail himself of such paranoid libidinizing language as "the good analyst" when other analysts speak differently about their

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[17] Meissner, *Psychoanalysis and Religious Experience*, p. 4.

[18] Ibid., p. 5.

[19] Rizzuto, *Birth of the Living God*, p. 4.

[20] Ibid., p. 210.

colleagues' approach to religion. In fact, Alphonse Calabrese, a classically trained analyst some years Meissner's senior, includes in his description of elements of his training the fact that it was considered good practice to encourage clients to engage in pre-marital and extra-marital sexual activity so that they could resolve their sexual problems. If religious reservations were raised they were deemed to be unimportant. The deeper more significant issue was sexuality, its repression and its release. As Meissner said above,

> . . it is his function in the psychoanalytic situation to help the patient to explore the roots, causes, meanings, and implication of whatever beliefs, values, convictions or attitudes he holds.

What he did not say was that the roots or causes always led to early childhood, and for many analysts, to unexplored sexual problems, the cure for which was the free pursuit of satisfaction with religious inhibitions being reduced to "super-ego" activity which the ego could take or leave, and, where religion was involved, leave. Calabrese and others trained at that psychoanalytic institute thus routinely advocated a form of morality antithetical to most religious beliefs.[21] Meissner's only comment in this vein was "...the myth of libidinal license still haunts the view of many"[22]--presumably why so many clergy have an antithetical attitude "to any psychiatric, psychological, or psychoanalytic

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[21] Alphonse Calabrese and William Proctor, *RX: The Christian Love Treatment*, (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1976), pp. 15-20. Calabrese, as the title suggests, converted to Christianity at a Billy Graham crusade, became a Roman Catholic Charismatic, (a renewal of his roots) and at the time of publication was founder and director of the Christian Institute for Psychotherapeutic Studies as well as a practising psychoanalyst. As interesting as his approach to integrating psychoanalytic therapy, Christian belief, and charismatic healing are, it is nevertheless for this thesis off topic. A future topic of study might be however, an analysis of the religious/psychoanalytic syntheses of people like Meissner, Rizzuto and Calabrese.

[22] Meissner, *Psychoanalysis and Religious Experience*, p. 5.

intervention."[23]

Meissner, then speaks in an approving manner about an "open-minded" psychoanalytic community and "good analysts," a characterization which is much at odds with Rizzuto's and Calabrese's experiences. He is obviously trying to sell psychoanalysis to his religious community, those "thoughtful religious men." His antagonists are those religious people who reject psychoanalysis and pastoral counselling. His project is to dialogically construct a psychoanalytic, theological understanding of the religious side of human nature. Thus he will apply developmental, self-psychological and object relational theories to religious phenomena in an attempt to order and categorize it into normal and pathological, authentic and inauthentic for the dual purposes of, on the one hand, better informing those religious professionals who would psychologically help their clients in their religious development, and on the other, preserving from psychoanalysts' critique certain religious phenomena and a sanctioned pattern of religious development. For the sake of clarity, I will proceed first with Meissner's valorization of "authentic religious experience," that subjective interplay with "scientific" theology, a section where he puts Winnicott's theorizing on illusion to good use. Then I will consider the two different ways he pathologizes those whose religiosity differs from his ideals. In this contrast we will see how Meissner uses Winnicott to validate, even idealize those whose spirituality fits his values and worldview, while using Freud to denigrate those whose spirituality does not fit, perhaps even conflicts with his values and worldview.

Psychoanalysis and the Religious Experience of Theologians, Religious, Clergy, and Pastoral Counsellors

Meissner's foundational work in psychology of religion is his 1984 publication,

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[23] Meissner, *Psychoanalysis and Religious Experience*, p. 5.

Psychoanalysis and Religious Experience. He has in subsequent publications elaborated on, defended and extended these basic ideas, but since the core of his analysis is represented by this work, I will begin here the analysis of his theory. Meissner, in this work, takes up a great deal of space analysing Freud; discusses a developmental framework that includes religious dimensions of experience; introduces Winnicott's transitional objects and transitional phenomena and then applies this theory of transitional experience to a number of cultural realms including of course religion. He concludes with two chapters on theological anthropology, attempting to create a space in which psychoanalytic and theological conceptions of being human can meet and mutually inform each other. I will not spend much time with his analysis of Freud nor his psychoanalytic, theological anthropology, as neither are relevant to the main thrust of this work. Neither will I take the time to criticize Meissner's stages of development as mainly suiting the needs and developmental trajectories of liberal, humanistic, intellectual Christians, but not likely the needs of people from other groups. It is outside the scope of this thesis to focus on developmental psychology.[24] Although Winnicott also was a developmental theorist, he had nothing to say about religious stages of development. My focus will be on Meissner's utilization of Winnicott in his chapter on illusion and transitional experience, although relevant aspects of Meissner's later work will also be considerd.

Meissner begins his chapter "Religion as Transitional" by describing the many ways and the

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[24] It is, however, one of the dominant concerns of this thesis that the psychologists of religion who are mapping out normative stages of religious development are analysts with mainstream church affiliations, members of an establishment that does not look sympathetically on those people whose way of being religious differs markedly from their own ideals. This religious bias, I will argue is one of the predominant characteristics of psychology of religion in North America today. Advocates of a more pluralistic approach, such as David M. Wulff, J.W. Jones and Benjamin Beit-Hallahmi represent only a minority, although perhaps one that will become more influential in the last years of this century.

consistent manner with which Freud attacked illusion in human experience, especially the illusion of religion. But he then turns his attention to how there has been a shift of attitude in psychoanalysis, and that now

> . . . the current perspective not only has found a place for illusion but has defined it as a powerful and necessary force in human psychic development and in the continuing nourishment and health of the human spirit as well. This change in perspective has come about as a result of the thinking of Donald Winnicott perhaps more than any other single figure. Winnicott has staked a claim that illusion is an important aspect of man's capacity to involve himself in the world of his experience, a capacity that ultimately finds expression in man's creativity in shaping a human and meaningful environment. . . .[25]

He then proceeds with a fairly detailed description of Winnicott's theory of transitional objects and transitional phenomena with an enlightening emphasis on "subjective omnipotence" (this being the core of an infant's first good experiences with its mother/object) and its importance in making life meaningful and enjoyable. Meissner points out that in Winnicott's theory, it is the mother's support of the infant's use of illusion--providing the breast just when the baby was ready to hallucinate one--that gives the child "an illusion of control over a world of satisfying objects."[26] Winnicott, Meissner continues,

> . . . contends that without this "primary illusion" of omnipotence a capacity truly to enjoy reality will never develop. Frustration can teach the child to perceive, adapt to, and test reality, but only out of this sense of unique fulfilment flowing from the conjunction of magical wish and attuned response, can he learn to love reality.[27]

This is a useful restatement one of Winnicott's contributions to the psychoanalytic weltanschauung, the understanding of what it is that makes life worth living.

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[25] Meissner, *Psychoanalysis and Religious Experience*, p. 164.

[26] Ibid., p. 167

[27] Ibid.

Meissner also utilizes an extender of Winnicott's theories, Gilbert Rose,[28] who conceptualized human development as a "transitional process."

> The term "transitional process" suggests that there is a dynamic equilibrium between a more or less fluid self and external reality that is not simply limited to the transitional object phenomenon of childhood but continues into adult life. Moreover, the process of adaptation in the course of everyday life demands an element of creative originality and imagination that reflects a continuing transitional interplay between self and reality . . . . Each human being selects, abstracts, and creates an idiosyncratic and unique *Umwelt* of his own by which he integrates his sense of reality.[29]

In his extension of Rose's concept "the transitional process," Meissner highlights another of Winnicott's contributions, one that all too often gets lost even by those like Meissner who pay attention to it,[30] and that is the radical pluralism involved in the recognition that our ways of shaping the world are incredibly idiosyncratic, arising as they do from our own very particular stories with our families of origin and how we then are influenced by, and in turn influence, our particular cultures and societies. Our ability to subjectively recreate aspects of our reality is a key ingredient to being able to get along in the world, this is what Meissner (and Winnicott) means by transitional experience:

> Illusion, therefore, becomes in Winnicott's view a developmental form of transition to reality, in the sense that without the capacity to utilize transitional objects and to generate transitional forms of experience the child's attempts to gain a foothold in reality will inevitably be frustrated. Illusion in this view is not an obstruction to experiencing reality but a vehicle for gaining access to it .[31]

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[28] Gilbert J. Rose, "The Creativity of Everyday Life" in *Between Fantasy and Reality.*

[29] Meissner, *Psychoanalysis and Religious Experience*, p. 172.

[30] As mentioned above when I stated I would not be able to look at Meissner's developmental schema, once psychologists of religion start trying to schematize, hierarchicize, and so on, it is my finding that they inevitably conceptualize a framework which reflects their values, idealizations, transferences and so on, to the disservice of those multitudes who are not like them.

[31] Ibid., p. 177.

Winnicott, for Meissner has provided the material with which to repudiate Freud's denigration of illusion. With Winnicott's theory of the transitional object and its development into the capacity for transitional or cultural experience, Meissner has found a more sympathetic analytic lense with which to consider religious phenomena.

Having introduced his analytic tool, Winnicott's concept of transitional experiencing, Meissner proceeds to analyse four aspects of religious experience: faith, the God-representation, the use of symbols and the experience of prayer. For the God-representation he mainly relies on Rizzuto's conceptualization of it unfortunately incorporating her usage of God as being a transitional object. He thus makes the same mistakes discussed above with Rizzuto, i.e., a confused, internally inconsistent application of Winnicott's theory, and the tendency to make the "object" rather than the "experience of relating to the object" primary.[32]

> The faith experience for Meissner includes beliefs about,
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> > the nature of the world in which he lives, of the meaning and purpose of his existence there, and, in most religious traditions, of the relationship of that world and himself to a divine being who creates, loves, guides, and judges.[33]

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[32] Meissner usually refers to transitional experience and other sorts of intrapsychic experiences or processes, but in discussing the God-representation moves more towards Rizzuto's focus on objects rather than experiences. In his later works, "Religious Thinking as Transitional Conceptualization," in *Psychoanalytic Review*, (1992), and "The Role of Transitional Conceptualization in Religious Thought," in *Psychoanalysis and Religion*, vol. 11 of *Psychiatry and the Humanities*, Eds. Joseph H. Smith and Susan A. Handleman, (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990), are both reworkings of portions of the chapter under discussion with additions and modifications to respond to critics. Meissner clearly states that, "There is no sense in which God can be regarded as a transitional object, but the mode of conceptualization by which we think of God may involve transitional components."(1990, p. 107) Even in this statement, he continues to use "thing-like" language--i.e., components, rather than "experiencing." Cf. Chapter VI below for a further discussion of experience vs. objects in interpreting Winnnicott's transitional objects.

[33] Meissner, *Psychoanalysis and Religious Experience*, p. 178.

Of course it is patently untrue to affirm this statement as being true of most religious traditions; in fact it is a minority of the world's population that are monotheists. This bit of ethnocentrism or parochialism aside, Meissner's point is that these beliefs about the world (objective reality) cannot be demonstrated as being independently verifiable. But neither argues Meissner, are they as Freud would have it, totally subjective but rather "both the subjective and objective poles of experience contribute to the substance of belief."[34]

Meissner finds parallels between the experience of faith and the infant's experience of the mother:

> ..the emergence of faith is much like the infant's creation of the mother. The what and how of belief in any given religious tradition are presented to the child in such a manner that he can respond to them and conjoin them to his own inner need to believe. In this sense, then, the young believer comes to create beliefs in conjunction with the objective reality of a set of beliefs that he finds in his environment.[35]

It might not be too presumptive to say that Meissner here has portrayed the dynamics of the discovery of faith everywhere. However, he has at the same time introduced an interesting twist to this interplay of objective/subjective, that is making theology/tradition "objective" in its relation to the individual believer.

Meissner not only uses objectivity and subjectivity to refer to internal and external reality but also to the opposition of "individual/psychodynamic" versus "institutional/ received tradition" poles of the faith experience. He thus strains the psychoanalytic or scientific language of subjective/objective by making theology/tradition objective. Finally, Meissner, still utilizing this latter sense of objective/subjective, differentiates for adolescents and adults the need to integrate oneself

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[34] Meissner, *Psychoanalysis and Religious Experience*, p. 178.

[35] Ibid.

within a community (to identify) as opposed to the need "to rebel and to find and express one's individuality" and the desirability of finding a balance between these two needs. Despite this confusing use of objectivity/subjectivity Meissner, in his conclusion reverts to Winnicott's theory of the source of cultural experience:

> The faith of any human being, then, is both received from the religious community of his affiliation and created as a matter of internal and subjective expression. In this sense faith can be regarded as taking shape within the realm of illusory experience, and the faith of religious communities as being realized through the sharing of illusory experience within a given group of believers. Within any religious group, such sharing of illusion is a matter of degree that allows for both individual variation and a community of sharing.[36]

So although Meissner strains an already weakened scientific language of subjectivity/objectivity,[37] he also uses Winnicott's own formulation, that of culturally shared illusory experience. Thus Meissner brings to expression in the religious area of faith experience Winnicott's whole developmental schema from the first transitional object to the formation of groups of like-minded individuals.

Meissner brings new light to another area of religious phenomena, that of religious symbols. Here again the subjective/objective dichotomy is utilized. Religious symbols are real objects with both objective and subjective meanings. They are objective both, in the sense that there is a received tradition of their interpretation, as well as in the more traditional sense, that they are physical objects or gestures. They are "subjective" in that an idiosyncratic mix of psychodynamic factors shape how a person responds to symbols. Again, the Catholic experience that gives rise to Meissner's theory shows through in his following opinion about the necessary conditions for belief:

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[36] Meissner, *Psychoanalysis and Religious Experience*, p. 179.

[37] In chapter VI below I will, with J.W. Jones, (while analysing his use of Winnicott) further elaborate on the problems with objectivity and subjectivity. In the process, with Jones, I will show how, Winnicott--although he also uses that language--represents for psychoanalysis the beginning of an epistemic shift away from such a conception of human experience.

> Human beings are, by and large, incapable of maintaining a commitment to something so abstract as a religious belief system without some means of real--sensory, visual, or auditory--concretization. The individual Catholic's belief in the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist could hardly be maintained . . . if participation in the Eucharistic liturgy were not surrounded with a panoply of concrete symbolic expressions of what is basically a highly theological and suprasensory understanding.[38]

Meissner with Winnicott recognizes that it is not only the objective stimuli that are necessary but that the religious symbols themselves must be "found," subjectively appropriated and therefore meaningful, or, in Meissner's words, "become part of the transitional realm of the believer's illusory experience."[39]

Finally, Meissner's analysis of prayer is straightforward, suggesting that the relationship between an individual's God-representation and his/her own self-representation is the matrix of prayerful experience. Here doctrine, tradition and even scripture may not play much of a part but rather the individual's own idiosyncratic construction of God and reality. These psychodynamics may include "more consciously mature and self-reflective" elements as well as "elements that stem from earlier developmental levels and have a more infantile, dependent, and even narcissistic quality."[40]

Benign, balanced analyses of the psychodynamic determinants of religious experience such as the above analysis of prayer are not however the rule in Meissner's analysis of religious phenomena. Sometimes, psychopathology is normal and present in some blend with "healthier" psychodeterminants and sometimes psychopathology is described in a much more serious language.

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[38] Meissner, *Psychoanalysis and Religious Experience*, p. 181.

[39] Ibid.

[40] Ibid., p. 182.

And it is in just this latter sort of pathological analyses that an element foreign to Winnicott is inserted into Winnicott's transitional realm, that element being the pathological judgement.

Fetishistic versus Transitional Phenomena,
Infantile/primitive versus mature/authentic religion,
Idealization versus Denigration in Paranoid Psychoanalysis of Religion

Meissner has two main heuristics through which he is working at further refining the "unhealthy" side of religious beliefs, what Pruyser called the "seamy" side of religious beliefs.[41] One is fetishistic phenomena as a way of introducing pathological distinctions to Winnicott's pluralistic transitional experiencing, the other is his whole elaboration of the paranoid process with some further elaborations that include hysterical, obsessive, depressive, masochistic and narcissistic pathologies.[42] Typical of Meissner's and for that matter Pruyser's work is the suggestive rather than substantive application of categories of individual psychopathology to group phenomena.[43]

Meissner, fetishistic objects and transitional objects

I will begin with the twist that Meissner gives to Winnicott's concept of transitional experience, that is the "infantile or pathological channels" into which it can be channelled:

> Just as the transitional object of the child can degenerate into a fetish object, transitional religious experience can be distorted in less authentic, relatively fetishistic directions that tend to contaminate and distort the more profoundly meaningful aspects of the religious

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[41] Paul W. Pruyser, "The Seamy Side of Current Religious Beliefs," in *Bulletin of the Menninger Clinic*, 41, (1977).

[42] Cf. W.W. Meissner, "The Phenomenology of religious psychopathology," in *Bulletin of the Menninger Clinic*, 55, (1991).

[43] This complementarity between Meissner and Pruyser is rather ironic, given that for the most part, although they both utilized Winnicott, they ignored each other's writing. Cf. Chapter IV for further discussion of this irony.

experience.[44]

But what is a fetish, or what differentiates fetishistic phenomena from transitional phenomena? According to Meissner's source, Phyllis Greenacre, the psychoanalytic diagnosis of fetishism involves sexual perversions with objects connected in some way with the mother, a mother who was traumatically absent from her child to such an extent that the infant, the child and later the adult is severely traumatized. In such cases, the adult is unable to engage in genital sex without the aid of the fetish,[45] and the use of the fetishistic object (FO) is always characterized by fixation, a repetition compulsion, and the magical assuaging of anxiety. While Greenacre does also discuss the possibility of fetishistic phenomena (rather than simply a FO) she does so in rather vague terms that would make it difficult to differentiate from transitional phenomena:

> There are other fetishistic phenomena in which the differences from the transitional object are not so clear-cut. This is especially true in conditions where the fetish is not related specifically to the genital sexual performance. It would be helpful, then, to study the fetish as an amulet or magic object, as a symbolic object in religious rites, as a token in romantic love, and as a special property in children's play. The use of the transitional object seems then to be prolonged and ultimately serves a fetishistic need.[46]

However, the connection with the genitals is key to most of her discussion of fetishistic objects and phenomena, as is the fact that fetishes are a later development as compared with transitional phenomena. The key differentiation for Greenacre and Meissner is that there is a certain rigidity or fixity in the use of the fetishistic object or phenomena compared to the use of transitional phenomena, that the trauma and anxiety are deeper, more pathological. Both Greenacre, who was a contemporary

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[44] Meissner, *Psychoanalysis and Religious Experience*, pp. 181-82.

[45] Phyllis Greenacre, "The Fetish and the Transitional Object" (1969) in *Emotional Growth*, vol. 1, (New York: International Universities Press, 1971).

[46] Greenacre, "Fetish and Transitional Object," p. 320.

of Winnicott's, and Meissner are still caught in the ethnocentric view of Winnicott (and the upper and middle classes of western society)--i.e., it is now admitted, and has been for some time, that the transitional object is not ubiquitous and in fact is a sign of pathology in the infant and child, of difficulties managing separation from the mother.[47]

Melitta Sperling, in her 1963 article "Fetishism in Children" was sharply critical of Winnicott saying that what he was calling transitional objects (TOs) were really fetishistic objects(FOs), that they were not discovered by the children but presented by severely neurotic mothers with pathological results, i.e., that separation was not being managed properly leading to an arrest in development for the child. Thus this confusion of TOs with FOs was dangerous.[48] And, in fact, although this is not what Winnicott intended, due to the tremendous influence he had in British society, many mothers took it upon themselves to present their children with "objects" believing that this was helpful to their development.[49]

Although Winnicott would not have agreed that the adoption of a TO represented an arrest in an infant's or child's development he did realize that sometimes TOs developed into FOs, if the environmental conditions were not supportive enough--he believed that TOs and FOs were on a continuum. There is also some confusion in how he described the TO for on the one hand he said it was never subject to magical control--an important distinction between TOs and FOs--but on the

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[47] Cf. Chapter II, pp. 93-4.

[48] Melitta Sperling, "Fetishism in Children," in *Psychoanalytic Quarterly*, v. XXXI, (1962). To be clear, Sperling's problem was not so much with nomenclature, whether or not this phenomena was termed FOs or TOs. Her criticism was that these objects were used by mothers to manage separation that wasn't going well, and that because of being able to fall back on these objects, the infants arrested in their development, and thus were not able to separate from mother.

[49] Cf. for example, Davis and Wallbridge's *Boundary and Space*, p. 60.

other hand he observed that TOs were sometimes more important than the mother and that children were addicted to them.

Abbot A. Bronstein, in his "The Fetish, Transitional Objects, and Illusion" in the 1992 volume celebrating Winnicott's contributions that includes Meissner's article on transitional religious phenomena, offers a much needed clarification of this subject.[50] The word fetish, according to Bronstein,

> ...is derived from a Latin root, meaning an object having magical powers. In some cultures, fetishistic objects hold a position of particular reverence. They are imbued with powers from two sources: (1) from the belief that the object has a will of its own, and (2) that a god dwells within the object and has transformed it into an instrument of his own desires. In most cultures, the power of the fetish is also extremely dangerous and is to be handled or touched by special individuals.[51]

In his following review of the literature, beginning with Freud and classical psychoanalytic thought in which the fetish was always the maternal penis, castration anxiety the root aetiology, Bronstein makes the following assertion:

> Though fetishistic and perverse phenomena seem to have figured prominently in only a small portion of our adult population and, overtly, in even fewer child patients, I believe that such symptoms are of great importance to varying degrees and intensity in all our analytic work.[52]

In making this claim Bronstein is not thinking so much of the classical interpretation of fetishes but more contemporary ones as evidenced in Sperling's article cited above. Sperling, as mentioned above, contends that fetishistic phenomena in young children were due more to separation anxieties than castration fears. Sperling's (and Bronstein's) hypothesis is that maternal behaviour contributes

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[50] Abbot A. Bronstein, "The Fetish, Transitional Objects, and Illusion," in *The Psychoanalytic Review*, 79, (1992).

[51] Bronstein, "Fetish, Transitional Objects," p. 240.

[52] Ibid.

significantly to the genesis and maintenance of the infantile fetish and, later, the adult fetish.[53]

According to Bronstein, there are two main theories of infantile fetishes, one of genital origination and the other of pre-genital origination. Winnicott did himself stay with the genital orientation, believing that TOs could later develop into FOs and Meissner takes the same line:

> The empathic good-enough mother arrives in sufficient time to prevent the metamorphosis of the *good* transitional object into a fetish object. The metamorphosis in the direction of the fetish is in a sense a developmental cul-de-sac. But with good-enough mothering the transitional object evolves in the direction of the formation of a broader intermediate transitional space where symbolic activities and creative effort can find their natural living place.[54] {*emphasis added*}

Bronstein, offers a corrective to this picture by describing the divergent developmental trajectories of TO's and FO's. In his view the normal pattern is the development of the TO in which the infant and child move through a transitional phase to a new stage of life, and in this transition the child is able to symbolize the original experience of union with the mother. Contrasted with this is the pathological pattern of the fetish object in which the ability to symbolize has been lost and the FO becomes the replacement for the mother rather than a substitute, the FO itself providing "... the comforting, soothing, and containing of his fears."[55]

However, Bronstein continues to function in a Winnicottian world seemingly oblivious of the growing body of research which points to the relatively pathological nature of transitional objects: when these studies are taken into account it seems that it is closer to the evidence to say that TOs and FOs exist on a continuum of phenomena with which children try to soothe their anxiety, anxiety

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[53] Bronstein, "Fetish, Transitional Objects," pp. 242-3.

[54] Meissner, *Psychoanalysis and Religious Experience*, pp. 169-70.

[55] Bronstein, "Fetish, Transitional Objects," p. 254.

caused by breakdowns in environmental provision. The different levels of pathology, or the ability to symbolize or not, seem to represent different levels of anxiety which must be managed. However, the majority of children do not need transitional or fetishistic objects, and one would have to hypothesize that this is because their anxiety is manageable within the environmental provision, there is no need to offer a pacifier or comforting toy.

On the latter point Bronstein again is helpful. On the basis of his own observations, he, with Sperling, believes that,

> . . . the parent always aids in the selection and creation of this [TO or FO] object where one exists, but for different purposes and to different ends. When parents require an external regulator for their own impulses toward the child and are unable to safely contain the child's affective states, a magically endowed object of some kind serves to keep the system operating. Here the magical, omnipotent object serves both parent and child. During the child's second year, when the depressive and separation anxieties mount for both parent and child, the burden to contain these anxieties is usually relegated to the magical control of some blanket, toy, old diaper, or shoe kept close at hand to ease the internal pressures of both parent and child.[56]

On the basis of his observations, illustrated by a case study, Bronstein finds that there are parents, who because of being unable to regulate their own infantile wishes, conflicts and affects, are doubly burdened by those of their own infant's or child's and thus for both parent(s) and child, the FO can become that magical regulator that does for them what the parents cannot provide.

> We are now able to define the infantile as well as the adult fetish object as the replacement for the ambivalently loved person by the omnipotently controlled fetish object.[57]

What Bronstein means here by omnipotent control, by magic, by the collapse of symbolism is that the FO, instead of being a vehicle for creative play and the management of anxiety in minor disturbances

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[56] Bronstein, "Fetish, Transitional Objects," p. 256.

[57] Ibid., p. 257.

like the TO is instead rigidly held, and used in a compulsive repetitive manner that manages to assuage anxiety that otherwise would completely overwhelm the fetishist. In this case, rather than a symbolic area of play, we have something that has to be real, instead of an illusion supported by the environment we have a delusion required by the environment. Thus the ability to symbolize collapses and the object instead has a special or magical reality. Bronstein, like Greenacre, as mentioned above, at one point in his argument says that an understanding of this phenomena could have wide application in other than classic fetish cases, which of course afflict only a very small minority of the population. But this suggestion is not further elaborated.

Both Greenacre and Bronstein are still entranced by an aspect of Winnicott's theory that is better jettisoned, the ethnocentric belief that transitional objects are normative, reflective of how a healthy development should proceed. It might be better to say that transitional and fetishistic phenomena are products of a process in which we learn to idiosyncratically shape our personal versions of reality as we manage anxiety and try to make reality bearable.

Beyond the Fetish Object: The Paranoid Process, The Cult Phenomenon and Various Other Pathologies of Transitional Religious Experience

Meissner's use of a typology of fetish objects in his earlier work is extended into a range of pathologies discoverable within religious experience. In later works, Meissner is forced to nuance his position, his use of fetishistic language is clarified and a number of other pathologies adumbrated, although in the end, the same basic approach remains:

> As is the case with other forms of traditional experience, this process can be misdirected into infantile or pathological channels. Greenacre (1969, 1970) has provided a workable model of the relationship between the transitional object and the development of a fetish. *A word of caution may be useful at this point regarding the use and implication of*

> *terms. Just as the realm of transitional experience and conceptualization is not synonymous with the transitional object, so the application of terms pertaining to the transitional realm or fetishistic distortions is not synonymous with the infantile or pathological experience of either. There is no sense in which God can be regarded as a transitional object, but the mode of conceptualization by which we think of God may involve transitional components. If we speak of a fetishistic dimension in thinking about religious objects, this does not imply that the phenomenon is a piece of fetishistic pathology.*[58]

Meissner's first qualification removes the bluntness of the ugly comparison. His second qualification admits other than fetishistic pathologies to the spectrum:

> *The transitional mode of experiencing and conceptualizing can be distorted by the excessive injection of subjective needs, needs which may be pathologically derived. The needs when pathological are not necessarily synonymous with the needs involved in the pathology of the fetish. They may reflect unresolved dependency needs, passivity, narcissism, conflicts over aggression, guilt, shame, inadequacy, identity conflicts, and so on. The religious object can become the vehicle for projective or transference processes that involve the object in a defensive or need-satisfying system. When such a defensive course is followed, religious objects or practices begin to take on a magical quality that perverts their authentic religious impulse and meaning.* Religious objects, prayers, and rites become magical talismans in the service of magical expectations and infantile needs. In this sense religious objects can be reduced to talismans, religious rites can become obsessional rituals, and religious faith can be corrupted into ideology. *The more these "fetishistic" or otherwise defensive components pervade the individual believer's beliefs and the belief systems of the religious community, the more they might be presumed to veer toward Freud's vision of religious systems as delusional.*[59]

The reader will remember that Meissner earlier uses a liberal, tolerant language based in Winnicott's view of illusion to say that everyone is different, everyone's way of shaping the world has unique features. But here he does an about face and places people in more or less pathological groupings while invoking Freud's criticisms as being legitimately applied to this or that group that deviates from what he sees to be healthy religion. The above expansion of Meissner's corruption of Winnicott's

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[58] Meissner, "Role of Transitional Conceptualization," p. 107. (The italicized section is Meissner's addition to the original text of *Psychoanalysis and Religious Experience*).

[59] Ibid., p.108. (*emphasis* again signals Meissner's additions)

realm of transitional experience, a corruption that creates healthy and pathological transitional experiences, does not however yet represent the full range of Meissner's enumeration of pathological religious phenomena.

In his 1991 article, "The phenomenology of religious psychopathology" Meissner details his analyses of a number of pathologies found in religious experience. In his introductory comments Meissner, as we have come to expect, differentiates healthy from unhealthy religious beliefs, names the appropriate authority for deciding religious "truth," and locates pathology in religious belief systems particularly those of "deviant religious groups:"

> To the extent that a patient uses religious beliefs to *pervert or subvert effective and adaptive functioning*, or as an expression of personality disturbance or symptomatic disruption, *we can judge the religious adaptation to be psychiatrically pathological*. In making such a judgement, we prescind from any conclusion regarding the religious validity or truth of the beliefs in question. That *judgment* belongs not to the psychoanalyst or psychiatrist, but to the *theologian*.
>
> The pathology of belief systems . . . may be most dramatically expressed in organized religious groups, especially in some cults, sects, and other more or less *deviant* religious groups.[60][*emphasis added*]

We see in Meissner an unholy alliance between "scientific" theology the "judge"of religious beliefs and "adjustment" psychology whose task is to adjust the individual to his/her context without questioning the health of that context--thus the use of the word "deviant." This is an especially potent weapon in religious rivalry, being able to designate certain whole ways of being pious or religious as potentially pathological. What a theologian and psychoanalyst such as Meissner might see as building a structure to contain and ameliorate deviance is in fact as well a language of dominance, an ideology serving the needs of the dominant hegemony within the Roman Catholic Church by suppressing or discrediting other influential grassroots movements or groups like Marian devotion, charismatic

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[60] Meissner, "religious psychopathology," p. 282.

renewalists or cursillistas. Religious experience is being typecast in such a manner that religious authorities can proscribe behaviours and label believers as pathological even though these people may be functioning well-enough in their own lives, families, careers and society. This is where social-psychological research is required, to sort out the ideology and transferences or countertransferences on the part of the researcher from what is actually being lived by the people he or she is judging. With that, a fuller utilization of Winnicott would really help: incorporating his non-hierarchical, respectful approach to those helped, eager to learn from them rather than impose pathological diagnoses on them. If Meissner was more familiar with Winnicott's approach to countertransference, to being used by his clients and students, then he would not be perverting his theory of transitional experiencing with the addition of pathological categorizations. Meissner's use of pathological concepts distinguishing between healthy and unhealthy transitional experiencing is not in the spirit of Winnicott--it does not represent the kind of tolerance and openness to discovery he embodied.

It was not Winnicott's way to name certain cultural transitional phenomena pathological. And in fact it flies in the face of the humanistic inclusive project that Meissner seemed to be establishing. The only judgement Winnicott makes along cultural lines is:

> Should an adult make claims on us for our acceptance of the objectivity of his subjective phenomena we discern or diagnose madness. If, however, the adult can manage to enjoy the personal intermediate area without making claims, then we can acknowledge our own corresponding intermediate areas, and are pleased to find a degree of overlapping, that is so to say common experience between members of a group in art or religion or philosophy.[61]

Winnicott gives us instead a gentle, respectful, "live and let live" approach to the formation of cultural groups, the only judgement being, "Don't try to force your version of reality onto us or we will think

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[61] *Playing and Reality*, p. 14. It is ironic that immediately following this citation Meissner begins his first discussion of pathology with transitional objects (*Psychoanalysis and Religious Experience*, p. 169), a discussion which of course is not modelled on Winnicott's own description of pathology.

you are crazy." Just as this was his understated response to the zeal of Klein and her group to win adherents, I can imagine the same diagnosis being made here.

Another of Meissner's innovations in the psychoanalytic understanding of religious phenomena is what he calls the "cult phenomenon," a category that hopefully will not get much use beyond his own string of articles in *The Psychoanalytic Study of Society* on the Cult Phenomena in everything from Early Christianity to modern day Messianic Judaism. Meissner defines the cult phenomenon as "factionalization" by which he means the formation of dissident groups within established religions that then split off and form their own new groups, usually with a strong paranoid cast to their ideology.[62] This is rather a weak bit of social scientific labelling, since what he is describing is closer to the sociological defintion of "sects" than "cults." However, it may well be indicative of just how ensconsed Meissner is in a mainstream Christian perspective--deviant religious groups seem to him to be at root factional rather than new innovations.[63]

The main dynamic that Meissner sees acting in this cult phenomenon as well as other sorts of religious psychopathology is what he has coined "the paranoid process." By paranoid process

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[62] W.W. Meissner, "The Cult Phenomenon and the Paranoid Process," in *The Psychoanalytic Study of Society*, 12, (1988), pp. 70-74.

[63]Meissner does briefly mention the fact that some new groups are transplants from other religions and some other simply new innovations, but his main heuristic is "factionalization" a word which better relates to the formation of sects rather than cults. It is interesting that Metta Spencer, the author of a recent introduction to sociology, *Foundations of Modern Sociology*, 5th Edition, (Scarborough: Prentice-Hall Canada, 1990), found fault with the Canadian sociologist, Reginald W. Bibby, *Fragmented Gods: The Poverty and Potential of Religion in Canada*, (Toronto: Irwin, 1987), for much the same reason. She agrees with David A. Knock, "Cult, Sect and Church in Canada: A re-examination of Stark and Bainbridge," in *Canadian Review of Sociology and Anthropology*, 24, (1987) who criticizes Bibby for failing to differentiate between cults and sects and notes the resultant distortions in his findings and projections (p. 350). What is of interest is that the one major factor shared by Meissner and Bibby is of course their church background.

Meissner means that developmental process in which beginning with the ambivalence of the oedipal situation, an ambivalence that is resolved through splitting and the projection of good and bad objects onto one's respective parents, the groundwork is laid for relating to a world of good people and bad people, idealized groups or beliefs and denigrated groups or beliefs:

> The paranoid mechanisms thus serve to divert destructive feelings and to resolve ambivalence. They accomplish this by the use of displacements, projections, introjections, and the institution of a form of false belief system in which one object is relatively idealized and the other devalued (the paranoid construction).
>
> The resolution of ambivalence in the Oedipal context serves as a paradigm for the use of paranoid mechanisms in the resolution of ambivalence more generally. In the organization of groups and the working out of group behaviour, protection from the sense of loss and separation is accomplished by idealizing and libidinizing the values and attitudes and beliefs of one's own group while, at the same time, devaluing, rejecting, and opposing the values and attitudes of what does not belong to one's group. Many aspects of these forms of group-related paranoid mechanisms act to insure that group members will direct positive feelings towards one another and toward their own group and negative feelings toward outsiders. The process serves to resolve the inherent ambivalence in any such group relationship and provides a greater constancy and stability of psychic relationships. It is a form of normal delusion formation which serves to aggrandize one object or set of objects and conversely denigrates and devalues all other objects.[64]

Meissner goes on to discuss how these mechanisms function adaptively for the individuals involved--giving them a sense of identity through introjection (I am we) and through projection (I am not they). He recognizes that having a group to which to belong is important for many, even most people. It gives a certain broad base for identity thus making it less likely that otherwise idiosyncratic beliefs would evolve towards the pathological end of the spectrum.[65]

> . . . the group process provides a support and context within which the individual paranoia can assert itself and sustain itself. Given the mutual support and reinforcement for the false belief system shared by the group, the belief system then becomes for the group a matter of principle, an ideology, or a dogma, for which group members are willing to contend, fight,

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[64] W.W. Meissner, *The Paranoid Process*, pp. 799-800.

[65] Ibid., pp. 800-01.

> and even in certain extreme situations surrender their lives. In reflecting on the paranoid process, consequently, it is important to remember that the system of delusional belief which characterized the paranoid distortion is driven by strong internal defensive and adaptive needs. It is motivated by the need to resolve intolerable ambivalence and to avoid the pain of loss--most poignantly and pressingly the pain of narcissistic loss and deprivation. Thus the individual psyche resorts to any devices which offer it the promise of sustaining narcissistic impairment and integrating a sense of self and identity, which is both internally consistent and coherent and articulated within a context of acceptance and belonging.[66]

Thus the group characterized by paranoid processes is for its members in fact a safe, nurturing environment, perhaps even this author would add, a good-enough or a holding environment and any conflicts or negative feelings can be safely projected onto external individuals, groups or forces.

It is this individual and group delusional process that Meissner sees in the operations of groups he labels as being characterized by the Cult Phenomena. He also admits that most political and religious groups show the same dynamics,[67] but he argues, they are at their most pathological in factionalization--the Cult Phenomena.

What is missing or underplayed by Meissner in his purported analysis of "cults" is the effects of membership in these alternative religious groups. Studies that showed a high degree of pathology or of worsening pathology would certainly buttress his theory. In fact in the one study in which he did include some social-scientific research into the effects of cult membership, he emphasized the finding that a greater degree of psychopathology was found amongst group members prior to their becoming involved, rather than the equally obvious interpretation favoured by the authors of the

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[66] Meissner, *Paranoid Process*, p. 801.

[67] In fact, Meissner's tone is quite different when discussing what he seems to find as the normal paranoid dynamics inherent in political groups as opposed to the problematic dynamics of religious groups. (Cf. *Paranoid Process*, pp 795-813).

study, that these groups attracted these people because they could help them.[68] Needless to say, he didn't refer to this sort of research in any more of this studies, although Galanter, the lead author for these studies, has since produced a substantial amount of balanced research and interpretation of these Eastern alternative religious movements.[69] The distortion and suppression or ignoring of available data on the benefits of "cult" membership by an analyst who purports to be a member of the scientific community (both by reason of his psychoanalytic and "scientific theological" backgrounds) raises questions about not only the validity (weak conceptualization and selective evidence) but also the motives of this work.

I, with a number of other psychoanalytic authors, believe that the themes of one's own life are manifested in one's creations, and certainly, in the case of Winnicott, have found that each of his theoretical constructs bear the marks of his own psychodynamic and interpersonal situations. What life themes can be discerned in Meissner's theoretical application of paranoid mechanisms to group phenomena? Are there examples in his writing of the use of paranoid language? The expectation would be that one would see "good" - "bad" descriptors and idealizing versus denigrating language when identity and core-value issues were prominent. Conversely one might expect to see less of the paranoid constructions in those areas that were not as central to Meissner's sense of self and primary group loyalties.

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[68] W.W. Meissner, "The Cult Phenomenon: Psychoanalytic Perspective," in *The Psychoanalytic Study of Society*, 10, (1984) pp. 97-8.The Studies cited are: M. Galanter, and P. Buckley, "Evangelical religion and meditation: Psychotherapeutic effects," in *Journal of Nervous and Mental Diseases*, v. 166, 1978, pp. 685-691; and M. Galanter, et al., "The 'Moonies': A psychological study of conversion and membership in a contemporary religious sect," in *American Journal of Psychiatry*, 136, (1979).

[69] Perhaps Marc Galanter's most significant contribution is his monograph, *Cults: Faith, Healing, and Coercion*. (Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1989).

I already noted above, how in the introductory sections to the *Psychoanalysis and Religious Experience*, the interesting use of positive libidinal language on the part of Meissner, i.e., "these thoughtful religious men," the "amazingly open-minded psychoanalytic community," and the "good analyst." If one recalls that Rizutto, who lived and worked in the same context as Meissner, yet had very different things to say about psychoanalytic attitudes towards religion, as well as the evidence hidden in Meissner's brushing aside "the myth of libidinal licence" and Calabrese's story,[70] what we have here in Meissner's characterization of the psychoanalytic community may well be an idealization in the face of contradicting evidence. Perhaps this idealizing tendency in Meissner will be more evident to the reader after considering other examples of this type of language in his psychology of religion writings.

In an effort to fend off Freud's criticisms and to validate certain kinds of religious experience, Meissner uses positive libidinizing language both in his developmental schemas as well as his characterizations of mystics and saints. Take for example Meissner's description of the higher reaches of prayerful experience:

> . . . the range of prayerful experience extends . . . to the deepest and most profound forms of mystical experience which are restricted to those who reach the highest degrees of spiritual perfection.[71]

This idealization is even clearer in the following excerpt from Meissner's description of Stage 5 faith experience (the ultimate):

> We touch, at the higher reaches of this modality, the realm of integration of the faith experience that bridges over into spiritual experience often described in terms of special graces, mystical gifts, and spiritual genius. *Such individuals reflect an inner life of lucidity,*

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[70]Cf. op. cit. n. 21, pp.107-8.

[71] Meissner, *Psychoanalysis and Religious Experience*, p. 243.

> *simplicity, and inner harmony that escapes the great majority of humans, yet somehow seems more fully and more profoundly human.* The love of God in these souls *seems* wholly unselfconscious, stripped of the residues of infantile narcissism, and yet capable of integration into a life of activity, responsibility, and generative fulfilment. They often *seem* capable of profoundly meaningful object relations that are characterized by selfless love and acceptance of others. It is here that the lives of the saints need more careful scrutiny, for it is possible that the model of narcissistic regression is inappropriate to the description of these phenomena and to the evaluation of the higher reaches of spiritual attainment within this modality. A more appropriate model might be found in an enlargement and intensification of the meaning of unremitting object love. It is the quality that Erikson (1964) has hinted at in his description of ego integrity and wisdom.[72] {*emphasis added*}

He is not talking here about real people, but the stuff of legends and historicized biography, that is the lives of the saints. There is a strong idealizing tendency in Meissner that goes hand in hand with his psychopathological denigration of a variety of groups.

If this is the case, that in fact Meissner's own vision of religious experience includes strong idealizing and denigrating elements, then according to his own way of analysing transitional religious experience, he is subject to Freud's interpretation of his own religious vision as delusional. By this I mean that, according to Meissner's own analysis of paranoid phenomena he himself seems to be an individual who is part of a group that functions on the basis of these strong defensive needs of establishing identity (I am we and I am not they), we being the people who are positively libidinized and they, the ones who are negatively libidinized.

> The more these . . . defensive components pervade the individual believer's beliefs and the belief systems of the religious community, the more they might be presumed to veer toward Freud's vision of religious systems as delusional.[73]

After all Meissner himself also said,

> . . . that the system of delusional belief which characterized the paranoid distortion is driven

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[72] Meissner, *Psychoanalysis and Religious Experience*,, pp. 157-58.

[73] Meissner, "Role of Transitional Conceptualization," p. 108.

by strong internal defensive and adaptive needs.[74]

Meissner's use of idealizing and denigrating language, when taken with his choice not to test his diagnoses with measures of health and well-being applied both to his own community and those he psychopathologizes, leaves the strong impression that what we have here is paranoid psychology of religion.

Psychology of religion is an interesting vocation, at least on the basis of considering Meissner's work: On the one hand positively assessing those whom one values with a problematic arsenal of psychological tools--problematic because so much of religious experience can be interpreted as evidence of psychopathology--while on the other hand using the same criteria or tools to pathologize those whose way of being, believing and practising one finds foreign or who inspire antipathy in oneself. The problem here is that unchecked religious bias--a paranoid religious point of view that celebrates some ways of being religious while denigrating others--gets inserted into a developmental, ego-psychological framework.[75]

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[74] Meissner, *Paranoid Process*, p. 801.

[75]The problem with ego psychology, as I see it, is its normalizing thrust with complete disregard for the context--adjustment and the failure to adjust is its focus. To make such a psychology the basis for theological reflection further constricts human possibilities. Below is a sample of Meissner's synthesis of the two:

> The ego is, therefore, the agent of intrapsychic harmony and adjustment to external reality.
>
> Reality has a certain predetermined structure into which the ego must learn to fit itself harmoniously. Failure to make such an adjustment brings a high cost in terms of conflict, tension, frustration, etc. The ego has the alternative, vis-á-vis reality, of adjustment or withdrawal as possible means of resolving the tensions resulting from the failure to achieve integration. The reality in question is a complex order of things that includes not only the world of physical existents, but other people in complex social and cultural interaction. Beyond these experienceable aspects of reality, there is the profoundly meaningful reality that is known through revelation. Man lives and moves and has his being in a reality that is supernatural and spiritual; his adjustment to reality cannot be regarded as complete unless the ego has been able to integrate its functioning harmoniously in relation to the order of spiritual

Meissner's *Ignatius of Loyola: The Psychology of a Saint,*[76] in which he analyses his patron saint, shows how religious bias continues to characterize his analyses. On beginning to read this work, it becomes immediately evident that Ignatius was quite "sick," and yet, according to Meissner, showed a tremendous ability to both keep that "disorder" at bay and at the same time be an inspirational, highly organized leader and a self-disciplined ascetic. Gone is the inspirational suggestive approach only to be replaced by the heroic though psychopathological approach. The following excerpt, is the clearest example of how Meissner recognizes pathology in his previously idealized patron, but still assesses him very positively:

> . . . in his periods of prayer and mystical ecstasy Ignatius entered such a realm of transitional experience. His mystical experiences were forms of illusion, in Winnicott's sense, that were expressions of his inner subjective psychic life, *with its complex needs and determinants--infantile, narcissistic, libidinal, and otherwise--as they intersected with an external reality* that can be described in theological terms as divine presence, grace, infused contemplation, and other transcendental manifestations. If one accepts the validity of such a conceptual device it becomes possible, even with the limitations of a psychoanalytic understanding, to speak of the influence of drives, needs, psychic representations (the God-representation), and the whole range of dynamic and adaptational considerations that might impinge on the mystical experience itself. That issue is not for psychoanalysis to decide. It can do no more than reach its own understandings, in terms that do no violence to the objective dimensions of our human efforts to fathom such transcendent experiences that take place at the limits, or the horizons, of human capacity.[77][*emphasis added*]

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realities and values. Cf. W.W. Meissner, *Life and Faith: Psychological Perspectives on Religious Experience*, (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 1987), p. 24.
The focus of spirituality then becomes the adjustment to reality as defined by the church. But spirituality, and for that matter, psychoanalysis, has the potential for giving people alternative ways of relating to status quo, including rejecting or criticizing parts of it if they are deemed to be damaging or restrictive. The transformative potential of "grace baptized ego-psychology" seems limited to how well you can accommodate to the status quo, while yet finding the sanctioned "true" depths of spirituality.

[76] W.W. Meissner, *Ignatius of Loyola: The Psychology of a Saint*, (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1992).

[77] Meissner, *Psychology of a Saint*, p. 391.

This is exactly the same *psychoanalytic language* he uses to designate psychopathology in articles written at the same time as this work was being written.[78] Here however, he is saying, in effect, yes the pathology is here, but there is so much else. This recognition of pathology and gift in the same person perhaps correlates with the ambivalence of a more mature position. Rather than idealizing and denigrating, Meissner can see both strengths and weaknesses, health and pathology in the same person.

We have seen a Meissner who idealizes and denigrates religious experiences of others and now a more ambivalent third approach. The three ways Meissner relates to the religious experience of others seem to be: are they consonant with my values(idealized), pathological like me(tolerantly appreciated), or not-me, deviant, against my values(psychopathologized and denigrated). In effect, although he is a psychoanalyst, and thus has himself had a training analysis, he seems to be an example of what Rizzuto warned of, an analyst whose religion, transferences and countertransferences need more examination.

Psychoanalytic Evolutionary and Developmental Language

There is one last aspect of Meissner's psychopathological categorization that requires attention, and that is the distinction he draws between magical, infantile and primitive religiosity as opposed to authentic, mature religiosity. The use of these concepts and understandings is not limited to Meissner, but can be found in many psychoanalytic writings. It is my position though that the use of this kind of language to describe the experience of people whose culture or religiosity differs from one's own is ethnocentric and inappropriate.

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[78] *Psychology of a Saint* was published in 1992, the articles in 1990 and 1992, and as I have pointed out, Meissner tends to reproduce the same arguments, even sentences and paragraphs.

We saw above in Meissner's description of "the fetishistic course" that religious phenomena become less authentic and more magical--serving infantile needs--the more fetishistic they become.[79] In Meissner's understanding infantile religious experience is magical, i.e., trees are alive, spirits appear, special objects have magical powers. This style of developmental psychology includes a version of evolutionary psychology. The following extended quotation shows how this facile parallel is drawn by psychological theorists between what we observe in western children and what we observe in other people in other contexts:

> Piaget has studied the child's sense of immanent justice. A child of six, for example, believes that a wrong deed will be punished automatically by some catastrophe. This belief in immanent justice is reinforced by his animistic belief in humanlike intentions behind events in the world . . . . The belief in immanent justice diminishes with age, so that by the time of puberty it is practically nonexistent, at least in children raised in Western cultures . . . . In a child's mind, however, these attitudes merely represent a mixture of emerging religious beliefs with magical beliefs.
>
> Similar manifestations of religious attitudes can be found in primitive religions, but in the child they remain open to gradual transformation and modification during the rest of the developmental sequence. Persistence of such beliefs can be found in animistic beliefs in divine protection or divine punitive intentions. They may also find expression in belief in the causal efficacy of prayers, particularly in the expectation that God will hear and answer the petitioner's prayers. Sacramental signs and rituals in particular provide an arena in which such magical expectations may play themselves out. A child often believes that the sacraments have some automatic, magical effect that is produced independently of the recipient's consciousness. The residues of such magical belief can be identified even in adolescence. This trend in religiosity can be reinforced by the natural obsessionality of latency-age children, particularly in obsessional practices--for example, repeating certain numbers, counting groups of objects, avoiding cracks in the pavement, and so forth. These are more or less secular forms of magical ritualistic behaviour that are easily translated into a magical religious form of ritualism.[80]

This differentiation between primitives and advanced Westerners is an unfortunate anachronism in

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[79] Meissner, *Psychoanalysis and Religious Experience*, p. 182.

[80] Meissner, *Life and Faith*, pp. 34-5.

the work of Meissner, Weston La Barre[81], and many other psychoanalytic thinkers, and it arises from the method psychoanalysts use to comprehend human phenomena.

Generally speaking, psychoanalysts, by confronting pathology, come to understand how human beings function in the first place, an understanding that perhaps would otherwise not be gained. Freud's work with hysterical women and Winnicott's work with displaced children during WWII are both prime examples of this: Freud came to understand sexuality and repression through hysterical acting out, Winnicott came to understand the trauma of separation from the caregiver and thus the necessity of good-enough reliable care. But what happens when this sort of insight is applied to people from other cultural, ethnic or religious groups, especially if their way of seeing the world conflicts with the values of the analyst? To best answer this question I believe requires a psychoanalytic interpretation of psychoanalysis, an interpretation grounded in the study of other cultures.

Howard F. Stein, a psychoanalytic anthropologist, in his article "The Problem of Insidious Ideology and Countertransference in Behavioural Science," claims that psychoanalysis like any other system of thought can be used as an ideology, as a defence or a form of resistance to new insight. Ideology for Stein is a system of thought,

> . . . that screens and edits feedback from within and without the organism in order to confirm premises that, for reasons of psychic homeostasis, "must" be true. The delusional character of *any* ideology stems from its fixity in the fact of contradicting evidence. Doubt-haunted faith seeks only its own data . . . . Consensus is one of man's most impregnable bulwarks against anxiety. Our *ego* lacunae in reality testing correspond precisely to those tacit agreements we

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[81] Weston La Barre, *The Ghost Dance: The Origins of Religion*, (New York: Dell, 1972) and "Freudian biology, magic and religion" presented to the American Psychoanalytic Association in 1977 and cited by (Rizzuto, *Birth of the Living God*, pp. 228-9): It is beyond the scope of this thesis to do a survey and analysis of anthropological opinions on evolutionary psychology, but suffice it to say that facile parallels like those in the above quotation are outdated, anachronistic, and ethnocentric.

> make unconsciously and interpersonally to know what we want to know, and to distort or omit altogether what we do not want to know for reasons of our defences. Both at individual and group levels, ideologies are closed cognitive belief systems that represent the world to us as we perceive it.[82]

In Stein's theory, ideologies in any culture perform the function of regulating anxiety, a defensive function that binds a culture together.[83] Scientists and psychoanalysts, as much as any other members of their culture, struggle against the inherent blindness of their own cultural system.[84] Where this blindness is most insidious is when it comes to our cultural assumptions about outsiders, a cultural countertransference that distorts and limits the effectiveness of any such analysis.[85]

It is my argument that when psychoanalysts use words like "primitive," "magical" and "infantile" that they are using culturally constructed words that are part of idealizing a certain way of being--"thoughtful men" and denigrating others--infantile, magical and paranoid. In so doing they reveal their own values and biases, but distort the understanding of people who are different from themselves. What is needed here is an approach to others that does not operate out of preset categories of interpretation but rather out of an inherent respect for clients, students and research subjects.

Winnicott, unlike Meissner, in his own approach to his students, clients and colleagues at the BPS shows something of the same approach as that of Stein. As Clare Winnicott said of her husband,

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[82] Howard F. Stein, "The Problem of Insidious Ideology and Countertransference in Behavioural Science," in Howard F. Stein and Maurice Apprey, *From Metaphor to Meaning: Papers in Psychoanalytic Anthropology*, vol. 2 of *Series in Ethnicity, Medicine, and Psychoanalysis*, (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1987), p. 321.

[83] Stein, "Insidious Ideology," p. 322.

[84] Ibid., p. 324.

[85] Ibid.

"As much as possible he entered into each new situation undefended by his knowledge."[86] In fact, he dedicated *Playing and Reality* "To my patients who have paid to teach me." In a later interview Clare gave further insight into how he saw things quoting him in the following manner:

> Once you're defending your position, you've lost sight of science, he would say. I mean, he would imply that. Once you're defending a position, you watch out. You're on to something different....He would say you're defending a position, which you've perhaps no right to defend. This new evidence doesn't fit into your defended position. Why are you defending your position? What's wrong with it? There's new evidence here that you've got to consider; your position may not be valid.[87]

Winnicott approached his clients and students ready to learn, providing a context in which they could discover together. While being keenly analytical he was strongly against imposing interpretations on people, believing that growth came from within. Meissner's tendency to pathologize those whose values and religious experience differed from his own may be as opposed to Winnicott's way of doing psychoanalysis as one can get.

In summary then, Meissner like many other psychologists of religion, finds in Winnicott the vehicle for advancing a positive view of illusion, a view that recognizes the functional and live giving nature of transitional experience, as well as the idiosyncratic nature of these experiences. However, making recourse to Greenacre's theory of fetishistic objects, thus bringing in a note of pathology foreign to Winnicott's way of conceiving cultural creations, he then reverts to the classical psychoanalytic critique of infantile religion, as a means of labelling those who are not so evolved. Thus the inclusive approach to cultural creations found in Winnicott's tolerant humanism is narrowed in a paranoid, religiously prejudiced manner to serve the interests of a particular group, upholding

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[86] Clare Winnicott, "D.W.W.: A Reflection," p. 17.

[87] "Interview with Clare Winnicott," pp. 190-91.

their idealizations, while denigrating those who do not conform to their brand of scientific theology.

Meissner, it seems, is intent on building an edifice meant to contain and help deviant members of the church or of society. But in the end, it seems to me, rather than "holding" them in Winnicott's sense of the term, Meissner impinges upon those who might be vulnerable to this exercise of hegemonic power, exercising what Winnicott called a "dominating countertransference."

If Meissner had been able to take more from Winnicott, i.e., Winnicott's careful observational approach, the basis for him breaking from Melanie Klein's more imaginative approach, as well as his concomitant respect for each one and the willingness to learn from them: if Meissner had been able to take these things as well from the Winnicott's writings, than perhaps he would not so misused his theory. In the end what Meissner has given us is paranoid psychoanalysis of religion: Winnicott's genial vision is used to reassure a religious group ego in need of comfort after the narcissistic damage of Freud's assault, and idealizations are restored. But unfortunately denigration is the other side of the coin when it comes to describing those whose experiences conflict with his group's way of understanding the world, the church and themselves. Then in the Freudian tradition, he pathologizes freely, in the process altering for the worse Winnicott's transitional sphere. While Meissner's understanding of paranoid processes is of use in a pluralistic society, his paranoid psychology of religion is less so.

Chapter IV
Paul W. Pruyser:
Pioneer, Humanist, Idealist, and Polemicist

Paul W. Pruyser, psychoanalyst, psychiatrist and religious psychologist of religion[1] pioneered the use of Winnicott's work in the psychological study of religion.[2] A Presbyterian elder for much of his adult life, Pruyser enjoyed the respect of his colleagues both in the church and in the psychiatric establishment. A long time distinguished member of the Menninger Clinic, Pruyser published many works both in psychiatry and psychology of religion. Whatever else can be said of him Pruyser contributed much to the necessary dialogue between psychiatry/psychoanalysis and mainstream Christianity.

In reading Pruyser's many works I have noticed that there are at least three distinct authorial voices: the cool-headed, rational scholar making insightful comments on his peers or subjects; the humanist idealist who preaches the value of tolerance, who celebrates the agnostic faith of Einstein as well as the experiential depths of Rudolph Otto; and finally, the polemicist, the denigrator and disparager of evangelical Christianity and many contemporary religious or psychological "fads." (Spared from this critique are the liberationist, social action and process theological approaches to Christianity.) The Pruyser I will portray then is a man of science who did not hesitate to criticize his peers both in the psychiatric as well as the psychology of religion professions, but also a religious psychologist who very much worked to advance the cause of his

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[1] "Religious" is meant to denote Beit-Hallahmi's characterization of those scholars whose church commitments profoundly affect their theory. (Cf. op. cit. n. 1, Intro. p.1.)

[2] Pruyser died in 1987. The subsequent posthumous publication by Malony and Spilka of a collection of his articles, especially their editorial essays on his life and work, are one of the main source of details about, and insights about Pruyser. (H. Newton Malony and Bernard Spilka, "An appreciation of Paul Pruyser," and "The Pruyser Legacy for the Psychology of Religion," in *Religion in Psychodynamic Perspective: The Contributions of Paul W. Pruyser*. Eds. H. Newton Malony and Bernard Spilka, (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991).

brand of religiosity while attacking all other competitors.

The Pruyser who speaks in the first voice I have identified is in many ways a pioneer both in his psychiatric profession as well as in psychology of religion. For example, he acknowledges that his biases are shaping his writing:

> Rather than being afraid lest some of my own beliefs slip through the mazes of scholarly restraints, 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 he is free to judge it from the angle of his own posture.[3]

Thus it with this author's invitation that I analyze him through his work, an invitation issued in 1974 some fifteen or twenty years before other psychologists of religion began suggesting that perhaps knowing a scholar's religious affiliation, biography and definition of religion might help better contextualize his or her theories.

Pruyser the pioneer is also the first psychological practitioner I know of who warns psychiatrists of the vagaries of their own countertransferences to religion and the negative impact this could have on their religious clients. He includes in the list of the possible causes of such a negative countertransference:

> ...the interviewer's own undigested experience in which religion and the do's and don'ts of early moral training are still childishly confused.
> ...an examiner's own God-image, which may be a compound of forbiddingness, strictness and authoritarianism.[4]

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[3] Paul W. Pruyser, *Between Belief and Unbelief*, (New York: Harper and Row, 1974), pp. xi-xii.

[4] Paul W. Pruyser, "Assessment of the Patient's Religious Attitudes in the Psychiatric Case Study," in *Bulletin of the Menninger Clinic*, 35, (1971), p. 287.

While today's readers might find these latter characteristics a bit stereotypical and not that prevalent amongst people today, it may well be that more of the people raised during the first half of this century had an upbringing that would produce such characteristics. Certainly Pruyser is not the only psychiatrist of religion to describe authoritarian religion.[5]

On this theme, in addition to discussing the vicissitudes of religious countertransferences Pruyser also called attention to the psychiatric taboo on discussions of religion:

> Risking overstatement, one might say that there is in clinical practice a conspiracy of silence or a kind of self-imposed taboo on thorough discussions of religious ideas, convictions and practices . . . . But if my general thesis is correct--namely, that beliefs, disbeliefs, and unbelief reflect something about the nature of psychodynamic object relations and interpersonal experience--this taboo must be relinquished, if only to promote better psychiatric assessment and therapy.[6]

For Pruyser, religion clearly belongs in the psychiatric consultation, not only because a patient's religious issues are part and parcel of all of their psychodynamic or relational issues but also because religious issues need to be addressed in an analyst's own analysis.

Pruyser, then in his earlier works is a pioneer in the field of psychiatry and religion. In one of his last publications, we see the same willingness to evaluate his peers, but this time directed towards his colleagues in psychology of religion. In "Where do we go from here? Scenarios for the Psychology of Religion"[7] he delineates many different motivations and aims in psychology of religion scholarship:

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[5] Cf. Erich Fromm, *Psychoanalysis and Religion*, (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1950), for an extended description of humanistic versus authoritarian religion.

[6] *Belief and Unbelief*, p. xiii.

[7] Paul W. Pruyser, "Where Do We Go From Here? Scenarios for the Psychology of Religion," in *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, 26, (1987).

> . . . psychologies of religion which attempt to buttress religion or defend it apologetically by trying to describe, if not prove, its psychological necessity or inevitability; psychologies of religion which seek to make subjective and private experiences objective and public; as regards strange or rare practices some try to make them seem normal or acceptable while others are out to show how pathological they are; some psychologies of religion clearly aim at exposing religion as an atavism or anachronism while others seek to demonstrate the continuity between primitive and modern humanity, between child and adult; some seek to apply psychological understanding to religious phenomena in an exploratory manner, to see what understanding of religion can be gained; finally mixed with some of the above is an approach that greatly respects religion's historical persistence, power, etc. but probes it with a no holds barred analysis.[8]

In this same article, Pruyser also complains about the endemic parochialism or "contented narrowness of vision" afflicting his discipline: ". . . many scholars pay little attention to works outside their own clique."[9] However, despite this analysis of his field, an analysis confirmed in a small way in this thesis, Pruyser himself shows the same tendency, in that although his work predates that of Meissner or Rizzuto, he is not recognized in their writing, but then neither does Meissner appear in his. Evidently, Roman Catholics and Protestants were at one point not reading each other's works.[10] Since there are not that many psychoanalytic commentators on religion, especially those who also make use of Winnicott, this seems to be an example of the kind of parochialism to which Pruyser was referring.

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[8] Pruyser, "Scenarios," pp. 174-5. Of course it is evident which of these approaches is Pruyser's own.

[9] Ibid., p. 176.

[10] I would have agree with Pruyser here, based on what I have found with psychologists of Religion who utilize Winnicott. Neither Meissner nor Pruyser even list each other's major works in their bibliographies, although Meissner's only came out in 1984. John McDargh, on the other hand has done a purposeful synthesis of Protestant and Roman Catholic sources working with Rizzuto, Meissner and Pruyser. One other exception to this rule is Raymond Studzinksi, an oblate who spent some time at the Menninger Clinic and his resulting article "Tutoring the Religious Imagination: Art and Theology as Pedagogues," in *Horizons*, 14, (1987), is a nice synthesis of Pruyser, Rizzuto and Meissner's work.

I have portrayed Pruyser as a pioneer and one not hesitant to evaluate and criticize his peers. What are the life themes that resonate in these characteristics?

Paul W. Pruyser: The man, selected formative experiences, and his theory.

There are three formative life experiences which without doing an exhaustive analysis can be seen as figuring strongly in the shape of Pruyser's theorizing. First among these is the early loss of his father. His wife's first characterization of him when discussing him with the Malony and Spilka was that he was "a rebel."[11] Malony and Spilka speculate ". . . that the lack of a strong socializing father figure was probably a significant influence in his willingness to stand against authority and convention"[12] a characteristic I have identified in my portrayal of Pruyser as a pioneer and critic of his peers. But perhaps even more significantly, at least for his psychological theorizing about religion, is the obvious analytic connection identified by Malony and Spilka between his early loss of his father and his subsequent denial of an anthropomorphized deity.[13] In fact, as we will see, Pruyser is critical of any sort of religion that had "concrete" objects of faith. Malony and Spilka describe his religiosity during the latter years of his life as being closest to orthodox Judaism:

> In personal conversations, he expressed an attraction to the orthodox Judaic proscription against imposing any limitation on God--even in the pronunciation of God's name![14]

As we will see, this loss of his father reverberates through his theories of religious phenomena.

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[11] Malony and Spilka, "An Appreciation of Paul Pruyser," p. 3.

[12] Ibid., p. 4.

[13] Ibid., p. 5.

[14] Malony and Spilka, "The Pruyser Legacy for the Psychology of Religion," p. 213.

The second major formative factor I have selected is the sharp contrast between his home life and his school life, and how this impacted on his faith development. Pruyser's need to question authority--what he called "a degree of neurotic blocking on anything externally imposed"[15] and the contrast between the supportive loving atmosphere in his mother's home versus the rigid and restricting atmosphere of his Calvinist schooling[16] led him to reject the doctrines of the Dutch Reformed Church. The school had a much stricter interpretation of the bible and *The Institutes of the Christian Religion* than did his mother:

> Thus, home and school presented me with two different religious and emotional worlds. The first was mellow, optimistic, and forgiving; the second strict, somber, and punitive....There is nothing like such an upbringing to convince a young boy that religion is what you make it, that all of it is what I now call "illusionistic."The hand of God, much talked about in school, was closer to my mother's tender-and-firm hand than to the threatening and often slapping extremities of my teachers. Small wonder then, that I have always found the highlight of worship the benevolently outstretched hands of a fulsome pastoral blessing, and that one of my dearest pictures is Rembrandt's etching of the father blessing the prodigal son on his return home.[17]

Although he later joined the Presbyterian church and was an active member of it for much of his adult life, he nevertheless experienced ongoing conflicts with the religious contents of faith.

The third major formative experience I have selected is that of the Pruyser, as a young man, living through the Nazis occupation of Holland. As one might expect from what we already know of him, he was a member of the underground throughout that occupation. It is easy to see how a member of the underground during the Nazi occupation of Holland, would also be "a man

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[15] Paul W. Pruyser, "Forms and Functions of the Imagination in Religion" in *Religion in Psychodynamic Perspective*, p. 181.

[16] Malony and Spilka, "An Appreciation," p. 6.

[17] Pruyser, "Forms and Functions," p. 180.

of strong opinions and intense loves and hates."[18] Whether one dates the tendency to strongly identify with one group over against a just as strongly hated other group to these experiences, or even earlier to the difference between his mother's loving but firm hand and "the slapping extremities of his Dutch Reformed teachers,"[19] this was one of his most marked professional and personal characteristics.

This then is the Pruyser I discover through his writings:

1. The anti-authoritarian intellectual whose voice was that of the rational, balanced scholar: he was a scholarly rebel, not afraid to criticize his peers or the canons of his tradition(s);
2. The lyrical humanistic psychoanalyst who celebrates "grand themes," heroic martyrs and great classics in theology, music and art, who has a generous and optimistic tone reminiscent of his mother's home;
3. The sometimes virulent polemicist who doesn't hesitate to denigrate, demean or dismiss those he sees as by their beliefs and practices threatening his cherished beliefs and practices. In this perhaps, understood psychodynamically, he is speaking with the voice of his Calvinist teachers, of the hated Nazis or perhaps those who opposed and hated either.[20]

The Pruyser I have discovered is reminiscent both of W.W. Meissner and Sigmund Freud of whom Peter Gay has said that he worked "best in an atmosphere of tension and combat" --with a

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[18] Malony and Spilka, "The Pruyser Legacy," p. 205.

[19] Malony and Spilka, "An Appreciation," p. 7; quotation from "Forms and Functions of the Imagination in Religion," in *Bulletin of the Menninger Clinic*, 49, p. 363).

[20] It is not coincidental that this is the author who writes of beliefs as "love" and "hate" objects.

friend and against an enemy.[21]

Pruyser the Humanist:

I have elsewhere called Pruyser a religious psychologist, one committed to the furtherance of his religious group. In this section then, by paying attention to his language we will see Pruyser's beliefs and commitments. A psychiatrist and yet an influential member of his church, Pruyser didn't hesitate to juxtapose faith and psychoanalysis:

> . . . a deliberate and passionate agnosticism can be very close to religious belief, despite its surface appearance of unbelief. This commitment to open-endedness is precisely what Rieff has singled out as the attitude of faith in classical psychoanalysis.[22]

He also cites Einstein's epigram "I am a deeply religious unbeliever"[23] as an example of how a secular thinker can yet feel awe and wonder when confronted by the wonder of the natural world. What kind of Christian can appreciate the agnosticism of psychoanalysis or of Einstein, and call it a form of faith? It may well be that he is describing himself or his own values here just as Malony and Spilka speculated that he was describing himself in the following passage:

> . . . in some intellectuals with critical and analytical minds their engagement in psychology of religion is a substitute for, or a once-removed form of engagement in religious thought.[24]

Certainly Pruyser describes himself as an intellectual speaking to the intellectual community:

> Since this book is likely to be read by intellectuals who regard themselves as members of a

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[21] Peter Gay, *A Godless Jew*. (New Haven, Conn: Yale University Press, 1987), pp. 59-60.

[22] Pruyser, *Belief and Unbelief*, p. 60. Pruyser's source for what he calls in his index the "faith of psychoanalysis" is Philip Rief, *The Triumph of the Therapeutic*, (New York: Harper and Row, 1966).

[23] Pruyser, *Belief and Unbelief*, Ibid., p. 114.

[24] Malony and Spilka, "An Appreciation," p. 9; quotation from *Belief and Unbelief*, p. 175).

> special community, inheritors of a special tradition, and claimants to a special kind of freedom, it may not be amiss for me to avow at the beginning of this study that I consider myself a part of the intellectuals' community and share their great tradition of freedom to consider and choose.[25]

Pruyser is an intellectual who though not being agnostic himself certainly values the religious agnostic stance. But if he values the agnostic stance what form of religious experience does he also value? As with a number of other psychologists of religion it is in fact Rudolph Otto's "mysterium tremendum et fascinosum."

Pruyser introduces Otto's *The Idea of The Holy* as a book on "the various qualities of reality and dimensions of experience which are elicited when the holy is encountered."[26] It is noteworthy that Pruyser speaks of Otto's work as describing "reality" for his critique of all other religious types is based in how they substitute wishful fantasizing for reality. As a critic of other's reality claims for religious experience, Pruyser acknowledges that Otto has to deal with the same criticism--are the experiences Otto describes simply in the eye of the beholder rather than being something real? But he allows Otto's response, that of asking "...us first to be open to the phenomenology of the numinous experience.[27] At this point, the open-minded scholar would say fair enough, it is too easy to categorize other's experience according to one's own, and at least being open to the experience is thus an appropriate request. Of course, this is also the tactic taken by enthusiasts of many different religious persuasions. However, the openness to experience that Pruyser requests is in fact tightly circumscribed:

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[25] Pruyser, *Belief and Unbelief*, p. 11.

[26] Ibid., p. 103.

[27] Ibid., p. 104.

> We have here a description of mystery which rings true to the richness of experience. What Otto describes has nothing to do with mystification or mystique, which to the cool-headed man are pejorative words for muddled thinking, promoting unnecessary secrecy. It has nothing to do with the taste for the arcane and the occult which has had its occasional fads.[28]

The switch from idealizing to denigrating language is made easily, and as we will see again and again, they are held in constant tension. While an open mind is requested when it comes to Otto, of course this has nothing to do with all those silly religious fads current today.

Pruyser's brand of religiosity then is clearly religion for the rationalist. He celebrates trends such as "Death of God" theology[29] and at the same time stands open to encounter the mystery that is behind the screen of our projections. Or, consider the conclusion of his first major work in psychology of religion, where he quotes from Paul: "For now we see in a glass, darkly, but then we will see face to face."[30] Gone is the focus on specific contents of faith. Instead Pruyser presents us with the certainty that still behind our fallible and limited images and theologies exists that ground of being from which we sprang and to which we shall return.

The last of Pruyser's values to which I intend to draw the reader's attention is his tolerance. As an intellectual psychoanalytic Christian, Pruyser not only saw his need to consider and choose, but also that in a pluralistic world, others needed to be given the same consideration.

> ...if the sorting out of beliefs and unbeliefs is indeed as laborious, complex, demanding, and continuous a task as this book indicates, it might be a sign of maturity when one's belief system contains an explicit belief in tolerance as a positive value in its own right. All of us, at any point in our lives, have so much reason to assess and reassess our own beliefs

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[28] Pruyser, *Belief and Unbelief*, p. 104.

[29] Cf. Ibid., p. 196.

[30] Paul W. Pruyser, *A Dynamic Psychology of Religion*, (New York: Harper and Row, 1968), p. 339.

> and unbeliefs that we should also believe in the value of "letting be with respect for the nature of divergent states of belief, if not states of being."[31]

Devoting the concluding chapter of this monograph, *Between Belief and Unbelief* to the value of tolerance in a pluralistic society, Pruyser calls for a way of being that both benefits from and benefits those whose beliefs differ from one's own:

> In human intercourse, reverence for life means first of all being reverent toward the mystery of someone else's being--with his beliefs, disbeliefs, and unbeliefs. Openness to mystery is a condition that may move a person from an attitude of mere toleration* of divergent beliefs to the active practice of tolerance as a virtue. Tolerance is not merely a nice gesture to the alien. Like all virtues, it enriches and enlarges the mind of its practitioner.[32]

Closely related to tolerance for Pruyser was the virtue of "caring." "Caring" for Pruyser, is being able to see in others their beliefs and needs to believe, ambivalences, and so on: Caring is "knowing another at a deep level."

> Such an attitude of caring prepares the soil for tolerance: tolerance that lets the other fellow be as he defines himself through his beliefs. Such tolerance can also promote in the cared-for person the desire to care for himself, to examine his beliefs and disbeliefs, and to revise them according to the light he will gain as he cares for himself.[33]

Grounded in a developmental view of object relations that sees everyone's beliefs and disbeliefs tied to events in their lives as combined with their particular situations now, Pruyser believes that if tolerance and caring were practiced that the caring tolerance of "the intellectual"[34] would evoke

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[31] Pruyser, *Belief and Unbelief*, pp. xvi-xvii.

[32] Ibid., p. 266. *For Pruyser, toleration ". . . implies an attitude of disapproval, dislike, or condemnation . . ." (Ibid., p. 262.)

[33] Ibid., p. 267.

[34] What Pruyser seems to connote by identifying himself and his audience as "intellectuals" is a rationalist Christian, likely one informed by psychoanalysis. Of course there are intellectuals who are not Christians, who may have a taste for the arcane or the occult. However, for clarity's sake I

the conditions of possibility for self-actualization both for the "carer" and the recipient whatever their beliefs might be at that time.[35] This is humanistic, psychoanalytic spirituality: self-awareness and non-intrusive awareness of the other perhaps combine to give the other the conditions for acquiring self-awareness as well. Thus, even in his own desire to proselytize Pruyser saw respect and "letting be" as the way to be effective. We see here at times, I believe, evidence of his mother's nurturing in this generous, optimistic approach.

Pruyser, in his more detached, descriptive voice, also speaks of the reality of intolerance and its psychodynamics. At the group level, instances of intolerance he details include one group of devotees (right wing Christians) imposing their mores on others through the legal system as well as the fierce hatred people holding one set of beliefs may receive from those upholding another set in phenomena such as "witch hunts." However, as a professional whose focus is on intrapsychic dynamics, he emphasizes the "...*individual* penchant toward intolerance with which most of us grow up..."

> For each belief we are taught to love, we are taught to hate or despise several alternative beliefs. Positive identity formation accompanies negative identity formation....With the circulation of the large assortment of distorting legends about other fellows' alleged beliefs and practices, it takes considerable fortitude and acumen to avoid exposure to such influences or to overcome their effects after inculcation.[36]

A point well taken. At some level, Pruyser knew that of which he spoke, for as I will demonstrate Pruyser regularly takes recourse to negative stereotypes, knocking down "straw men" that have little to do with the lived experience of the people he is caricaturizing.

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will be faithful to Pruyser's use of the word, and what it means for him.

[35] Pruyser, *Belief and Unbelief*, p. 267.

[36] Ibid., p. 258.

The Polemicist vs. Contemporary Religious Movements

As I have been indicating, Pruyser not only approves of a range of experiences, theologies and psychologies, but there are also those which he disparages, denigrates and dismisses. In the following section we will see some of Pruyser's own words taking flesh as it were, as he himself circulates distorting legends about other people's beliefs and practices. Groups with which Pruyser was unable to overcome these effects include charismatics, witches, and many other New Religious Movements (NRMs) and human potential movement groups.

In the midst of an article in which he brands as narcissistic alternative religious and therapeutic groups (i.e. anything outside of a liberal Christian or psychoanalytic approach) he presents this caricaturization of charismatic renewalists:

> ...we have to envisage the likelihood that some charismatics speak in tongues, jerk their limbs, writhe their bodies, break out in shouts, and claim to receive the Spirit in notably pre-Oedipal ways, which may amount to an apotheosis of themselves.[37]

This is not the description of someone who has actually been present and observed such phenomena but in fact someone passing on distorted beliefs and legends about other people's alleged beliefs and practices. At the same time Pruyser makes reference throughout the article to healthy, balanced religion--i.e., one that is rational, mature and involved in social action and presumably not narcissistic.

Pruyser's caricaturization of "witches" is even more evidently misinformed and belittling:

Belief in magic also derives from the hyperactivity of the pleasure ego and a very weak tie with outer reality. Magic manipulates power--a power of narcissistic origin projected onto the world and then charmed, conjured up, or maneuvered in such a way as to reapproporiate it for self-aggrandizement or for cutting down one's enemies. The blatant disregard of outer reality, so

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[37] Paul W. Pruyser, "Narcissism in Contemporary Religion" in *Journal of Pastoral Care*, 32, (1978), pp. 228-9.

patent in magic, not only makes magical acts silly but inflates the self with each repetition by furthering the enslavement to the pleasure principle. Whatever is deemed to be transcendent in today's renascence of witchcraft and Satanism does not arise from the playful and delicate transitional sphere, but seems a crude projection of the "bad mother" imago, tantalized, bitterly fought, and battered about in a fictionalized "outer world."[38]

Of course, in contemporary witchcraft, magic has many more uses than self-aggrandizement or cutting down one's enemies, in fact, even a cursory glance at Starhawk's work would show that such uses of magic are not appropriate and could be dangerous.[39] When one reads this, one wonders how Pruyser can conclude the same monograph with sentiments like "letting be" when it comes to the diversity of religious beliefs or that each person's beliefs "presumably speak to their needs for the moment," or, "What right have I to deny someone else's right to believe in his fashion...for his existential purposes?"[40]

Perhaps the most dramatic example of Pruyser's "hate objects" is his article "The Seamy Side of Current Religious Beliefs."[41] Although he begins this analysis of neurotic religion with many psychoanalytic disclaimers like we are all sick in some ways and neurotic people sometimes

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[38] Pruyser, *Belief and Unbelief*, p. 116.

[39] Cf. Starhawk, *The Spiral Dance: A Rebirth of the Ancient Religion of the Great Goddess*, (New York: Harper/Collins, 1989 {1979}). Granted that Starhawk's work was published in 1979, and Pruyser's work under discussion in 1974, nevertheless, it is evident from what he says that he has no personal or professional experience with "the straw women" he is caricaturizing in this fashion. I believe it is fair enough to see her work as representative of at least some of the beliefs and practices of the "witches" Prusyer is pathologizing.

[40] Pruyser, *Belief and Unbelief*, pp. 266-67.

[41] Paul W. Pruyser, "The Seamy Side of Current Religious Beliefs," in *Bulletin of the Menninger Clinic*, 41, (1977); reprinted in *Pastoral Psychology*, 26, (1978); and in *Religion in Psychodynamic Perspective*, pp. 47-65.

live adjusted, functional lives[42] he quickly becomes a "religious psychologist," one committed to his group and opposed to others. He first states his religious views, "grand themes" as he calls them, themes which resonate with a humanistic religious approach.[43] He then goes on to psychopathologize, insult and denigrate those whose religion he judges to be neurotic, and this judgement is made without any evidence or even substantial case histories. In essence, this article is in fact an extended religious polemic based in psychological arguments rather than scriptural or theological arguments. Evidently, Pruyser is as he says, a participant observer in the issues which with he is dealing. However, when it comes to those he "hates" or despises, it is evident that his usual manner of participation is in the propagation of distorting legends and beliefs about their alleged beliefs and practices.

But what are we to make of this man who on the one hand preaches tolerance and respect and yet on the other freely denigrates those whose religiosity he despises? Again, as with Meissner, in his own theory, in this case his theory of ambivalence, Pruyser provides the clue to understanding these contradictions in his writing.

Ambivalence and Intensely Held beliefs.

Pruyser saw beliefs as being basic to the structure of the human being.

> . . . strong beliefs function as definers of personality and personal identity. Beliefs play a role in giving content to the superego and ego ideal, but beliefs also have a quasi-interpersonal character. The ego is consciously engaged in beliefs, maintaining a love relationship with them much as it engages itself in other persons; it invests itself in beliefs, clings to them, respects and cares for them, and in so doing obtains from them reciprocal satisfactions. A person's love for his beliefs makes him lovable to and beloved by these

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[42] Pruyser, "Seamy Religious Beliefs," p. 48.

[43] Ibid., pp. 49-50.

> beliefs, precipitating a constant flow of nutrient energy. Beliefs, like persons, command attention, care, protection, and loyalty. One lives with them tenderly or passionately, as the situation demands. When they are attacked one will rise to their defence, with the feeling that one is really defending one's self.
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> And so one can stand arm in arm with his beliefs, as it were, defiantly before his ideological opponents. Those who love their beliefs and find them seriously threatened claim for themselves the right to resist . . . . firm believers join the Resistance. They let their voices be heard in existential affirmation, prepared to die if there are no alternatives.[44]

And, for Pruyser this is strongly felt as he then continues with examples of martyrs to the Nazi regime who refused to give up their beliefs, and thus their beliefs endured even though they died. Strongly held beliefs, being willing to go to the death for them functions well enough perhaps in times of oppression. But this same intensity is not as suitable for a pluralistic society in which learning to live with and value each other's differences in belief and practice are necessary for peace. Of course, in his more humanistic moments Pruyser could see this, but only I believe when his own beliefs were not being threatened.

There are of course strongly held negative beliefs as well, or "hate objects." Examples Pruyser gives of this sort include:

> ...the disdain for and suspicion of beliefs of "the establishment" felt by a large assortment of individuals and groups, including restless innovators, radical revisionists, people gripped by the charismatic movement, and various alienated or anomic segments.[45]

as contrasted with

> . . . the opposition, among those who locate themselves in the center of the establishment, to any and all "radicals," as they are wont to call them. In both cases, since very little accurate and digested knowledge of the opposed beliefs may be present, the judgements are largely based on clichés and have an air of flippancy. Mutual derogation is the order of the day, true dialogue is rare, and concentration on the precise tenets of one's own beliefs

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[44] Pruyser, *Belief and Unbelief*, p. 254

[45] Ibid., p. 260.

tends to be poor.[46]

Pruyser has himself provided the commentary that best describes his own polemics.

But Pruyser did not only clearly enunciate the importance of beliefs be they positive or negative but also how contrary beliefs could be held by the same person. It is here, in his theory of ambivalence that we see most clearly into his own psychodynamics.

> Beliefs held consciously may be undermined by deviant or contrary beliefs held unconsciously. This has been amply demonstrated in studies of racial prejudice showing that the belief that "all men are brothers" is effectively undone by the same person's belief that certain classes of men are inferior--an obvious instance of dissonance. A conscious disbelief such as "there is no personal God" may only be a defence against a strong unconscious wish for just such determinedly paternalistic guidance.[47]

Pruyser shows us how his own and others' "loves" and "hates" can coexist in the same bosom and perhaps something of his personal psychodynamics underlying his God relation. For one can see his early father loss ringing through all too clearly in his latter statement.

Pruyser, from the beginning opposed and criticized evangelical, conservative or dogmatic religion, stating unequivocably that it was dysfunctional, that a faith that was too "concrete" or "specific" about its object(s) of devotion was immature and infantile.[48] Was this life-long effort at one level simply "a defense against a strong unconscious wish for just such determinedly paternalistic guidance?" Perhaps so, and this will be discussed further below, but Pruyser's understanding of ambivalence is more nuanced than the first quotation above, there are more layers of complexity in ambivalence than a simple conscious/unconscious split.

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[46] Pruyser, *Belief and Unbelief*, p. 260.

[47] Ibid., p. 246.

[48] Malony and Spilka, "Pruyser Legacy," p. 208.

Pruyser introduces this more complex rendering of ambivalence with the term "cognitive dissonance."[49]

> Beliefs of opposite tenor and with contrary implications are held within one bosom and defended with ad hoc argumentation, typically without painful awareness of the conflict by the person himself . . . . Psychodynamic reasoning would stress the *emotional* dissonance which underlies such incompatible beliefs and describe them as cases of marked ambivalence: a conscious belief is held in apposition with an unconscious contrary belief, and both are invested with considerable energy derived from attitudes of love and hate. The hated belief is also cherished, and the loved belief is also despised, in varying mixtures of conscious and unconscious reasoning. Behind the consciously held belief may stand the image of a beloved parent against whom one also felt the urge to aggress; behind the unconsciously professed belief may lie parental imagos toward which one may harbor many discordant feelings, not yet sorted out or synthesized.[50]

So we can understand Pruyser's own "beliefs of opposite tenor and with contrary implications" such as his humanistic assertion of the value inherent in "letting be" when it comes to others with divergent beliefs, as contrasted with his vituperative attacks on groups that diverge from what he considers to be mature religion. And, as he says, he does not seem to have the painful awareness of these internal conflicts, or how they surface in his writing.

To this point then we have seen Pruyser the pioneer, the rebel who is not afraid to call a spade a spade when it comes to naming blind spots and flaws in the professional activities of his peers. We have seen Pruyser the humanist who appreciates the reality of a pluralistic culture and advocates a respectful, caring approach to those whose beliefs differ from his own in the belief that both the "carer" and the "cared for" are enriched by this action, and the hope that the uniformed will self-actualize because of the favourable conditions created by the "carer." We have

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[49] Pruyser borrowed this term from L. Festinger, *A Theory of Cognitive Dissonance* (Evanston, Ill.: Row, 1957).

[50] Pruyser, *Belief and Unbelief*, pp. 256-7.

seen Pruyser the polemicist, who disparages, demeans, and dismisses those whose "way of being" conflict with his own cherished beliefs. And finally, we have seen Pruyser's theory of ambivalence, in which he accounts for others'(and unconsciously his own) conflicted beliefs, positions and approach to others. What remains then in this analysis of Pruyser the scholar is to fill in the last piece of Beit-Hallahmi's recommended approach, and that is Pruyser's definition of religion.

This is more complicated, because it involves us in the main business of this thesis, and that is the analysis of the uses of Winnicott. We have already seen that Pruyser's view of Christianity is not mainstream, he rejects too many central tenets of Christianity as too concrete. Malony and Spilka on the other hand believe that his thought does reflect the values and goals of "process, liberation and feminist theologies."[51]

Pruyser was deeply influenced by Freud, and in fact when it comes to religion, he shows more of a Freudian approach than anything else. He largely accepted Freud's characterization of religion as infantile, autistic and illusory. He regretted that Freud had been wrong about religion's staying power; he would have preferred that the demythologizing winds of change that swept through Christianity in the middle part of the century had not been overwhelmed by new waves of "concrete" religiosity in the 1960's.[52] He agreed with Freud that religion was neurotic--both individually and collectively--and devoted his article, "The Seamy Side of Current Religious Beliefs" to nuancing this position. As with other psychologists of religion of his time like Meissner, he applied Freud's critique to forms of religion of which he disapproved but maintained that there is as well mature or realistic religion, and that it is possible to for people to outgrow

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[51] Malony and Spilka, "An Appreciation," p. 14.

[52] Pruyser, *Belief and Unbelief*, pp. 196-7.

religion's primitive origins. As Malony and Spilka put it, Pruyser suggests that religion can develop from autistic to realistic; from primary to secondary process thinking.[53] The epitome of healthy or mature religion for Pruyser was "intelligent religion" which for him is "non-dogmatic, almost non-institutional, non-concrete, and socially conscious."[54]

Pruyser, Mature and Immature Religion and Winnicott:

It is with the categories of autistic and realistic religion that Pruyser turned to Winnicott for help in nuancing Freud's position on illusions. Pruyser has done more than any other to expand and use Winnicott's tripartite schema of inner, outer and intermediate experiencing. In addition to the large role it played in his *Between Belief and Unbelief*, Pruyser also wrote a number of articles and a monograph, *The Play of the Imagination: Toward a Psychoanalysis of Culture*,[55] which although not a work in psychology of religion, it is certainly the most thorough treatment of Winnicott's approach to culture by a psychologist of religion and perhaps by anyone else. Unfortunately, Pruyser's use of Winnicott, extensive as it is, is also seriously flawed. Pruyser's ethnocentrism, his judging other people's experience through the lense of his own values, denudes Winnicott's intermediate area of almost all its denizens--relegating them instead to the realm of wild fantasizing, autistic wish fulfillments, and magical creations.

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[53] Malony and Spilka, "Pruyser Legacy," p. 209.

[54] Ibid.

[55] Paul W. Pruyser, *The Play of the Imagination: Toward a Psychoanalysis of Culture*, (New York: International Universities Press, 1983).

Pruyser the Psychoanalyst

In order to appreciate Pruyser's use of Winnicott, it is necessary not only to understand his psychodynamics and his approach to religious phenomena but also of course his approach to psychoanalysis. What sort of psychoanalyst was Paul Pruyser? In his first psychology of religion monograph, *A Dynamic Psychology of Religion*, Pruyser answers this question: he defines dynamic as "a clinical, psychoanalytic psychology which includes considerations of ego psychology."[56] However, if one looks more closely one finds that it is an interesting sort of ego psychology because "regression" is almost always negatively defined, Hartmann is only mentioned once and "regression in the service of the ego" never appears. It is of interest that Pruyser, in one of his last autobiographical reminiscences described himself as once having thought he was above the primitive need to regress:

> I had imagined myself omnipotently not only above regression but also beyond any need even for temporary regression, after I had grandly diagnosed other people's communion celebration as a primitive, regressive act.[57]

As you can see in his use of the words "omnipotent" and "grandly" Pruyser has come to terms with elements of his own psychodynamics connected with the absence of a father, he has been able to put the necessary limits on his grandiosity. It is interesting that omnipotent or magical thinking and regression are two aspects of religion he criticizes most often, even though he manages to allow himself a narrow access to the latter through certain rituals.

In his first major opus, *A Dynamic Psychology of Religion*, the only object relations theorist he refers to is Balint and the basis of his object relations theory is:

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[56] Pruyser, *Dynamic Psychology of Religion*, p. ix.

[57] Pruyser, "Forms and Functions," p. 182.

> ...that all of human life revolves around desire. Objects are not sought for their own sake, but as satisfiers of wishes.[58]

The same approach is found in *Between Belief and Unbelief*, but with an interesting further clarification. Not only do objects exist as fulfillers of drive satisfactions but,

> The psychodynamic key word, then, in considering any and all relations an individual maintains to his world (including others, self, things, and ideas) is *satisfaction*.[59]

Pruyser is a drive-based psychoanalyst, and his uses of object relations theory or ego psychology are therefore drive-based as well. This clearly sets him apart from Winnicott for whom, for example, regression is core to his treatment strategies, and object love is differentiated from although related to drive satisfaction.

Pruyser also recognizes that some object relations theorists are quite contrary to his psychoanalytic worldview:

> Object relations theory (although some of its adherents reject far too much of drive psychology for my taste) also entails an upgrading of the value of fantasy vis-á-vis the obvious virtues of reality testing.[60]

However, he does not at least in print realize or acknowledge that Winnicott is one of those theorists. Pruyser, as a reality-oriented Freudian psychoanalyst, cannot but misuse Winnicott's theories despite his obvious appreciation of them.

Pruyser also has much in common with Winnicott. For example, Pruyser states that most belief/unbelief issues have their emotional roots in early childhood:

> In fact, the developmental view espoused in this book puts much stock in early childhood

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[58] Pruyser, *Dynamic Psychology*, p. 222.

[59] Pruyser, *Belief and Unbelief*, p. 47.

[60] Ibid., p. 194.

> experiences in which *all* themes have some emotional roots which load the dice toward postures of belief or rejection, or, as the case may be, keeping a person caught in ambivalence.[61]

The following introductory citation from his *The Play of the Imagination* is very like Winnicot, except for its last line:

> ...any discussion of images and imagination entails at least two reference points. One is external reality and its impact on the human mind. The other is the mind itself, with its capacity for generating mental images that may variously record, replicate, modify, augment, distort, or falsify external stimulus patterns, or even create substitutes for what the outer world is felt to lack. In this last case the mind may indulge in its own inner promptings in defiance of reality adherence, either purely internally or by creating works that have a public status as art, literature, music, science, or religion. The thrust of this book is that these cultural works form a third reference point for images and imagination. It comprises a wealth of symbol systems that each generation transmits to the next, constituting a world of its own that transcends both the external world of nature and of things and the innermost world of *"wild"* fantasizing. My thesis is that most pedagogies do not take image formation and the imagination for granted, *but rather seek to shape and tutor them in specific directions.*[62] [*emphasis* added]

Winnicott, with his Rousseau-like vision of human development would recoil at this latter suggestion, likely seeing a cultivation of the false self rather than a flourishing of the true self as the end result of such tutoring.

Where Winnicott provides a facilitating environment, one in which the individual's own potential can be realized, especially through the recognition of his or her spontaneous gestures, Pruyser, perhaps Calvinist schooling comes through in the need to control "wild" fantasizing. Although Pruyser also had at times a tolerant and pluralistic approach, was also a man of intense hates, a man who although he had to defend his own religiosity from Freud, still needed to attack those whose values differed from him.

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[61] Pruyser, *Belief and Unbelief*, p. xvi.

[62] Pruyser, *Play of the Imagination*, p. 2.

Pruyser's Use and Abuse of Winnicott:

Both in *Between Belief and Unbelief*[63] and the above *The Play of the Imagination*, Pruyser's rendition of Winnicott is straightforward. It is his innovations we will focus on, the ways he attempts to move Winnicott's theory forward. The first of these is Pruyser's linking of the transitional object with "transcendence" a popular current theological term:

> *...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. Illusion also includes mystery: since it is beyond the merely subjective and the merely objective, it has a special object relationship endowed with many surplus values about whose legitimacy one does not bicker. Its validation lies in the encounter with the special object itself. And Illusion also includes the holy: the special object is held as something sacred and so regarded by third parties also.[64] [*emphasis* in the text]

"Mystery," "the holy," and "sacred" are words that Winnicott for the most part does not use. Pruyser is careful to define each of them and is very careful to distinguish authentic or true examples of these categories from all of the pathologies and delusions out there that claim to be mysterious, holy or sacred. If Pruyser was not dividing the world up into healthy versus unhealthy, pathological versus mature categories, this paragraph would read as a straightforward elaboration of Winnicott's theory into the area of religious studies or theology. In this case, however, as he continues elucidating the transcendent nature of transitional phenomena he is describing religious experience as he values and knows it:

> And so the difficult question of a disposition or talent for the numinous resolves in

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[63] Pruyser, *Belief and Unbelief*, pp. 108-112. In this his first introduction of Winnicott, he identifies both the Freudian and Kleinian substrates to Winnicott's innovation of the transitional sphere.

[64] Ibid., pp. 111-112.

> the more manageable observation that reality is not simply split between an inner and outer aspect, but permits an intermediate sphere in which one can have various degrees of practice, usually at first a joint practice of mother and child. The transcendent, the holy, and mystery are not recognizable in the external world by plain realistic viewing and hearing, nor do they arise directly in the mind as pleasurable fictions. They arise from an intermediate zone of reality that is also an intermediate human activity--neither purely subjective nor purely objective. They derive from transformations of the subjective into something original, as they derive from transformations of the objective into something special . . . . As art creates a third world, which transcends pure idea as well as pure matter, so religion, to cite Erikson's words . . . "elaborates on what feels profoundly true even though it is not demonstrable: it translates into significant words, images and codes the exceeding darkness which surrounds man's existence, and the light which pervades beyond all desert or comprehension."[65]

Pruyser concludes this passage hearing in Erikson's words the echoes of numinosity, mystery and transcendence.

Pruyser's drive to set parameters on the transitional sphere is most thoroughly elucidated in his *The Play of the Imagination*. He does this by first differentiating between "imaginative" and "imaginary;" the former being "respectable," and the latter considered "disreputable:"

> . . . it is not out of keeping with experience to speak of imagining . . . as a talent that can, and under some regulatory principles should, be exercised. What these regulatory principles are will be made clear in subsequent chapters; what counts for now is to be open to the thought that there is much in any culture that undertakes to both cultivate and tutor the imagination.
>
> Holding this pedagogical view of the imagination, which many poets, artists, religionists, scientists, and inventors will find congenial, implies the recognition that the imagination may go awry, remain brutishly underdeveloped, or regress. Two English words play on this dialectic: *imaginative* versus *imaginary*. These words sum up the wisdom of the ages that distinguishes respectable products from disreputable figments of the imagination. The latter are held to be mere fabrications, contrived to suit a personal whimsy or welling up from an unsound mind. Psychopathology is of course full of examples of imaginary objects perceived or thought by psychiatric patients, and a good part of its literature has been concerned with describing and classifying these products of

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[65] Pruyser, *Belief and Unbelief*, pp. 113-114; the citation is from E. H. Erikson, *Young Man Luther: A Study in Psychoanalysis and History*, (New York: Norton, 1958), pp. 21-22.

deranged imagination.[66]

While it is true that clearly pathological imaginary constructions can always be found, and certainly Winnicott would have been familiar with these sorts of phenomena, where Pruyser diverges from Winnicott is both on where to draw the line between imaginary and imaginative, and on what is required to cultivate the imagination.

How then does Pruyser's "cultivation of the imagination," this drawing lines to separate authentic, transcendent illusional creations from pathological ones play out when it comes to religion? Pruyser takes Winnicott's schema of inner and outer worlds separated and related by an intermediate realm, and creates three worlds: the autistic world of fantasy; the illusionistic world of cultivated imaginative activity; and the realistic world of sense perception and facts.

Pruyser's intention in placing the illusionistic worlds between the autistic and realistic worlds--for both of which he uses standard psychological categories--is to underline his assertion that there is more than the simple choice between autistic and realistic; the informed rational reader has another option.[67] This of course is Winnicott's "transitional sphere" or "intermediate area of experiencing" which Pruyser calls the "illusionistic sphere."

Pruyser's choice of the word "illusionistic" over Winnicott's "transitional" or "intermediate" is meant to denote Freud's definition of the word illusion. In fact in "Forms and Functions of the Imagination in Religion" he quotes from Freud's *Future of an Illusion* in order to clarify his provisional definition of the term:

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[66] Pruyser, *Play of the Imagination*, pp. 9-10. For the purposes of this thesis, my review of Pruyser's psychoanalytic theory of culture will be limited to is analysis of religion.

[67] Ibid., p. 65.

> These [religious ideas which profess to be dogmas] . . . are illusions, fulfillments of the oldest, strongest and most urgent wishes of mankind. The secret of their strength lies in the strength of those wishes . . . . In the case of delusions, we emphasize as essential their being in contradiction with reality. Illusions need not necessarily be false--that is to say, unrealizable or in contradiction to reality.[68]

Pruyser's comment on this citation is "Illusion is not hallucination or delusion *but can deteriorate into them*"[*emphasis added*].[69] This concern over the movement between illusion and delusion is not Freud's, nor Winnicott's, but Pruyser's--although once one introduces psychoanalysis to the world of religious images and ideas some sort of discrimination will be needed. However, once one becomes involved with judgements of health or dysfunction with those whose religiosity or culture differs from one's own, we are again in that area where ethnocentrism never mind countertransference become very real concerns.

To return to Pruyser, in sum then, what he means by the illusionistic world, is a world of consensually validated fantasy, ideation and symbolism. This intermediate world exists between between the two worlds of subjective, autistic, inner reality and objective, realistic, outer reality and, as Winnicott says, serves to mediate the stress of relating the two:

AUTISTIC WORLD	ILLUSIONISTIC WORLD	REALISTIC WORLD
untutored fantasy	tutored fantasy	sense perception
omnipotent thinking	adventurous thinking	reality testing
utter whimsicality	orderly imagination	hard undeniable facts
free association	inspired connections	logical connections
ineffable images	verbalizable images	look-and-see referents
hallucinatory entities or events	imaginative entities or events	actual entities or events
private needs	cultural needs	factual needs
symptoms	symbols	signs, indices
dreaming	playing	working
sterility	creativeness	resourcefulness

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[68] Pruyser, "Forms and Functions," p. 176; citation from Sigmund Freud, "The Future of an Illusion." *Standard Edition* Vol. 21, (London: Hogarth Press, 1953), pp. 30-31.

[69] Ibid., p. 176.

internal object (imago)	transcendent objects prefigured by the child's transitional object	external object

While there is in my opinion no quibbling with the necessity for establishing in psychoanalytic thought the importance of this third world, there are problems with Pruyser's categories.

For example, why put "ineffable images" in a pathological category? Is sanity only ensured because an image can be put into words? We retain at some level all of our experiences, and as I have mentioned before, regression is seen by many analysts, not the least of them Winnicott, Bollas and Hartmann as being capable of helping restore balance in adult life. Pruyser, by shifting much of what Winnicott would call transitional into the autistic sphere, has seriously compromised the usefulness of his elaboration of Winnicott's programmatic suggestions on religion and the transitional sphere. But before launching into a detailed criticism of his schema, a closer look at what Pruyser actually calls realistic, autistic and illusionistic will help clarify the schema he is proposing.

Pruyser's Realistic World

In his earliest rendition of these ideas, *Between Belief and Unbelief*, before he had conceptualized the above schema we see again his party loyalties, those with whom he can identify and those whom he disdains. In this work, Pruyser, at some length and in a sympathetic manner describes the realistic option in which the transitional sphere is not believable, but awe and wonder in the face of the natural world is the "religious" sentiment. One gets the impressions that although "realistic" is supposed to be a pathology that it is, for Pruyser, closer to a virtue. However, a decade or so later, near the end of his life, in "Forms and Functions of the Imagination in Religion" Pruyser does find some realistic incursions into the illusionistic sphere to

criticize, i.e., the refusal to expose children to fairy tales in the early years of their education.[70] But on the whole, his enemy of choice remains evangelical believers. For example, his oft repeated example of incursions of realistic thinking into the illusional sphere is the reification of religious symbols, where they are given an equivalent reality to trees, stones or scientific facts.[71] People who "know" Jesus, who "know" what the bible says about anything and everything are prime examples of this pathology. In this complaint,[72] Pruyser does share Winnicott's perspective, for the only time Winnicott diagnoses madness in relation to the transitional sphere is when a person tries to convince others that their illusionistic beliefs are objectively "real." However, in comparison with the time he spends on delineating, listing and criticizing autistic incursions into the illusionistic world, realistic incursions are not much more than a footnote to his schema.

The Autistic World

In *Between Belief and Unbelief*, we find a Freudian elaboration of primary process activity, quite similar to more recent developments in the understanding of narcissism:

> . . . the transitional sphere and the relation to transitional objects may remain undeveloped because of over activity of the inner world of dreams and hallucinatory wish fulfillment. The private world may remain too full of instinctual products. The unchecked fantasy may be too gratifying. No external objects are necessary: the internal objects derived from fragmentary incorporations suffice for a modicum of well-being. But since life in such a completely autistic privacy is hardly possible, it is more likely that frequent projections

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[70] Pruyser, "Forms and Functions," p. 185.

[71] Ibid., pp. 184-85.

[72] I say "complaint" rather than say, "diagnosis," because like many scholars or thoughtful people also at times I find it annoying and frustrating to attempt a dialogue with a close-minded enthusiast. I believe that the dominant affect for Winnicott in saying this was something like annoyance, and I would prefer if Pruyser used a language of "choice, frustration and distaste" rather than psychopathology.

> occur which falsify the outer world of the senses beyond recognition. Self and world become dreamy habitats, subject to magical control and omnipotent manipulation.
>
> One may call this alternative "sick" if one wishes. It is the world re-creation in fantasy of the pure pleasure ego, in which pleasant fictions are substituted for unpleasant actualities, unalloyed by the demand of reality testing . . . .The so-called supernatural has been a receptive screen for all kinds of projections. Illusion in Winnicott's sense has often shaded over into hallucination or delusion.[73]

Having established what he means by autistic, Pruyser then, takes great pains to pathologize many groups of people and sorts of religious experience, all the while pointing out how reasonable it is for the realistically minded person to reject these sorts of beliefs.

While Pruyser claims a basis in for his analysis in Winnicott's system, the informed reader will have noticed a number of discrepancies between the two. Pruyser's way of basing this analysis in object relations is idiosyncratic. If one considers again the schema, Pruyser has realistic people relating to external objects (not transitional objects), autistic people to internal objects (and not transitional objects) and I suppose illusionistic or transitional people can relate to all three, although this is not made clear. Now this might seem to be a natural pairing but in fact Winnicott refused to relate the transitional object to Klein's internal object, he did occasionally use Freud's term, "imago" but his main emphasis was on how external objects get subjectively recreated in the transitional sphere.

A more significant divergence however, is Pruyser's inclusion of the contents of most religious beliefs in the autistic sphere or what we could call the delusional realm. Compare this with Winnicott's statement,

> . . .no human being is free from the strain of relating inner and outer reality, and that relief from this strain is provided by an intermediate area of experience . . . which is not

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[73] Pruyser, *Belief and Unbelief*, pp. 114-15.

challenged (arts, religion, etc.).[74]

Winnicott had enormous respect for individual creativity as well as a sharp awareness of the difficulty of relating inner and outer worlds, and so would have been reluctant to pathologize religious beliefs which an individual might have found life-sustaining. Clare Winnicott says of him,

> He was never anti-religion! Ever, ever. He was only too thankful if anybody could believe in anything! . . . He would say: "The point is, can they believe? I don't care what it's about. The capacity to believe is much more important than what you believe."[75]

Clearly Winnicott would not have had the same agenda we find with Pruyser, Meissner, and Rizzuto, an agenda to differentiate believing into sanctioned and pathological categories.

Pruyser later elaborated autistic development, this time specifically rooted in Winnicott's theory:

> [autistic] symptomatic incursions . . . produce a morbid quality in some children's play: Oral and anal, sadistic and masochistic preoccupations make their playing compulsive, repetitive, and stereotyped, and cast a pall of grimness over their activities. This kind of playing . . . . stands in sharp contrast to the *happy* playing of a healthy child who "is able to feel *satisfied with the game*,* without undue intrusion of excited id impulses. In Winnicott's opinion, happy playing depends on the child's *capacity to be alone*.[76] [*emphasis* in the original]

Pruyser explains that the capacity to be alone,

> . . . means having within oneself a dynamic, trustworthy, reliant image of the benevolent mother, which not only sees one through in times when she must be physically absent but also functions as an auxiliary ego that enhances the child's mastery of impulses.[77]

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[74] D.W. Winnicott, *Playing and Reality*, p. 13.

[75] "Interview with Clare Winnicott," p. 181.

[76] Pruyser, "Forms and Functions," p. 183; Pruyser draws this material from Winnicott, *Playing and Reality*, and Winnicott, "The Capacity to be Alone," in *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 39, (1958). (*Citation from "Capacity to be Alone," p. 416.)

[77] Pruyser, "Forms and Functions," p. 183.

Pruyser extends this theme to give his rendition of how "impingements" set the conditions for incursions into the illusionistic sphere from the autistic world.

> Any "impingements" [Winnicott's term] from bad mothering [not Winnicott's language] and situational deprivations to mental or physical handicaps, thwart the formation of a good internal object and a trusting relation to the world outside, whether to persons, things, nature, or institutions. Such impingements generally stimulate the autistic fantasy, producing distortions in the appropriation of illusionistic entities and procedures: Gods become monsters, the self is held to be despicable or unworthy, curiosity becomes dangerous, thinking becomes best by apprehensiveness, and playing becomes grim and repetitious.[78]

Fortunately, Pruyser does not explicitly state how these clinically observable phenomena found in seriously disturbed children and adults can be diagnosed in certain sorts of religious phenomena. In his earlier work, Pruyser does attempt a generalization:

> ...the more concrete, detailed, and fixed the imagery of wishful elements in belief is, the closer it is to autistic dominance.[79]

And one can see this generalization as being an implicit source for his broad brush denigrations of belief in a wide range of religious phenomena. But he does not systematically theorize this area.[80]

Having seen Pruyser's description of how both the autistic worlds and the realistic worlds can make incursions into the illusionistic world, thus causing illusion to dissolve into delusion, the question remains what is Pruyser's view of the illusionistic world and its inhabitants.

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[78] Pruyser, "Forms and Functions," p. 184.

[79] Pruyser, *Belief and Unbelief*, p. 203.

[80] If he had been familiar with Meissner's work he would have had access to an interpretation of Winnicott that emphasized this very element of psychopathology, using a language of fetishistic versus transitional phenomena.

The Illusionistic World

The illusionistic world is for Pruyser, that achievement of civilization which gives the tutored imagination a space in which to play, to create, to be truly alive. This world is the place in which art, music, the great themes or symbols of religion and creative scientific work all are found. However, in Pruyser's view, this illusionistic world and therefore civilization is vulnerable to incursions both from the realistic world and the autistic world.

> These distortions of the illusionistic world...[having just finished a long list of the manner in which clinically disturbed people distort religious imagery and thought] show how delicate and vulnerable the illusionistic world is. Civilization is a precarious achievement that needs constant nurture and a great deal of vigilance against intrusions from either the autistic or the realistic side. And the great goods of civilization can each and all be undone by what history knows as barbaric invasions, iconoclasms, and other forms of destruction from without or within. Books have been burned, artworks destroyed, libraries pillaged, priceless metallic objects tossed into the melting pot, scientific discoveries suppressed--and their creators decapitated, banished, or left to rot in prison. Barbarism is not merely backwardness, but an aggressive turning back of the historical clock, a reducing of life to a finger-and-thumb kind of realism in the struggle for food and power, with plenty of autism given leeway in cruelly animistic thought, superstition, and witch-hunts.[81]

These are life and death issues for Pruyser. The wrong kind of rationality or imaginary religious activity can threaten our civilization. A survivor himself of the Nazi occupation of Holland, the specter of the decent to barbarism haunts Pruyser's thought.

Pruyser has constructed a model in which the illusionistic world at the psychological level is paralleled with civilization and culture at the societal level. The fates of these respective levels of human phenomena are interrelated and their contents change from age to age. Also, although certain religious images may have had their start as autistic fantasms (too concrete), once commonly held they attain a degree of objectivity:

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[81] Pruyser, *Play of the Imagination*, p. 71.

> . . . certain fantasies are corporate within a given culture or tradition, and have to that extent a certain kind of objectivity. They attain this special kind of objectivity through symbolism which is transpersonal. There is something in any ideal self and any ideal object that amounts to a recognizable "common humanity"--a common value of excellence or completeness that attains special form in the symbols which are alive in a culture, whether in symbolic words, symbolic objects, or symbolic rites. To hold a belief and to be a believer mean sharing common strivings, having common ideals, holding shared view of certain paths toward attaining these ideals . . . . Whether one believes in supernatural ideas, in theistic tenets or in humanism, one will have to find in culture or tradition certain symbols which wrap up these ideals and the paths along which one wants to move towards them. Some of these symbols are "God," "Saviour," "nirvana;" others are "universal compassion," "righteousness," or "Zen;" still others "man," "selfhood," "rational man," "human dignity." There is ample choice to allow for individual differences, but all of these symbols have in common that they are neither completely autistic fantasms nor concrete sensory reality. They are elaborations of the transitional sphere.[82]

Notice that these elaborations of the transitional sphere are for the most part not concrete images.

What Pruyser sees as more appropriate for today are these sorts of ideas about God:

> . . a Ground of Being . . . a God behind the gods . . . the Holy which is no longer confined to burning bushes, altars, amulets, and fatherly caretakers. The Holy may now be seen in macroscopic as well as microscopic grandeur, in stars and cells, in evolution and in such beautiful conceptions as $E=MC^2$.[83]

The illusionistic world, in Pruyser's view gives us the ability to play creatively and in an inspired manner with the ideas and symbols of our religious traditions rather than being trapped into a mind-numbing conformity.

However, for Pruyser, the illusionistic world not only protects us from realistic thinking about autistic fantasies, i.e., "Jesus is real!" but it is needed in the realistic world in order to inspire the ideals which can help lead to necessary social change.[84] Rational thinking without well

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[82] Pruyser, *Between Belief and Unbelief*, pp. 200-01.

[83] Ibid., p. 241.

[84] Pruyser, "Forms and Functions," p. 186.

informed ideals can also be dangerous.

Pruyser's favourite exemplar of healthy, constructive and necessary illusionistic functioning is Martin Luther King's "I have a dream" speech:

> That speech straddled both the world of ideas and the world of facts; it introduced a new paradigm after showing the bankruptcy of the older one; it combined Yahwistic wrath with the benevolence of a God-in-Christ. But for all his patent creativity, what reliance King had on the great illusionistic traditions of the Bible, black preaching, and Gandhian nonviolence![85]

Pruyser, in giving another of his many autobiographical reminiscences, relates how in reflecting on King's death, he slipped into a fantasy in which he and a group of King loyalists suddenly realized that King was alive (not literally of course), that his impact would continue to grow. As a result of this rather vivid *imaginative* experience, he then demythologized Jesus' resurrection while he mythologized King's, seeing them as similar human events with larger than life implications. For Pruyser, this example from his own life is one of illusionistic creativity, not impinged upon by autistic fantasizing or realistic thinking.[86]

In Pruyser's version of the illusionistic world, we find the intellectual and symbolic products appropriate to an intellectual Christian, which at the level of his own idiosyncracies is to be respected, and in Winnicott's view would be the basis from which he might establish a group with like-minded others. Unfortunately, Pruyser makes the claim that this illusionistic world is appropriate for everyone, that the imagination needs to be tutored in order to conform with this healthy spiritual world, avoiding the excesses of autism and realism. In so doing, he establishes a dominating transference with which his clients, students and readers have to deal, the sort of

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[85] Pruyser, "Form and Functions," p. 179.

[86] Pruyser, *Belief and Unbelief*, p. 218.

transference against which Winnicott inveighed. One can only wonder whether Pruyser's students and clients got the benefit of his "live and let live" approach or instead the contamination of his own unresolved transferences.

Critiques of Pruyser

Before turning to the critiques of Pruyser, it is appropriate first to affirm that there is much that is useful in Pruyser's elaboration of the transitional sphere into his illusionistic world and *The Play of the Imagination* certainly deserves being included in any list of significant works of psychoanalysis and culture. Although on the religious front, there is much to criticize in Pruyser's appropriation of Winnicott, when Pruyser turns to other aspects of culture, i.e., literature, music and science, he extends Winnicott's work in a useful and useable manner.

David M. Wulff, in his *Psychology of Religion: Classic and Contemporary Views*, in his concise manner summarizes the problem with Pruyser's illusionistic world:

> We may wonder whether most people can find satisfaction in so abstract and spare a world of religious images as Pruyser offers. Whereas Winnicott asks only that objective reality not be demanded for one's illusionistic objects, Pruyser requires that the objects themselves be moderated by the dynamic interplay of the autistic and realistic worlds. . . Pruyser would doubtless look askance, for instance, on the multiple-armed and copulating deities of the Tantric Hindu tradition. Winnicott, unlike Pruyser, would presumably view them as legitimate transitional objects . . .[87]

Denuding the illusionistic world of the majority of its denizens on the grounds that they are too autistic is a serious flaw in Pruyser's thought, one that severely limits its usefulness for psychology of religion.

Malony and Spilka have criticized Pruyser's use of Winnicott on a number of grounds. For

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[87] Wulff, *Classic and Contemporary Views*, p. 341.

example, they characterize Pruyser as not recognizing the illusional nature of science,[88] as not having fully appreciated Winnicott's contention that illusions are the cultural fabric from which science as well as religion and art are formed. I must disagree with Malony and Spilka. In *The Play of the Imagination* Pruyser does a thorough analysis of transitional activity in science, asserting that the creation of theory is always a transitional activity.[89] In Pruyser's writings while one sees both the optimistic trust in science as well as the desire for demythologization, one also sees an understanding of scientific creativity very much based in Winnicott.

Malony and Spilka also say of Pruyser that he,

> . . . may not have appreciated fully the profundity of Winnicott's contention that the compulsive need for teddy bears, blankets, or other idiosyncratic objects among infants was the child's first experience of the divine.[90]

But the contrary seems to be true for Pruyser shows an understanding of transitional phenomena based in those early experiences. Like Winnicott, Pruyser describes the warmth transitional or illusionistic objects are felt to exude as well as the ambivalent feelings the individual can experience in relation to their illusionistic object(s).[91] It seems to me that although Malony and Spilka were Pruyser's colleagues that they have misread him.

Perhaps the reason behind this misreading is the theistic agenda followed by these authors, an agenda that differs from Pruyser's in a fundamental way as can be seen in the following

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[88] Malony and Spilka, "Pruyser Legacy," p. 212.

[89] Pruyser, *Play of the Imagination*, pp. 132ff. Pruyser's philosophy of science is dated, he still speaks of facts like they are in the real world as opposed to being human creations. But nevertheless he makes good use of Winnicott in his analysis of scientific activity.

[90] Malony and Spilka, "Pruyser Legacy," p. 211.

[91] Pruyser, "Forms and Functions," p. 179.

citation.

> Winnicott makes a distinction between "object relating" and "object use". . . . it is absolutely necessary to differentiate illusory objects from their essential natures. Winnicott noted that it is essential to accept the paradox that "the baby creates the object, but the object was there waiting to be created"(p. 89). Hood states the issue succinctly, "Unlike object RELATING, in which the object has no independent existence as indicated by the subject's omnipotent control over it, object USE entails no magical control: the object has independent existence. . . . The object's autonomous existence survives the subject's will and cannot be "wished away" (p. 18; emphasis added).
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> Pruyser would be confused with Winnicott's paradox concerning the independent existence of the object of faith because he basically believed that religious illusions were "unreal."[92]

Unfortunately, I believe Malony and Spilka have again misread Pruyser. As quoted above, Pruyser at some length describes the objective reality belonging to traditional religious illusionistic objects,[93] and in this he is closer to Winnicott than are Malony and Spilka. The objective reality of the illusionistic sphere for Winnicott and for Pruyser is cultural--not "real encounters" with supernatural entities.[94]

It is not the best "use" of Winnicott's theory to advocate the "reality" side of illusionistic phenomena. Hood himself refers to Berger and Luckman's *The Social Construction of Reality*, as

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[92] Malony and Spilka, "Pruyser Legacy," p. 212. {The ( )'s and page numbers are reproduced verbatim.} The article by Ralph W. Hood, Jr., which Malony and Spilka are citing is "Religion and the reality principle: Religious truth and Freudian theory" (presented to the Annual Meeting of the American Psychological Association, New Orleans, August, 1989).

[93] Cf. op. cit. n. 82, p. 173.

[94] On the other hand any "real encounter" must also be culturally and psychodynamically mediated, so, psychology of religion must remain agnostic, otherwise it starts to argue reality questions when it comes to the contents of religious beliefs.

representing the gist of what Winnicott was after.[95] This is as far as we need go, recognizing that human reality is socially constructed, that whatever is behind that reality is notoriously hard to get at, never mind collectively affirm. When Winnicott lumped together religion, art and creative scientific activity he was talking about human phenomena, human creativity and human imagination. There is no back door with which to admit the reality of God question simply because imagination, illusion and creativity have been readmitted to a psychoanalytic vision of health. Malony, Spilka and Hood's theistic agenda does not contribute much to, and may hinder the development of object relational psychoanalysis of religious phenomena.

Conclusion: The Good, the Bad, and the Ambivalent

Pruyser, a drive-based psychoanalyst of religion, found in Winnicott's treatment of illusion and the transitional space, the instrument he needed with which to protect his own cherished values and religious experience from the critique of his cherished mentor, Freud.[96] Unfortunately, because he was a man of intense loves and hates, particularly in the religious arena, he was unable to truly realize the potential inherent in Winnicott's genial and tolerant humanism. Also, Pruyser, shares with most other psychologists of religion Winnicott's ethnocentric valuation of transitional objects and phenomena as normal and ubiquitous, despite the studies that have since correlated these phenomena with more difficult childhoods.[97] Although Pruyser has made a substantive

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[95] Hood, Ralph W., Jr., "Mysticism, Reality, Illusion, and the Freudian Critique of Religion," *The International Journal for the Psychology of Religion*, 2, (1992), pp 152-3; Berger, P. and Luckman, T., *The Social Construction of Reality*, (New York: Anchor, 1967).

[96] Cf. pp. 158-9 above.

[97] Cf. Sylvia Brody's "Transitional Objects: Idealization of a Phenomenon," in *Psychoanalytic Quarterly*, 49, (1980).

contribution to the psychoanalysis of culture on the basis of his expansion and elaboration of Winnicott's intermediate area of experiencing, strong transferential issues impinged upon this theorization in the area of religious phenomena. Thus, the usefulness of his theory of the illusionistic world to Psychology of Religion is limited, at least as it now stands.

However, the way I have chosen to conclude my analysis of Pruyser, is with his positive contributions rather than his misuse of Winnicott. For as I have said, in some ways, Pruyser does much to advance the tolerant sort of pluralism I attribute to Winnicott. Thus in keeping with one of the ironies I have highlighted in Pruyser's writing, we will turn to him for a last few comments on how best to appropriate Winnicott's work.

Final Wise Words from Pruyser

Pruyser at his best was a humanistic, spiritual thinker who worked to include religion in his own and psychoanalysis's weltanschauung:

> We found in hoping a belief in benevolence also, an apperception of the *more* as having a friendly, sustaining, and caring disposition. And thus it is that we can approach our own beliefs with a dose of humour, in awareness of their limitations determined by our past and present, but before which the future stretches out with realities yet unknown. It behooves us to have some modesty, to practice tolerance for other people's beliefs and disbeliefs from an awareness that our own . . . cannot yet be finalized.[98]

With his "natural theology" Pruyser speaks well for many scholars in our field, scholars who are aware of the plurality of options, of the tentative nature of our knowledge, and hopefully of the need for a respectful, dialogical approach to those with differing core beliefs and values. In this latter respect Pruyser has another wise word to offer:

Many of our own beliefs and practices could benefit from being placed in the crucible of a

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[98] Pruyser, *Belief and Unbelief*, pp. 267-8.

> demythologizer, after which they turn out pale as the moon and thin as air. Again, such scrutiny of our own beliefs should make us tolerant of the beliefs and disbeliefs of others.[99]

And again, Pruyser takes recourse to scientific language to describe the provisional nature of our beliefs, preferring to think of them as hypotheses:

> Man is only becoming more curious, willing to form some new hypotheses but not to declare himself in possession of truth. He lives open-endedly, no longer insisting on premature closure. Such an attitude toward ultimate reality is of course a powerful inducement for the active practice of tolerance, very different from the attitude of toleration which may flow from skepticism.[100]

Forgiving Pruyser his androcentric language, we see that he, like Freud, sees in science the ground from which "active tolerance" (as distinguished from "skeptical toleration") can spring.

> Throughout this book and pointedly in its title there has been an emphasis on the ambiguity of choice and the ambivalent feelings with which many choices are made. To the extent that some ambivalence seems an irreducible fact of life, it attaches to our beliefs and disbeliefs--and thus also attaches to the beliefs and disbeliefs of others which we praise or blame. It is always possible that our conscious opposition to other people's beliefs is tainted by some unconscious attraction on our part to just those beliefs we despise in others. We may have some secret envy of the beliefs of others we say we hate, just as we may secretly despise the beliefs of our own to which we verbally testify. The more we know of our own ambivalences toward any belief or disbelief, the more we should--and can--practice tolerance toward the divergent beliefs of our fellow man.
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> Lastly, we must have a final rendezvous with the late D.W. Winnicott, who has made some very important contributions to this book. The transitional sphere and the transitional object are in my view, and I think in Winnicott's, the first testing ground of belief . . . . [Belief] arises when the id and the outer world are brought . . . together by the contrivance of play in which the old and the young, the serious and the light-hearted, the dependent and the autonomous, the braggers and the timorous, the fantasts and the realists, come together to practice that greatest of all gifts: to play and to make beliefs. Such mutual engagements in play require a social contract in which tolerance is the highest virtue.[101]

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[99] Pruyser, *Belief and Unbelief.*, p. 268.

[100] Ibid, p. 268.

[101] Ibid., pp. 268-9.

Chapter V
John McDargh: Religious Object Relations Psychologist

John McDargh, clinician and theologian,[1] is a self-described object relational psychologist of religion who is following closely in the footsteps of Ana-Maria Rizzuto.[2] In the foreword to his published thesis, *Psychoanalytic Object Relations Theory and the Study of Religion*,[3] McDargh says how fortunate he is to have spent the last years of his academic formation working with Rizzuto on her foundational opus *The Birth of the Living God*. He describes her work as representing

> ". . . the first time that a psychoanalytic object relational perspective has been systematically applied to the study of this aspect of religion [God representations] in more than a single case study approach.[4]

McDargh also sees himself as working from a psychoanalytic object relations perspective but in one place he credits Rizzuto, Meissner and Modell as those to whom he is "most deeply indebted."[5] In fact in his writings Modell is rarely mentioned and Meissner gets some attention, but also criticism. On the other hand, McDargh sings Rizzuto's praises:

> Outside of the Harvard community, the single most sustained and significant source of intellectual stimulation and personal inspiration has been Dr. Ana-Maria Rizzuto . . . Dr.

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[1] John McDargh accepted an invitation to participate in an European-North American symposium on the clinical psychology of religion in 1993. As a participant he was asked to write a paper that introduced himself to his international colleagues in terms of how psychotherapy and religion was integrated in his own life and practice. The resulting article "Group Psychotherapy as Spiritual Discipline: From Oz to the Kingdom of God" in *Journal of Psychology and Theology*, 22, (1994), is the main source of my comments on the relationship between McDargh's life and theory.

[2] McDargh, as well as basing himself in Rizzuto's work, in his later articles integrates the contributions of Eugene Gendlin and Christopher Bollas.

[3] John McDargh, *Psychoanalytic Object Relations Theory and the Study of Religion: On Faith and the Imaging of God*, Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1983.

[4] McDargh, *Psychoanalytic Object Relations*, p. 120.

[5] John McDargh, "God, Mother and Me: An Object Relational Perspective on Religious Material," in *Pastoral Psychology*, 32, (1986) p. 253.

> Rizzuto's landmark research . . . *The Birth of the Living God*, is one of the central points of theoretical reference for this book. It was my unusual privilege and great joy to have been invited to follow the progress of this investigation as it took form. . . Dr. Rizzuto is one of those rare scholars whose generous sense of sponsorship and conviction that "truth belongs to the Spirit" invites and encourages the new colleague in the field.[6]

Not only does McDargh so evidently respect Rizzuto, but his own theoretical work is based on, and further extends, her premises about the dynamics of God representations throughout the life cycle.

One of the factors that differentiates McDargh from his other predecessors, Pruyser and Meissner, is that his formation seems to have included Winnicott and the other object relations theorists.[7] Conversely, Meissner and Pruyser, with whom of course he was also familiar, each discovered Winnicott well after having already completed their psychoanalytic formation. In this McDargh is also like James W. Jones--the last author I will discuss: they both seem to have been exposed to Winnicott and other object relations theorists during their initial formations. It is admittedly speculative to discuss formations, but the evidence from McDargh's and Jones' writing certainly suggests a foundational integration of the work of Winnicott and object relations theory generally, rather than, as is the case with Meissner and Pruyser, the use of Winnicott here and there with the foundation being more in Freud and structural psychoanalysis or ego psychology.

A second point of differentiation, albeit an even more tentative one, is to locate McDargh and for that matter Jones with Winnicott and vis-a-vis Pruyser, Rizzuto and Meissner using the conceptual

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[6] McDargh, *Psychoanalytic Object Relations*, p. vi.

[7] For example, McDargh, in *Psychoanalytic Object Relations Theory and the Study of Religion*, when outlining his own theory of development uses Winnicott, Guntrip, Fairbairn and Klein as well as Mahler and Bowlby. As I pointed out in the earlier chapter on Rizzuto, she also seems to have come upon Winnicott later in her formation, and although we can speculate about an original Kleinian formation in Argentina, the sort of object relations she advances seems to be, except for her use of Winnicott, more American than British.

device of the margins versus the mainstream. As we will see, McDargh and Jones both locate themselves very much on the margins, for McDargh, on the outside looking in.[8] Pruyser, Rizzuto, and Meissner, on the other hand are more mainstream. This difference in location is reflected in the approach that McDargh and Jones take to understanding those on the margins. Like Winnicott, they show tremendous respect for individual differences and neither pathologize those whose beliefs differ from their own.

McDargh, in a purposely autobiographical article, in which he discusses the integration he has found between psychotherapy and religion in his own life, gives the following account of his formative experiences:

> I was raised in the American South, but without the deep historical roots or family in the region which would have conferred status and identity. A Roman Catholic by baptism and thirteen years of parochial education, even that identity was a tangled one--being Jewish back a generation on my mother's side and on my father's side Presbyterian and Baptist. Moreover, to be Roman Catholic in the South in the fifties was always to feel like an odd minority and an outsider . . . . When I finally encountered the ethnic Roman Catholicism of Boston I remember being appalled at my students' (and colleagues') unquestioned presumption of Roman superiority and their innocent ignorance of other ways of being Christian.* Perhaps this is why in recent years I have felt most spiritually at home in a marvellously eccentric liturgically-serious, socially-radical Anglo-Catholic parish--a marginal tradition in a denomination which itself is sometimes uneasily camped on the boundary between Catholicism and Protestantism.
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> Finally, I am recognizing that this very old sense of being on the outside looking in also surely has something to do with the experience of growing up gay in a straight world.[9]

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[8] McDargh, "Group Psychotherapy," p. 293. Jones' auto-biographical statements about being on the margins will be considered in the next chapter. I have already touched on this difference between Meissner and Winnicott in Chapter III. It is worth noting that Naomi Goldenberg in her article "The Tribe and I," in *Returning Words to Flesh*, also made some autobiographical comments locating herself on the outside looking in (pp. 59-60).

[9] McDargh, "Group Psychotherapy," p. 293. *Both Rizzuto and Meissner are likely among the colleagues he is describing here. In their writings one finds just this "innocent ignorance of other ways of being Christian" if not the "unquestioned presumption of Roman superiority."

In his own words McDargh characterizes himself as being on the margins. Perhaps this is what gives him the freedom to explore the practices and traditions of others, such as Buddhists.

McDargh describes how impressed he was at one point with the psychological sophistication of Buddhist thought, and in fact to this day uses "a breath mindfulness technique" combined with Gendlin's search for the "felt meaning," in his group therapy sessions.[10] Perhaps it is fair to describe him as a pluralist of sorts, certainly an ecumenist and not parochial. In *Psychoanalytic Object Relations and the Study of Religion*, for example, in constructing a psychology/theology dialogue he works with both protestant and catholic theologians and psychologists of religion, including Pruyser and Meissner. McDargh then seems to emerged beyond the boundaries of a parochial approach to psychology of religion. A Catholic theologian he nevertheless utilizes Protestant theologians and psychological thinkers, as well as Buddhist insights and techniques. A psychoanalytically trained clinician he yet takes recourse to Eugene Gendlin's "focusing" techniques.

In his published thesis *Psychoanalytic Object Relations Theory and the Study of Religion: On Faith and the Imaging of God*, McDargh is integrating thinkers like Klein, Fairbairn and Guntrip his interpreter, Balint, Winnicott, Mahler and Bowlby in a way very reminiscent of both Rizzuto and Meissner, and the latter connection is not surprising since they were colleagues at Boston College while their foundational psychology of religion works were being prepared and published.[11] McDargh

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[10] It is in short a body-oriented awareness technique that is effective in helping people get in touch and stay in touch with their feelings.

[11] The Eastern United States in the 1970's and '80's if not up to the present, has been a real hot-bed of Roman Catholic Psychoanalytic theorizing on religion. As mentioned above McDargh worked with Rizzuto in the last years of his graduate program and then subsequently he gets a position at Boston College as a theologian where Meissner, the Jesuit scholar was already established as a professor of psychoanalysis. Meissner was by this time already a major psychoanalytic author having published two large psychoanalytic monographs in the last decade and his major psychology of

makes extensive use of Winnicott, excerpting and quoting from his case studies, and utilizing some of Winnicott's concepts not seen much in psychology of religion, such as "the ability to be alone" and his "true self" and "false self" categorization. But more than that, Winnicott is for McDargh a foundational thinker in that most of the authors that McDargh builds on, or is in dialogue with, have themselves been substantially influenced by Winnicott, (Rizzuto, Meissner, Pruyser, Bollas and Milner). Like Jones, McDargh is a second generation object relations scholar, whose leading lights are those who themselves have already been influenced by Winnicott and other object relations theorists.

In this thesis, the element of faith is considered only to the extent that it sheds light on an author's assumptions and loyalties as well perhaps as how it impacts on the study of religious experiences of people from other groups. McDargh, in introducing his foundational work makes explicit the centrality of faith in this study:

> . . . this book attempts to show the resource which an object relations perspective is for addressing a central problem in the psychology of faith development: the role of the representation of God in the life of faith.[12]

Given that he grew up Roman Catholic and now works in a Catholic theological school, it is not surprising that when it comes to defining faith, like Meissner, he also accepts the maxim "grace perfects nature" and thus is comfortable studying human nature in order to understand what it is that grace perfects.[13] It is also not surprising that the three audiences he names are theologians, clinical

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religion opus would come out in 1984.

[12] McDargh, *Psychoanalytic Object Relations*, p. xiii.

[13] Ibid., p. xv.

psychologists and pastors, and, religious educators and spiritual directors.[14]

Faith, then for McDargh is,

> . . . that human dynamic of trusting, relying upon, and reposing confidence in, which (1) is foundational to the life-long process of becoming a self, and (2) is fulfilled in the progressively enlarged capacity of that self for love and self-commitment.[15]

It is also not surprising, given his self-description above as being on the outside looking in, that the sort of faith development he favours has a strong social action orientation.

Faith, McDargh points out, is a Jewish-Christian term, and thus a psychology of faith is necessarily a dialogical process between psychology and theology.[16] And in fact, as the reader must now have surmised, McDargh's work, particularly in this foundational book, is a thoroughly dialogical synthesis of Protestant and Roman Catholic theology and psychoanalytic object relations as interpreted by both Roman Catholic and Protestant psychologists of religion.

There is another point McDargh makes on faith worth considering at this point because it shows something of his values when it comes to considering worldviews, and it demonstrates an approach to scholarship complementary with the goals of this thesis.

> The assumption that directs our interrogation of both Protestant and Catholic theologians and psychologists of religion is that every definition of faith has behind it a basic understanding of the nature of the human person under two aspects. First, what it is that is seen as the dominant life problem or dilemma with which human beings have to contend in the course of development . . . . Second, what it is that represents the telos or goals of human development, the optimal human life, the end point of maturation. . . . One might view these as the "from whence" and the "to where" questions. Every theologian who takes seriously the necessity of having a theological anthropology, and every psychologist asking non-trivial questions of human development, must work implicity or explicitly from his or her answers

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[14] McDargh, *Psychoanalytic Object Relations*, p. xiv.

[15] Ibid., p. 71.

[16] Ibid., p. 23.

to these questions.[17]

McDargh affirms, in a manner consonant with what I am advancing in this thesis, that our worldviews and "ultimate" questions shape our scholarly activity.

Finally, in among McDargh's many discourses on faith, the following shows something of his psychodynamics, his values, and his perspectives on psychoanalysis and religion:

> In order to genuinely love the world we must first find it, and that is no small accomplishment. Faith, as Fowler observed, is involved in the process of constructing a "life map" by which we can find our way through the "compounds of limitation" (Bowker) which ring us around and to the others that are given us to love and serve. The accuracy of this life map, which I shall shortly relate to the "the representational world" (Sandler and Rosenblatt, 1962) is not determined on positivistic grounds. It is not about the withdrawal of all projections. This would be an undesirable prospect even if it were possible. What we can move towards is the mitigation of those defences against ambivalence* which require us, in the interest of preserving a beloved self and a loving world, to distort both ourselves and the world in the direction of polarization.
>
> Faith then is set against what William Lynch called "the absolutizing imagination," the imagination bereft of a sense of irony which goes about dividing the world into camps and categories of radical good and radical evil, saints and sinners, sick and well (Lynch, 1965). The faith that overcomes ambivalence*and enables mature love and genuine intimacy is the faith that supports a whole-seeing. It is a trust that endures the realization that most objects of my attachment are at their best less than my idealizations would have them and at their worst better than my severe judgments upon them. It is also a trust in my fundamental worth and lovableness in spite of the fact that I show up invariably less than my lofty expectations for myself and yet more adequate than my worst fears. Faith describes an underlying assurance of goodness and possibility that supports an awareness that the world as the object of my love and attention is imperfect, fallible, frustrating and yet confounding of all my efforts to divide it into good and bad, acceptable and unacceptable, us and them, mine and yours.[18]

McDargh, here is in some ways sounding like Meissner, Pruyser and Rizzuto when he talks about

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[17] McDargh, *Psychoanalytic Object Relations*, p. 24.

[18] Ibid., p. 95. *By ambivalence McDargh does not denote the oedipal understanding put forth by Meissner, but rather a Kleinian version of the frustrating and pleasing parent, the tendency to split them off from each other as a psychic defence and later, if conditions are favourable, to resolve that split in a recognition of the fundamental ambivalence of both the world and ourselves(Ibid., pp. 93-5).

maturity and the need to overcome "the absolutizing imagination."[19] While I have some sympathy for this point of view, I prefer a less value-laden approach such as correlational studies in which the question is, "How are the people who hold these beliefs (not just those who present with symptoms for treatment) doing in life?" "How are these beliefs working for them?" Complementing such studies with qualitative research would likely issue forth a decent picture of who these people are, how they see the world, and how they experience life. From such a base of knowledge one might more fruitfully then attempt some psychodynamic speculations, but such is not McDargh's approach.

Another significant point in the above quote is the fact that McDargh, like Pruyser and Meissner is opposed to dividing the world up into good and bad, us and them, sick and well. However, unlike his predecessors, McDargh in fact does not divide the world up in that way, there is no discussion of healthy and unhealthy religion. While he holds goals for spiritual maturity he does not spend time pathologizing those who do not in his eyes meet that goal.[20]

I entitled this section calling McDargh a "religious psychologist" again utilizing Beit-Hallahmi's nomenclature denoting a psychological scholar whose is also a member of a religious

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[19] It would be a useful cross-cultural exercise to examine whether or not this opposition between "maturity" and "an absolutizing imagination" is born out in other cultures. The question I would want to answer would be whether or not "an absolutizing imagination" could be correlated with monistic or animistic beliefs where good and evil are not psychodynamically opposed as they are in western Christianity. The psychoanalytically oriented thinker in me would then want to inquire further into parenting patterns in these cultures to try to better understand the genesis of their particular psychodynamic beliefs. My suspicion is that "maturity" so defined is ethnocentrically limited and thus perhaps works well enough for people for this group(liberal theological, psychological intellectuals) but not so well in the analysis of people from other groups.

[20] The only possible exception I have found to this rule in McDargh's work is his characterization of parents. He does seem to work with a model of good parent versus bad parent, or healthy parent versus unhealthy parent, rather than Winnicott's good-enough model which had more space in it for ambivalence and mixed results. Cf. pp. 181ff. immediately below for a discussion of this point.

community and committed to its furtherance in his or her academic work. This McDargh certainly is, although it is hard to find grounds to criticize his project since at its most basic level it is simply the attempt to better understand how one's feelings and images of "God/dess" or "the divine" are formed and dynamically interrelate with one's most intimate and significant feelings and beliefs about oneself, significant others and the world during one's journey through life. Thus his work is meant to, on the one hand, help create the conditions for more effective therapy and spiritual direction for religious or irreligious people whatever their affiliation or faith might be and, on the other hand, further extend the competence and breadth of contemporary psychoanalysis. In short clients with strong religious or anti-religious feelings[21] may perhaps be better comprehended from within the psychoanalytic object relations framework that he with Rizzuto and others are developing than has been the case in other forms of psychoanalytic and psychological therapies.

McDargh's Psychoanalytic Object Relations Theory:
McDargh's Use of Winnicott--Subtle Nuances, Foundational differences?

McDargh's psychoanalytic object relational theorizing takes place in a theoretical context supported by Winnicott's theory, one in which "illusions" are valuable and integral to human functioning. As such he is part of that movement in psychoanalysis from drive-based theory to relationship based theory. For McDargh as contrasted with say Pruyser, "the human person is born with a *primary and irreducible need for the confirmation and affirmation of relationship*."[22] In his

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[21] Of course all feelings or the lack of feeling are significant in psychoanalysis. In choosing "strong feelings" I simply have chosen the more obvious candidates. McDargh, Rizzuto, Pruyser et al. would argue that the interrogation of a client's religious issues and feelings should simply be standard psychoanalytic/psychological practice.

[22] McDargh, "God, Mother and Me," p. 255.[*emphasis* in the original]

view, a person's fate and faith are dependent upon the quality of his or her earliest relationship(s).

McDargh's focus is on the competency of those who must play the role of primary caretaker:

> The role is demanding, difficult and unrelenting, yet no special training is necessarily needed . . . It is not even clear that one sex has any a priori advantage over another (Chodorow, 1978). What . . . parenting . . . does require is that the involved parties have adequately enough mastered their own developmental issues, and . . . [that they are] sufficiently supported by a network of social meanings and structures (including economic) to be optimally available through the period of the child's extended dependence.[23]

And McDargh continues with Winnicott's schema about how the mother's adaptation to the child over time lessens and the child's ability to tolerate frustration increases as it is developmentally able to make the adjustments. However, when McDargh then expands upon this theme of the competency requirements of the primary parent something different than Winnicott's presumption of a mother's inherent ability becomes apparent:

> . . . the faith of the child has its foundation and origins in the faith of the parenting other. The parents' sense of availability for loving self-donation and their capacity to tolerate ambivalence are absolutely crucial factors in sponsoring into being the child's nascent self. Optimally, the parent must be able to give recognition and attention to the child from a position of strength and a sense of fullness, not from a posture that unconsciously fears the child's needs will deplete the parents' resources. Behind this must be a more fundamental sense that the parent and the child exist in a universe where they are not in competition for a limited supply of the good things in life. Additionally, the caretaking adults must first be able to accept in themselves as they have had to accept in their own parents - the fact that human beings are capable of both love and hate, even towards the child of their own flesh. The parent must then be able to absorb without anxiety the anger and rage which the child will express towards them from time to time in the course of growing up.[24]

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[23] McDargh, *Psychoanalytic Object Relations*, p. 215.

[24] Ibid., p. 216. Those readers who are also parents might be forgiven for wondering whether McDargh had himself done any parenting. One wonders if parents who consciously take on such an agenda can turn out anything except for children who must work hard to live up to their parent's expectations of the results of their parenting. I suspect that many parents would perhaps be better served by Winnicott's optimistic trust of the "good-enough" quality of most parenting, which sometimes gets disturbed by external factors beyond a parent's control, (like the London Blitz), but can be restored again within a sufficiently strong holding environment.

In what is perhaps an example of over-idealistic naiveté around the requirements of parenting roles, McDargh has constructed a model of parenting requiring for many people as much as five to ten years of psychoanalysis before pregnancy should be undertaken. Gone is Winnicott's "good-enough" parent, his optimistic trust in the inherent dynamics of parent-child interaction--a parent who instinctively "knows" how to parent better than she or he can be taught from a book. McDargh's rendition seems more reminiscent of Bowlby's willingness to recognize "bad mothers." It is interesting that in a later article, when it comes to describing the background of safety from which an infant or child can develop smoothly into the wider world of relationships, that the theorists he cites are Bowlby and Mahler rather than Winnicott,[25] the "bad mother" rather than the "good-enough mother."

McDargh does however, from time to time refer to Winnicott's "good-enough mother" such as in the following description of Winnicott's accomplishments:

> What Winnicott proposed, and developed as a concept in a lifetime of creative analytical writing, was a process of "primary psychic creativity" whereby the child creates the maternal object in the case where a satisfying or "good enough" mother provides a secure basis for the child's primary activity of psychic construction.[26]

Despite this useful and useable summary which well captures significant aspects of Winnicott's contributions, McDargh goes on in the same passage to significantly revise Winnicott's theory, again moving towards a good mother/bad mother approach. While he uses extensively Winnicott's theory

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[25] McDargh, "God, Mother and Me," pp. 255-6. Feminists who have accused object relations theory of subtly or not so subtly supporting misogynistic attitudes with the explicit or implicit focus on "bad mothering" as the root of all evils--Denise Riley's *War in the Nursery: Theories of the Child and Mother*, (London: Virago Press, 1983), is an excellent example--may well again have cause to complain here. Even though McDargh cites Chodorow as equalizing the parenting competency of both sexes, in fact mothers still do most of the primary parenting, and thus still will get the blame.

[26] McDargh, *Psychoanalytic Object Relations*, p. 213.

of transitional phenomena and "True Self, False Self" formation in analysing two case studies, he also warns that he sees developments in psychoanalytic theory going beyond what was suggested by the work of Winnicott, and these developments include of course Rizzuto's work:

> . . . the representational world functions constructively as a kind of map or model, which enables us to identify not only danger but safety, not only enemies but also potential friends and lovers. Hence the psychoanalytic dictum that "object finding is object refinding". . . no longer needs to be seen simply as a commentary on distorting projective mechanisms or the human proclivity to recreate earlier relational patterns. The inevitability if not the essentiality of projective mechanisms as a way of finding a path through a world of unlikeness must have profound consequences for the study of religion which heretofore has dismissed God as "merely" a matter of projection.[27]

While I agree with McDargh's last assertion, an assertion founded in Winnicott's epistemology--i.e., that all of living is subjectively tinged, that all perception is conditioned--his emphasis on enemies and friends, good and bad objects rather than ambivalence and good-enough relationships is where we part company. While this is work that is not yet done and beyond the scope of this thesis, it still is worth asking: "Is it not possible that our inner representational map gives us more options than good or bad, safe or dangerous?" Can we not have a representational world that also reflects Winnicott's "good-enough mother," Klein's Depressive Position, or Winnicott's use of an object?

McDargh's portrayal of parenting and the subsequent internal worlds we develop seems to be more in the tradition of Fairbairn or perhaps of Bowlby than of Winnicott, an emphasis upon good and bad parenting, good and bad internal object representations. Missing from McDargh is Winnicott's emphasis on good-enough parenting, on the recognition that an otherwise good-enough parent can have a lapse or let down caused by external circumstances. This is why Winnicott emphasizes impingement and break-down in care, rather than good or bad parenting. Winnicott, it

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[27] McDargh, *Psychoanalytic Object Relations*, p. 213.

seems is more humanistic: a certain environment is necessary and is usually provided. Things happen, but the ship can be set back on course, either by the parents or if necessary, later in analysis. Winnicott's emphasis was on the conditions for growth and the fact that they were usually, at least to some degree present, rather than attaching good and bad labels to mothers or parents. McDargh's emphasis on the other hand seems to be more on "optimal parenting" than good-enough parenting.

This is not to say that Winnicott, a psychoanalyst and paediatrician, did not see pathological parenting and its results. In his discussion of True and False Self, he presents a differentiation between good-enough parenting and not good-enough parenting. The key concept in this case is whether or not the infant is able to without concern evolve or whether it had to precociously become watchful and aware of its environment, adapting itself to its environment instead of to its own normal urges and requirements. Winnicott describes environmental deficits, when the maternal preoccupation is not sufficient, when the child has to respond to the mother rather than vice versa, all the time using the language of "not-good-enough" parenting.[28] However, this clinical description of the results of impingements at different places in the developmental track should not be interpreted in isolation from the rest of Winnicott's theory of "good-enough" parenting. More prominent in Winnicott's writing is the optimistic assumption that mothers are good-enough, and that impingements that do occur often are because of circumstances beyond the parents' control.

While I have been taking issue with McDargh over his use of good and bad objects and "optimal parenting" it is only appropriate to acknowledge the inherent difficulty in attempting to create a single language adequate to carry the various and diverse insights of object relations theorists. These theorists, especially Winnicott, developed their own concepts and languages, and

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[28] Winnicott, "True and False Self," pp. 145-147.

although overlaps are clearly seen, synthesis will always leave something to be desired. And yet, unless one is to restrict oneself to the language of one of these object relations theorists, some form of synthesis is required. Although there is in Winnicott little use of the words "good" and "bad," and although I prefer Winnicott's good-enough emphasis to McDargh's "optimal parenting" nevertheless there is much to be gained from the work McDargh has done.

McDargh's Object Relations Developmental Schema

McDargh's developmental schema of the first six months is rooted in Mahler as synthesized with Bowlby, Alice and Michael Balint and Winnicott, along with Federn and Erikson. In this object relational, developmental psychology matrix McDargh's use of Winnicott centers around the relationship between "good-enough" care and "True Self, False Self" dynamics:

> As Winnicott saw it, the human sense of "continuity of being" or what Federn called "ego feeling" . . . got its essential start in the child's safe anchorage within the maternal matrix (Federn, 1952). "Good-enough" mothering was simply care which protected the child from having to make premature or precocious adjustments to environmental and interpersonal impingements. The origins of the "True Self sense," the capacity for feeling real, creative and spontaneous, are to be found in the careful modulations of the process by which the child is brought to realize the existence of an external world. By contrast, the False Self configuration is characterized by an inner sense of unreality or futility which derives from the infant having to make a premature adjustment to the schedules, wishes and whims of the caretaker . . .[29]

As McDargh demonstrates, it is by weaving together Winnicott's insights from various places in his opus that one begins to get the feel of what Winnicott saw in his paediatric practice with over 60,000 consultations. "Good-enough mothering," "holding," "facilitating environment," True Self and False Self, "There is no such thing as a baby!" taken together represent at that time a new insight and perspective on the dynamics of infant and child development, and a still useful approach to religious phenomena.

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[29] McDargh, *Psychoanalytic Object Relations*, p. 219.

McDargh's use of Winnicott continues as he explains a separation-individuation process again rooted in Mahler. This phase, lasting roughly from 6 months to 3 years of age, is one in which the True Self, False Self dynamic continues to be a factor, i.e., the parents insist that the child adheres to their interpretation of the world, even of itself in a manner that alienates it from its own experience.[30] But of course, Winnicott's key insight into this period, his most unique contribution was his theory of transitional objects and phenomena.

McDargh's rendition of transitional objects and phenomena is faithful to Winnicott's insights, avoids Rizzuto's mistakes but also partakes in the general overidealization of a phenomenon linked with developmental deficits and difficulties. Although he confuses transitional objects and transitional phenomena calling them "transitional object phenomena" while calling such ritual activities as "sucking one's thumb in a special way while stroking one's nose" a transitional object rather than transitional phenomena,[31] this lack of clarity does not much distort Winnicott's theory.

McDargh usefully sews together aspects of Winnicott's theory of the true self and false self with the development of transitional objects.

> The very condition for satisfying transitional object phenomena is the secure presence of the parent who provides an arena of safety, a space within which the child can genuinely play. Play for Winnicott, as it was for Erikson, is the serious work of childhood . . . . it [play] means acting out of a spontaneous, creative core of self. Clearly the capacity for play is compromised to the degree that one's experience with the parenting adults was such as to require the defence creation of a False-Self position as a way of maintaining the fragile

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[30] McDargh, *Psychoanalytic Object Relations*, pp. 221-22.

[31] Ibid., p. 226. Cf. Winnicott, *Playing and Reality*, pp. 3-4 in which he clearly differentiates the earlier transitional phenomena such as McDargh describes above from the later "first not-me possession" which is the transitional object. As I have elsewhere noted, Winnicott is not always consistent with his language usage, but on this point, he is.

integrity of the self.[32]

McDargh, it would seem has read more of Winnicott than his predecessors, or at least finds more of Winnicott useful, for he sews into this well known area of Winnicott's thought the transitional object, both a portion of one of Winnicott's clinical cases emphasizing how his patient pointed out the transitional object function of God for some people, as well as Winnicott's comments on moral education where he directly addresses the conditions necessary for belief in God.

For McDargh, the transitional object is basically a stand in for the good object, it provides the "background of safety" which enables the person to play.

> . . . for some persons God functions as that all accepting Other, who, like the analyst and the good-enough mother, is the guarantor and preserver of that background of safety which makes possible play. In Winnicott's terms, that God serves as that transitional object which allows the person to experience and express the True Self . . . . Whether or not the child is able to use an object representation of God to protect play, i.e., for the faith that supports self-becoming, will depend on multiple factors. Most primary is that there be that foundational sense of trust which can be a referent for the representation of God. Winnicott spoke of this when he observed that there was no possibility for "belief in God" where there was no "belief in," no sense of there being a fundamental reliability in life (Winnicott, 1965, p. 94).
> The second condition is that the child's introduction to God must respect his own primary religious creativity. *God cannot be given to the child let alone forced upon him.* God is discovered/created by the child in the transitional space. Winnicott's few published thoughts on the subject of religious education are an eloquent plea for parents and religious educators to respect the integrity and the timing of an individual's private creation of a God that preserves a sense of inner goodness[33][*emphasis added.*]

McDargh's use of Winnicott is here both accurate and for the most part helpful. The only thing missing is a more critical reading. I have pointed out elsewhere that Winnicott was both a humanist and allergic to dogma of any kind. His own religious upbringing in a non-conformist household where he was free to interpret the bible in his own way can certainly be seen in the position he takes vis-a-vis

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[32] McDargh, *Psychoanalytic Object Relations*, pp. 226-7.

[33] Ibid., p. 229.

religious or moral education. It can also be seen in his own idealization of transitional objects as found rather than given. As I discuss in other places, they were in fact commonly given, especially after his theories became widely known. Ideas, practices and beliefs about God are also "given" even though if they feel "found" they are obviously going to seem more real to the individual. However, the larger contribution of McDargh's rendition of Winnicott's emphasis upon good-enough early experiences as the foundation upon which faith and other cultural riches can be built is welcome, and poses interesting problems for religious educators, pastors and Christian parents.

In sum McDargh relates True Self/False Self dynamics to the development and ultimate helpfulness or lack thereof of the God representation. A God-representation that psychodynamically functions as that guarantor of safety enabling the True Self to experiment, play and therefore develop is one of the possibilities. But God-representations can also psychodynamically be too allied with the False Self, as an ally with other compliance demanding voices or inner personas that must be ignored or in Fairbairn's terms exorcised, for the True Self to safely emerge.[34] In so doing McDargh has successfully mined more of the resources available in Winnicott's writings, and shaped useable tools that help better understand certain psychodynamic aspects of religious experience.

McDargh has been more successful with this marriage of Winnicott's theory with Rizzuto's God-representation than was Rizzuto herself. And in fact, he manages to for the most part avoid her error, even though he sees himself developing and deepening the research she began. As an extender of Rizzuto's work on God-representations, McDargh examines their dynamic origins and transformations within the context of a Winnicottian epistemology, but without repeating Rizzuto's forced assimilation of the God-representation with the transitional object.

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[34] McDargh, *Psychoanalytic Object Relations*, pp. 229-30.

> Dr. Rizzuto's most significant contribution has been to link the developmental origins of the God representation with what D.W. Winnicott identified as the human infant's capacity for the creation and use of "transitional objects" as a means of negotiating the psychic trauma of separation and individuation.[35]

As I have said elsewhere God-representations certainly belong in the transitional sphere, but should not be equated with it. McDargh does for the most part avoid this too easy parallelling, but it is difficult because for example it is accurate enough to call the God-representation an object representation:

> . . it [is] appropriate . . . to conceptualize the creative process involved in the formation of the object representation of God as taking place in the space of transitional object phenomena, the "between" of primal creativity that occurs in the interaction of child and parent (Winnicott, 1953).* As such the object representation of God when first formed is unchallenged as to its status . . . .[36]

The reader will recall that object representations are comprised of bits of internal objects that are synthesized into a new meaningful whole, this all being of course an unconscious activity. However, when considering part of the function of a transitional object rather than the whole of its nature as described by Winnicott it is still easy to slip and call the object representation of God a transitional object representation as McDargh does in the following citation from his analysis of a case:

> God must help satisfy a deep need for a consistent, available, loving object and at the same time must help defend her against the intrusive efforts at control exercised by her mother. God must be a presence, but not too present. On the other hand, God as a transitional object representation must help defend Ann against the opposite threat to the integrity of the self-the terror of too much freedom and not enough limitation.[37]

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[35] McDargh, "God, Mother and Me," p. 257.

[36] McDargh, *Psychoanalytic Object Relations*, p. 122. *McDargh is here citing D.W. Winnicott and M. Khan, "Review of Fairbairn's *Psychological Studies of the Personality*." *International Review of Psychoanalysis*, v. 34, pp. 329-333.

[37] Ibid., pp. 234-5.

McDargh here by "transitional object" I believe is denoting that background of safety which in this case sets firm enough limits to prevent her from hurting others in her "play." The language is inherently clumsy, but it would be more accurate to say "God as an object representation with transitional object qualities." However, for the most part McDargh is careful to not mix together object representations and transitional objects.

Good Objects/Bad Objects and "The Capacity to be Alone"

However, it is not every concept of Winnicott's that McDargh uses to its best advantage. A case in point is how McDargh introduces Winnicott's insights into transitional objects:

> After years of closely observing the interaction of normal, healthy mothers and children, D.W. Winnicott proposed that optimally this passage to selfhood was a matter of the internalization of good parental objects. This process structured the inner representational world in such a way as to permit the human child to carry with him the assurance of well-being which was reflected in early life by the actual presence of the parents. This particular idea Winnicott shares commonly with Balint, Bowlby, Kernberg and other psychoanalytic theorists.[38]

The reader familiar with Winnicott will immediately realize that neither Winnicott's insights nor the language with which he expressed them are in this citation. Winnicott does not use language such as "internalization," or "good parental objects" and neither does he discuss "inner representational worlds." However, it should also immediately be pointed out that one of the bedevilling factors about working in object relations theory is that the theorists tend to have idiosyncratic theoretical languages that sometimes do, and sometimes do not, relate to each other. Winnicott is a classic case of this. While he rarely used Klein's language of good objects preferring to speak instead of a "holding environment," a "facilitating environment"and "good-enough mothering,"in his article "The Capacity to Be Alone," perhaps out of deference to his mentor, but not in a way that is repeated in the last

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[38] McDargh, *Psychoanalytic Object Relations*, pp. 225-26.

decade or more of his writing, he does switch for a moment to her language:

> I will now attempt to use another language, one that derives from the work of Melanie Klein. The capacity to be alone depends on the existence of a good object in the psychic reality of the individual. . . . The relationship of the individual to his or her internal objects, along with the confidence in internal relationships, provides of itself a sufficiency of living, so that temporarily he or she is able to rest contented even in the absence of external objects and stimuli. Maturity and the capacity to be alone implies that the individual has had the chance through good-enough mothering to build up a belief in a benign environment. This belief is built up through a repetition of satisfactory instinctual gratifications.
>
> In this language one finds oneself referring to an earlier stage in the individual's development than that at which the classical Oedipus complex holds sway. Nevertheless a considerable degree of ego maturity is being assumed. The integration of the individual into a unit is assumed, otherwise there would be no sense in making reference to the inside and the outside, or in giving special significance to the fantasy of the inside. In negative terms there must be a relative freedom from persecutory anxiety. In positive terms: the good internal objects are in the individual's personal inner world, and are available for projection at a suitable moment.
>
> . . . . Being alone in the presence of someone can take place at a very early stage, when the *ego immaturity is naturally balanced by ego support* from the mother. In the course of time the individual introjects the ego-supportive mother and in this way becomes able to be alone without frequent reference to the mother or mother symbol.[39]

And, if Winnicott links his own ideas with Klein's in such a manner, than McDargh's way of framing Winnicott is not so far off the mark. And given the complexity of working with multiple idiosyncratic theoretical languages, perhaps such a synthetic moment can be forgiven. However, what is lost is Winnicott's own contributions, his own unique perspective on what he saw in his many decades of clinical and paediatric experience, and how this was expressed in his own words.

McDargh, following in Pruyser's steps, sees the capacity to be alone resting on good introjects--what Winnicott called a "facilitating environment:"

> . . . the capacity to have an inner world, or, in Winnicott's words, the capacity to be alone, is itself a developmental accomplishment and the gift of the Other. It is the Other that secures the place of a tolerable and solacing solitude. The late Paul Pruyser in his last book described aptly that the major achievement of the capacity for illusion, including illusionistic religion,

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[39] Winnicott, "The Capacity to be Alone," pp. 31-2.

is to make available to an individual this capacity to be alone:

> If one can be alone with the internal representation of a benign object, human or divine, that grants the exercise of autonomy and a spirited use of the imagination, the fantasy can be productive, inventive, happy and potentially creative. But if one is saddled with a haunting introject, human or divine, one cannot be happy while alone and is doomed to engage in rather morbid, repetitious fantasizing, beset with fears and worries.[40]

Both McDargh and Pruyser, in taking recourse to the language of the good or bad introject, I believe change the spirit of Winnicott's work as found in his own words. This may be why Winnicott was so reluctant to use other's language, not being sure that by using it he would be saying what he wanted to say. And in this case, I believe the words are important. "Good-enough parenting" is a more inclusive and I believe realistic concept than dividing the world up into good and bad, as satisfying as the latter might be at some levels.

To this point, in analysing McDargh's utilization of Winnicott, I have painted a picture of a thorough, respectful and useful synthesis of Winnicott's work as it applies to religious phenomena, a worthy addition to the foundation established by Rizzuto. But before we turn to the last of our scholars who are utilizing Winnicott to comprehend religious phenomena, I want to turn to McDargh's "deepening" of Rizzuto's theories, for his innovations, while representing a synthesis of Eugene Gendlin and Christopher Bollas, are fairly interpreted as based in Winnicott's work.

McDargh, in "The Deep Structure of Representations" is attempting to take the discourse on representations, already substantially developed and nuanced by Rizzuto, to a deeper level. McDargh presents Rizzuto's distinction between theological images and representational images but seeks to go deeper, to the source of these representations in human psychic life. In so doing he is moving

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[40] John McDargh, "The Deep Structure of Representations" in *Object Relations Theory and Religion: Clinical Applications*, p. 10; the Pruyser citation is from Pruyser, *The Play of the Imagination.*

beyond the problematic of secondary process, theological God talk versus the primary process, affective experience of the God-image to what underlies both: the inarticulate or pre-articulate experience of the original interpersonal environment. McDargh, with Erikson, asks "Was our original environment trustworthy or not, was it supportive of our need for being loved and loving?"

> The shape of an individual's faith reflects his or her unique personal history of that struggle. That faith is primally carried forward as a preconceptual, somatic experience of the quality and character of one's own bodily being-in-the-world. It is this sense that constitutes the "inarticulate feelings of reality" that are potentially the deep structure of religious representations, symbols and beliefs.[41]

McDargh analyses these deep structures, "held" as it were, in a Winnicottian environment and from this background of safety playing with the insights of Gendlin's "felt sense" and Bollas' the unthought known or the transformational object, both of which emphasize a non-verbal, and according to McDargh, pre-representational experience. For it is Winnicott's insights into "holding," into whether an infant is "held satisfactorily" which are the foundation for what Erikson calls "basic trust" and the starting point for a deeper reflection on what these pre-articulate experiences are or how they are experienced in the older child or adult.

McDargh explains first Eugene Gendlin's, and then later Christopher Bollas' insights using as his case study, Marion Milner's *In the Hands of the Living God*.[42] The common point that McDargh identifies in the work of these two theorists is "the surplus of meaning in our feelings"--the sense that we know more than we can say. According to McDargh, Gendlin tells us that one of our central "drives" is to render those feelings "articulate in metaphor, image or concept."

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[41] McDargh, "Deep Structure," p. 5.

[42] Marion Milner, *In the Hands of the Living God: An Account of a Psycho-analytic Treatment*, (New York: International Universities Press, 1969).

> . . . when an image or concept is found that most accurately completes and captures our felt sense of our life situations, we experience what he terms a 'felt shift." A felt shift is . . . a deep but subtle bodily signal that tells us we have appropriately symbolized what we know at the level of our embodied selves.[43]

And, the moment this awareness dawns, McDargh explains, we are already moving forward, there is a transformative moment in this deep realization which enables us to move from a previously fixed position.

McDargh similarly uses Christopher Bollas' concept of the "unthought known" or the "transformational object"[44] to cover this "primal" territory. What Bollas means by "unthought known" or the "transformational object" is McDargh tells us,

> . . . an identification that emerges from symbiotic relating, where the first object is 'known' not so much by putting into object representation, but as a recurrent experience of being--a more existential as opposed to representational knowing.[45]

McDargh continues, as with Gendlin's "felt sense" and "felt shift," the "unthought known," the "transformational object" is at some level sought after:

> Thus in adult life, the quest is not to possess the object; rather the object is pursued in order to surrender to it as a medium that alters the self, where the subject-as-supplicant now feels himself to be recipient of enviro-somatic caring, identified with metamorphoses of the self.[46]

One can hear echoes of Winnicott's "holding" or "facilitating environment" in Bollas' own language, which is not surprising as Bollas is recognized as the foremost of Winnicott's extenders.

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[43] McDargh, "Deep Structure," p. 6. McDargh's citation is from Eugene Gendlin, "Existentialism and Experiential Psychotherapy," in *Existential Child Therapy: the Child's Discovery of Himself*, Ed. Clark Moustakas, (New York: Basic Books, 1966), p. 227.

[44] Christopher Bollas, *The Shadow of the Object: Psychoanalysis of the Unthought Known*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1987).

[45] McDargh, "Deep Structures," p. 12; Bollas, *Shadow of the Object*, p. 14.

[46] McDargh, "Deep Structures," p. 15; Bollas, *Shadow of the Object*, p. 14.

What McDargh has accomplished with his utilization of Bollas and Gendlin is a Winnicottian-based extension of Rizzuto's work. Without a "holding environment" either in one's initial life experiences or perhaps like Milner's patient Susan, later in a good-enough analytic setup, one cannot get access to these felt senses or the unthought known. And, healthy or salvific God-representations can only be formed or reformed if those conditions are met. This was the essence of Winnicott's and other independent object relations theorists' (i.e., Milner, Khan and Bollas) insights into what was required for the healing of "deeply" disturbed people: that feeling real and alive, that experiencing life as meaningful came from having enough of that "good-enough" parenting, that "holding" that was to be found with most parents, and could with the right kind of analytic presence, be found in analysis.

McDargh, has in fact, taken the object relational psychoanalytic study of religion forward several paces from its initial starting point with Rizzuto. He has managed to go deeper than the level of representations and transitional phenomena to the pre-verbal experience of trust, a trust that was established by good-enough parenting. In so doing he is integrating not only newer developments amongst Winnicottian analysts but insights from non-analytic sources such as Gendlin as well as Buddhist practices and ideas. And although perhaps there is something perfectionistic about McDargh's expectations of parents, his approach to religious phenomena is pluralistic and comprehensive, and shows something of the promise inherent in a Winnicottian based approach to the study of religion.

Chapter VI
James W. Jones: Transference and Transcendence, the Relational Self and A Winnicottian Epistemology for Psychoanalysis and Religion

James W. Jones, an Episcopalian professor of Religion as well as a psychoanalytic clinical psychologist,[1] is a scholar who has published a work on understanding the charismatic movement,[2] a philosophy of science that makes room for a reconsideration of spirit in a material universe,[3] and as broad a survey of contemporary psychoanalytic treatments of religious phenomena as exists today.[4] In short, we have here a philosopher, working on the margins of science, to respiritualize our "material universe," a clinician working with religious issues in therapy, a professor trying to shed light on the religious experiences of people of many faiths, and a religious psychologist furthering the dialogue between psychology and theology based in the intermediate space between the concepts of transference and transcendence.

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[1]In the preface of *Filled With New Wine: The Charismatic Renewal of the Church*, (New York: Harper and Row, 1974) Jones describes himself to his Episcopalian audience as "a professor of history and theology" although in the fly leaf he is described as an Assistant Professor of Religion at Rutgers College (p. vii). In his *Contemporary Psychoanalysis of Religion: Transference and Transcendence*, now Professor of Religion, he discusses how he divides his time between a clinical practice and teaching ". . . the wisdom of the Buddha or the sayings of Jesus and how they might be interpreted philosophically or understood against the backdrop of modern physics or psychology" (p. ix).

[2] James W. Jones, *Filled With New Wine: The Charismatic Renewal of the Church*.

[3]James W. Jones, *The Redemption of Matter: Towards the Rapprochement of Science and Religion*, (Lanham: University Press of America, 1984). Jones contextualizes the science/religion debate in a history in which matter was once understood spiritually, and because of mechanistic science among other things, nature was exorcised of any spiritual presence. But because of recent developments in the hardest of the hard sciences, physics, the mechanistic hypothesis has collapsed so that even the hardest of substances are based in immaterial reality not comprehended by science. Thus the door is open for a respiritualization of nature in a way that is not at all contrary to good science but only to the now-outdated spirit of that enquiry that expected to solve all puzzles through observation and rational processes.

[4] James, W. Jones, *Contemporary Psychoanalysis of Religion: Transference and Transcendence*.

Jones' earliest publications, an article on the problem of religious experience in a Religious Studies forum,[5] the monograph *Filled With New Wine: The Charismatic Renewal of the Church*, and finally *The Texture of Knowledge: An Essay on Religion and Science*[6] peak the interest of a former charismatic renewalist who pursued psychology of religion in order to understand religious experience.[7] Jones' *Filled with New Wine*, simply by its title signals that an insider is writing since "filled with new wine" is a popular self-characterization for charismatics. In this work, the reader finds an interesting blend of sympathy for, and yet criticism of, the charismatic movement, a blend that may have its source in his multiple identities and loyalties as charismatic insider and theology professor. *Filled with New Wine* was written in order to explain charismatic phenomena to Episcopalians, giving them tools to comprehend and appreciate the charismatic movement in their church.

Jones, as an academic familiar with charismatic experience, would naturally be concerned with how to comprehend religious experience, and how to find a "scientific" way to discuss spirituality and

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[5] James W. Jones, "Reflections on the Problem of Religious Experience," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, 40, (1972).

[6] James W. Jones, *The Texture of Knowledge: An Essay on Religion and Science*, (Lanham, Md.: University Press of America, 1981).

[7] My own religious studies career shows some parallels with Jones' in that I was a charismatic renewalist in the Anglican church, trained for the Anglican ministry including a degree in theology but was not ordained, and took up psychology of religion in order to better understand religious experience. Once in Religious Studies, my attention was drawn to methodological and epistemological issues, including the dialogue between theology and religious studies* and finally I settled on Winnicott as providing the best language for interpreting religious experience. *Cf. Daniel F. Berg, "Toward an Integral Science of Religion: Programmatic Suggestions for Theology, Philosophy, Science and Religion in a Pluralistic Context," in *Religious Studies: Issues, Prospects and Proposals*. Eds. Klaus K. Klostermaier and Larry W. Hurtado, (Atlanta, Georgia: Scholars Press/University of Manitoba, 1991).

religious experience, this perhaps being part of the motivation behind his epistemological essay on religion and science. Most charismatics sooner or later move on to other ways of being in the world,[8] but their religious experiences leave a strong imprint, one which for a scholar of religion would likely mark his theorizing for years to come. As Jones' himself says, "The psychoanalytic framework utilized in the upcoming pages suggests that the themes of one's writing often mirror the theme's of one's life . . ."[9]

What life themes are being addressed for example, when Jones, in *The Redemption of Matter: Towards the Rapprochement of Science and Religion*, contextualizes the science-religion debate in a history in which matter was once understood spiritually? What life themes are behind decrying the exorcism of spirit from nature by mechanistic science, or the interest in the collapse of the mechanistic hypothesis because of developments in physics? Why is it significant that matter is no longer solid and that the basis of existence is not understood? Why the impetus to respiritualize nature arguing all the while that this is not at all contrary to good science but only to the now outdated spirit of that enquiry that expected to solve all puzzles through observation and rational processes?

> In the past mechanistic determinism answered the question of what holds the events in the universe together. Since the causal chains of connection snapped under the weight of phenomena too heavy and complex to handle, no new image for the unity of the universe has emerged . . . . it is not discontinuous with current views to perceive the universe as bound together by the presence within of a freely-acting divine spirit, pervading the physical reality, constituting the connections between events, giving rise to the matter we perceive. "In him all things were created . . . all things were created through him and for him . . . in him all

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[8] For example, F. Bird and B. Reimer in their "Participation Rates in New Religious and Para-Religious Movements," in *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, 21, 1982), observe that these groups tend to have a small core of relatively long-term members with a constantly changing larger group. They conclude that of all those who at one time participated in such groups only a small fraction are still involved.

[9] Jones, *Transference and Transcendence*, p. x.

things hold together."[10]

Or again, what is the life theme that drives Jones' to try to reconcile theology and science?

> This essay demonstrates that compartmentalized theologies and secular sciences are historical anomalies; for most of mankind's history a mutually enriching relationship has existed between what today we call theology and natural science. With the coming of twentieth-century physics, that relationship may flower again . . . . But in a way unknown in previous scientific thought, modern science provides analogies for conceiving of the Spirit as the origination of matter, for characterizing natural events as the products of free choice, for perceiving the universe as a whole, and for understanding its wholeness as a single body having many parts. And so the pilgrimage of understanding goes on.[11]

We have already seen evidence in Jones' writings and life of intense religious experiences (this likely can be inferred from a charismatic involvement,) but why the driving passion to respiritualize science? Jones' answers this question himself while responding to a paper in a AAR panel organized to comment both on his *Contemporary Psychoanalysis and Religion: Transference and Transcendence* as well as Naomi Goldenberg's *Returning Words to Flesh: Feminism, Psychoanalysis and the Resurrection of the Body*.[12]

Slipping for a moment into an autobiographical mode Jones explains why "Freud functions as a stand-in for the reductive rationalism I am still opposing."

> because I was . . . raised in . . . [an] environment dominated by an ethos of rational efficiency, in my gut I am more sensitive to the dehumanizing effects of a reductive rationalism. The experience of religion, which opened up for me new vistas of human potential and awareness, was an experience of liberation from this mechanistic straightjacket,

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[10] Jones, *Redemption of Matter*, p. 132.

[11] Ibid., p. 132.

[12] This panel [at which John McDargh also presented "Commentary on *Returning Words to Flesh* and *Contemporary Psychoanalysis and Religion*," (pp. 391-99)] has been published in its entirety as volume 40 of *Pastoral Psychology*, 1992.

even though it made me increasingly marginal in a scientific culture.[13]

It would seem that Jones grew up in a secular perhaps even scientific environment, but underwent a liberating religious transformation, and since then he has been trying to integrate for himself and the scientific world religious experience, spirituality and science.

One of the papers to which Jones was responding with the above cited article, was that of Diane Jonte-Pace who in a rather entertaining and spicy commentary, "Which Feminism, Whose Freud,"[14] analyses these psychoanalytic thinkers. Jonte-Pace examines the transferential patterns in both Jones' and Goldenberg's reactions to Freud's work in the classical manner. She has it that Goldenberg desires to marry the father, Jones wants to slay him while both embrace the mother (feminism).

> Remaining faithful to the psychoanalytic tradition of discovering and analysing transference relationships and embodied language in all interactions and communications, I want to suggest that if the body of the mother is lovingly embraced (Oedipally or pre-Oedipally) in both texts, the body (and mind) of the father surely plays an important role as well. Freud is a kind of intellectual father for many of us in this field, and, as with all father figures, we either love him or hate him--or both. Naomi's Freud is the good father, the wise father, the feminist father . . . . Jim's Freud, on the other hand, is the bad father, the sexist father--trapped in nineteenth century models of science . . . . if, as Freud suggested, affirmation is equivalent to *eros* and aggression to *thanatos*, then, as in the proper Oedipal relationship, Jim would like to murder the father; Naomi would like to marry him.[15]

But, Jonte-Pace goes on to explain, it is in becoming personally aware of our own unconscious bondage to our transferential patterns that we may be enabled to better understand others like Freud instead of simply reproducing our projected distortions of them:

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[13] James W. Jones, "Response: Religion, Reductionism and Psychoanalysis," in *Pastoral Psychology*, 40, (1992), p. 401.

[14] Diane Jonte-Pace, "Which Feminism, Whose Freud?" in *Pastoral Psychology*, 40, (1992).

[15] Jonte-Pace, "Which Feminism," p. 372.

> But enough of embracing the mother, enough of slaying and "laying" the father. I feel that it's only fair to admit that part of my pleasure in uncovering Jim's thanatology and Naomi's erotics is that I too am caught in an ongoing love affair with Freud, a love affair with its share of murderous moments. Of course, the whole point of discovering the transference relationship in our aggressive and erotic attachments to teachers, texts, therapists and colleagues, is *not* to kill or to "bed" our parents or their current symbolic recreations. Rather, the point is to discover the repeated patterns of desire for parental loves and deaths, and finally to end our entrapment in the samsaric cycle of transference relationships. It is, of course, very difficult to acknowledge the battles to the death and the love affairs underlying our intellectual pursuits . . . . I'd like to suggest that just as therapy only works through *establishing* and *analysing* a transference relationship . . . perhaps a real understanding of Freud and of religion may only be possible through *establishing* and *analysing* our transference desires to murder or to marry our intellectual and spiritual parents, like Sigmund Freud, like God the Father, or like God the Mother.[16]

It is encouraging to see authors such as Jonte-Pace, Pruyser, Meissner, McDargh and Jones, affirming that the professional work of a religious psychologist, requires more than intellectual ability, it requires an increasing self-awareness, a knowledge of the deeper workings of the human psyche in ourselves and others. This has been one of the most demanding requirements of the psychoanalytic vocation, that of not contaminating the professional relationship with one's own transferential issues.

We have so far encountered a Jones with a mission to combat reductionist scholarship/science, a Jones who experienced a religious liberation from "the mechanistic straightjacket" in which he felt imprisoned. In *Contemporary Psychoanalysis and Religion*, we also find a pluralist, one who sees the value in many ways of being religious, and one who is comfortable with various psychoanalytic languages:

> Is a detached selfobject matrix re-created through investing the self in intellectualizing about an abstract world spirit or universal system of energy? Is a relationship to a chronically unavailable primary caretaker continued through a perpetually unresolved search for the meaning of life? Is a warm symbiotic bond re-created, or the lack of compensated for, through the intimacies of a baptism in the Holy Spirit or a merger with the Great Mother or the vast ocean of being? What inner relational patterns go into our devotional exercises, meditational

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[16] Jonte-Pace, "Which Feminism," p. 373.

disciplines, philosophical theologies?[17]

Using both self psychology and object relations concepts and citing diverse examples of religious experience Jones demonstrates how psychology of religion can increase understanding and perhaps tolerance without reductionism. As such he is constructing a way to comprehending a plurality of religious experiences through analysing relationships, that is the psychodynamic constituents of an individual's significant relationships, be they with friends, enemies, lovers, beliefs or the divine.

> What relationships within the inner object world are made conscious by the language of the sacred as void and abyss and the image of the self forever vanishing in the ocean of being? What organizing themes are disclosed by seeing the Virgin Mary floating on a cloud, or hearing "the sound of one hand clapping," or knowing that "the ways of Tao are effortless." What introjected relationships are reenacted by being "a sinner in the hands of an angry God," by "walking alone in the garden with Jesus," by "resting in the arms of the Great Mother," by "being grasped by the ground of being," by realizing that "God does not play dice," by resigning oneself to fate, or by "experiencing the state of no-mind?" What inner relational patterns resonate in the koans of Zen Buddhism, the syntheses of Aquinas and Barth, the tragedies of Homer, and the speculations of the Upanishads.[18]

In these two lists of questions one sees the work of a comprehensive[19] scholar of religion, utilizing various psychoanalytic languages, and considering many ways of being religious or spiritual.

At the same time, rather than presenting lists of healthy and unhealthy religious phenomena

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[17] Jones, *Transference and Transcendence*, p. 65.

[18] Ibid., p. 66.

[19] "Comprehensive" is a concept borrowed from David M. Wulff, *Psychology of Religion: Classic and Contemporary Views*:

> A comprehensive understanding of the field requires systematic knowledge of diverse kinds: of a great variety of psychological theories, principles, and methods as well as essential aspects of neighbouring fields such as neurophysiology and sociobiology; of the history of religions along with elements of theology and philosophy; and of the history of psychology of religion itself, and of the lives of its chief contributors....even if mastery of the field as a whole is out of the question, aspiration to genuine psychological understanding of religion in all its complexity impels us to draw on insights from every possible quarter (pp. viii-ix).

found in so much psychoanalytic writing on religion, Jones instead is willing to question our culturally determined categories of health and pathology. For example, in his article "Psychoanalysis, Feminism, and Religion" Jones speculates as to whether or not we can attain to the level of interaffectivity found in premodern cultures and contemporary witchcraft, or whether our individualistic ego boundaries make that impossible.[20] Such a comment is certainly consonant with, if not based in, Winnicott's willingness to learn from his students and clients, rather than imposing preset diagnostic categories on them.

Jones not only considers many religious phenomena, but he also explicitly dialogues with feminist perspectives on being human and religious. He finds in feminist scholars like Keller and Flax allies in his battle with reductionist science, now recast as separative and distancing:[21]

> The specific kinds of aggression expressed in scientific discourse reflect not simply the absence of a felt connection to the objects one studies but also the subjective feelings many children (and some adults) experience in attempting to secure a sense of self as separate from the more immediate 'objects' of their emotional world. The contest many scientists feel themselves engaged in, either with nature as a whole or with the particular objects they study, reflects the contest they feel themselves engaged in with human others. Similarly the need to dominate nature . . . arises not so much out of empowerment as out of anxiety about impotence . . . The dream of dominion over nature, shared by many scientists, echoes the dream that the stereotypic son hopes to realize by identifying with the authority of the father.[22]

Jones envisions a new psychoanalysis, a gender sensitive psychoanalysis:

> A gender sensitive psychoanalysis reveals the ways in which science and philosophy

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[20] James W. Jones, "Psychoanalysis, Feminism, and Religion" in *Pastoral Psychology*, 40, (1992), p. 365.

[21] Jones, "Psychoanalysis, Feminism," pp. 356-7.

[22] Ibid., pp. 356-7; Citation from Keller, E.F. and Flax, J. "Missing Relations in Psychoanalysis: A Feminist Critique..." in Messer, Sass, and Woolfolk, *Hermeneutics and Psychological Theory*, (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1988), p. 339.

> (including the philosophy of science, of knowledge, and of religion) express the desires of the unconscious, not only in terms of motivation but also in their very content and practice, and that these desires reflect the different developmental trajectories of boys and girls. Specifically Freud and much of modernity idealized that combination of investigation by detached observation, a motivation to dominate and control nature, and an atomistic and uncaring model of the universe, all of which serve as sublimations of the need for distance and separation.[23]

Jones, in accepting the psychodynamic version of boys trying to separate from mother and in time becoming dominant over her now in the form of "wife," "nature," "feelings," and all that is considered feminine, has found another ally and language with which to battle mechanistic science.

This is the Jones then who presents Winnicott: determined to defeat reductionist science, to move beyond the dualism of objectivity and subjectivity, to affirm connection and relation as the root of human life, to use the psychoanalytic lense to shed light and increase understanding without reductionistic, exploitative explanations. But if we know something of his loyalties and foes, his goals and objectives, what then are the methods Jones utilizes to come to grips with individual religious experience, the focus of his analytical search?

Jones' methods: How to Study Religious Experience

In his major psychoanalytic opus, *Contemporary Psychoanalysis and Religion: Transference and Transcendence*, Jones prefaces his case studies chapter with a brief discussion of methods--a discussion in which the perceptive reader can garner psychodynamic as well as methodological insights into the author. He tells us that he tried a pilot project in which he had people "fill out open-ended questionnaires about their images of God and their feelings about God."[24] Although this project garnered a rich body of diverse data, Jones found that for his purposes it seemed to static, ". . . *it*

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[23] Jones, "Psychoanalysis, Feminism," p. 357.

[24] Jones, *Transference and Transcendence*, p. 68.

could not capture the transformations of religious experience."[25] Jones is only satisfied with a methodology that can offer insight into "transformative experiences."Being a psychoanalytic clinician, Jones' chosen methodology for the study of a changing process such as transference, will obviously be the clinical case study, since these dynamics are most readily observable in the therapeutic set up. Thus Jones' psychoanalytic lens will focus on "the vicissitudes of the transference as it emerged in therapy and the dynamics of religion in each person's life."[26]

Casting himself as a participant-observer, to borrow a concept from anthropology, is clearly an improvement on the sort of psychoanalytic studies in which projective theories are applied to religious texts in the search for oedipal dynamics or bad objects. Here now, by observing relational dynamics in a person's images, feelings, beliefs and reactions to the divine, the scholar/clinician can infer dynamics of early parent/infant or parent/child relationships. Conversely, by analysing the transference, the clinician not only can infer early life relational dynamics but also of course dynamics in all other affective relationships including the relationship with the divine. As Jones says, "Our earliest relationships . . . form a template into which all later interactions fit."[27] Finally, as therapeutic advances or transformations of the transference become evident, so too changes in feelings about, and images of, the divine may also be seen. While Jones' work may not produce "generalizable" results, it certainly is opening up new questions not only in psychoanalysis but in the larger arena of psychiatry, psychotherapy and psychological theories of human nature.

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[25] Jones, *Transference and Transcendence*, p. 69.(*emphasis* added)

[26] Ibid., p. 69.

[27] Ibid., p. 10.

J.W. Jones and D.W. Winnicott:
Playing with transference and transcendence

Jones, like McDargh, is playing and working in a Winnicottian context. But of course Jones' use of Winnicott will differ in some ways from how he is used by Rizzuto, Meissner, Pruyser or McDargh. While McDargh relates to Winnicott perhaps as a consumate clinician, Jones sees in him another ally in his struggle to refashion science, psychoanalysis and epistemology.[28]

> In his drive to go beyond the dualism of objectivity and subjectivity, Winnicott carries into psychoanalysis a theme that has dominated much current philosophy of science . . . as well as other contemporary movements. His search for "the intermediate area between the subjective and that which is objectively perceived". . . is clearly part of a larger cultural concern.[29]

Winnicott's introduction of the intermediate sphere gives Jones the epistemological context in which to link together transference and transcendence, the ground upon which to build a psychoanalysis free from reductionism and mechanistic assumptions.

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[28] Perhaps this difference in orientation affected not only what they choose to utilize in Winnicott but how much they read of him as well. McDargh seems to have read much of Winnicott as can be seen in his utilization of many of his theoretical concepts. Jones on the other hand mostly refers to Winnicott's epistemology and theory of culture, and in one particularly revealing passage on countertransference discusses an article by Alan Rolland without any reference to the pioneering work by Winnicott and other object relations theorists. Whether this indicates selective reading or perhaps just selective use of theorists, i.e., taking the best for each theoretical area, Jones' use of Winnicott is not as extensive as McDargh's.

[29] "[Winnicott's] search for 'the intermediate area between the subjective and that which is objectively perceived' (1971:3) is clearly part of larger cultural concern." (*Transference and Transcendence*, p. 62; the 1971 citation is Winnicott's *Playing and Reality*.)

A Winnicottian Epistemology:[30]

Winnicott's contribution to epistemology is his identification of a third area of human experience, an area that transcends the limitations of inner and outer reality, of subjectivity and objectivity. Thus, Winnicott is for Jones a natural ally in his fight against reductionist, objectivist science. However, Jones' version of Winnicott's epistemology is quite different from those we have already analysed.

> Between inner and outer lies *interaction*. Neither the objective environment nor the isolated individual but, rather, the interaction between them defines this third domain, for it "is a product of the *experiences of the individual*. . . . in the environment"(p. 107, emphasis in the original). This intermediate reality is interpersonal from its inception. Beginning in the interactional space between mother and infant, it *remains an interpersonal experience* as it gradually spread out from the relation to the mother to "the whole cultural field" for "the place where cultural experience is located is in the *potential space* between the individual and the environment . . "(p. 100).[31]

Working with Winnicott's later article "The Location of Cultural Experience," the article Khan called "Winnicott's testament of faith,"[32] rather than with his original formulations in "Transitional Objects and Transitional Phenomena"[33] Jones sees in Winnicott's theory of "transitional experiencing" a theory about interactional experience rather than special kinds of objects. He does not discuss the now familiar list of qualities of a transitional object, nor does he describe transitional phenomena. Rather he links together the "potential space" between the infant and the mother--the "playground"

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[30] Jones not only identifies Winnicott's epistemological contributions but is trying to advance a "Winnicottian Epistemology" in his "Knowledge in Transition: Toward a Winnicottian Epistemology," in *Psychoanalytic Review*, 79, (1992).

[31] Jones, "Winnicottian Epistemology," p. 223.

[32] M. Masud R. Khan, "Introduction," in *Through Paediatrics to Psycho-Analysis*, p. xxxxvii.

[33] The former was first published in 1967 while the latter first appeared in 1951. Both are now found in *Playing and Reality*.

which joins the child and the mother--with all of human culture. When he mentions transitional objects, they are simply physical things a child might invest with private meanings, there may be many of them and there is certainly no emphasis on the "special" nature of transitional objects.[34]

This may seem like an unusual way to construct a Winnicottian epistemology, since it was precisely "the concept of the transitional object" which, according to Anna Freud, "conquered the analytic world."[35] However, it is also not unwelcome, since it avoids the sorts of problems I have criticized in Rizzuto and McDargh. In fact, Jones criticizes both Meissner and Rizzuto for focusing too much on objects and not enough on the transitional experience:

> ...it is the weakness of Meissner's and Rizzuto's use of Winnicott that they tend to treat it as a theory about certain kinds of objects.[36]

Although he shares with them some common goals, i.e., the rehabilitation of "illusion,"[37] his use of Winnicott focuses on the experience of interaction rather than different sorts of objects. Thus he avoids the pitfalls which Rizzuto and to some extent Meissner and McDargh stumble into, that is trying to sort out or amalgamate transitional objects and object representations. Instead he focuses

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[34] Cf. for example J. W. Jones, "The Relational Self: Contemporary Psychoanalysis Reconsiders Religion" in *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, 59, (1991), pp. 120-3; and, "Winnicottian Epistemology," pp. 223-4.

[35] F. Robert Rodman quotes from a letter "Anna Freud to Winnicott, 30 October 1968" in the introduction to *The Spontaneous Gesture*, p. xix.

[36] *Transference and Transcendence*, p. 59. I cannot completely concur with Jones in this criticism of Meissner. It seems to me to be too easily lumping him in with Rizzuto, of whom the criticism certainly is appropriate. Meissner's major opus was called *Psychoanalysis and Religious Experience*, and it seems to me that there was more talk of experience than of objects, except when he discussed Rizzuto's work on the God-representation.

[37] For example, Jones approvingly quotes Meissner in an extended citation from *Psychoanalysis and Religious Experience*, on Winnicott versus Freud on illusion. Cf. Jones, "Winnicottian Epistemology," p. 230; and, Meissner, *Psychoanalysis and Religious Experience*, p. 177.

on the infant-mother experiences in which the child plays safely in the mother's presence rather than the quality of the physical object as such.

Jones is the only one of Winnicott's interpreters in psychology of religion who acknowledges and uses the work of scholars who are critical of Winnicott such as Loewald and Stern.[38] What unites two otherwise distinct theorists such as Loewald and Stern is that they are critical of Winnicott's depiction of the infant as moving from a state of symbiotic or fused subjectivity to that of a differentiated objectivity.

Stern, Jones tells us, through his careful and detailed observations of infants concludes that they start out life already engaged in relational activity, both seeking and responding to their parent's responses. However, Jones also acknowledges that it is not clear just how much Winnicott's theory of transitional objects must be revised since these objects do clearly aid infants in their move from complete dependence to relative autonomy. Rather the effects of these findings for Jones, (and here he sees himself working in concert with Chodorow and Flax,)[39] are that both "the self" and "autonomy" are becoming relational concepts: we are related from the beginning and even when there is an appearance or perception of autonomy, the inherent core of this autonomous individual is still relational.

While Jones utilizes Stern's careful observations to nuance Winnicott's theory, his most significant theoretical debt is to Hans Loewald, a psychoanalyst who has done much to rehabilitate

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[38] Jones refers to the following works: Hans Loewald's *Psychoanalysis and the History of the Individual*, (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1978), and *Sublimation*, (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1988); and, Daniel N. Stern's, *The Interpersonal World of the Infant*, (New York: Basic Books, 1985).

[39] The above paragraph represents my rendition of Jones' summary of Stern as found in "The Relational Self," pp. 130-1.

the "primary processes," the Id of classical psychoanalysis. Loewald suggests, according to Jones, that primary process activities such as certain types of memory, dreaming and fantasizing are simply one state of consciousness or awareness, different from the sort of consciousness involved in "objective perception." Objectivity means a form of awareness focused on the "not-self," although, as Loewald points out, the awareness of the "not-self" is still subjective--as in belonging to the self. Thus, Jones is able to use Loewald to make the point that we simply have different forms of awareness which serve different purposes. Primary process activity continues throughout the life cycle and while it is hidden beneath secondary process in day to day functioning, it is the source of our creativity, inspirations and refreshment. In health, primary processes are not to be outgrown, but are to remain available without swamping secondary process functioning.[40]

One gets the impression from Jones' citation and discussion of Loewald, that Loewald and Winnicott are after much the same thing using different languages. In fact Loewald did say that he

> . . . suspect[s] that Winnicott would not have disagreed with an interpretation of subjectivity in a wider and different sense, as outlined here.[41]

This might be so, for with different words and a different language Loewald (at least as Jones presents him) like Winnicott is concerned not simply with illness but with what makes life worth living.

Jones is building a Winnicottian epistemology but not using Rizzuto or Meissner, both of whom he criticizes, but rather Loewald who himself is critical of Winnicott's manner of negotiating the subjectivity/objectivity divide. On the whole, the result is in fact a Winnicottian epistemology, but

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[40] This paragraph is my summary of Jones' summary of Loewald as found in "Winnicottian Epistemology," pp. 227-230.

[41] Ibid., p. 229; Loewald, *Sublimation*, p. 80.

there is a twist. There are some real contradictions between Loewald and Winnicott that cannot be glossed over because they both value creativity, religion and the arts.

Jones' (Winnicottian/Loewaldian) Epistemology

Jones admits that Loewald never discussed how transitional objects could be reformulated with his understanding of primary processes. Thus, when Jones uses phrases like "a certain 'transitional' state of consciousness"[42] (presumably differentiated from primary and secondary process states of consciousness) I feel as obliged to protest as when Rizzuto coined the concept "transitional object representation of God." While being perhaps understandable from a psychodynamic point of view, from a conceptual viewpoint these attempts to blend such concepts leave something to be desired. What exactly would a transitional state of consciousness be like? How would it be different from or similar to what Loewald envisions with his "to-ing and fro-ing" between primary and secondary states of consciousness? Would this experience have qualities associated with what Winnicott described such as warmth, soothing, or libidinal impulses both positive and negative? These are questions that naturally come from such a conceptual innovation as "transitional states of consciousness" but no answers are provided. I will return to this point however, after delving deeper into Jones' use of Loewald and Winnicott.

There is another significant difference between Loewald and Winnicott which Jones does not acknowledge. It is seen in how Jones uses Loewald to support the health and validity of ecstasy and rapture while paralleling them with Winnicott's transitional space:

> Re-immersion in the primary process through moments of rapture and ecstasy are necessary times of psychic refreshment and rejuvenation and are the source of creativity, sanity, and a

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[42] Jones, "The Relational Self," p. 132.

> full human life. Winnicott's "transitional process" means not only a developmental stage or the use of certain soon-to-be-outgrown objects but also entering a certain "transitional" state of consciousness or psychological space.[43]

While Winnicott may or may not have agreed that rapture and ecstasy are what Jones and Loewald say they are, I do not believe he would include them as transitional processes. Winnicott clearly distinguishes "play in the cultural sphere" from "mystical ecstasy:"

In his article "The Place where we Live," (a later version of his statement of faith, "The Location of Cultural Experience") Winnicott focuses his tripartite schema on where individuals find infinity:

> Infinity for...[mystics] is at the centre of the self, whereas for the behaviourists who think in terms of external reality infinity is reaching out beyond the moon to the stars and to the beginning and the end of time, time that has neither an end nor a beginning.
>
> I am attempting to get in between these two extremes. If we look at our lives we shall probably find that we spend most of our time neither in behaviour nor in contemplation, but somewhere else.[44]

Winnicott further expands upon the difference between mystical experience and cultural experience by giving what he admits is a simplified and distorted view of psychoanalytic literature of mystical experience:

> In regard to mystical experiences, in the literature of psychoanalysis the person we are looking at is asleep dreaming, or if awake is going through a process rather akin to dream-work, but doing this while awake. Every mood is there and the unconscious fantasy of the mood ranges from idealization on the one hand to the awfulness of the destruction of all that is good on the other--bringing the extremes of elation or despair, well-being in the body or a sense of being diseased and an urge to suicide.[45]

He does not refute this literature, but rather returns to discussing what kind of space are we in when

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[43] Jones, "Winnicottian Epistemology," p. 236.

[44] Winnicott, "The Place Where We Live," pp. 104-5.

[45] Ibid., p. 105.

listening to a Beethoven symphony, going to an art gallery or playing tennis. Jones might want to interject at this point saying that one can have rapturous or ecstatic experiences listening to Beethoven or in other cultural pursuits. This is of course true. But Winnicott continues to differentiate mysticism from cultural pursuits in a manner that at least puts into question Jones' parallelling ecstasy and rapture with transitional processing:

> The other two areas do not lose significance because of this that I am putting forward as a third area. If we are truly examining human beings, then we must be expected to make observations that can be superimposed, the one on the other. Individuals do relate to the world in ways that involve them in instinctual gratification, either direct or in sublimated forms. Also, we do know the paramount importance of sleep and the deep dreaming that is at the core of the personality, and of contemplation and of relaxed undirected mental inconsequence. Nevertheless, playing and cultural experience are things that we do value in a special way; these link the past, the present, and the future; *they take up time and space*. They demand and get our concentrated deliberate attention, deliberate but without too much of the deliberateness of trying.[*emphasis* in the original][46]

It is not one of the characteristics of states of ecstasy or rapture that they take up time and space, in the sense of programmed activity of some sort. Such states are likely better comprehended through ego psychology's "regression in the service of the ego" or Loewald's return to primary processes but it is far from clear what connection they have to Winnicott's notions of cultural experience.

While it is perhaps workable to maintain Winnicott's schema of inner, outer and transitional experience and call them states of consciousness, Jones does not seem to be discussing discrete phenomena such as primary process versus transitional process phenomena. Rather, his use of Loewald to critique Winnicott's basic assumptions about subjectivity and objectivity when taken with his pairing of primary process and the transitional realm suggest that he sees them as being the same phenomena theorized differently.

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[46] Winnicott, "The Place Where We Live," p. 109.

> For Winnicott and Loewald, human life is impoverished if deprived of access to the transitional realm or what Loewald (1978) calls "the primary level of mentation."[47]

If it is Jones' intention to place religious ecstatic phenomena in the arena of cultural experience, and it does seem that this is the case, he must contend with a Winnicott who only dealt in cultural realities, not in religious realities, and I am sure Jones would not want to reduce the latter to the former, as others have accused Winnicott of doing.[48]

To this point I have discussed how Jones has his own particular cast to a Winnicottian epistemology, a cast that renders his transitional space both more useable as well as in some ways less recognizably Winnicott's. Having established this foundation it still remains to explore how Jones builds on Winnicott's theory of the intermediate area. There are two main ways he does this: analysing the affective bond with the sacred and the definition of human knowing as a transitional process.

In *Contemporary Psychoanalysis and Religion: Transference and Transcendence*, Jones' main use of Winnicott's epistemology is to create a space in which the affective relationship with the sacred can be psychoanalytically considered, where the relations between transference and transcendence can be analysed.

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[47] Jones, "Winnicottian Epistemology," p. 236.

[48] Cf. for example, Roy H. S. Smith, "The Denial of Mystery: Object Relations Theory and Religion," in *Horizons*, v. 16, (1989) a Kohutian scholar, who accuses Winnicott and other object relations theorists of psychologism, of reducing the external world to "being included within or as only functioning for the individual psyche" (pp. 258-9); and Robert Jay Kilby, "Is Culture 'Illusion'? A Pragmatic Response to D. W. Winnicott," in *Horizons*, 20, (1993) who argues against Winnicott's reducing culture to personal illusions which may be shared in groups with others with overlapping illusions; and Stanley A. Leavy, "A Pascalian Meditation on Psychoanalysis and Religious Experience," *Cross Currents*, 26, (1986) who is critical of the use by Meissner, et al. of Winnicott's assertion that transitional experience widens out into the whole field of culture as a way of psychodynamically understanding God, thus reducing God to the status of a teddy bear or fetish (p. 154).

> . . . both the therapeutic transference and the bond with the sacred can be conceptualized as expressions of a person's internalized affective relationships . . . . changes in the therapeutic transference ought to be parallelled by transformations in a person's religious experience . . . modifications of the interior world should be reflected in the experience of God.[49]

In essence what Jones is establishing is the usefulness of focussing on ". . . a person's felt bond with the sacred and conceptualizing that bond as a reflection of their inner object world. . ."[50]

In traditional psychoanalysis though, Jones points out, this bond with the sacred would be considered to be a product of the individual's psychodynamics. However, in Jones' view, beginning with Winnicott's exclamation "There is no such thing as a baby!" an epistemic shift has occurred. The autonomous individual, the standard of normal development in western culture, is now a "relational self"[51] from the very beginning. We now do not study babies in isolation, or anyone or anything else in isolation, but rather as part of a network of relationships.

The implications of being in a Winnicottian world in which individuals create their worlds in a relational matrix, of being a relational self, are further extended by Jones by analogies to family therapy and physics. In family therapy, he tells us, the choice can be made between starting the analysis with either the man or wife or the interaction between them. In particle physics, in a similar manner, one can focus on characteristics of particular particles or treat ". . . them as segments of an ongoing system of matter-energy interaction."[52] It is the change in how we construct our worlds, that

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[49] Jones, *Transference and Transcendence*, p. 110.

[50] Ibid.

[51] While there is clearly a concept of "The Relational Self"already introduced in this monograph, Jones further extends this line of thought in the article "The Relational Self: Contemporary Psychoanalysis Reconsiders Religion," in *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, 59, (1991).

[52] Jones, *Transference and Transcendence*, pp. 112-13.

change of which Winnicott's is an important part, that permits Jones to do this:

> . . . in the psychoanalytic investigation of religion, exchanging a model of linear causality for one of reciprocal interaction, an atomistic model for a systemic one, opens up the possibility of starting the psychoanalysis of religion with the individual's dynamics (as Freud did and Rizzuto does), with the relationship between the individual and the sacred (as I have done here), or with simply the sacred.[53]

Because Jones is not limited like Rizzuto to analysing "objects" but rather "experiences," experiences that involve a constant interaction between internal and external, the new relational psychoanalysis can analyse any part(s) of the interactions present in the analytic setting in a manner which can comprehend the vicissitudes both of the transference as well as the relationship to the sacred.

While Jones' use of Winnicott's epistemology in his earlier monograph discussed above is focussed upon bringing transcendence into the analytical hour and dynamically relating it to the transference, in a subsequent article, Jones makes explicit the usefulness of Winnicott's epistemology as epistemology.

> Knowledge occurs in and through a relationship: our relationship to the world that we both find and create. Knowledge arises not from the self alone nor the world alone but from the interaction between them . . . . Occurring in a relational space between self and world, subject and object, human knowing is a transitional process. Like all transitional processes, that interactional and relational space which is human knowing echoes with the child's first interpersonal experiences. This makes possible the psychoanalysis of the various forms of human knowledge (science, art, religion, philosophy, even psychoanalysis itself), for the structures of our knowing carry themes laid down in our earliest interpersonal encounters. Thus, psychoanalysis is an inherently epistemological enterprise, laying bare the dynamic forces at work in the various forms of human knowing.[54]

The informed psychoanalytic reader will not find anything surprising in the above last two statements

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[53] Jones, *Transference and Transcendence*, p. 113.
Jones clarifies "analysis of the sacred" to be analysis of the experience of the sacred--Cf. pp. 225ff. below for further discussion.

[54] Jones, "Winnicottian Epistemology," p. 225.

since psychoanalysis has been a major force in raising epistemological questions in this century. However, the claim that knowing is a transitional process certainly is a new one, one that resonates with other significant contributions to human knowing such as Berger and Luckman's *The Social Construction of Reality*.[55] Winnicott's assertion that creative human activity is illusional, that creative science, religion and the arts are all valuable human productions that together constitute a functional, meaningful human world certainly recasts psychoanalytic theories of culture, reframing the foundations of how we understand ourselves and our relation to our world. But Jones takes Winnicott's rehabilitation of illusion a step further.

Winnicott's reframing of illusion means more for Jones than it not necessarily being an error: illusion is a source of knowledge and truth.[56] Working again in counterpoint with Loewald, Jones presents a very different psychoanalytic epistemology than that which ruled in Freud's time. Now reimmersion in the primary process as well as participating in the transitional sphere are now valuable, even vital human experiences. Jones supports these psychoanalytic innovators, Winnicott and Loewald, with the resources of a number of contemporary works in philosophy of science. He concludes his discussion of the philosophy of science:

> Philosophy of science concurs that all knowledge is transitional and interactional* in Winnicott's sense. *Discursive reason and imaginative creation interpenetrate*. Pragmatic realities constrain imaginative reconstructions while creative reinterpretations reframe

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[55] Peter Berger and Thomas Luckman, *The Social Construction of Reality*. (New York: Anchor Press, 1967). Of course claims that Winnicott's *Playing and Reality* and Berger and Luckman's work are new innovations is a bit of academic overstatement since these works were produced a quarter century ago. Furthermore there have been many similar advances in epistemology contributed to by other streams in psychoanalysis such as post-modernism with its connections to Lacan. However, Winnicott's work also contributes and it is only in the last ten to fifteen years beginning to be used, thus the relevance of Jones' utilization of Winnicott's epistemological suggestions.

[56] Jones, "Winnicottian Epistemology," pp. 225 and 230.

> empirical experience. *No hard and fast line can be drawn between objective and subjective spheres or between the products of reason and imagination.*[57][*emphasis* in the original]

In the opinion of this author, Jones is well on his way to framing a Winnicottian/Loewaldian epistemology, but there is one task that remains.

While Jones has realized a substantial gain from his utilization of both Winnicott and Loewald, there are still problems to be ironed out. As I have already noted, Jones too easily has Loewald and Winnicott speaking with the same voice:

> Loewald and Winnicott point to the creative power of that state of consciousness where the usual distinctions of inner and outer, subjective and objective, fade, and a "deeper level of mentation" is accessed: a creative power that can be understood in terms of the metaphorical nature of experience. In this state of disciplined imagination, or what the theologian Paul Tillich calls "ecstatic reason," new metaphors and paradigms can be encountered. From the transforming interpretation that reframes a patient's experience, to Watson's dream of the DNA spiral, to the imaginative encounter with the holy, transitional experiences become epistemologically creative and psychologically restorative through the generation of new metaphors and therefore new realities.[58]

Perhaps Jones believes that Loewald's wider definition of subjectivity or primary process subsumes Winnicott's transitional experiencing, since he is speaking of one state of consciousness and not two. In the end, however, neither Winnicott nor Loewald are recognizable. But, if one takes Winnicott's view on tradition and creativity, this is not a problem.

Winnicott described being creative in relationship to tradition as first destroying and then recreating it: "Mature adults bring vitality to that which is ancient, old and orthodox by re-creating it after destroying it."[59] Perhaps what is needed here is that Jones should take the next step and

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[57] Jones, "Winnicottian Epistemology," pp. 235-6. *"Interactional" is not one of Winnicott's words.

[58] Ibid., p. 236.

[59] Winnicott, *The Family and Individual Development*, p. 94.

fashion his own solution based in, and yet going beyond both Winnicott and Loewald. Jones' comprehensive approach synthesizing psychoanalytic, epistemological, feminist and even anthropological insights, certainly provides the basis from which such a contribution could be made. For example, in "The Relational Self," Jones while again parallelling Loewald's "primary level of mentation" with Winnicott's transitional realm,[60] in his conclusion parallels Victor Turner with Winnicott:

> Turner and Winnicott both point to the transforming power of entering a liminal or transitional state of consciousness, where the usual distinctions of inner and outer, subjective and objective, temporarily fade.[61]

This transitional state of consciousness is certainly worth further pursuing.[62] Jones' psychoanalytic work to this point, shows promise for furthering our comprehension of creativity and even ecstasy as integral to intellectual effort and accomplishment.

At Play in the Fields of the Imagination:
The Vicissitudes of Winnicottian work on Religion

The one aspect of Jones' thought that still needs attention is his definition of religion--keeping in mind Bit-Hallam's minimalist suggestion that grounds this thesis. Jones, by including religious phenomena in the realm of transitional experiences, referred to the "imaginative encounter with the holy."[63] In so doing he touches on one of the growing controversies concerning the object relations

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[60] Jones, "Relational Self," p. 131.

[61] Ibid., p. 132.

[62] If Jones in fact follows up this task, the first item of business perhaps should be the clarification and ordering of primary, secondary and transitional states of consciousness.

[63] Ibid.

approach to the study of religion. It is ironic that a man who is so concerned to battle reductionism should himself be utilizing an approach to religious phenomena that can be called reductionistic. And yet, I believe it is a fair enough charge. Jones, unlike Malony, Spilka and Hood is not attempting to make a case for discussing the reality of God in psychology of religion based in Winnicott's depiction of the reality side of transitional phenomena.[64] However, neither do I find in Jones the simple form of cultural reductionism that some authors have criticized in object relations analyses of religion.[65]

As I have already indicated, Jones' main focus seems to be on reforming science and psychoanalysis. As such, definitions of religion are not as readily found in Jones' work, even though he is a professor of religion. Instead he begins his major opus *Contemporary Psychoanalysis and Religion*, with an etymology of the word "analysis."[66] And in fact, he does not present any definition of religion until the final chapter of this work, at which point he takes up Rudolph Otto's *The Idea of the Holy*," focussing his analysis of Otto's "mysterium tremendum" on "the experience"of the holy."[67] Disagreeing with Otto that "the mysterious experience of wholly otherness" means that God therefore must be wholly other, Jones instead turns to what might give rise to the numinous quality of the experience.[68] For Jones, the numinous experience arises because of what "the sacred" evokes

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[64] Earlier, contra Malony, Spilka and Hood I sided with Pruyser, saying that the reality side (as opposed to the internal experience side) of religious phenomena such as doctrines, images or symbols is cultural, or at least that is all we can say about it as scholars rather than believers. Cf. pp. 177-8 of this thesis.

[65] Cf. op. cit. n. 48, p. 223.

[66] Jones, *Transference and Transcendence*, p. 1.

[67] Ibid., p. 114.

[68] Ibid., p. 115.

in us, that is "what is primary and fundamental *in our experience*."[69]

> Psychologically, then, to start with the sacred means to start with the experience of the psyche's most fundamental experiences: those constituting its creation and re-creation. The quality of sacredness refers to the potential to resonate with the deepest recesses of ourselves. What makes the experience of the holy mysterium tremendum is that it reverberates with the awesomeness and mystery of the depths of selfhood.[70]

While I have tremendous sympathy and respect for his ensuing discussion of Bollas' concepts of "the shadow of the object" and the "tranformational object" as intertwined with the insights of other psychoanalysts and theologians, all in a thoroughly Winnicottian context,[71] it is necesary to stop here to more carefully consider what Jones is establishing.

In order to set up his critique of Otto, Jones gives mundane examples like being frightened by a noise in the dark, only to find in the light that it was nothing. His question is, "What is it in us that gives rise to such experiences as that fright, or numinosity?"Unfortunately such mundane examples trivialize the God of Christian, Jewish or any other revelation. While it is of interest to examine what human components would contribute to (rather than give rise to) feelings like awe, terror or wonder what suffers here is the quality of what confronts the individual in their transforming religious experience. Jones' analysis works well for certain types of experience such as,

> . . . encountering the transforming and sustaining source of selfhood through holy words and books, evocative rituals and gestures, compelling ideas and powerful communities, the glories

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[69] Jones, *Transference and Transcendence*, p. *116 [emphasis* in the original].

[70] Ibid. On the evidence of this citation, and, although the alliteration would be lost, this book might more appropriately be subtitled "transference and immanence."

[71] It is of interest that Jones states that Rizzuto's God-representation is probably better understood through Bollas' concept "the transformational object"as compared with Winnicott's "transitional object" (Ibid., p. 120).

of nature, or an encounter with the depths of the self.[72]

It does not however, account for experiences recorded in the scriptures of the world, and experienced by people in every culture and time when they are confronted by something that surpasses the normal bounds of human experience, say Jesus--risen, ascended and glorified, The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the Goddess, Krishna, Shiva, or for that matter extra-terrestrial beings.

John McDargh, in responding to Jones' *Contemporary Psychoanalysis and Religion*, acknowledged this critical response to the use of object relations in psychology of religion, a response that "... has challenged both the clinical and also in some sense the *theological* adequacy of the object-relational approach to understanding the origins and dynamic history of the individual's most private representations of God."[73] McDargh cites the example of the work of Moshe Halevi Spero, an orthodox Jewish psychologist, who has raised concerns about the use of the word "illusion" and whether or not it can do justice to a patient's experience of relationship with a divine other. McDargh tells us that Spero is concerned that the object relations analyst is sitting and listening to an analysand's religious experiences from the unspoken perspective of "What I am listening to is an illusion, albeit a psychologically useful one, but ultimately I also judge this God to be a delusion."[74] McDargh's question (echoing Kohut) is a valid one: "Will such a therapist be capable of the kind of empathy which effects genuinely psychic healing?"[75]

McDargh believes that Jones has adequately dealt with this because his formulation has sacred

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[72] Jones, "*Transference and Transcendence*," p. 132.

[73] McDargh, "Commentary," p. 396.

[74] Ibid.

[75] Ibid.

numinosity leaking out from behind the object-derived images--there remains in Winnicott's language a "God-us" or "God-me" dimension that is not reducible. He maintains this despite Spero's insistence that God be treated as an other--as real as the therapist. While it is arguably an advance over Freud's position to have the illusion considered psychologically useful, and for that matter to hymn the praises of the depths of our illusion-creating capacities, Spero's point is still well taken. There is at least the perception if not the reality of a clash of worldviews between object relations theorists on the one hand and on the other, theists, polytheists, and others whose object(s) of devotion may well be as real as to them as a neighbour or family member.

Theological Psychology:
Implicit and Explicit--Whose Vision, What Belief?

Chris R. Schlauk, in his article "Illustrating Two Complementary Enterprises at the Interface of Psychology and Religion Through Reading Winnicott" proposes that one of the tasks of psychology of religion should be to analyse how psychology may function as religion or theology when psychoanalytic theorists make claims about human nature.[76] Schlauk does a careful, accurate and sympathetic analysis of Winnicott's article "Transitional Objects and Transitional Phenomena" from the point of view of what kind of psychology/theology is implicit in Winnicott's theory of the intermediate space. His project is to take what is theologically implicit in Winnicott's view of human nature and make it explicit. He accomplishes this with Rizzuto's central theses about the God-representation. He concludes affirming strongly the value of considering our view of God as an illusion:

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[76] Chris R. Schlauk, "Illustrating Two Complementary Enterprises at the Interface of Psychology and Religion Through Reading Winnicott," *Pastoral Psychology*, 39, (1990), pp. 47-8.

> If the place where we live, know, have faith, is in an intermediate area of experiencing, where through creative and playful imagination we make sense of who we are, and what life may involve, it follows that our unfolding understandings of who "God" is and what our relationship with "God" is also evolve in this place. Our self-understanding and our vision of God are, properly speaking, illusions. To affix that label is not to lower their status, as if to measure how they fall short of, and are distortions of, an accurate "objective" grasp of reality "out there." Rather, to call these fundamental visions illusions is to appreciate deeply how all of who we are, and what we know, and what we have faith in, is an ongoing effort to play seriously, to live in a world that is and must be, in part, of our own creation.[77]

As strong, sensible and meaningful a conclusion as Schlauk has fashioned, it still doesn't address Spero's concerns. However, Schlauk's project does make significant advances in a field accustomed to simply using psychological tools to shed light on religious phenomena. What is needed as a complement to object relational psychology of religion is a dialogical approach in which claims about human nature are made explicit and can be compared with other claims.[78] While it is doubtful that Spero would argue with Schlauk's conclusion, that all of human reality is for each individual partly idiosyncratically and psychodynamically fashioned, Spero's point about how real God is for some clients still needs addressing. No solution has been proffered, but perhaps agnosis is the best we can do, if that agnostic is stance is properly respectful, tolerant and open to learning from divergent ways of being religious.[79] Otherwise, at some level, the problem Spero identifies remains, and with the

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[77] Schlauk, "Complementary Enterprises," p. 60.

[78] I have addressed the need for a dialogical approach in Religious Studies, in so doing utilizing the resources of David Tracy's *The Analogical Imagination* (New York: Crossroad, 1981), Georg Schmid's *Principles of Integral Science of Religion*. (The Hague: Mouton, 1979), and Raimundo Pannikar's *Myth, Faith and Hermeneutic* (New York: Paulist Press, 1979). Cf. Daniel F. Berg, "Toward an Integral Science of Religion: Programmatic Suggestions for Theology, Philosophy, Science and Religion in a Pluralistic Context," (op. cit. n. 7, p. 206).

[79] David Tracy, in his *Analogical Imagination*, asked for a style of dialogical encounter in which the scholar [or therapist] was genuinely open to the other, ready for the possibility that something else might indeed be the case [rather than one's own assumptions](ch. 1).

power imbalances of a therapist-client situation, that problem may even be a subtle form of cognitive imperialism. When the clash between the client's and therapist's faith is not acknowledged but remains implicit one has to wonder about the effects of countertransference, of subtle or not so subtle nuances in body-language and empathy, and the resulting efficacy or lack thereof of the therapeutic environment.

We are again in that area with which Winnicott was so concerned, that is whether the analyst can truly provide a facilitating environment (whether for colleagues, students or clients) or are transferential issues going to be contaminating the potential space. Scholar/therapists like McDargh and Jones necessarily must pursue the sort of understanding Schlauk was getting at, i.e., identifying the implicit and explicit theological assumptions that underlie their professional activities. Scholars with a philosophical theological formation like McDargh and Jones, tend to have a positive valuation of western mystical experiences but also an understanding of religious reality which may well be antithetical to the client or student who has a personal relationship with a concretely real God. If empathy is the key to cure, or in Pruyser's vision, if care is the key to new insight, the question remains--can this person heal or learn while remaining religious or must their religiosity transform to something more akin to the psychoanalytic professional's way of believing if they are to derive any benefit.

Perhaps, as Pruyser said in one of his wiser moments, a more radical demythologization is needed for scholars of religion, in this case in order to strip the gnostic followers of "the Holy" of their confidence in comprehending our relations with Mystery. Such a demythologization rather than simply destroying cherished beliefs, might make for a more dialogical, tolerant agnosis while still retaining what seems to be strongest and most beloved of one's own beliefs.

It is ironic, that a scholar one of whose chosen tasks is to combat reductionism in all its forms ends up being fairly charged with reductionism himself. However, far from being like Pruyser, the sort of scholar who criticizes concrete religion, Jones seems to be trying to find a way back to it. This can be seen in the only criticism of religiosity I have found in Jones, not surprisingly a criticism of those who are perhaps "too scientific or secular," that is feminist "thealogians."[80]

Jones criticizes Eisler (*The Chalice and the Blade*), Whitmont (*Return of the Goddess*) and Goldenberg (*Returning Words to Flesh*) for ". . . reducing the Goddess to a metaphor of cultural transformation."[81] He feels that relating to the Goddess in the here and now has been lost in the work of these writers (and himself):

> Lost . . . is the Goddess as religious object and the practices associated with her which allow one to listen to the wisdom of the wind, to be nurtured by the sea, to conjure power from the earth. Such devotions and practices involve entering, in Winnicott's phrase, a transitional space where the modern dichotomies of subject-object, spirit/flesh fade and by accessing and taking to the limit (a masculine drive to be sure) the feminine developmental dynamic of interconnection, thereby entering that domain in which differentiated selfhood dwells in relation.[82]

While I can share with Jones his hope that we are in the midst of a cultural revolution supported by the currents of object relations theory, feminism and Goddess religion, I cannot share his use of Winnicott in this instance. Even though this is only implicit rather than explicit in Jones' text, what he seems to be saying is relating to divine objects is transitional, whereas celebrating the Goddess as

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[80] "Thealogy" is a word coined by Naomi Goldenberg to describe the work that she and others are doing in revitalizing the study of the Goddess. Cf. *Returning Words to Flesh*.

[81] Jones, "Psychoanalysis, Feminism," p. 365; R. Eisler, *The Chalice and the Blade*, (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1987); E. Whitmont, *Return of the Goddess*, (New York: Crossroad, 1982).

[82] Ibid., p. 366.

a metaphor for cultural transformation is something else. Of course it is not only devotions and practices that involve entering Winnicott's transitional space but also inspired writing or creating a liberating vision. Perhaps I am reading too much into Jones' concluding words, but psychoanalytic writers have to guard against the tendency to baptize their own most cherished object by immersing them in healthy psychoanalytic categories while giving a different treatment to those objects which are not positively subjectively charged for them.

A more explicit psychology as theology approach would probably help in such situations, such is found in a playful comment made by Goldenberg as she discusses the theological differences between Jones and herself, she being "like the founder . . . a 'godless Jew:'"

> As you will see, even though we are headed in different directions, we do share opinions that enable us to carry on an interfaith dialogue before we part company to attend separate types of shrines.[83]

Making theological/thealogical positions and differences explicit in psychoanalytic writings about religion, along with attention to transferential issues, perhaps can lead to a style of object relational psychoanalysis of religion free from the accusation of "reductionism." The question remains, how can we as object relations scholars of religion or religious object relations therapists shed light on religious phenomena in a way that increases understanding without damaging those we study or wish to help?

Rizzuto, Meissner, Pruyser, McDargh and Jones have each in their own way contributed to the establishment of such an approach. They have each availed themselves of the genial and pluralistic approach to culture of D.W. Winnicott. They have each contributed to the re-evaluation of illusion

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[83] Naomi R. Goldenberg, "Psychoanalysis and Religion: The Influence of Theology on Theory and Therapy," in *Pastoral Psychology*, 40, (1992), p. 344.

in everyday life, and to the inclusion in psychoanalysis' purview of an infinite variety of religious phenomena (some of whom of course have made more positive contributions than others in this area). To the degree that they have imbued and internalized his discovery-oriented, non-judgmental approach to the idiosyncratic creativity of our cultural creations, to that degree they may be on their way to being able to understand and help others whose core values and religious beliefs differ from their own.

Chapter VII
Using Winnicott: The well-used object.
Toward a Humane Psychoanalysis of Religion

Those familiar with Winnicott's work will agree that one of the ambitions of his life, one that he saw fulfilled, was his desire to become a well-used object.[1] Winnicott's desire to be well-used differs in many respects from the desires of other pioneers in psychoanalysis such as Freud or Klein and this difference can be seen in his theory of 'the use of the object.' As I have elsewhere explained, what Winnicott meant by 'use of the object' was the destructive appropriation of what one finds, and in the process of making it one's own, creating something anew. This destruction, however, is not complete, in that what makes an object useable is that it survives the destruction, and is still dependently present, ready to be used again and again. This is the true Winnicott, creating paradoxical ideas that nevertheless set a tone, creating a space in which others can themselves be creative. Rather than creating a language and a system meant to be replicated and extended by a circle of devoted disciples, he allows himself to be used as he facilitates a process in which people develop their own understandings.

As we have seen thus far, Winnicott's ambition to be a well-used object is being realized in psychology of religion. In this thesis I have destructively found Winnicott, and for that matter Rizzuto, Meissner, Pruyser, McDargh and Jones. I have with each, from my point of view, winnowed the chaff from the grain. They have each survived this destructive use and have thus proved themselves to be useable, and together they contribute to a composite result--my version of Winnicott's usefulness for psychology of religion. Following Winnicott's example, I have found what it is true for me, I have "gotten on with it" myself, and what I am presenting is not

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[1] In fact, Philips tells how Winnicott suggested "that a psychoanalyst was like a prostitute, there to be used"(*Winnicott*, p. 37).

meant to be the last word on Winnicott, but a contribution to the continuing discussion and exploration he has in part engendered in an object relational study of religious phenomena.

One of the key points that distinguishes "Winnicottians" from other schools of thought is their use of theory. as Simon Grolnick puts it,

> . . . it was Winnicott's writings that helped me understand the tough going involved in learning to use the object, in this case, theory. He has helped us all to use theory and not allow it to use us.[2]

From this point of view it would be un-Winnicottian to simply accept and promulgate Winnicott's ideas. Murray M. Schwarz, in a similar vein, describes Winnicott's language and theory as "more democratic:" ". . . we as readers are encouraged to make use of his ideas rather than apply them as an interpretive grid into which meanings ought to fit. . ."[3] Like the mother who presents her nipple just as the infant was hallucinating it, thereby facilitating the development of the baby's omnipotence and imagination, Schwartz tells us that Winnicott, ". . . spoke and wrote to facilitate the meeting of the ideas already present in our minds with the ideas he presents to enrich them."[4]

This is what endears Winnicott to those he has influenced: rather than having to "convert" to someone else's view of reality, to use their language like an interpretive grid, to become disciples of the revealed truth, those who are inspired by Winnicott are able to develop their own ideas, and their own points of view as they make use of his theory. In reading Winnicott, they find what they already know to be true, and yet it is also their own creation. Winnicott, being

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[2] Grolnick, *The Work and Play of Winnicott*, p. xiii.

[3] Murray M. Schwartz, "Introduction: D.W. Winnicott's Cultural Space," in *Psychoanalytic Review*, 79, (1992), p. 170.

[4] Schwartz, "Winnicott's Cultural Space," p. 171.

nonconformist and thus allergic to doctrine, being like Darwin and thus by observation finding out what the facts are, being like Lord Horder and thus respecting and learning from his patients, and finally needing a non-intrusive style of analytic intervention, one that respected him and his own growth processes, went on to fashion a way to be with his students, clients and colleagues that kept open the possibility of more discoveries.

Winnicott, Freud and the Psychology of Religion

Winnicott resolved for many religious psychologists their most fundamental problem: that is how to be at the same time religious and a psychoanalyst. Freud offers to many Christians a liberating vision of what it really means to be a human being, i.e., sexual and aggressive drives are normal and need to be integrated into our conscious lives. Unfortunately for these same Christians Freud also taught that religion is infantile, pathological and to be outgrown. Where once the "cure of souls" was the purview of the church and its clergy, now mental health was best found outside the church. Winnicott's observations of how infants and little children create their own worlds, and do so without being challenged by others who "know better" revolutionized Freud's rationalistic interpretation of religious phenomena. As Meissner argues, Freud's dichotomy of objectivity and reality versus subjectivity and illusion has been in Winnicott superceded by an understanding of illusion as both subjectively and objectively influenced, not reduced to one or the other, and, vitally important to human functioning and creativity.[5]

Meissner uses Winnicott to make the point that illusions are not simply based in wish fulfilment. Winnicott demonstrated that illusions were at the basis of an infant's struggle to come

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[5] Cf. Ch. III, pp. 110ff. for my discussion of Meissner's use of Winnicott to combat Freud's critique of illusions.

to terms with external reality. This was not a struggle that ended with infancy but continues for the rest of the life span, the intermediate area of transitional experiencing is a resting place from the strain of relating inner and outer worlds, a place where life is made meaningful and enjoyable. As Meissner says,

> . . . Winnicott sees that illusion is an important part of human experience precisely because it is not by bread alone that man lives. Man needs to create, to shape and transform his environment, find vehicles for expressing his inner life, or rather the constant commerce between the ongoing worlds of his external experience and his inner psychic reality . . . . It is through illusion then that the human spirit is nourished.[6]

Winnicott, for Meissner and the other religious psychologists I have surveyed, has created a space in which each person's *Umwelt*, each person's idiosyncratic and unique integration of his or her relationship with reality--is respected.[7] This includes of course transitional phenomena in the realms of art, religion and any other creative activity including science.

Rizzuto, with her discovery of, and elaboration of a theory of God representations, constructed a powerful tool for appreciating the idiosyncratic dynamic creations each western or monotheism-influenced person fashions and modifies during the course of their life-time. She too, benefited much from Winnicott's elaboration of an intermediate area of transitional experience, an area which her God-representations inhabit without suspicion of pathology. Through her work, it has become increasingly possible for analysts to work with their clients' ideas, feelings and beliefs about God, just as they work with any other material, in an effort to uncover the roots of their clients' distress while providing the conditions they need in which to heal.

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[6] *Psychoanalysis and Religious Experience*, p. 177.

[7] Cf. Ch. III, p. 111; and, *Psychoanalysis and Religious Experience*, p. 172 for the elaboration of these points.

Pruyser, a drive-based psychoanalyst, who for the most part was very partial to Freud's theorization of religion, nevertheless found in Winnicott, a tool for understanding human creativity and culture. Winnicott offered him a way to comprehend human creativity not found in Freud, a way to understand how each person creates meaning in their life. Recognizing both the inherently pluralistic nature of our society as well as the right each person has to shape their own way of being in the world, Pruyser also preached the value of tolerance as differentiated from tolerating. An individual's idiosyncratic religious stance was not simply to be tolerated--as a necessary evil--but respected, and such respect was not just a nice gesture to the alien, but an enrichment for the tolerant one.[8]

Jones also found in Winnicott the foundation upon which to build a new psychoanalysis and a new epistemology. Psychoanalysis is now the study of relationships, and a psychoanalysis of the sacred, an analysis of the relational dynamics an individual experiences with whatever is sacred for them. Jones affirmed that all aspects of human consciousness have their function and place, primary processes, secondary processes and transitional experiencing all are vital human functions. Using as well the contribution of feminist scholarship, Jones, in constructing a Winnicottian epistemology moves beyond value-laden categories such as good objectivity and suspect subjectivity, to a creative, playful way of being in the world in which transitional experience and primary processes bring creativity and joy into life without overwhelming rationality. Now being child-like can co-exist with being rational, imagery and synthesis are valued along with rational processes, both paradox and logic have their place. A Winnicottian epistemology creates a space in which the idiosyncratic creations of individuals can be respected,

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[8] Cf. Ch. IV, pp. 149ff. for my review of Pruyser's approach to tolerance.

their visions and dreams respectfully considered, and the meaning of their lives their own to find and create.[9]

Jones also, perhaps by virtue of his professional location as a professor of religion, widens the scope beyond Christian religious experience to opening for discussion the contributing psychodynamic factors discernable in the religious phenomena of many different religious traditions. While his work is mostly a survey of theories, and his clinical case studies involve people from Christian backgrounds (one of agnostic mixed Christian/Jewish parentage), nevertheless the fact that Jones mentions Hindu, Buddhist and Goddess worship phenomena widens the rather narrow range of most psychology of religion. While Winnicott and Jones et al. have greatly widened both what can be considered normal human functioning as well as what is considered material for analysis, one of Winnicott's greatest contributions is his divergence from Freud (and Klein) on how to professionally relate to his clients, students and colleagues.

"Dominating Transferences" versus Respect, Holding and Discovery.

Psychoanalysis, being a medically based system, first with Freud and then Klein, sought to explain the sources of diverse human phenomena with reference to certain dominant ideas about human beings, i.e., biological drives and their conflict with the requirements of civilization. There was a certain confidence in psychoanalytic circles that all human phenomena could be explained through such heuristics. Thus the attempt was made to classify and categorize human phenomena according to a certain number of explanatory principles. However, this scientific enterprise was subverted by the master-disciple dynamics first with Freud and his disciples and then Klein and her

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[9] Pruyser too saw this when he commented that the "realistic world" needed the ideals of the transitional sphere to make it human.(Cf. op cit. n. 84, p. 173)

followers. The idealization of the leader combined with the increasingly dogmatic application of these principles required by the leader resulted in the creation of an interpretative grid, which was then of course applied to the clients. According to Winnicott the result increasingly was a dominating, damaging countertransference, in which the client's "true self"never saw the light of day, but rather the false self was co-opted into an intellectualized analysis with very little therapeutic gain.

The way out of this trap, of imposing one's own countertransferences[10] on another, is according to Winnicott, to cultivate a certain healthy-mindedness as can be seen in the following excerpt from a talk he gave to nurses and doctors on "care" versus "remedy" in "cure:"

> . . . a sign of health in the mind is the ability to enter imaginatively and yet accurately into the thoughts and feelings and hopes and fears of another person; also to allow the other person to do the same to us.[11]

Accompanying this mind set is Winnicott's description of the therapeutic relationship:

> We find that when we are face to face with a man, woman or child in our specialty, we are reduced to two human beings of equal status. Hierarchies drop away. I may be a doctor, a nurse, a social worker, a residential houseparent--or, for that matter, I may be a psychoanalyst or a parson. It makes no difference. What is significant is the interpersonal relationship in all its rich and complex human colours.
>
> There is a place for hierarchies in the social structure, but not in the clinical confrontation.[12]

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[10] We have seen, in this thesis countertransferential issues such as: idealizing one's psychoanalytic and academic mentors, denigrating "aliens," the need for a heavenly being on which to depend and the just as strong need to deny it, other unresolved religious issues, and ethnocentric or paranoid reactions to the encounter with the alien.

[11] D.W. Winnicott, "Cure," in *Home is Where We Start From: Essays by a Psychoanalyst*, p. 117. This is a talk delivered the year before he died to doctors and nurses on care versus remedy in the attempt to cure.

[12] D.W. Winnicott, "Cure," p. 115. Winnicott also let his egalitarian tendencies be known in psychoanalytic circles as can be seen in his brief reference to a statement he had made at a meeting

But Winnicott did not simply have egalitarian sentiments, this non-hierarchical approach was key to his psychoanalytic method, his way of doing science. As Clare says of him:

> In his clinical work D.W.W. made it his aim to enter into every situation undefended by his knowledge, so that he could be as exposed as possible to the impact of the situation itself. From his point of view this was the only way in which discovery was a possibility, both for himself and for his patients. This approach was more than a stance; it was an essential discipline . . . [13]

Perhaps such a discipline seems idealistic, but Clare description's of the roots of this approach reveals its simplicity:

> And it was Horder who said to him, "Listen to your patient. Don't go in with your wonderful knowledge and apply it all. Just listen. They'll tell you quite a lot of things. You'll learn a lot if you listen."[14]

Winnicott's approach to the therapeutic relationship and to cure was very different from those of Freud and Klein for whom cure was in the remedy or interpretation, the application of preset categories to the experiences that clients bring for analysis. For Winnicott, it was this discovery-oriented, respectful and non-hierarchical approach that made cure possible. By providing what was needed, i.e., a stable and reliable holding environment, and by believing that healing came from within the client, and that what they found would be unique to that client, Winnicott established a healing relationship free of intrusive interpretations, one in which analyst and client or student could discover together.

McDargh, working in this Winnicottian context, points to the fact that we know more than

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of the British Psychoanalytic Society (BPS) found in a 1965 letter in *The Spontaneous Gesture*, to Michael Fordham, one of his Jungian colleagues: ". . . I talked about psychotherapy in terms of two people bumping up against each other"(p. 149).

[13] Clare Winnicott, "D.W.W.: A Reflection," p. 17.

[14] "Interview with Clare Winnicott," p. 189.

we can say, and that this "more" can be accessed through subtle bodily signals as Gendlin has demonstrated, or through the genesis of the "moods" that Bollas has identified.[15] But what is required in order to access this level of transformative insight is the experience of trust, as Bollas has found, we pursue a transformative object in order to surrender to it, or in Winnicott's language, once we feel "held" we are able to grow or transform, to move past old blocks and find new meanings or ways of being.

This is another aspect of Winnicott's theory that is still being underutilized, and that is an understanding of the conditions necessary for therapeutic or religious transformation. Winnicott's "holding" and Bollas' extension of that concept in his "transformational object," are revolutionary concepts both for a psychoanalysis that has mostly been preoccupied with neurotic features of religion, as well as for the religious professionals. While it is pretty clear for a therapist what Winnicott means by a "holding" or "facilitating environment" what research questions does this open up for psychoanalytic scholars of religion? For example, in today's society, who is providing these "holding environments," where are people going in order to resolve painful issues, to break through into a more meaningful life? What light, if any, can be shed on the proliferation of support groups and the concomitant decline of the churches? Does this conception of a trust-inducing space, a place where at a deep level a person knows he or she can be transformed, shed new light on the activities of New Religious Movements or the Human Potential Movement? Perhaps, we have in Winnicott the tools to move beyond Pruyser and Meissner's religiously biased apologetics, from their well-defended positions, and take a fresh look at what is happening to people in these groups.

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[15] Cf. my discussion of these authors, Ch. V, pp. 201ff.

Such a study, although based in psychoanalytic theory, would need to utilize other research methodologies in order to answer these questions. But Winnicott's discovery-oriented, non-hierarchical approach is strikingly similar to that of qualitative researchers. The use of qualitative techniques such as semi-structured interviews, participant observation and perhaps questionnaires would likely provide answers to these questions, answers that would be discovered through the experiences and realizations of our informants.[16]

Winnicott, then has given religious psychoanalysts the tools, not only to validate their own religious experience, but also the ability to help others, no matter what their beliefs, to find what they need through the good-enough environmental provision of the psychoanalyst. Furthermore emulating his discovery-oriented, non-hierarchical approach to his students and clients means that these religious psychoanalysts could continue to learn and grow along with their clients, students, and research subjects. But is this the case? How are these religious psychoanalysts doing when it comes to confronting "the alien?"

Defending a Theory: Religious Psychoanalysts and "the alien."

The reader will remember that tolerance, for Pruyser, does not go as far as Winnicott's discovery-oriented approach, in which one could learn from "the alien." Rather tolerance or "caring" is in effect a sensitive approach to proselytization: by caring for the "alien" one created

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[16]I am grateful to Susan L. Bedford for introducing me to qualitative research methods and theories, both in her *'Crying out of Recognition: ' Experiences with a Meditative Practice*, Unpublished MA Thesis, (Ottawa: Carleton University, 1993); and "New Methods, New Knowledge: Participatory Research in Altered States of Consciousness," (Unpublished paper presented to CSSR, Calgary, May, 1994). Cf. as well our collaboration, Daniel F. Berg, et al., "Men's Groups in the National Capital: Some Case Studies" presented to The Society for Pastoral Counselling Research, 4th annual conference, (Ottawa: St. Paul University, May 8-10, 1997) in which the research question was what are the effects of being in a men's group on its participants.

the conditions for that person's transformation, but clearly the "carer" had a pretty good idea of what transformation was required. Then there are the pathological categories that Meissner and Pruyser created to contain Winnicott's open-ended valuation of transitional phenomena. And of course, Rizzuto, Meissner and Pruyser all share the belief that many ordinary religious experiences are evidence of pathology. The urge to classify, to categorize, to pathologize the religious experience of others continues in the work of Rizzuto, Meissner and Pruyser. Although McDargh and Jones cannot be described as classifying or categorizing in their approach, there seems to be a subtle and implicit form of judgement when it comes to religious experiences. I am not sure I was able to discover in any of those I surveyed Winnicott's discovery-oriented and non-hierarchical approach to his clients and students.

Part of the problem is Jones' nemesis "reductionism." Psychoanalysis by its very nature is reductionistic, tending to see other realities behind the phenomena that present themselves for analysis, realities that determine in some way the shape of the phenomena under observation. This can be seen in obvious cases such as Pruyser's classification of "ineffable experiences" as autistic, or in Rizzuto's analysis of the genesis of the God-representation. Even with Jones and McDargh this problem presents itself in the concerns raised by Spero, i.e., their interpretation of the patient's experience of God is likely in some cases to be quite different from the patient's. Although Winnicott's theory of the psychodynamic nature of transitional experiences including experiences of religious objects is an advance on Freud's wholesale pathologizing of religious phenomena, it still represents a form of reductionism.

Some have tried to argue that transitional objects have a foot-hold in reality, they are not simply subjective creations (i.e., Freud's theory of projection) and thus God is not simply a

projection.[17] They are misled if they believe that they can find in Winnicott's theory a warrant for including God in psychology of religion discussions, for his theory is a theory of the God of the family and of the culture, not of supernatural encounters. However, I must also add that Winnicott's discovery-oriented stance, where he encountered others "undefended by his knowledge" as I am interpreting him, might have meant that if he encountered someone who believed they had encountered God, or had a transformative mystical experience, that he might have stayed open to what he might discover.[18] I say "might" because in his writings Winnicott shows little inclination to discuss the religious experiences of his clients. Although I appreciate Rizzuto's professionalism in specifying what it is that psychoanalytic scholars of religion can discuss or not, i.e., the psychodynamics of individual beliefs, I believe that the only answer to Spero's question is Winnicott's discovery-oriented, non-defended approach, in other words remaining open to the possibility *that something else indeed might be the case*.[19]

Psychoanalytic Practice: A Winnicottian Approach Beyond Countertransferences in a Pluralistic Context

Of course, it is the rare analyst who can enter situations "undefended by his or her knowledge." This is perhaps better understood today than it was when Winnicott was practising. As Beit-Hallahmi has demonstrated, ethnocentrism or religious bias is a real problem in

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[17] Cf. Ch. IV, pp. 177-78, for my discussion of Malony, Spilka and Hood's proposals.

[18] Winnicott had little to say about religious experience, and when he did discuss mystical experience, it seems he had spend little time or effort coming to grips with it but was prepared to accept the standard psychoanalytic interpretations of it. (Cf. Ch. VI, pp. 221-2)

[19] David Tracy expressed a similar sentiment in the first chapter of his *Analogical Imagination*.

psychology of religion. There is, it would seem, too little awareness of how religious psychologists' allegiances or identifications are affecting their work, never mind what Stein pointed out about implicit cultural assumptions and how vigorously they get defended.[20] Meissner finds group paranoid phenomena in all of our major institutions and Winnicott described the natural formation of groups as being people whose idiosyncratically shaped worldviews overlapped enough with those of others to form a group. From a psychoanalytic point of view (never mind sociological) psychologists of religion are part of distinct groups, groups which influence how their work is done, the opinions they form, the theories they create.

It is for this reason that Clare described her husband's practice of being undefended by his knowledge as a "discipline." As Winnicott exemplified, though while none of us can get enough analysis, one's self-analysis needs to continue in order to avoid or at least ameliorate these dynamics. An integral part of that self-analysis, for psychologists or religion today, might well be what Thomas Robbins calls the anthropologization of our discipline.[21] It is participant observation, immersion if you will, in cultures or religious groups different from one's own, with an "undefended stance," which can perhaps impact the nascent ethnocentrism and parochialism of psychologists of religion. Robbins found that this research in alternative religious groups profoundly changed his discipline of sociology of religion, moving it from a text-based discipline to a discipline studying live people and trying to come to terms with the significance of their experiences.

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[20] Cf. Ch. III, pp. 136ff.

[21] Thomas Robbins, "The Transformative Impact of the Study of New Religions on the Sociology of Religion," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, 27, (1988).

Much has been made in this thesis, of the fact of pluralism, and the need for a pluralistic stance. In Canada we are fast approaching the time when white descendants of West European immigrants will represent less than fifty per cent of the population. In such a multi-cultural, inter-faith context, is it appropriate for psychologists of religion in publicly funded universities to be interested in, and committed to the furtherance of their own relatively small group? Must not the changing composition of our society and classrooms mean that psychologists of religion should become familiar and comfortable with a wide range of religious phenomena? I have found each of the authors I have surveyed to have strong pluralistic leanings, based as they are in Winnicott's description of idiosyncratically shaped personal living, and Jones and McDargh particularly show something of the qualities I believe are necessary for psychology of religion in the next century. But being a pluralist[22] although it is based in tolerance and respect, does not guarantee a Winnicottian discovery-oriented, non-defended approach.

As we have seen, pluralists, like any other group, also have individuals or groups which they find hard to tolerate never mind as Pruyser would have it, practice tolerance or caring with them. As Roger Lapointe, sociologist of religion, points out, pluralists are liberal intellectual thinkers, and thus are part of a group that will have difficulty tolerating others who do not share their values.[23] It would thus be an interesting, perhaps even necessary, exercise for the pluralistic psychoanalyst of religion to do participant observation research in a Pentecostal temple, or a new religious movement. Such developments perhaps would equally benefit psychology of religion.

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[22] By pluralism I am not denoting relativism. A pluralist has his or her own beliefs and tradition(s), but he or she is aware of the weaknesses and strengths of his or her own tradition(s) as well as of other traditions or ways of being in the world.

[23] Personal communication, May 26, 1997.

Another area where a discovery-oriented approach would yield fruit is in following further Jones' interest in a transitional state of consciousness. It is no accident that he takes recourse to Victor Turner's anthropological understanding of "liminal states" as a way of grounding his interest in the functional value of ecstasy in human experience. For Jones, his research method *par excellence* was the clinical case study for the access it gives to the transformations of human experience. However, anthropological methods I believe are of a similar value for the psychoanalytic researcher both because access to this sort of experience in people from other cultures or faiths is not as likely in the consulting room, and because of the potential transformative impact of the research on the researcher. This is one way to take Winnicott's non-hierarchical, discovery-oriented approach and apply it in a manner that combats ethnocentrism and produces results that are of use outside of the Christian population.

Winnicott and Freud: Sanity, Insanity and Pathologization

Winnicott not only radically revised Freud's theory of illusion and culture, his biological theory of drives, and his style of therapy, from the right interpretation at the right time to a facilitating environment in which interpretations could usefully be wrong, he also challenged Freud's version of health or sanity. In Winnicott's first original paper, "Primitive Emotional Development,"[24] he makes the point that being sane can have its problems:

> There is, however, much sanity that has a symptomatic quality, being charged with fear or denial of madness, fear or denial of the innate capacity of every human being to become unintegrated, depersonalized, and to feel that the world is unreal.[25]

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[24] Winnicott, "Primitive Emotional Development," pp. 145-156.

[25] Winnicott, "Primitive Emotional Development," p. 150.

He footnotes this passage commenting ". . . we are poor indeed if we are only sane." Sanity, as Freud described it seemed often to be a defence against reality, and perhaps against natural internal dynamics. However, it is in his review of Jung's *Memories, Dreams and Reflections* that Winnicott makes his own position clear:

> If I want to say that Jung was mad, and that he recovered, I am doing nothing worse than I would do in saying of myself that I was sane and through analysis and self-analysis I achieved some measure of insanity. Freud's flight to sanity could be something we psychoanalysts are trying to recover from, just as Jungians are trying to recover from Jung's 'divided self,' and from the way he himself dealt with it.[26]

As Phillips observed, Winnicott presents the psychoanalytic traditions as giving us a choice: "sanity, a divided self, or the achievement of 'some measure of insanity.'"[27]

Winnicott, by saying he had "achieved some measure of insanity" likely was indicating a similar awareness of what is seen in the rehabilitation of primary processes by analysts like Milner, Jones and Loewald.[28] What Winnicott called Freud's flight to sanity, was in fact a rationalistic ethic that believed that nature had to be civilized, that unruly drives had to be tamed, and that sanity was a sober, stoic acceptance of the requirements of civilization.

Freud's genius lay in his uncovering of the reality of sexual and aggressive impulses and

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[26] D.W. Winnicott, "Review of *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*" in *Psychoanalytic Explorations*, p. 483. Philips comments: "If there could be Winnicottians they would have to recover from Winnicott's flight into infancy, his flight from the erotic." But he also sees Winnicott's measure of "insanity" as inspirational (*Winnicott*, p. 152).

[27] Phillips, *Winnicott*, p. 152.

[28] Marion Milner in "Two-Way Journey," has enlarged on this understanding of Winnicott with reference to the change in the meaning of "primary process"(p. 42)--something Hans Loewald has developed even further (Cf. discussion in Ch. VI, pp. 219ff.). Being on good terms with one's primary process according to Milner and Loewald is a sign of health, but therefore more than only logical or "sane."

how their repression resulted in neuroses. His discovery of the unconscious, and the power of the unconscious in everyday life, what he called the "psychopathology of everyday life," radically changed dominant conceptions of the person. He was able to point to the unconscious determinants of many human phenomena including of course religious feeling, belief and action. But while Freud revolutionized our sense of ourselves, in Winnicott's view, he did little to help us understand what makes life meaningful. His was a vision of what made people sick, and health for him, according to Winnicott, was mostly a matter of not being sick. What was lost were many aspects of human functioning that in Freud's view were pathological, but have since through Winnicott, and Milner, Jones, Loewald, and many others been restored as integral to healthy human functioning. Winnicott's notion of transitional processes revolutionized a inner world, outer world hypothesis and rendered nonproblematic or normal for psychoanalysts many cultural and religious phenomena, making creative play in many fields possible and valuable once again. Similarly, analysts like Milner, Jones and Loewald have been rehabilitating primary process phenomena such as being child-like, experiencing timelessness and unity, and seeing them as a fruitful and sustaining part of human life. Health for them is exemplified in Milner's description of Winnicott as being ". . . on excellent terms with his primary process; it was an inner marriage to which there was very little impediment."[29] And in fact anecdotal stories of Winnicott bear this out. According to Clare he sometimes drove his car with his head through the roof and his walking stick on the gas pedal, and he was once stopped by a policeman for riding his bicycle with his feet on the handlebars down a hill who said to him: "Fancy an old man like you setting an example to

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[29] Milner, "Two-Way Journey," p. 42.

everybody."[30] Yes Winnicott achieved some measure of insanity.

Winnicott not only differed from Freud in his beliefs about health, but also in his approach to pathological labels. Winnicott's respect for colleagues, students and clients, and his non-dogmatic discovery-oriented approach left him nervous of categories. Winnicott in various places spoke of the concern he had that people would use his ideas of transitional objects and his diagnostic techniques as the basis for some new system of classification. In a 1952 letter to Roger Money-Kyrle, a Kleinian and the one who suggested the use of the word "intermediate" to him, Winnicott says why the word "transition" is so important:

> The word intermediate is certainly useful but the word transition implies movement and I must not lose sight of it otherwise we shall find some sort of static phenomenon being given an association with my name.[31]

Winnicott, as he proceeds to make clear to Money-Kyrle, in describing transitional objects and phenomena is not describing classifiable objects, or something static, but rather a form of experience.

> Experience is a constant trafficking in illusion, a repeated reaching to the interplay between creativity and that which the world has to offer. Experience is an achievement of ego maturity to which the environment supplies the essential ingredient.[32]

When Winnicott some years later gathered together his major papers in *Playing and Reality*, he in his introduction made his concerns about the classification of objects very clear:

> In writing this book around the subject of transitional phenomena I find myself continuing to be reluctant to give examples. My reluctance belongs to the reason that I gave in the original paper; that examples can start to pin down specimens and begin a process of

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[30] "Interview with Clare Winnicott," p. 193.

[31] *Spontaneous Gesture*, p. 42.

[32] Ibid., p. 43.

> classification of an unnatural and arbitrary kind, whereas the thing that I am referring to is universal and has infinite variety.[33]

Being in a psychoanalytic medical system, classification is a natural outcome, but the humanistic Winnicott was focussed on relationships, experiencing, being alive, and what it was that caregivers and analysts could do to facilitate growth in these areas. Not only did Winnicott not want an interpretative grid created of his theory however, I believe he would not have been happy that analysts used his ideas about transitional experiencing to pathologize religious experiences. As mentioned earlier, Winnicott was only too happy that his clients had the ability to believe, had had a good-enough beginning that they could believe.[34]

It is clear that for Winnicott, health and Freud's views on sanity are not the same thing. It is equally true that the application of Freudian ideas of health to transitional phenomena would have been repugnant to him. Rather than a new language to which one has to submit in order to derive benefits (the Freudian and Kleinian approach to therapy), in Winnicott's view the potential for healing and growth exists within the client or student and requires appropriate conditions within which to grow. Thus the analyst is there to be used so that growth can happen. Rather than a dominating lexicon and transferential relationship to the master, Winnicott offered a facilitating, "use-me," relationship to his clients and students: a non-hierarchical, equal to equal way of relating. This non-hierarchical approach where the therapeutic set-up is more of a window than a two-way mirror is perhaps an appropriate model for academic work in the study of religion. Rather than thinking that deep psychoanalytic interpretation will show the truth of this or

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[33] Winnicott, *Playing and Reality*, p. xii.

[34] Cf. Ch. IV, p. 170.

that religious phenomena, especially when the person or group being addressed is from a different cultural or religious group to that of the psychological expert, perhaps a non-hierarchical, tolerant and respectful approach to others could lead to something other than parochial or ethnocentric psychology of religion. Perhaps we will see in the future an increasing number of psychoanalytic studies that use a discovery-oriented approach to comprehend the experiences of individuals and groups whatever their faith or spirituality who seem to be providing a "holding environment" to their people.

Conclusion:
Winnicott and a Humane Approach to the Psychoanalytic Study of Religion

This is a thesis on the usefulness of Winnicott's theory for the psychological study of religion. However, since Winnicott in fact said little about religion, and certainly did not try to study religious phenomena as such, perhaps since part of what I am taking from Winnicott is his approach to research, it will be useful to conclude with some complementary insights from those who do study religion. Winnicott's way of being a professional resonates with that of others in the study of religion, at least as seen in their writings. Two that come to mind are Wilfred Cantwell Smith and Carol Christ.

Smith, in his "Objectivity and the Humane Sciences: A New Proposal" calls for a "humane" approach to study the religious lives of others, one in which the scholarly "we" is not separated off and distinct from those studied, but rather a communal "we" which includes those studied such that they are able to recognize their experiences and values in the scholar's

findings.[35] There are no dominating countertransferences here. Christ, on the other hand, calls for a new ethos in the study of religion, an ethos of eros and empathy. Her ethos of eros and empathy means,

> . . . the root of our scholarship and research is eros, a passion to connect, the desire to understand the experience of another, the desire to deepen our understanding of ourselves and our world . . . . At its best, scholarship becomes a way of loving ourselves, others, and our world more deeply.
> . . . . one of the goals of our scholarship is empathy, a form of understanding that reaches out to the otherness of the other, rooted in a desire to understand the world from a different point of view. Empathy is the ability to put ourselves in the other's place, to feel, to know, to experience the world from a standpoint other than our own.[36]

Whether it is Christ's erotic and empathic approach to scholarship, Smith's "humane" sciences approach, or Winnicott's discovery-oriented, non-hierarchical professionalism, we have here an approach to scholarship that operates from a deep respect for those we study, help or teach. Scholars like David Tracy [37] and Benjamin Beit-Hallahmi[38] also contribute to this vision of scholarship by pointing out that such a respect is necessarily based in self-respect and a deep

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[35] Wilfred Cantwell Smith, "Objectivity and the Humane Sciences: A New Proposal" (in *Religious Diversity: Essays by Wilfred Cantwell Smith*, Ed. Willard G. Oxtoby, (New York: Harper and Row, (1976), pp. 178-180.

[36] Carol Christ, "Toward a Paradigm Shift in the Academy and in Religious Studies," in *The Impact of Feminist Research in the Academy*, Ed. Christie Farnham, (Bloomington and Indianapolis, Indian University Press, 1987), p. 58.

[37] David Tracy, in his *The Analogical Imagination*, (New York: Crossroad Publishing Co., 1981) holds that the way to move forward in dialogue was by respecting and understanding both one's own beliefs or tradition as well as those of your dialogue partner. In his mind such a dialogical approach is the academic way forward in a world of competing worldviews.

[38] Benjamin Beit-Hallahmi, in his *Prolegomena to the Psychological Study of Religion*, says that it is a thorough grasp of one's particular worldview and assumptions, one's own cultural specificity or ethnocentrism that gives one an adequate basis for making comparisons with those of other people, seeing where learning can happen for either side(pp. 53-54).

understanding of one's own traditions and ethnocentrism. Such an approach is I believe recommended for scholars, therapists and teachers working in a pluralistic society, and perhaps will give us a more fruitful approach to understanding the religious experience of all the inhabitants of our global village, of mother earth, as we prepare for a new millennium.

In closing, let me once again reaffirm that in discovering Winnicott one discovers a new way of being a teacher, a researcher or a therapist. One does not simply have a new lexicon, and it is not appropriate to use Winnicott as a way of calling one's own religiosity healthy while calling someone else's unhealthy. Winnicott, as Jones has realized with his concept of "relational psychology," has transformed the psychoanalytic relationship to a relationship in which there are three levels of study, all important, to any one professional relationship.

The first required ingredient is a sensitive awareness of one's own psychodynamic and group identity issues such as can be acquired through undergoing a personal analysis or meditative practices which deepen self-awareness. As Jonte-Pace put it, it is the psychoanalytic tradition to discover and analyse transference relationships in all interactions, including of course our own.[39] Necessary at this first point of analysis as well is exposure to the literature and experiences of religious or cultural groups other than one's own. The point of cultivating such awarenesses is to put an end to the "samsaric cycles" of transference relationships,[40] to be free to truly discover the other. The second required ingredient, which is based on the first, is a deeper, more thorough level of analysis of your partner in learning, be that partner a student, patient or research subject--in other words to show that degree of health aspired to by Winnicott: to be able

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[39] Cf. Ch. VI, pp. 209-10.

[40] Jonte-Pace, "Which Feminism," p. 373.

to enter imaginatively and yet accurately into the thoughts and feelings of another while being able to allow the other to do the same to us. Finally, as an expert in psychology of religion, one also must be cognizant of the third entity, that is the relationship shared by the two of you, its dimensions, its social location, the ramifications for each. Such a careful, respectful, humane approach to psychoanalytic helping, research, and teaching will do much to facilitate the growth of a tolerant, pluralistic society, at least within the spheres of influence which are available to academic psychoanalytic experts in the study of religion.

This then is my summary of the usefulness of Winnicott for the study of religion. Psychologists of religion who have discovered Winnicott have all made use of his rehabilitation of illusion and his creation of a transitional sphere, a place where we people can rest without being pathologized as immature or neurotic. Some of them have gone deeper into Winnicott and his have used his therapeutic concepts of "holding," "true self/false self," and "the capacity to be alone." However, still to be used in psychology of religion is Winnicott's discovery-oriented, non-hierarchical approach, jealous of the client's right to fashion his or her own transitional sphere, whose confidence is not in the power of his interpretations but in the quality of his "facilitating environment." The potential, as yet only partially realized, of Winnicott's contribution to psychology of religion is a new psychoanalytic epistemology, a new respect for those we study, teach or help, and an increasing sophistication when it comes to being undefended, and perhaps being able to discover with our clients, students, and those we study.

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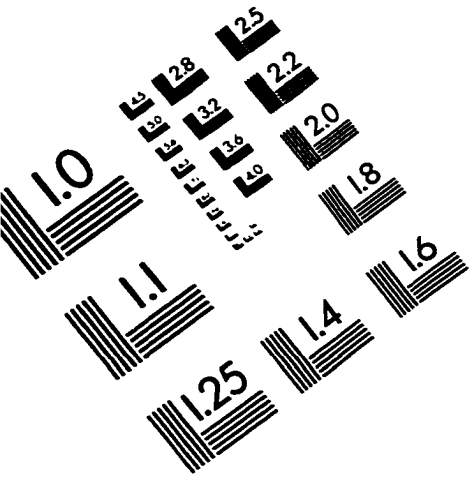
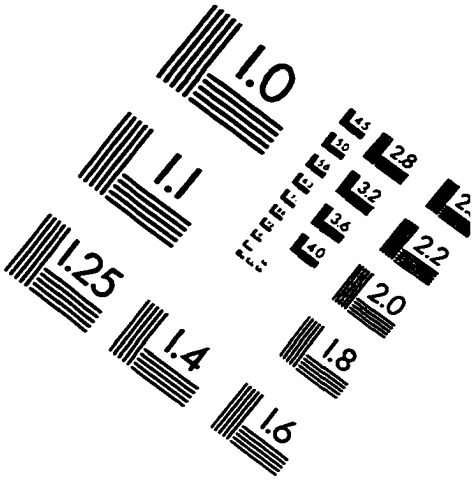
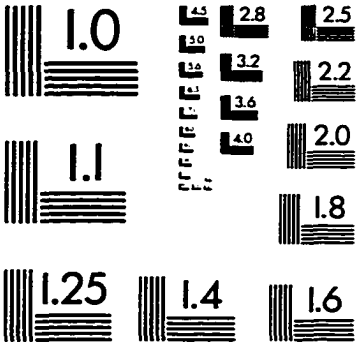
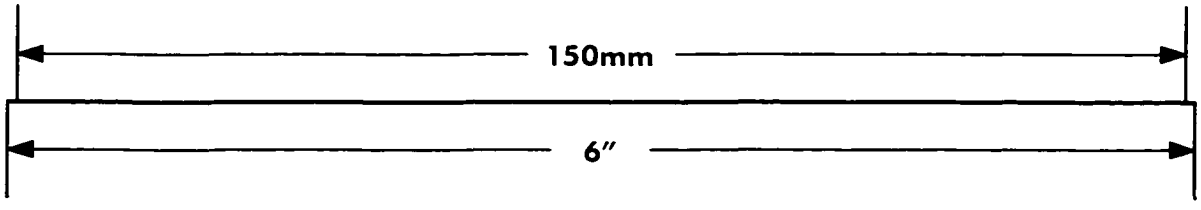
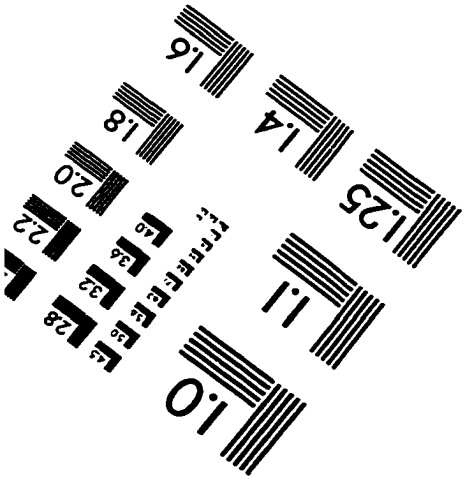
IMAGE EVALUATION TEST TARGET (QA-3)

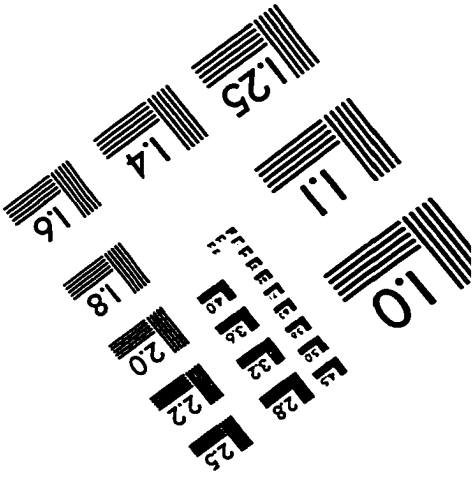












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