

**A Practical Theology of Mental Health:
A critical conversation between theology,
psychology, pastoral care and the voice of
the witness**

Submitted by

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Preface

**The day is not far distant when humanity will realize that biologically
it is faced with a choice between suicide and adoration.
Pierre Teilhard de Chardin**

What exactly do we mean by mental illness? Is it an organic disease? Or are its causes psychological and requiring therapy or counselling with, at times, medication to alleviate any accompanying organic symptoms? Or could one even consider that, in some instances, it is neither of these and is best described as a 'spiritual dis-ease'? If there is evidence that this is the case, then its causes [and remedies] must be sought elsewhere. In other words, could one argue that there are no substantial grounds for assuming that care of the mentally ill be relegated exclusively to the expertise of the secular sciences? This is the question that drives this dissertation.

This dissertation named "A Practical Theology of Mental Health: a critical conversation between psychology, theology, pastoral care and the voice of the witness" addresses this question that has lurked without answer in the shadows of the human mind for as long as there has been mental illness. Beyond the primary question there are subsequent questions. Can it afflict anyone, or is it specific to some people for some, as yet unknown, reason? Is it possible to fully recover from this illness, whatever its cause, or does the sufferer remain ever after mentally, emotionally and/or spiritually fragile?

This thesis will argue that in the absence of evidentiary knowledge it seems reasonable to assume that the primary and subsequent questions can be answered by the voice of the witness, the one who has experienced the phenomenon of mental illness and recovered from it ... if indeed that is possible. The author of this dissertation claims to be such a voice.

In 1965 I was first treated with medication for anxiety neurosis. By 1970 I was diagnosed with manic depression, now called bi-polar disorder. Certainly I suffered from delusions, illusions and hallucinations. In 1972 I was admitted to a psychiatric hospital where I remained for several weeks. After years of professional treatment that included psychotherapy, drug therapy, group therapy and electro-convulsive therapy, I encountered a self and mutual help organisation (1974) where other sufferers of mental illness claimed to have discovered a path to recovery, a path that rejected the medical model of treatment. In this setting I began my journey of recovery. By 1976 I had

ceased all professional treatment, including medication. My last clinical link with the medical model was broken. However, I continued for more than 15 years to be involved in the mental health arena, saturating my mind with psychological interpretations and the findings of psychiatric research, as well as attending GROW groups in a leadership capacity, before starting my own “Faiththrough” groups.¹

Several attempts to share my experience with professional mental health carers fell on deaf ears. For example, in 1987 a complimentary copy of *Ordinary Insanity*, my autobiography of recovery from mental illness, was sent to every psychiatrist listed in the Yellow Pages of the Sydney Telephone Directory.² An invitation to dialogue with me was extended, along with my contact details. The silence was deafening.

Several attempts to absent myself from the mental health arena also proved futile. My entry into formal theological education (1993) was one such attempt, but it seemed God had other ideas!³ In this attempt I was surprised by two things which now appear to be related. First, my experience of both mental illness and recovery from it had reference frames in theology which allowed the experience to be articulated. This is distinct from psychology which talks *about* ‘a condition’ from the outside. It does not *speak to* the experience from the inside. Part of the surprise was that in more than 20 years of searching and re-searching I remained utterly ignorant of any theological connection.⁴

The second surprise came some years into my education when I began to recognise contradictions between theological and psychological paradigms of the ‘human person’. There was contradiction here that it seemed to me had remained

¹ GROW (not an acronym) is a self and mutual help organisation for sufferers of mental illness. It commenced in Australia in 1957. GROW’s position is that faith in God is not necessary to mental health. While I owe my functional sanity to GROW, I consider their overall position to be incompatible with my own position of wholistic sanity. The distinction between ‘functional’ and ‘wholistic’ sanity is, in a word, faith in God. This is fully explicated in my book *Mental Illness, Fact & Fiction* (Sydney: Faiththrough, 1993), 73-139.

² Emma Pierce, *Ordinary Insanity* (Sydney: Pierce Publisher, 1984).

³ Rev Dr Michael Whelan SM, then and now my spiritual director, recognised when I could not recognise the theological reflection in my experience of mental illness. It was with his gentle guidance that I entered formal theological education.

⁴ The ignorance of a theological connection, even among sufferers is not unusual, in spite of the fact that most are painfully aware of the spiritual nature of the experience. Many who suffer a mental illness and recover sufficiently to want to assist others, enter formal education in psychology, counselling and/or pastoral care. Anton Boisen is a prime example. Widely regarded as a pioneering figure in the hospital chaplaincy and clinical pastoral education movement, he suffered several relapses even as he continued, in so far as he could, to function in his pastoral care role.

unaddressed from the time Freud laid the blame for neuroses at the feet of God, or more precisely at belief in God. If theology ever mounted a challenge to this Freudian assertion, that challenge went largely unnoticed. Perhaps, from this, society is left with the impression that theological perceptions of the 'human person' are 'less real', and therefore subservient to, those of the human sciences.

The absence of a spiritual dimension is today being addressed, indeed formally recognised in institutions such as Heythrop College. However theological and psychological *contradictions* on what it means to be human, if recognised, remain largely unaddressed. Those involved in mental health care from a theological perspective are essentially those in a ministry of pastoral care. While they bring a very human dimension of compassionate caring to the mentally ill, they are obliged to work within the framework of the *theoria* established by the human sciences. Theology seems to accept its subservience to the human sciences in the field of mental health care. We will meet this acceptance in the words of Edward Schillebeeckx in the next chapter.

One glaring distinction between the human sciences and theology is the voice of the witness. The task of science, including the human sciences, is to discover/establish fact. To this end they rely on weight of numbers – part of their quantitative methodology.⁵ On the other hand, theology is led forward by the voice of the witness. More often than not this is a lone voice. The ancient prophets of Israel are such voices. John the Baptist is such a voice. Jesus of Nazareth is such a voice. In our own time I believe Martin Luther King and Mother Teresa of Calcutta are such voices. These are examples of the power of the witness to speak and influence public perception of reality.

Today witnesses speak and are heard in almost every arena involving issues of morality and social justice. Feminist theology, liberation theology and environmental theology all have their prophetic voices. But who speaks for the mentally ill? The voice of the witness in this arena is given little credibility. Yet that voice belongs to a

⁵Qualitative methods and the role of personal narrative are now being engaged by mental health professionals. This is a more recent development that was apparently not in practice in 1987 when *Ordinary Insanity*, as already related, was made available to so many professionals. What it will yield in terms of understanding what it means to be mentally ill remains to be seen, and may depend upon the interpretation placed on personal narrative. If theological perceptions of what it means to be human are not embraced, what personal narrative has to say is in danger of being corrupted by objective interpretation. If theology has a significant value to bring to this endeavour, it must surely include its own assertion that every human person is unique and unrepeatable.

human person, one who is as much a child of God and a member of the human family as every other voice.

What other voice will speak for the 17 million *children* worldwide who consume prescribed mind-altering drugs that can cause them to become violent and suicidal? It is scientifically established that it is the drugs, not the initial behavioural problems that cause the violent and suicidal behaviour.⁶ What might theological investigation have to say about the ‘necessity’ of treating the brain with chemicals that have such detrimental effects? Violent behaviour aside, psychiatrists have long been aware that their prescribed medications cause Parkinsonian and *encephalitis lethargica* symptoms in adults.⁷ What might be revealed if theology investigates research into psychiatric medication, focusing on just two relevant issues: a) by what criteria is such medication deemed suitable for human consumption, and b) by what criteria is it deemed beneficial to human mental health? Given that humans are the only known creatures gifted with reflective thought, *mental* health is not an area of research where the results of tests upon animals can be considered relevant and trustworthy. Surely theology does not acquiesce with the unspoken prejudice against the mentally ill – that there is a two-tiered humanity: those capable of taking responsibility for themselves and their lives, and those who are incapable – those who are victims of genetic and/or environmental heredity?

The majority of witnesses in the mental health arena do not speak of what is needed to improve their lot. They do not know. What they do say with a resounding weight of numbers is: ‘You do not hear me. You are not listening to me. You do not understand me’.⁸ Surely even the human sciences can hear that much! If the ‘Burdekin Report’ is to be believed, the mentally ill feel that what they have to say is given little, if any credibility. I believe the deafness of society to the voice of this

⁶There is a wealth of reports and statistics on mental health issues – world wide – through the World Health Organisation (WHO) available from http://www.who.int/topics/mental_health/en/ Internet; accessed 12 May 2006.

⁷Robert Whitaker, *Mad in America: Bad Science, Bad Medicine, and the Enduring Mistreatment of the Mentally Ill* (U.S.A.: Perseus Publishing, 2002), 203.

⁸By 1993 more than 40 inquiries into mental health services had been conducted in New South Wales alone. During the press conference at which “The Burdekin Report” (popular name) was released, Brian Burdekin commented that one of the most alarming things he found was that in all the independent inquiries into mental health services across Australia, not one viewed the professional in a kindly light. The Human Rights and Equal Opportunities Commission, *Human Rights and Mental Illness*, (Canberra: Australian Government Publishing Service, 1993).

suffering renders mentally ill people among the most vulnerable group in our society today. This dissertation seeks to address social ignorance of, and perhaps indifference to, the plight of the mentally ill. It seeks to give the mentally ill a voice, a place to speak its experience and be heard. This is not an easy task. There is no abundance of witnesses who have experienced mental illness, recovered and documented their experience. Such voices are rare. They should not be discounted on that account. Indeed, if there was only one witness to have recovered from mental illness, is it not in the tradition of theology to listen to the testimony of that witness? Perhaps a greater appreciation of this is something that theology can offer psychology.

Very recently a book has come to light, intended for publication in the latter half of 2007. *Back From the Brink* is a collection of interviews with those who have suffered a variety of mental and emotional anguish from depression to the contemplation of suicide.⁹ The author, Graeme Cowan, is not a mental health professional but rather himself a witness. The book appears to have one objective: to give a voice to the witness, and in so doing give hope to those who suffer affliction(s) so badly misunderstood. I can only lament its late arrival in the public arena, but rejoice that the concept of listening to the voice of the witness is perhaps an idea whose time has at long last come.

This dissertation seeks to answer the questions the human sciences have been unable to answer in terms of recovering mental health when one has been afflicted by mental illness. The answers are presented as they were discovered, in living experience, where the differences, even contradictions, between psychological and theological perceptions of what it means to be a human person are encountered. These contradictions are acknowledged, addressed, resolved where possible, or invited into ongoing theological/ psychological dialogue. What is sought is understanding: understanding that can lead us into transformative praxis, making this dissertation very much a practical theology.

While reading this dissertation I would ask the reader to bear two things constantly in mind. The first is their own personal fear of mental illness and mentally ill people. Experience suggests that very few people who have not experienced mental illness are free from this fear. However great or small that fear might be it has some

⁹Graeme Cowan, *Back From the Brink* – is expected to be published about June, 2007. See appendix C.

influence on personal perceptions of mental illness and mentally ill people. The second is that the author of this dissertation comes from the group of people so feared.

No genuine human endeavour is achieved by a lone individual, and that is especially true in the case of this dissertation. My most sincere and heartfelt thanks go to the many ‘witnesses’ who, over a period of 35 years gifted me with the privilege of sharing part of their life’s journey, even as I shared mine with them. They have been a continuing inspiration and motivation in my life as well as in my studies. Thanks is due also to the GROW organisation which was instrumental in my recovery from mental illness, as well as assisting with research undertaken for this dissertation.

Special thanks is due to Rev. Dr Michael Whelan SM who guided me gently into formal theological education recognising when I did not, the relevance of theology to mental health care. If credit is due anyone for recognition of theological reflection in the experience of mental illness, it is due to Dr Whelan. His guidance, challenge and affirmation have not ceased for more than eighteen years. Thanks to his guidance I came to know many lecturers at the Catholic Theological Union at Hunters Hill, all of whom contributed in some measure to this dissertation.

I am especially grateful to one of those lecturers, Rev. Dr Gerard Hall SM, who I encountered in my very first year as an undergraduate. His ability to challenge my thinking, inspire my writing, and encourage me as he has done throughout cannot be overstated. Dr Hall has been a most positive influence in my formal theological education from the very beginning. I was also fortunate in having Rev. Dr Tom Ryan SM as co-supervisor for this dissertation. Dr Ryan’s intellectual rigor proved itself invaluable.

There are others whose assistance is gratefully acknowledge: the Catholic Institute of Sydney; the Sydney College of Divinity; staff at Veech library and the library of the Broken Bay Institute; friends who dialogued for endless hours helping me to clarify my thoughts, especially Fr. Michael Kelly OSB, Fr Michael O’Toole, Peter and Nada Herro, John and Marie Lizzio, Sue Christian and Troy Fisher, all of them giving invaluable assistance.

Last, and paradoxically first, I thank my five children who suffered with me and for me during the difficult years, and then became friends and supporters in these latter years. Their encouragement and support has never wavered.

Chapter One

Introduction

This dissertation addresses two questions that are interrelated: what does it mean to be a human person and; what is mental health? It is argued here that theological and psychological contradictions with regard to what it means to be a human person underlie the prevailing inability of the current mental health system to heal mental illness. The contention is that theology and psychology need to collaborate, to explore and resolve the contradictions between them in the interest, not just of mental health, but of better understanding of authentic human life-formation. The voice of the witness, the one who has suffered and recovered from mental illness, is understandably invaluable in this endeavour. This is our first concern in this chapter.

A brief look at post Enlightenment mental health care reveals the value of attending to the voice of the witness. While this may seem an extraordinary idea in the current climate, it is not without precedent. Jean-Baptiste Pussin (1746-1811) is remembered as a hospital worker at the Bicêtre in Paris. Himself a rare ex-mental patient, he saw great value in the practice of humane treatment of the mentally ill. One must remember that what then passed for ‘treatment’ would today be called barbaric. They were kept in chains and beaten regularly among other barbaric practices.¹ In 1978 a document was discovered in the Archives Nationales in Paris.² This document reveals the role of Pussin in what became Philippe Pinel’s (1745-1826) famous and successful ‘moral treatment’ (to be explained below). Something of a partnership between the two men was initiated by Pinel.

In 1793 Pinel visited Pussin at the Bicêtre where, after his recovery, he worked. So impressed was Pinel with Pussin’s humane treatment and the positive results achieved that later, when he was assigned to the Salpêtrière Hospital, Pinel arranged to have Pussin hired as a special assistant. Patients under the care of Pinel were unchained and allowed to move freely around the hospital grounds. He replaced their dark dungeons with sunny, well-ventilated rooms, and offered support and advice. This approach proved so successful it

¹Emile Kraepelin, E. *One Hundred Years of Psychiatry*. Translated by Wade Baskin. New York: Citadel Press, 1962, 10-15.

²D.B.Weiner *The Apprenticeship of Philippe Pinel: A New Document*, “observations of Citizen Pussin on the insane” available from <http://ajp.psychiatryonline.org/cgi/content/abstract/136/9/1128>; Accessed 14th August 2007.

was repeated in several other established mental hospitals. Later Pinel's student and successor, Jean Esquirol (1772-1840) established ten new mental hospitals that operated on the same principles. Throughout his *Treatise on Insanity*, Pinel acknowledges his indebtedness to Jean-Baptiste Pussin.³

Independent of the French experience, the English Quaker William Tuke (1732-1819) brought similar reforms to northern England with the same successful results.⁴ Tuke added a dimension of reward for patients who behaved well, and in this sense recognised their moral autonomy.⁵ Benjamin Rush (1745-1813) introduced 'moral treatment' to the U.S.A., and Dorothea Dix (1802-1887) continued his legacy, helping to establish thirty-two state hospitals that were to offer 'moral treatment'. Again, the results proved successful.⁶

So why did a treatment so apparently successful in several countries become redundant? According to Robert Whitaker, whose account does not differ significantly from others, new medications were developed (neuroleptics) which made the treatment of mental illness easier (for the professional) and demonstrably more effective in as much as patients were speedily rendered more 'manageable'.⁷ Whitaker cites evidence that in the first half of the nineteenth century 60-80% of patients admitted to 'moral treatment' hospitals were discharged as 'cured' or 'improved', a success rate that has yet to be repeated. On the other hand the new medications, under the influence of the pharmaceutical industry, changed their descriptions from "brain damaging" to "virtually free of side-effects", ignoring studies that showed that unmedicated schizophrenics have a lower rate of relapse than those who take medication. Whitaker's position is now supported by two research projects carried out by the World Health Organisation.⁸

³Philippe Pinel, *Treatise on Insanity*, Birmingham: Classics of Medicine Library, 1983.

⁴Wikipedia *Moral Treatment* [Internet] accessed 14 August 2007; Available from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Psychiatric_hospital

⁵The significance of morality is emphasised in chapter six of this dissertation.

⁶Robert Whitaker, *Mad in America: Bad Science, Bad Medicine and the Enduring Mistreatment of the Mentally Ill*. U.S.A.: Perseus Publishing, 2003.

⁷Edward Shorter is among those who share Whitaker's view. E. Shorter, *A History of Psychiatry: From the Era of the Asylum to the Age of Prozac*, U.S.A. John Wiley & Sons, 1997; Jay Neugeborn's experience gives considerable credence to Whitaker's faith in 'moral treatment'. Jay Neugeborn *Transforming Madness: New Lives for People Living with Mental Illness*, California: University of California Press, 2001; Whitaker, *Mad in America*.

⁸Chapter seven of this dissertation looks more closely at these reports.

There is now, as ever, two distinctly different approaches to treating mental illness: the psychological and the medical. A case might be made that Sigmund Freud's psychoanalysis, in as much as it was intended by Freud to be medication-free, sits well with the more humane approach of endeavouring to work *with* the patient as opposed to working *on* the patient with medications and psycho-surgical procedures. This will be explored further in the next chapter as the distinctions between psychiatry and psychology are explored as they apply, not just to the treatment of mental illness, but to its 'diagnosis' or, more accurately, its interpretation.

What is apparent throughout the history of mental illness, its 'diagnosis' and treatment since the birth of modern science, is the absence of an awareness of the spiritual dimension and specifically of any authoritative role for theology.⁹ There are educational institutions today seeking to address this neglect and no doubt they have much to contribute to the subject. However their approach is largely one of accepting the *theoria* of the human sciences and endeavouring to retrieve from, or add to such *theoria*, a theological perspective.¹⁰ While there is value in this approach, it is significantly different from what is here proposed: that theology and psychology put aside any pre-conceived ideas. They are asked to leave *theoria* outside the 'hermeneutic circle' of their dialogue, to seek together understanding from a "new revelatory experience", in search of new practices that might lead to more effective and healing treatment(s).¹¹

In current practise theological perceptions of what it means to be human do not enter the domain of mental health care. It is this absence and the contradictions that flow from this absence that this dissertation seeks to address. This requires understanding as distinct from knowledge; understanding that will lead to transformative praxis. It is this dimension that necessitates a *practical* theology of mental health.

⁹Mark Sutherland "Towards Dialogue: An Exploration of the Relations between Psychiatry and Religion in Contemporary Mental Health" in *The Blackwell Reader in Pastoral and Practical Theology*, ed. J. Woodward & S. Pattinson, consultant ed. J. Patton, U.K.: Blackwell Publishing, 2000, 272-282.

¹⁰Heythrop College, University of London is one example. An examination of "Module Content" of its several units demonstrates that they are divided between psychology, theology and philosophy – each explored on its own terms. The value of the integration is more one, for example, of retrieving "embedded values" in psychological theories than of open dialogue free from pre-conceived ideas. This more objective approach has its value, but it is significantly different from the dialogical dialogue here proposed. <http://www.heythrop.ac.uk/>; Internet accessed 28th August, 2007.

¹¹Gerard Hall, *Intercultural & Interreligious Hermeneutics: Raimon Panikkar*, 6; available from http://www.mcauley.acu.edu.au/theology/ghall_panikkar.htm; Internet; accessed 3rd April 2004.

Definition of Terms

Experts in the field note the difficulty in defining **practical theology**. Emmanuel Lartey whose stated concern is primarily “maintaining a university course of study which reflects process” outlines several models for ‘doing’ practical theology as distinct from defining it. In each model ‘experience’ is central to the process, just as it is central in this dissertation.¹² Mark Sutherland also avoids defining practical theology. He emphasises its relevance to mental health care, noting: “It is a matter of some importance that students of practical theology concern themselves with mental health. Mental health is central to any critical theological analysis of contemporary social experience.”¹³ He says unambiguously that “the challenges mental health issues pose for the religious tradition concern the essential importance of levels of non-rational mental functioning to any understanding of the human condition.”¹⁴ Non-rational mental functioning is a key point in this dissertation and is specifically addressed in chapters two and three.

Sutherland introduces the position of Anton Boisen in his paper, creating a slight but significant confusion between practical and pastoral theology. Sutherland claims Boisen clearly understood the importance of the spiritual components in mental health disturbance. However Boisen, according to Sutherland, believed that the pastoral practitioner would, in the mental health arena, be brought “face to face with the painful search for meaning in the lives of others”.¹⁵ This very relevant and potentially beneficial face to face encounter is not strictly speaking ‘doing’ practical theology. It is certainly pastoral and spiritual, but practical theology has a distinct task. While its task includes addressing the search for meaning, that task incorporates more than personal or even spiritual meaning. Practical theology must address the interrelationship of widely differing social issues that impact on life, which in turn impact on meaning for life. This is well described by James Woodward, Stephen Pattison and Karl Rahner. We will come to this shortly and in more detail, for this difference is crucial to avoid misunderstanding the disposition of the interdisciplinary dialogue this dissertation is proposing. Sutherland also

¹²Emmanuel Lartey, “Practical Theology as a Theological Form” in *The Blackwell Reader in Pastoral and Practical Theology*, 127-134 at 133.

¹³Mark Sutherland “Towards Dialogue: An Exploration of the Relations between Psychiatry and Religion in Contemporary Mental Health” in *The Blackwell Reader in Pastoral and Practical Theology*, 272-282 at 272 & 273.

¹⁴Sutherland “Towards Dialogue”, 274.

¹⁵ Sutherland, “Towards Dialogue”, 275.

helpfully suggests that dialogue might now be a way forward in the light of new paradigm thinking that recasts the old conflicts between science and religion. Dialogue as a way forward will be explicated further on as the methodology of this dissertation.

The models of Larney and Sutherland have much to offer. However each invites theology to engage with contemporary social issues from a pre-existing position, 'new paradigm thinking' in the case of Sutherland, but a pre-existing position none the less. This dissertation invites theology to dialogue with psychology in a manner that negates pre-existing positions.

The 'picture' of practical theology painted by Terry Veling reflects the same apparent difficulty in its definition as experienced by Larney and Sutherland, but is more appropriate to the model of practical theology engaged here, as will be seen further on under the heading 'Methodology'. Veling, in the mode of Martin Heidegger and Hans Georg Gadamer, places emphasis on *understanding*, and on understanding as an event that might be called new insight. "Understanding is an *event* – a *happening* – more than it is something that I already possess."¹⁶ From the event of understanding in Veling's model comes the practical dimension: "practical theology ... is less a thing to be defined than it is an activity to be done."¹⁷ In a similar vein the editors of *The Blackwell Reader in Pastoral and Practical Theology* write:

Practical theology is a place where religious belief, tradition, and practice meets contemporary experiences, questions, and actions and conducts a dialogue that is mutually enriching, intellectually critical, and practically transforming.¹⁸

Karl Rahner more precisely defines the *task* of practical theology that it might achieve its goal of putting theological knowledge into transformative practice.

The task of practical theology as an original science demands a theological analysis of the particular present situation in which the Church is to carry out the especial self-realisation appropriate to it at any given moment. In order to be able to perform this analysis of the present by means of scientific reflection and to recognise the Church's situation, practical theology certainly needs sociology, political science, contemporary history etc. To this extent all these sciences are in the nature of

¹⁶Terry Veling, *Practical Theology: On Earth as it is in Heaven*, Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2005, 44.

¹⁷Veling, *Practical Theology*, 4-5.

¹⁸James Woodward & Stephen Pattison, "An Introduction to Pastoral Theology" in *The Blackwell Reader in Pastoral and Practical Theology*, 1-19 at 7.

ancillary studies for practical theology. However, it cannot simply draw on it uncritically as though it were already complete and given. Practical theology must itself critically distil this analysis within a theological and ecclesial perspective.¹⁹

This dissertation invites theology to dialogue with psychology and psychiatry so that it might critically distil their analyses within a theological and ecclesial perspective that can then translate into practical application that is transformative. Obviously as already stated, dialogue is significant.

One final point on the meaning of ‘practical theology’ as intended in this dissertation: Rahner voices this point very precisely when he asks “What does practical theology expect of the other fields of theological study”? As the dissertation proceeds it becomes obvious that almost every other field of theological study needs to be involved in the theological/psychological dialogue. “Practical theology’s demands upon other theological studies should be put forward not by a representative of practical theology but by an ‘outsider’.”²⁰ For example, moral theology might engage in dialogue with psychology regarding psychological concepts of morality. It is then the task of practical theology to critically analyse, distil a theological and ecclesial perspective together with implications that are ‘practically transforming’ from revelations that emerge from such dialogue. This dissertation seeks to do this to the extent that it can be done – but that extent, necessary though it is to a ‘practical theology of mental health’, may well be minimal in the current circumstances. The dissertation invites theology and psychology to look forward – to the world in front of the text – so that future ‘revelations’ will not be so minimal.

One’s definition of theology is informed by one’s confessional allegiance. The theology here engaged is strongly biased towards the Catholic religious tradition, the belief system of the main witness – the author of this dissertation. By **theology** is meant the sum total of speculation on the datum of revelation as it has been handed down by the Tradition of the Catholic Church. That is to say apostolic revelation is the deposit of faith transmitted by Tradition, which is the embodiment of the unique act of revelation. Its first principles are taken from revelation rather than reason, marking the impotence of human intellect to know God. This brings spirituality as a theological dimension sharply into

¹⁹ Karl Rahner, “Practical Theology within the Totality of Theological Disciplines” in *Theological Investigations* Vol 9, London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1966, 104-105.

²⁰Rahner, *Theological Investigations* Vol 9, 101.

focus. While reason leads to the discovery of God, when it is applied to knowledge *about* God one ends up with the ‘God of the philosophers’. When philosophical knowledge of God is not open to mystery but, in fact, imposes the limits of the human mind on God through a narrow conception of knowing (existence and nature) it runs the risk of ending up in atheism, agnosticism or ideology.

By **psychology** is meant no particular school or model of psychology, much less a meta-psychology.²¹ What is here meant by psychology is perhaps best described in analogy. The same limitations encountered in knowledge *about* ‘the God of the philosophers’ is encountered in knowledge *about* ‘the human of the psychologists’. When psychology continues to apply to the human person the same principle – logic – which leads to the recognition of ‘human’ as distinct from all other creatures, it encounters the equivalent of atheism, agnosticism and ideology in the realm of human *being*. That is to say, it can produce lack of belief in the spirit and mystery of personhood, ambivalence as to the unique and unrepeatable nature of ‘person’, and ultimately reduce ‘human person’ to an ideology circumscribed by human intellect.

A significant point must be made here. This dissertation deals essentially with the psychologies of Freud and Jung, the two main architects of modern psychology. It does this for a specific reason. While both men had mental illness or mental health as their starting point, ultimately their theories dealt more with what it means to be human. In other words, they applied their theories universally. For example, Freud posited the Unconscious and its various features as a dimension in every human person. He negated the spiritual, naming it a neurosis in every human person. Jung also applied his theories, such as Collective Unconscious, *Participation Mystique*, to every human person. He acknowledged a spiritual dimension as present in every human person, though he grounded that dimension in human intellect. In this way both applied their psychological constructs to a universal concept of *what it means to be a human person*.

Most psychological schools of thought to follow them had a greater sense of the particular in their psychological analyses and constructs. That is, their theories took a particular aspect of human psychology, for example Erikson’s psycho-social development,

²¹The word ‘psychology’ is used throughout except where there is a specifically medical context when the word ‘psychiatry’ is employed. This does not intend in any way to distinguish between psychologists and psychiatrists as professionals in the field of mental health care, but rather to distinguish between methods of treatment that are psychological as distinct from those that are medical. It is well understood that both psychiatrists and psychologists apply psychological methods, while only psychiatrists can apply medical remedies.

and sought to find a pattern, but did not try to apply the theory as a universal concept of what it means to be a person. Much benefit and insight has been gained by such research and analyses. The contributions of Laing, Fromm, Harris, Horney, Becker, Erikson and others cannot be denied, and should not be underrated. Indeed it is hoped such contributions will continue into the future – in partnership with theology. It is not the findings and/or theories of psychologies as they apply in specific circumstances that are of concern in this dissertation. Rather it is the impact on the meaning of ‘human person’ as that meaning emerges from a discipline circumscribed by human intellect that is of concern. The tendency to confine ‘human person’ to the horizon of human intellect emerged from the psychological theories of the two main architects as a result of their universal application of their theories. While the ‘condition’ of being human is universal, each person is unique and unrepeatable. Veling tells a mythical story worth repeating for it poignantly makes this point. Rabbi Joshua ben Levi asks the prophet Elijah when the Messiah will come. Elijah invites him to go and ask the Messiah himself, at which Rabbi Joshua naturally asks where he will find the Messiah and how he will recognize him.

You will find him sitting at the gates of Rome. ... You will see him among the poor, the afflicted and the diseased, binding up their wounds. However while all the others bind an entire area covering several wounds with one bandage, the Messiah dresses each wound separately.²²

Practical theology and the psychologies named above address the particular. It is the hope and anticipation of this dissertation that any future attempts on the part of psychology to define the ‘condition’ of being human be recast beyond the boundaries of human intellect.

Psychology that continues to be governed by scientific methodology is confined to evidence-based knowledge; the world of material things. There is no room for ‘revelation’ on the human level. That is, there is no room for the testimony of the witness as a form of qualitative method.

The property of persons ... is silence. They can only be known if they reveal themselves; and they only reveal themselves through love. On the level of testimony, truth leaves the world of things to enter the world of persons. It [truth] becomes a sign of the relationship that links them together, of their inter-subjectivity; it is the mark of their communication; it brings them into communication with one another; it withdraws them from

²²Veling, *Practical Theology*, 52.

solipsism and idealism. Thus truth assumes a moral character. Bearing witness commits the entire personality, insofar as it is responsible.²³

What is meant by psychology is therefore that psychology which tends to *produce* ‘the human of the psychologists’ rather than reveal the human who *is*. This is especially damaging when ‘the human’ is in a vulnerable condition, untrusting of their own personhood, as are the mentally ill. As with philosophy’s contribution to theology, psychology is invaluable as long as it recognises its limitations.

What is meant by **pastoral care** cannot be better stated than it has been in the quote above from Jean Daniélou. Humans are not known by an-other who interprets from a detached observation post. Humans only reveal themselves through love. Pastoral care is the context that has the potential to create, foster and nurture the loving communication of which Daniélou speaks. A model for such communication is spelled out in greater detail in the next chapter. What needs to be emphasised now is that self-revelation, leading to true understanding as distinct from objective knowledge, requires a climate of sharing rather than dialectic of expertise. Pastoral care is here presented as the *communal ground* for the dialogue between theology and psychology.

The role of the **witness** in the critical dialogue here proposed is somewhat unique and therefore needs clarification. ‘Witness’ is defined in reference frames given by Raimon Panikkar, who alone among hermeneutists gives the testimony of the witness a place of significance and credibility at the table of dialogue. The witness is of course the one who has experienced mental illness and, more significantly for this dissertation, one who claims to have recovered from that illness.

Testimony, according to Panikkar, belongs to the order of *mythos*, not of *logos*. “We want to show that the character of testimony is to reveal myth. Myth reveals itself in dialogue just as the *logos* liberates itself in dialectics.”²⁴ However the testimony of the witness cannot be opened to analysis without destroying its value as testimony.²⁵ This would appear to make the testimony of the witness something of a sacrosanct monologue which commands the attention of the audience without actually engaging in dialogue. But

²³Jean Danielou, *God and the Ways of Knowing* (New York: Meridian Books Inc., 1957), 108.

²⁴Raimon Panikkar, *Myth, Faith and Hermeneutics*, Bangalore: Asian Trading Corporation, 1983, 239.

²⁵Panikkar, *Myth, Faith and Hermeneutics*, 39.

that is not the case. “Dialogue does not seek to be primarily *duo-logue*, a duet of two *logoi*, which could still be dialectical, but a *dia-logos*, a piercing of the *logos* to attain a truth that transcends it.”²⁶ That the testimony of the witness stands in a dialectical relation with dialogue, not only contributing to, but nourishing the dialogue, will be demonstrated further on when ‘dialogue’ is explicated as the methodology.

The critical conversation proposed is fundamentally about what it means to be a **human person**. A paradigm of ‘human person’ that can be equally applied to theology and psychology is therefore necessary for a cohesive conversation. To this end a metaphor of the human person as response to a call is posited. For psychology both called and caller are one and the same. The individual ‘I’ calls ‘self’ into identity. Psychologically we invite ourselves to develop self-love, self-assertion, self-motivation – and all this with the art of self-actualisation. The self-made person is lauded as the truly successful person. For theology the call comes from the Primordial Caller. While it comes to each person from the deepest depth of ‘self’ as a particular – that is, an intimate, personal call – it comes to the human family as a universal – through ordinary, human, I-thou relationships. What both disciplines share – their ‘communal myth’ that makes dialogue possible – is an implicit, if not explicit belief in the myth that is ‘true self’.²⁷

Methodology

Practical theology begins with the event of understanding.²⁸ As we have already seen, those who endeavour to explain practical theology, whatever their model, posit experience as the central issue. Experience needs more than articulation. It needs the art of interpretation – hermeneutics. A methodology faithful to the spirit of practical theology needs to pay attention to:

- Experience
- Interpretation
- Transformative praxis

²⁶Panikkar, *Myth, Faith and Hermeneutics*, 243.

²⁷The term ‘communal myth’ comes from the hermeneutics of Raimon Panikkar and is explicated in the next chapter.

²⁸Veling, *Practical Theology* 44-45.

Methodology is more theoretical than practical and as Karl Rahner has noted, in the case of practical theology “theory indwells the practice itself”.²⁹ The purpose of practical theology, as already stated, is to bring about the event of understanding. At the same time: “Any understanding that doesn’t issue forth in changed or renewed behaviour and action in the world isn’t really understanding.” And: “To understand is very different than to know.”³⁰ It is the movement from understanding to transformation that distinguishes knowledge from understanding, marking understanding as the art of interpretation, where knowledge is more the product of logic.

The tool engaged for understanding in this dissertation is that of dialogue. This makes the process of communication critical. The communication process engaged throughout this dissertation is that developed by Raimon Panikkar whose special interest is inter-religious and inter-cultural dialogue. The art of interpretation is the subject of the next chapter in which Panikkar’s hermeneutics and communication processes are fully explicated. What is needed now is a concise explanation.

A pre-requisite to what Panikkar calls ‘dialogical dialogue’ is “a deep human honesty, intellectual openness and a willingness to forego prejudice in the search for truth.”³¹ A new way of dialoguing comes into view, one that embraces an ‘imparative’ rather than ‘comparative’ method. The imparative method challenges us to learn from the other, “allowing our own convictions to be fecundated by the insights of the other”, bringing forth the event of understanding.³² For example: The witness gives testimony of his/her experience. Theology and psychology are asked to set aside any preconceived ideas and attend, not simply to the suffering of the witness, but to the perceived insights the witness claims to have gained on the journey from insanity to mental health.³³ Such testimony must be taken at face value. The dialogue between the two disciplines cannot analyse the testimony. Rather the dialogue seeks to understand how the experience does or

²⁹Rahner, “Practical Theology within the Totality of Theological Disciplines”, 109.

³⁰Veling, *Practical Theology*, 25 & 10.

³¹ Hall, *Intercultural & Interreligious Hermeneutics*, 7.

³²Raimon Panikkar, *Invisible Harmony* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995), 173.

³³It is this vital point that has left the author few reference sources for this dissertation. Those who recover from mental illness – and remain so for a sufficient time to validate their claims – are few and far between. Even rarer are such voices that have documented their experience. As suggested in the Preface, we may need to look to the discipline of theology, as a formal discipline, to give this voice credibility.

does not ‘fit’ within their traditions. In this way the testimony of the witness stands in a dialectic relation with the dialogue, while yet nourishing it.

While the witness, along with the dialogue partners, is accepted as an “equally original source of understanding”, the witness is not a dialogue partner in the same way as theology and psychology.³⁴ Exploring the way experience does or does not ‘fit’ specific traditions necessarily employs dialectical dialogue and “testimony ends dialectical dialogue and, in turn, such dialogue allows no room for witnessing”. However Panikkar himself asks: “when do we know that there is no longer place for dialogue or that there is the time for accepting the witness.”³⁵ What is also relevant and perhaps even beneficial in this particular dialogue is one witness – the author – able to enter the dialogue as ‘partner’ on behalf of theology.

The importance of tradition cannot be underestimated in any dialogue about human mental health. Hans-Georg Gadamer paints a picture of the modern tendency to reject tradition, noting that western culture believes itself to be enlightened, free, autonomous and skilled in the art of critical thinking, unshackling itself from past traditions.³⁶ Ironically it is this sense of ‘absolute freedom’ that begins the journey into mental illness.³⁷ Dialogue with regard to the place of experience in the traditions of both theology and psychology is vital to ‘good’ interpretation. In this dialogue it is inevitable that there will be conflicting interpretations that “require considerable skills in discernment and decision.”³⁸ In the dialogue proposed in this methodology it is critical that both disciplines remain open and honest without abandoning their own tradition.³⁹ It should be remembered that “tradition is a font of patient and hard-won wisdom that resounds with intuitive sense.”⁴⁰ If we search for new understanding and new insights in a spirit of honesty ‘with an intellectual openness willing to forego prejudice in the search for truth’, guided rather than guarded by tradition,

³⁴Panikkar, *Myth, Faith and Hermeneutics*, 9.

³⁵Panikkar, *Myth, Faith and Hermeneutics*, 242.

³⁶Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*. (New York: Crossroad, 1991), 270-85.

³⁷This issue is explored in chapter 6.

³⁸Veling, *Practical Theology*, 24.

³⁹The precedent for this has already been established by those like Raimon Panikkar who have specialised in the field of inter-religious and inter-cultural dialogue. This goes a long way to explaining why Panikkar’s hermeneutics and communication processes are so apposite here.

⁴⁰Veling, *Practical Theology*, 28.

I believe we can look forward to ‘a new revelatory experience’ opening the way to transformative praxis.

Format of the Study

Positing the human person as response to a call raises some intriguing questions for psychology. Gerald May addresses these, noting that they arise from the concept of ‘self’ guiding and controlling ‘self’.

Do they mean that the self is controlling some thing? Or do they mean that some thing is controlling the self? Do they mean that the self is controlling the self? Perhaps there is more than one self? A self behind the self which controls the first self? And maybe one behind that? Perhaps it is like a hall of mirrors, a never-ending series of nonidentifiable selves, reflecting each other, observing each other, and attempting to control each other? The mind boggles of course.⁴¹

He suggests that perhaps part of self-love is a trust that “whatever the self is, it will take care of itself.”⁴² But trust in whom or what?

Positing human person as response to a call has a long history and tradition in theology, one which answers the psychological question of whom or what the ‘self’ should trust. Theologically speaking this metaphor has its foundation in the Judeo-Christian tradition. From the very beginning – Genesis – when the word of God called forth creation, call and response is a resounding theme throughout the Old and New Testaments.

One of the oldest and most concentrated statements in the sacred texts of Jewish literature is the *Shema*, “Hear, O Israel”. ... Somewhere, way back when, an ancient people realized that their lives were not simply caught in a chain of events, nor less that their lives were simply autonomous and of their own making. Rather, they experienced a prior condition that required of them “to listen” – a condition of *being addressed*.⁴³

The word ‘call’ or ‘calling’ appears more than 500 times in the Old Testament, and more than 300 times in the New Testament. The word ‘hear’ appears more than 800 times in the

⁴¹Gerald May, *Simply Sane* (New York: Crossroads, 1982) 15-16.

⁴²May, *Simply Sane*, 17.

⁴³Veling, *Practical Theology*, 31-32, (italics original).

Old Testament, and more than 350 times in the New Testament. The word ‘answer’ appears more than 300 times in the Old Testament, and more than 280 times in the New Testament.⁴⁴ Responses not numbered under ‘answer’ are many where the response is the simple Hebrew phrase *heneni*, “Here I am.”⁴⁵ It is the contention of this dissertation that this response to the primordial call, with all its implications for daily living, is what identifies ‘true self’ and thereby delivers mental health.

Critical conversation about mental illness is not new. For example *Searching for the Soul* is such a conversation.⁴⁶ In this conversation a psychoanalyst (Moran) and a theologian (Kelly) bring their own tools and methods to their interpretations and reflections on the suffering of one human being. However the voice whose interpretations and reflections are not heard is the voice of the witness, the one whose experience is being interpreted. This voice is presented hearsay, as it has been interpreted by the analyst, who alone has heard this voice speak in the first person.⁴⁷ Marie Cardinal, the one who’s suffering is the subject of the conversation, does not have a place at the table of conversation.

The voices of Moran, the psychoanalyst, and Kelly, the theologian, speak their interpretations and reflections from the confines of their own areas of academic expertise. Whether their interpretations resonate with the living experience of Cardinal cannot be known without her voice speaking her own interpretations and reflections, free of the filter of academic theory – all academic theory. Cardinal’s voice needs to be heard speaking her experience as experience.

What the voice of the witness, free from the constraints of clinical language has to say about the practical, living condition we call mental illness will, I believe, come as a surprise to most. This voice needs to be heard for at least two significant reasons. The first falls into the domain of practical theology: the impact such a voice may have on the insights that might emerge from other minds engaged in areas of human life-formation not

⁴⁴S.v. “call”, “calling”, “hear”, “answer” Robert Young, *Analytical Concordance to the Holy Bible* (London: Lutterworth Press, 1971). 135-138, 461-465, 40-42.

⁴⁵Veling addresses the call-response framework often referring to Emmanuel Levinas who has written much in this vein. See Chapter Five “We Will Do and We Will Hear” in *Practical Theology*, 77-97.

⁴⁶Frances Moran and Tony Kelly, *Searching for the Soul* (Strathfield NSW: St Paul’s, 1999).

⁴⁷Moran points the reader to an autobiographical work by Marie Cardinal, *The Words To Say It: An Autobiographical Novel*, but on examination this work is as Moran describes it “a testimony to the experience of psychoanalysis”. Kelly & Moran, *Searching for the Soul*, 17.

directly involved in mental health issues. For example theologian Edward Schillebeeckx writes:

To take the domain of psychology, where, for example, the mentally deranged can be helped more effectively by the psychiatrist than they can by the priest, this particular laicisation helps to remove the clutter from the real sphere in which the search for God must be situated.⁴⁸

Such a statement makes it sound as though Schillebeeckx perceives the *sufferings* of the mentally ill (not the person) to be ‘clutter’ distracting the human family from the ‘real sphere’ of searching for God. Schillebeeckx is too good a theologian to arrive at such a conclusion had he heard the voice of the witness speak its own name, name its own pain. In the desolate searching of that voice Schillebeeckx would, I believe, immediately have heard the very search for God of which he speaks. Schillebeeckx would certainly have recognised what will here be made apparent: that interpretations and reflections from the voice of the witness, free from clinical interpretation, are well described as extended theological reflection.⁴⁹ One can only conclude that his perception of ‘the mentally deranged’ rests upon his trust that the expertise of the analyst faithfully represents and interprets the voice of the witness. What insights might come forth if theologians of the calibre of Edward Schillebeeckx attend directly to the testimony of the witness?

The second reason is the danger of seduction of the witness into accepting the analyst’s interpretation. With no other dialogue partner, and a dialogue so unequal as to be unworthy of the name dialogue, the extremely vulnerable partner is in grave danger of becoming the construct of the analyst’s opinion, a danger recognised in what has been called ‘the Jehovah effect’.⁵⁰ For example, in the small booklet *When Your Family is Living with Mental Illness*, the author Marcia Lund, a sufferer of mental illness (bi-polar disorder) offers advice to other sufferers, their families and friends.⁵¹ Her advice to all is that they should accept that ‘healing’ can be nothing more than acceptance of one’s illness.

⁴⁸Edward Schillebeeckx, *God and Man* (London: Sheed and Ward, 1969), 19-20.

⁴⁹It is precisely this that demands the human person be posited in a theological rather than psychological metaphor.

⁵⁰The psychoanalyst’s ability to recreate the analysand in his/her own image is described. Julian Meltzoff and Melvin Kornreich, *Research in Psychotherapy* (New York: Atherton Press Inc., 1970), 465.

⁵¹Marcia Lund, *When Your Family is Living with Mental Illness* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Books, 2002).

Drug therapy and counselling are the best means of ‘managing’ the illness which is ultimately incurable. Lund’s belief in God becomes a coping mechanism for accepting the *status quo*. The depth of her acceptance rejects all hope of healing. Sadly her experience of hopelessness is echoed by the majority of those who suffer a mental illness and have accepted the professional prognosis of ‘incurable’. Her advice is supported by statements from various established social support groups. She includes more than one such statement and its authority to support her position. One wonders what Lund – and the established social support groups – would make of the several stories of healing told by those who found full recovery.⁵² The scarcity of those who have done so speaks more to the power of relationship than it does to scientific fact. This will be demonstrated in chapter five.

The insights that might emerge from the voice of the witness naming his/her own pain cannot be known until that voice is heard. In the current climate where the voice of the analyst is given the credibility it is given – especially by the mentally ill person – few voices remain able to name their own pain, though they immediately recognise it when they hear it.⁵³ Within a relatively short time under professional treatment, the language of the professional is adopted, inadequate as it is. For example, Marie Cardinal might now find it impossible to recall her experience without articulating it in the language of her analyst.⁵⁴ For this dissertation a questionnaire was sent to group members of GROW throughout Australia.⁵⁵ Several respondents sent personal letters back with their responses expressing pleasant surprise that the questions asked were unusually spiritual, of more interest and

⁵²GROW has published several booklets that are the personal testimony of its members who have fully recovered from mental illness. While these stories essentially speak of recovery via the practical application of the GROW programme, they are none the less stories of recovery. *Joannie’s Story*; *Rennie’s Story*; *Robyn’s Story* and others, while not available through general distribution are available to any interested person. (Australia: GROW). My own story of recovery *Ordinary Insanity* was published by myself and made available through general distribution. Even after extensive internet research, it remains the only recovery story I know of written in a ‘personal experience’ framework.

⁵³In 1994 at the Catholic Parish Hall at Dulwich Hill New South Wales I addressed a group of 84 mentally ill persons. In this address I quoted a paragraph or two regarding the dark night of the soul experience from a variety of credible sources, including St John of the Cross, St Teresa of Ávila, Thomas Merton and Bede Griffiths. The way in which those 84 persons responded to what was read was summed up by one young man (diagnosed as paranoid schizophrenic) who shouted at me: “That’s it! That’s exactly how it is. Thank God somebody has written it down”.

⁵⁴This is made apparent in the book she co-authored. Marie Cardinal and Pat Goodheart, *The Words to Say It: An Autobiographical Novel* (Eastbourne: Gardners Books, 2000).

⁵⁵Information included from this survey will be referenced in brackets in the body of the text (see appendix A), unless common sense dictates otherwise.

relevance to their concerns. Even so their letters contained a language more psychological than spiritual.

As a practical theology, emphasis throughout this dissertation is placed on experiential rather than theoretical knowledge. The dialogue reflects not only on personal experience, but also current perceptions of mental illness as they emerge from professional opinion and are reflected in social beliefs and attitudes. This author is aware that she is not the first person to make critiques of the absence of attention to ‘transcendence’ and the spiritual realm in mental health care. What this dissertation argues is that Raimon Panikkar’s hermeneutical categories (especially ‘dialogical dialogue’) are relevant to overcoming this critical issue.

The theological anthropology of Raimon Panikkar, then, has been adopted as the reference frame best suited to the critical conversation here undertaken. The method followed is narrative, descriptive, interpretive, reflective, and where appropriate, dialectic. The challenge is to communicate, not only what has not previously been communicated, but what is often experienced as incommunicable.

The experience of mental illness given expression in the first person is uncomfortable in the language of psychology. It is not entirely at home in the language of theology. Something of a new language is needed. In his desire to promote inter-religious dialogue, Panikkar has developed a language that is as apposite for expressing the deepest experience of the human person in mental health issues as it has proven to be in inter-religious dialogue. It is part of the purpose of this dissertation to put forth a lexicon of meanings that will hopefully begin the development of a language that will assist others in the future to name their own pain. This lexicon of meanings takes shape from the glossary of Panikkar’s theological anthropology.

A final word on language is necessary in reference to the divine. God is recognised as non-gender. As far as reasonable, references to God are made in ways that avoid gender-bias. However when syntax demands that gender-specific language be used, the gender used is male in keeping with the Judeo-Christian tradition that refers to God in predominantly male terms.

What the witness brings to the conversation unfolds, as has already been noted, in a form of extended theological reflection. I repeat for emphasis: this demands there be a critical conversation between psychology and theology. This is the context of the entire critical conversation. It is a Judeo-Christian context in as much as the voice of the primary witness is biased towards the Judeo-Christian tradition.

Outline of the Chapters

The issues addressed chapter by chapter are those deemed significant by the experience of 'witness'. They are: interpretation, faith, spirituality, relationship, morality and freedom. That these are not issues usually addressed in the mental health arena already says something. There is inevitably a difference of perception from subjective to objective interpretations. It is this difference that is significant in understanding what it means to be a human person, especially a mentally ill human person.

Each chapter commences by naming the issue very precisely as it applies to the general focus of this dissertation – mental health. Following this is a brief description, relevant to the specific issue, of the parameters within which the issue will be explored. From chapter three to six the voice of the witness speaking its experience will lead the conversation forward. Tradition and authority from both theology and psychology then engage in critical conversation in reference to, and in light of, the experience of the witness. The metaphor of call-response is retrieved from the tradition and authority of both psychology and theology as the symbolic focal point that makes the conversation cohesive. Pastoral care supplies the communal ground best able to facilitate what becomes a dialogue of sharing rather than dialectic of expertise. Where tradition and authority appear to contradict experience, an exploration of the origin of such contradiction is made. Explorations of present situations in light of the testimony of the witness are made with a view to discerning viable and necessary change towards a better future.

While experience is the primary investigative tool, it is justifiably required to dialogue with tradition and authority in the interest of maintaining an authentic reference point for discerning Truth, the primary objective of all theology. It should also be the primary objective of psychology as it applies to human life-formation.

Chapter Two addresses the issue of interpretation. The difference between Enlightenment and post-Enlightenment hermeneutics is explicated. Special attention is paid to the absence of the voice of the witness in the hermeneutics currently engaged to determine and treat mental illness. The incongruence of interpreting psychic phenomena from a position of pristine objectivity is laid bare. An alternative hermeneutic is offered to overcome this difficulty. This hermeneutic comes out of Raimon Panikkar's theological anthropology. It involves communication categories he calls *mythos*, *logos* and *pneuma*. These are fully explicated. This process makes space for the testimony of the witness and

invites her/him to the table of conversation as “an equally original source of understanding”.⁵⁶

At the conclusion the question implicit throughout this chapter is raised explicitly: Could it be that what is perhaps the *fundamental contradiction* between theology and psychology is one of *mis*-interpretation regarding levels of non-rational mental functioning?

With the validity of testimony established, the conversation can move forward to the issues that are of concern to the witness, the first of these being the subject of the next chapter: faith.

Chapter Three addresses faith, not as it is professed by any religious tradition, dogmatic or otherwise. Faith is presented as it is experienced by the witness: as the primordial call. It is this very experience that initiates the healing journey. It is in faith that the primordial caller is heard and given the “here I am” response that is mental health. Psychology’s voice is not lost here or in any other chapter in spite of the fact that psychology does not formally involve itself in matters ordinarily called faith. In a critical conversation every voice needs to be heard.

The focal point of this chapter is the need for what has hitherto been called different ways of knowing to be recognised as different levels of consciousness. The call is heard at the level of *mythos*. The response is made at the level of *logos*. While the origin of the call at the level of *mythos* might be different for psychology, the psychological concept of ‘true self’ emanating from deep within self would not be uncomfortable with *mythos*. The challenge is to acknowledge all ways of knowing or levels of consciousness towards greater understanding, not only of mental health, but of what it means to be a human person. If the previous chapter raised a question regarding non-rational mental functioning, this chapter penetrates to a deeper level, seeking to answer that question at a depth (height?) beyond mental functioning – rational or otherwise.

Chapter Four presents spirituality as the ordinary perception of reality that develops as the “here I am” response to the primordial caller is lived. It is an experience of *metanoia* – conversion that continues ever after. The response leads one to hear the

⁵⁶The phrase ‘an equally original source of understanding’ is borrowed from Panikkar and used throughout this dissertation. Raimon Panikkar, *Myth, Faith and Hermeneutics* (Bangalore: Asian Trading Corporation, 1983), 9.

primordial call as it echoes in the voice of every ‘other’. A new consciousness, a new landscape comes into view.

The focal point quickly becomes imagination. Imagination is recognised as that which generates illusions, delusions and hallucinations, very much part of insanity. It also generates visions of reality in as much as it is the ‘tool’ of creativity, able to discern and actualise potential; able to hear and respond to the call of life. It is imagination that allows one to ‘see’ reality unavailable to physical sight. Further, it is at the boundaries of imagination that one meets the *unimaginable*, extending understanding of Reality in ways beyond the scope of the mind, even of imagination, which can only be drawn forth by something beyond itself – the *unimaginable*. God remains eternally unimaginable. At the same time, paradoxically, the kingdom of God on earth becomes more visible, the voice of the primordial caller, through all its echoes, more audible.

The new vision develops out of and into a *personal* philosophy of life as that life unfolds on the healing journey out of insanity. It involves a permanent attitude of listening, discerning and responding. This is what is meant by ‘doing’ practical theology. This philosophy or perception does not allow life to be separated into ‘sacred’ and ‘secular’. There is a perception of reality that spirituality and pastoral care might call ‘redemption’. This does not present as ecstatic revelation, but rather as simple truth. It is a sense of seeing things as they really are, a vision unavailable to faithless eyes.

In light of chapter four and the new vision of reality to emerge, **chapter five** recognises that reality is a relational structure. All of reality is called and required to respond. It is the response, or refusal to respond “here I am”, that determines what is real and what is not; what is sanity and what is insanity.

The current cause-effect structure presented by the dominance of intellectual ways of knowing is challenged and a relational structure is proposed. The relational structure is proposed first on logical grounds, where it presents merely as a logical alternative that does not contradict reason. Then it is presented on theological grounds that need the eyes and ears of faith, and the acquiescence of the mind, to bring the vision into focus. The faith journey continues. It is in a theological framework that love weds response to call, and therefore to the caller, revealing the trinitarian structure of reality. It is in this structure of reality that what it means to be a human person is revealed and shown to be synonymous with mental health.

Chapter Six carries forth the structure of reality as relational by explicating the right, or true, or loving response to the call. It presents morality as that response; morality

as the deep, integral initiative embedded in love. The moral, or right, or loving, or true response is the bonding agent of all that exists in a relational structure of reality.

The notion that morality is the product of reason is challenged. A case is made that confusion from such a notion is the underlying cause of mental illness – all mental illness. This becomes apparent in manifestations of orchestrated reality, or more precisely, unreality, as they unfold on the political landscape (for example, Stalinism and Nazism). Such orchestration is not currently recognised as insanity. Insanity is recognised only when it is manifested in the mind where it is called illusion, delusion or hallucination. Current perceptions of sanity and insanity are challenged. If sanity is to be understood as loving relationship it is vital that preconceived ideas not enter the hermeneutic circle of dialogue. The art of interpretation seeking understanding, as distinct from knowledge, is vital.

The chapter concludes with the assertion that insanity can only be healed when morality is allowed to remythicise itself, returning to its integral unity with faith, where it is the right response to the primordial call. Here it becomes so much an expression of love as to be beyond analysis.

The **final chapter** reveals freedom as the way to the destination intended for each and every human person. Freedom is presented, not as a range of options, but rather as divine gift that enables each person to *be* – to be truly her/his own self – to be true response – to say “here I am” in all circumstances.

The hinterland of western culture is explored for its perceptions of freedom revealing a dichotomy of freedom. The conversation reveals socially sanctioned irrationalities and psychological blindness embedded in this dichotomy.

Transcendent freedom, the freedom to *be*, to say “here I am”, lost in the first instance of mental illness, is perceived by the witness to be the very fabric and substance of sanity. What becomes apparent is that the insights to come out of faith, spirituality, relationship, and morality have served only to clarify the vision and empower the witness – every human person – with the courage and the ability to respond: “here I am”. The final chapter summarises this practical theology as culminating in the transformative praxis of responding “here I am” to the primordial caller in the ordinary, everyday activity of life.

Throughout the dissertation the voice of the witness comes from qualitative sources. The primary source is the author of the dissertation, though other voices are included. The scarcity of voices able to speak from a healed position has already been noted. Quantitative support, though it lacks the depth that may be permitted at a future time, is

also offered from a survey.⁵⁷ Apart from standard, generic questions, the questions asked were formulated out of the author's thirty years of experience and involvement in mental health issues at grass roots level (see appendix A).

Ethical Dimension of the Thesis

It is the contention of this dissertation that mental illness has many causes but that one of these, and a significant one, is the deafness of society to the primordial call. When no call is heard, no response can be made – except by accident. Mental illness is, in that sense, a spiritual and theological issue. We live in a society where God – if acknowledged at all – is contained in an ideological construct. Such a construct does not allow the Spirit of God to blow where it will through the human condition. It is restricted by the only thing that can restrict the Spirit of God – lack of faith. If we refuse to acknowledge the call, how can we hope to hear and respond? “I called and you would not answer, I spoke and you would not listen.” (Is. 65:12).

It will be the task of this dissertation to demonstrate that it is the absence of a transcendent divinity which leaves such a void in the creature whose reference point of reality is intrinsically the God now absented, that much irrationality arises upon the human landscape. Mental illness is one irrationality among many. It is perhaps the most poignant in as much as the seeds of a new consciousness, a new listening, a new beginning, redemption, lie at the heart of the *healing* of this sickness. It is a gifted irrationality in as much as it demands humble recognition of the limited ability of the intellect alone to embrace the Real. A hermeneutic that recognises this is needed if we are to understand what it means to be a mentally healthy human person. The next chapter deals precisely with that need – the vital art of interpretation.

⁵⁷The justified concern of the Human Resources Ethics Committee for the anonymity of respondents meant that only general questions could be asked, and answers given in an impersonal framework.

Chapter Two

A Matter of Interpretation

Prologue to “Naming the Issue”

If we are to explore interpretation as it applies to mental illness we must first state as clearly as possible the current position. There are two fields of human science involved in mental health care: psychiatry and psychology. Psychiatry places its expertise in the concrete area of medicine. Psychology places its expertise in the more nebulous area of the human psyche. While this dissertation deals essentially with psychology, each needs explication on its own terms.

In surveying these two fields, I am advocating a controversial position but it is one that is substantiated from two independent sources of research: a US Government Task Force and the World Health Organisation (WHO). After an extensive research project the US Task Force concluded: “In spite of decades of research there are thus far no biochemical, neurological, or genetic markers for any of the many mental illnesses.”¹ The World Health Organisation undertook two investigations into the effectiveness of neuroleptic (anti-psychotic) drugs. Both investigations found that those diagnosed as “schizophrenic” in poor countries had either recovered or were doing fairly well five years after their diagnosis, while only 25% of such patients in rich countries enjoyed the same level of success. The 1990 report noted that “living in a rich country like the United States is a ‘strong predictor’ that a person diagnosed with ‘schizophrenia’ will never fully recover.”²

In other words, in the light of scientific research there is *as yet no scientific evidence* that *any* mental illness has a physical cause (a fact that is little known and less appreciated outside the two disciplines of psychiatry and psychology). It is the assumption of physical cause that lends weight to the authority of psychiatry. Phrases such as ‘irrefutable evidence in support of the theory ...’ or words to that effect, are engaged to

¹Report by the U.S. Congress Office of Technology Assessment, *The Biology of Mental Disorder* (U.S. Government Printing Office, 1992), 46-7. See below also Footnotes 2 and 4.

²Home Page of World Health Organisation available from http://www.who.int/mental_health/prevention/suicide/suicideprevent/en/ Internet; accessed 4 April 2006.

express the scientific truth: the cause of any mental illness is, as yet, unknown. That there is physical *effect* is too self-evident to deny.

In the past forty years a variety of theories, some supported by ‘irrefutable evidence’, have been raised and discarded in favour of ‘new discoveries’ which, in their turn, have eventually been discarded ... and so on. Some of these theories include discoveries in neuropathology, neurodevelopment, neuroreceptors, lesions, the hippocampus region, hypofrontality, excess/deficit levels of serotonin, dopamine, glutamate, cholecystikinin, opiate peptides and discernible brain-cell pattern difference.³ Nothing has changed. To the present day research into the cause(s) of mental illness is as diverse as it ever was, the very diversity speaking to the confusion.⁴

There is certainly much observable evidence of brain and /or bio-chemical abnormalities in some mentally ill persons....[but] where apparent abnormalities are observed, it has yet to be determined whether they are the cause of the illness or the effect, either of the illness, or of treatment administered for the illness. This is true not only for the illness called schizophrenia, but also for manic depressive psychosis, or bipolar disorder.⁵

In surveying research in this area, it appears that, as yet, no evidence has emerged to lift any theory out of the realm of theory and place it in the realm of fact. If there is any bio-genetic cause for any mental illness that cause has yet to be discovered and/or

³Chapter One of *Mental Illness, Fact & Fiction* deals specifically with scientific evidence of cause(s) for mental illness, or more precisely lack of scientific evidence. It is supported by an extensive annotated bibliography from scientific journals. Scientific journals themselves add weight to the conclusions reached by the World Health Organisation and the US Task Force. Emma Pierce, *Mental Illness, Fact & Fiction* (Sydney: Faithrough, 1997), 9-39.

⁴Perusal through the many journals in the field of mental illness/mental health demonstrate that research continues in the same areas here mentioned, as well as additional areas, raising the same questions (including what is cause and what is effect of mental illness or even treatment for mental illness) with answers as elusive as they have ever been. The internet reference here offers links to other sites, which offer links to other sites ... and so on. NARSAD's Fourteenth Annual Symposium October 11 - 12, 2002 http://www.narsad.org/news/symposia/2002_symposia/symp2002-10-11c.html; accessed 10th August 2007.

⁵Pierce, *Mental Illness, Fact & Fiction* 12. Relevant footnotes p 32 ‘Schizophrenia Yields New Gene Clues.’ [there is a link between schizophrenia and a gene, yet that link is not found in two other studies in the same journal. ‘Are the Lifetime Prevalence Estimates in the ECA Study Accurate?’ [doubts re validity of lifetime prevalence data re epidemiology. ‘Molecular Biology and the Functional Psychoses’ [much research has not established genetic factors responsible for the ‘functional psychoses’ and that molecular biology may offer significant potential to increase understanding of functional psychoses].

substantiated. In the absence of known cause “mental disorders are classified on the basis of symptoms because there are as yet no biological markers or laboratory tests for them.”⁶

Personal experience supports scientific research. In the survey conducted for this dissertation (see Appendix A) the participants were asked: “Do you believe your illness is physical, psychological, something else?” 90.5% responded that they believed their illness was more mental than physical.

However medical research has proved invaluable in as much as it has identified brain malfunctions such as epilepsy, Alzheimer’s and Parkinson’s disease among others, removing sufferers of these illnesses from the ranks of the mentally ill.

Persistent cultural belief in an unsubstantiated theory is difficult to explain though it is neither new nor uncommon and covers a wide range of topics. The sun was once believed to orbit the earth. The pulmonary system was once believed to include only heart and lungs. But a more relevant unsubstantiated theory comes from our own time, and from an area closely related to mental health. It is the unsubstantiated theory that ‘alcoholism’ is a disease.

Contrary to common opinion, Alcoholics Anonymous neither originated nor promulgated what has come to be called the disease concept of alcoholism. Yet its members did have a large role in spreading and popularising that understanding.⁷

From wherever the idea originated, as early as 1934 “the understanding that ‘the alcoholic’ was a person who ‘had alcoholism’ and that alcoholism was a disease were commonplace in the professional literature”.⁸ However the official literature of A.A., the book *Alcoholics Anonymous: The Big Book*, states that alcoholism “is an illness which only a spiritual experience will conquer”.⁹

The disease concept of alcoholism has largely disappeared, due perhaps to the unparalleled success of A.A. in their non-medical model healing of an ‘illness’ all too

⁶Report by the U.S. Congress Office of Technology Assessment, *The Biology of Mental Disorder* (U.S. Government Printing Office, 1992), 46-47.

⁷Ernest Kurtz, “Alcoholics Anonymous and the Disease Concept of Alcoholism” in *Alcoholism Treatment Quarterly*, 20 (2002) 5.

⁸Kurtz, “Disease Concept of Alcoholism”, 10.

⁹A.A. Services, *Alcoholics Anonymous: Big Book* (U.S.A.: Benei Noaj), 2007, 44.

common in the human condition.¹⁰ Believing their alcoholism “has physical, mental, emotional and spiritual dimensions” alcoholics were less interested in “scientific precision” than in human experience. The message of A.A. is not that alcoholism is a disease and the alcoholic a victim, but rather that recovery is possible, and “that message is conveyed by the presence of someone who has recovered from alcoholism telling the story of that recovery.” The voice of the witness is indispensable in the healing program of A.A.

The medical profession must focus upon cause before it can attend to cure. Medically speaking cure cannot enter the arena until cause is established.¹¹ Even now research is being done on genetic factors that influence alcoholism. In a recent study (2006) NIDA notes: “Previous studies established that alcoholism runs in families, but this research has given us the most extensive catalogue yet of the genetic variations that may contribute to the hereditary nature of this disease.”¹² The word ‘may’ should be noted. It may simply be that the power of family relationship/influence is more the ‘cause’ of illnesses such as addictions, neuroses and psychoses than any genetic factor. This aspect of behavioural patterns is explored in chapter five when relationship is posited as the fabric of reality. While the concrete sciences are limited in how they can investigate a relational reality, they are surely capable of dialoguing with theology regarding this concept. At the same time withdrawal from alcohol or any other addictive substance can and does cause horrendous physical symptoms. Medical science is indispensable in assisting some sufferers to cope with withdrawal symptoms. But coping with withdrawal, be it medication or counselling therapy, is implicitly, though not necessarily, part of the healing journey. For addiction and many other behavioural problems, irrespective of cause, healing would seem to commence with the sufferer’s *decision* to change, to engage transformative praxis. Perhaps this says more about cause than any medical fact.

The parallel between alcoholism and mental illness in discovering ‘cause’ and assisting with healing is unmistakable. Not surprisingly a mental health organisation that has demonstrated its effectiveness in healing mental illness, the GROW organisation, has its origins in A.A.¹³ However the advantage of ‘alcoholism’ as a disease concept over

¹⁰This paragraph paraphrased with quotes. Kurtz, “Disease Concept of Alcoholism”, 14.

¹¹It is this simple, common sense fact that makes the ‘incurable’ prognosis for mental illness questionable to say the least.

¹²<http://www.drugabuse.gov/NIDAHome.html>

¹³On March 12th 1957 the first meeting of GROW (then called ‘Recovery’) took place in a private home in Petersham after its founding members discovered each other at A.A. meetings.

mental illness is that there is no disagreement about the concrete evidence of ‘alcoholism’. The alcoholic person struggles to resist the temptation to drink alcohol to excess. Certainly mental illness also manifests itself in human behaviour, but that manifestation is diverse. A further difficulty is that professionals contradict one another with regard to some behaviours. Karen Horney’s great contribution to mental health care was identifying the need to take cultural beliefs into account when ‘diagnosing’ mental illness.¹⁴ A young man regularly sitting all night on the grave of his parents had a very different meaning amongst his own tribal race than it did in suburban America.

Diverse interpretations of behaviour aside, I would suggest that the sufferers of mental illness, like the sufferers of ‘alcoholism’, are less interested in scientific precision than they are in a treatment that truly heals. If the presence of someone who has recovered telling the story of that recovery has proven to be effective, as has been the experience of members of A.A., then perhaps we might advocate a healing program like A.A. [GROW]. Mental health care could do worse than follow the example of A.A. and engage this ‘treatment’ of compassionate sharing and challenge to assist sufferers to recover. Ernest Krutz states the case clearly, not only for ‘alcoholism’, but also for mental illness.

Given the issues and prejudices involved, it is unlikely that the question of ... the disease concept will ever be definitively resolved. But this does not mean that study of the topic is useless. We can discover, organize and evaluate presently available information with aspirations to increased clarity if not to perfect pellucidity, hoping to approach ever greater accuracy even if – until time-travel be perfected by omniscient observers – we are barred from the Rankean paradise of *wie es eigentlich gewesen sei*.¹⁵ (What actually or essentially happened).

Rev Dr Con Keogh acted as scribe for the group who worked on the experiential principle of A.A., writing what became the GROW programme from the collective wisdom of the healing experiences of the founding members. GROW is also a ‘twelve step’ programme, its steps closely related to those of A.A. . Available from <http://www.grow.net.au/>; Internet, accessed 10th August, 2007.

¹⁴Karen Horney, *The Unknown Karen Horney: Essays on Gender, Culture, and Psychoanalysis* Ed. Bernard Paris, U.S.A.: Yale University Press, 2000; *Feminine Psychology*, New York: W.W. Norton Company, 1993.

¹⁵Since von Ranke, we appreciate better that facts cannot speak for themselves but only do so as selected by a researcher and seen within a certain context. This is a consideration that is very pertinent to our discussion in this chapter. Kurtz, “Disease Concept of Alcoholism”, 5.

While researchers continue their research, the benefits of treatments other than medical treatment should be neither denied nor discredited and certainly not discarded. In the end, it may be all that we have.

The authority of psychology rests largely on the theory of the Unconscious. This is a nebulous area where the layperson might be surprised to discover that there is much disagreement, not only from psychologist to psychologist, but from one psychological school of thought to another, a point well made by Carl Jung, among others.¹⁶ Ach writes “As a rule this concept [the Unconscious] is never defined in the works which employ it. More often than not the reader is obliged step by step to make his own picture of what each author understands by it.”¹⁷ As with psychiatric theories, confusion reigns.

The concept of an unconscious is not, strictly speaking, a Freudian discovery. While Freud gave the concept shape and form, weighting it with analytical theory and explication, the concept itself has been around from time immemorial.

A question regarding the Freudian Unconscious is framed by Victor White.

What facts or phenomena were then “discovered” that had not been familiar from time immemorial? Dreams, automatisms of various sorts, the influence of “forgotten” experience or unacknowledged desires upon conduct, alternating personalities, phenomena of trance, abnormal and paranormal psychological phenomena of many kinds: none of these was new in human experience. Nor was it any novelty to attempt to correlate and account for them in various ways. Gods and demons, influences celestial and terrestrial, hereditary dispositions, the *karma* of previous lives or the experience and acquired inclinations of the individual, bodily “humours” or environment: to any or all of these and to many other facts had such phenomena for centuries been ascribed.¹⁸

From Freud onward the assumption has been that the Unconscious is available for scientific analysis and explication, destroying the concept of mystery in the human person, severing any substantial link with the transcendent. Perhaps inevitably the content of the Unconscious is revealed by psychology to be more demonic than angelic. While applying scientific investigation to the unconscious has cleared away much fantasy and superstition,

¹⁶C.G. Jung, *Modern Man in Search of a Soul* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd, 1933), 32-33.

¹⁷Victor White quoting N. Ach in *God and the Unconscious*, (Great Britain: Fontana Books, 1952), 49.

¹⁸White, *God and the Unconscious*, 48.

has it thrown out the baby with the bathwater, so to speak? On the other hand theology, which posits the angelic at the deepest level of the human person, is extremely anxious that there be no confusion between mysticism and psychosis. Has theology raised mystical experience so high that it is beyond the reach of the ordinary person?¹⁹

In 1848 Carl Gustav Carus, court physician to the then king of Saxony, wrote a little known work *Psyche*, never translated into English. In this work he states: “The bases of all life is the Divine, which *for us* cannot be fully grasped on the analogy of human intelligence, but only as what *to us* is purely unconscious.” His claim is that the task of the human mind is: “to pursue the Divine within us in its unfolding out of the unconsciousness to consciousness. ... The highest aspiration of the conscious mind, the attainment of God, can be approached only by its submission to the deepest depths of what to us is purely unconscious.”²⁰ Polarised theories of the *content* of the unconscious currently divide psychology and theology. It may be that this is the most significant contradiction between the two disciplines. In any case it is an area much in need of dialogue if understanding is to replace theoretical knowledge.

In summary, psychiatry operates from a position that perceives physical matter as not merely the conductor or *processor* of thought, but as a significant contributor to the *content* of thought. Psychology operates from a position that perceives deep, internal drives and instincts that usurp human volition, controlling thought, emotion and ultimately behaviour. Each discipline, speaking generally, develops its treatment(s) from these perceptions, though there is more often than not a mix-match of treatment. That is to say treatment for mental illness is usually a combination of medication and psychological therapy/counselling. However the mix-match treatment, irrespective of its effectiveness, does more to obscure than to clarify the two separate professional positions on mental illness.²¹ An exploration of the interpretive methods involved in discerning/diagnosing mental illness requires as unambiguous a statement of each position as possible.

¹⁹Donald Blais certainly thinks mysticism is available to all, as does Raimon Panikkar. Vatican II advocates a universal call to holiness that can be understood as mysticism for the ordinary person. Donald Blais "The Imperative of Mystical Transformation." in *Studies in Spirituality* 13 (2003): 1-10. Raimon Panikkar, *Invisible Harmony* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995. http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19641121_lumen-gentium_en.html; Internet, accessed 29th October 2007.

²⁰White, *God and the Unconscious*, 54-55 (*italics original*).

²¹This point is made and verified with reference sources at various times throughout this dissertation.

Theology cannot agree with the psychiatric position that thought is a secretion of the brain. Yet for whatever reason, theology has yet to officially state its position on the use of mind-altering drugs – the neuroleptic and psychotropic drugs that can result in brain damage. On the other hand, it cannot deny the reality of physical malfunction, for example epilepsy, Alzheimer's and Parkinson's disease, which affect the way thought is *processed*. Theology does not disagree with the concept of an unconscious but it cannot grant absolute controlling influence to that dimension – whether demonic or angelic.

With some understanding of the current positions regarding mental illness and mental health – the actual subject matter under interpretive review – we can now proceed to 'name the issue' as it applies to the interpretation of mental illness.

Naming the Issue

Given the unresolved state of research as to the causes of mental illness, it is reasonable to give greater weight to its subjective dimension, namely as psychic phenomena. This chapter deals with the irrationality of interpreting subjective experience from an objective position when there is a marked absence of the voice of the one whose experience – the very 'data' – is being interpreted. A corollary to this is that the dimension of spirit, whatever we understand spirit to mean, is overlooked.²² The testimony of witnesses (see Appendix A) speaks to the relevance of the dimension of spirit from a subjective position. When asked "Do you believe it takes expert knowledge to understand human beings?" 64.8% answered "No". When asked whether God was relevant to their lives 82.9% answered "Yes". When asked if God was willing to help them 78.7% thought he was, and 74.4% thought it important that they should love God.

From a scientific observation post whatever the voice of the witness may have to say on the subject of spiritual experience is left out of the interpretation, leaving at least an implicit impression that spiritual experience is irrelevant to mental health, and perhaps equivalent to mental illness.²³

²²The absence of the spiritual dimension in mental health care is, in more recent times, coming to the attention of professionals in this field. John Swinton addresses this precise absence, stating the issue clearly. "While spirituality remains a peripheral issue for many mental health professionals, it is in fact of central importance to many people who are struggling with the pain and confusion of mental health problems". John Swinton, *Spirituality and Mental Health Care: Rediscovering a 'Forgotten' Dimension* (London and Philadelphia: Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2001), 7.

²³The relevance of spirituality to mental health, and the possibility that it is equivalent to mental illness is explored by Swinton in two chapters of *Spirituality and Mental Health Care*. He

Society has given authority to determine whether or not subjective experience is irrational to the only professional in the field of mental health with a medical degree, the psychiatrist. Congruent with the research already noted, the anomaly is that there is no medical evidence and (dare one say it?) no medical expertise involved in determining whether or not a person is mentally ill. There are no *medical* tests or procedures able to detect mental illness.

First, no biological etiology has been proven for any psychiatric disorder in spite of decades of research. ... Don't accept the myth that we can make an 'accurate diagnosis'. Neither should you believe that your problems are due solely to a 'chemical imbalance'.²⁴

What is called a diagnosis is made on the grounds of interpretation known as psychiatric/psychological evaluation. To repeat: "Mental disorders are classified on the basis of symptoms because there are as yet no biological markers or laboratory tests for them."²⁵ Scientific methodology is engaged in this practice. This means mental illness is interpreted from an objective position that necessarily excludes subjective input to the extent that it can be excluded. This dissertation seeks to give that subjective dimension, namely the voice of the witness, not only a hearing, but the credibility ever due to the voice of human experience.

Setting the Parameters

This chapter will explore the science of hermeneutics, of interpretation. It will then propose a hermeneutic more appropriate to discerning mental illness/mental health than the hermeneutic – an Enlightenment hermeneutic – currently engaged in this practice. It will do this by:

- exploring Enlightenment hermeneutics and comparing it to other methods of interpretation;

examines an impressive body of literature, presenting both pros and cons of the issue in keeping with his well balanced research of the subject. Swinton, *Spirituality and Mental Health Care*, 40-92.

²⁴Edward Drummond, *The Complete Guide to Psychiatric Drugs* (New York: John Wiley & Sons Inc., 2000), 15-16.

²⁵U.S. Congress Office of Technology Assessment, *The Biology of Mental Disorders*, 46-47.

- presenting the critique of Hans-Georg Gadamer to Enlightenment hermeneutics, paying attention to the critique of that critique made by Jurgen Habermas and the contribution to the Gadamer-Habermas debate made by Paul Ricoeur;
- introducing and explicating the hermeneutics of Raimon Panikkar as that which is eminently suited to the task of practical theology in as much as it fosters understanding in an area (mental health care) currently saturated with objective knowledge;
- paying attention to the testimony of the witness who, in Panikkar's hermeneutics, is given the validity and credibility of an 'equally original source of understanding', thus extending the event of understanding, facilitating the task of practical theology.

After surveying the history and practice of hermeneutics as it is applied in the mental health arena, the voice of the witness will speak from its experience of the inadequacy of Enlightenment hermeneutics. This introduces the necessity of acknowledging universal concern for a spiritual dimension. Presumed conflicts between psychology and theology as they apply to interpretation are then explored.

In conclusion the contradiction implicit throughout this chapter is raised as an explicit question that practical theology must address: does the angelic or the demonic reside at the deepest level of human *being*?

A Brief History of Hermeneutics

Interpreting is a spontaneous activity as natural to the human person as breathing. In its simplest form it is the process by which every human person deciphers and makes sense of reality. This inevitably brings about a variety of interpretations or opinions regarding reality. It was the desire to know reality-in-itself, as distinct from personal opinions about reality that brought interpretation to the attention of modern science. The developments to come out of the Enlightenment allowed science to posit a position of pristine objectivity. From this vantage point reality-in-itself could be apprehended. The natural sciences went ahead in leaps and bounds.²⁶

It could be argued that since the Enlightenment the yardstick by which reality is measured is predominantly, if not exclusively, the domain of intellect.²⁷ This has given

²⁶Richard Tarnas, *Passion of the Western Mind* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1991), 248-271.

²⁷Gadamer believed that Descartes had promoted "the total reconstruction of all truths by reason". Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method* 2nd ed. (New York: Crossroad 1991), 279.

weight to the opinions of those with demonstrably higher levels of intellect, as well as to those with greater education and expertise. Such a position is not without merit. However a knowing that interprets reality to the exclusion of faith, or spirit, or intuition, or mystery, is a knowing that excludes a great deal of what the daily practice of living would interpret as real.²⁸ People pray, believe, have premonitions, intuitions, a ‘gut sense’ of things, and generally live the uncertainty of life attended by mystery. The objectivity so necessary to modern science is inadequate to the task of interpreting life lived ordinarily, by ordinary people. It therefore tends to remove the mentally ill person from the realm of the ordinary, isolating him/her in a rarefied world as ‘object’.²⁹

A more fluid, organic approach to understanding can be traced back to Friedrich Schleiermacher (1768-1834). It is from this time onward that the word ‘hermeneutic’ comes into popular usage.³⁰ Before Schleiermacher there was “on the one hand a philology of classical texts and on the other hand an exegesis of sacred texts, of the Old and New Testaments”.³¹ Schleiermacher addressed the need for a more general hermeneutic, one which combined epistemology with ontology, unifying knowledge and understanding. He perceived understanding to be an interactive, relational endeavour, rather than an objective, intellectual exercise. Knowledge *as* understanding expanded in Schleiermacher’s paradoxical ‘hermeneutic circle’. The paradox of the hermeneutic circle is that the parts cannot be understood until the whole is understood, at the same time the whole cannot be understood until the parts are understood.³² Life itself exemplifies this paradox. Ironically Schleiermacher’s insights were not adopted by the *human* sciences. These continued to maintain pristine objectivity as necessary.

Wilhelm Dilthey (1833-1911) recognised the merit of Schleiermacher’s efforts to close the gap between epistemology and ontology, between grammatical and technical

²⁸Raimon Panikkar, *The Cosmotheandric Experience: Emerging Religious Consciousness* (New York: Orbis Books, 1993), 35.

²⁹It was this subtle but vitally significant fact that prompted me to call my autobiography *Ordinary Insanity*.

³⁰*The Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy*, Robert Audi ed., s.v. “Schleiermacher, Friedrich” (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

³¹Paul Ricoeur, *Hermeneutics and the Human Sciences* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 44-45.

³²Anthony C. Thiselton, “Biblical Theology and Hermeneutics” and “Specific Exponents of Hermeneutic Theory” in *The Modern Theologians: An introduction to Christian theology in the twentieth century* 2nd edition, ed. David Ford (Cambridge: Blackwell Publishers, 1997), 530-34.

interpretation. Paul Ricoeur explicates these quite precisely: “Grammatical interpretation is based on the characteristics of discourse which are common to a culture; technical interpretation is addressed to the singularity, indeed to the genius, of the writer’s message”.³³ The first is ‘objective’. The second is the proper task of hermeneutics: to reach the subjectivity of the one who speaks/writes, passing over language in the attempt. Dilthey held that the dimension of history is vital to Schleiermacher’s hermeneutic circle applied to the human sciences. With this claim he undertook to develop a methodology and epistemology which would give the human sciences credibility equal to that enjoyed by the natural sciences. Ricoeur pinpoints Dilthey’s quest, fundamental to this task.

How is historical knowledge possible? or more generally, how are the human sciences possible? This question brings us to the threshold of the great opposition which runs throughout Dilthey’s work, the opposition between the *explanation* of nature and the *understanding* of history. ... Every human science – and by that Dilthey means every modality of knowledge of man which implies an historical relation – presupposes a primordial capacity to transpose oneself into the mental life of others.³⁴

This postulate implies that hermeneutics is one variety of the theory of knowledge, and that the debate between explanation and understanding can be resolved within the methodological dispute.

Hermeneutics construed as epistemology in the human sciences is precisely what Gadamer challenged, ultimately deconstructing science’s position of pristine objectivity. Gadamer’s hermeneutics will be explored further on. What is of immediate concern is the impact and consequences of Enlightenment hermeneutics (including Dilthey’s historical interconnection) on our understanding of mental illness and mentally ill people.

Enlightenment Hermeneutics in the Human Sciences

It was Enlightenment hermeneutics, or more precisely the scientific methodology born of the Enlightenment, that gave birth to what we now call the human sciences.

The Enlightenment brought to western culture a paradigmatic shift in science, religion and philosophy.³⁵ Within a single generation Copernicus started a scientific

³³Ricoeur, *Hermeneutics*, 46- 47.

³⁴Ricoeur, *Hermeneutics*, 49 (italics original).

³⁵Tarnas, *Passion of the Western Mind*, 224-291.

revolution by hypothesizing a heliocentric universe, while Luther's rebellion against the Catholic Church launched the Reformation. With Copernicus the concrete centre of gravity shifted. With the Reformation religious authority, the symbolic centre of gravity, was removed and the human person was free to choose his/her own belief system, to be the arbiter of her/his own reality.

Renaissance Man appeared to have suddenly vaulted into virtually superhuman status. Man was now capable of penetrating and reflecting Nature's secrets, in art as well as science, with unparalleled mathematical sophistication, empirical precision and numinous aesthetic power.³⁶

With the removal of authority, specifically religious authority, which had until then been the arbiter of reality, intellect began to assume infinite proportion in the interpretation of the real. The great debate of the day lay between science and religion, or reason and faith, and the prize for the winner was the right to claim to be the vehicle of truth.

René Descartes entered the debate and appeared to settle it in favour of science. Truth was that which could be seen with "clarity and distinction".³⁷ This banished the world of spirit to the realm of wishful or fearful thinking – an irrational construct of the mind – left to fade away as superstition and lunacy. The fact that God (whose existence Descartes acknowledged) could not be seen with clarity and distinction escaped Descartes' attention. That intellect without faith might well be an untenable position was not suspected in Descartes' time.³⁸

Arbiter of his/her own reality, the human person went on to demonstrate in ways so subtle as to be almost unnoticed her/his intrinsic need for guidance in the realm we shall for the moment call psychic phenomena. The ancient Israelites might have recognised this intrinsic need for guidance as the condition referred to in the previous chapter of 'being addressed'.³⁹ But a one dimensional reality, incapable of embracing a transcendent dimension, is incapable of recognising a transcendent caller, let alone hearing a call.

³⁶Tarnas, *Passion of the Western Mind*, 224.

³⁷"It is evidently impossible for me to be mistaken because every clear and distinct perception is certainly something." René Descartes, "Fourth Meditation" in *Meditations and Other Metaphysical Writings* (London: Penguin Books 1998), 51.

³⁸The separation of reason and faith and its consequence is well described by John Courtney Murray, *The Problem of God* (New Haven & London, 1964) 87-89.

³⁹Veling, *Practical Theology*, 32.

Out of the Reformation messiahs of all sorts rose to fill the void left by religious authority. Psychotherapy was one messiah among many, but this messiah carried the weight of scientific certainty. By the 19th century psychotherapy had begun to cleanse the 'inner' human being of the superstition and lunacy of the spiritual world, gradually undermining the many religious messiahs. Dilthey's postulate of a primordial capacity to transpose oneself into the mental life of others only served to enhance the position of objectivity in the human sciences. The interior life, the mental life, the spiritual life could be scrutinised and interpreted from an objective position.

The inner life of man had always been portrayed traditionally as the area of the soul. But in the 19th century scientists wanted to reclaim this last domain of superstition from the Church. Science thought that it had gotten rid forever of the problems of the soul by making the inner world the subject of scientific analysis.⁴⁰

However there was a failure to notice that grasping the interior life of another in its immediate expression, whether mental or spiritual is not possible. It is necessary to reproduce or reconstruct by interpreting objectified signs.⁴¹ For example it is difficult to imagine anyone intensely fearful of snakes displaying no sign of such fear at the appearance of a snake. It is the behavioural response that is observed, translated by the observer, and interpreted 'backward' into an experience. Thus psychoanalysis is virtually the science of one human being interpreting the inner experience of another human being, and using the methodology of observation employed by the concrete sciences to do so. The somewhat nebulous experience of hearing the call of the primordial caller naturally interprets as lunacy. With the loss of the transcendent dimension, including its intellectual reference frames, how can it be otherwise? The primordial caller is replaced by the psychoanalyst, and the call reduced to professional opinion and advice. Thus a theory of knowledge supplants divine wisdom.

In light of post-Enlightenment hermeneutics which will be examined shortly, we can say that theoretical knowledge obtained in psychoanalysis is essentially the mental construct of the analyst, and that such construct cannot avoid being coloured by human subjectivity – not of the one whose experience is being interpreted, but of the interpreter,

⁴⁰Ernest Becker, *The Denial of Death* (London: Collier Macmillan Publishers, 1973), 191.

⁴¹Ricoeur, *Hermeneutics*, 51.

the analyst. In other words, psychoanalytical interpretation says at least as much about the analyst as it does about the analysand. This may or may not bear any relationship to the reality of the experience being interpreted. Any understanding presumed to flow from such knowledge will itself be merely an objective unpacking of the analyst's mental construct. The psychic phenomena of the analysand is touched, if at all, only accidentally. In this way objectivity itself becomes a significant obstacle to understanding.

In contradiction to the insistence on objectivity, in the mental health arena there is no one objective, authoritative reference source established to rule on what is normal. There is no professional consensus of criteria.⁴² Not even the objective mental construct of the analyst can be measured for validity against another objective construct, mental or otherwise. You are mentally ill if, in the opinion of the consulting analyst, you are mentally ill.⁴³ One can only hope that the consulting analyst is mentally healthy! One also begins to understand how in legal situations of criminal prosecution one professional will declare the accused to be insane, while another equally well qualified professional will declare that the accused is sane.⁴⁴

Strictly speaking Enlightenment hermeneutics is not applied in the human science of psychology simply because it cannot be applied. The objectivity so necessary and helpful to the natural sciences is impossible in a science that deals with a reality that is ever unique and unrepeatable – the human person.

In the mental health arena as it currently is, the human person becomes an object under scrutiny, an object to be classified and categorised, very much at the mercy of a range of interpretations that serve only to speak the confusion of analysts. Seventy years ago Carl Jung asserted that “the very number of present-day ‘psychologies’ amounts to a confession of perplexity”.⁴⁵ Time has only increased the number. It has done nothing to

⁴²“The field of psychology today is literally a mess. There are as many techniques, methods and theories around as there are researchers and therapists”. Roger Mills, “Psychology Goes Insane, Botches Role as Science” in *The National Educator*, July 1980, 14.

⁴³Pre 1966 the New South Wales Mental Health Act read: “A mentally ill person is one who has been defined as being mentally ill”. The current Act now refers to ‘illusion’, ‘delusion’ and ‘hallucination’. These are defined by the consulting psychiatrist on a case by case basis. NSW Consolidated Acts – Mental Health Act 1990; available from http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/nsw/consol_act/mha1990128/ Internet; accessed 5 November 2004.

⁴⁴At the trial of John Hinkley Jr. who attempted to assassinate President Ronald Reagan several expert witnesses testified to Hinkley's psychological disturbance. Other expert witnesses testified for the prosecution disputing the defense's claims.

⁴⁵Carl Jung, *Modern Man in Search of a Soul*, 33.

clarify understanding. In the most recent official inquiry into mental health services across Australia, what is popularly called ‘The Burdekin Report’ states: “we were confronted with a number of difficult definitional issues.”⁴⁶ The ‘definitional issues’ were significant enough to command a separate chapter of the report: ‘Chapter 3 – Definitions and Conceptions of Mental Illness’. It is not unusual for one person to be diagnosed with more than one mental illness. It is not unusual for persons to be diagnosed as mentally ill even though the precise illness is “undecided” or “not known”. Professional confusion demonstrates itself in diagnoses of “undiagnosed depression” and “professional uncertainty”.⁴⁷

While Enlightenment hermeneutics fails in the mental health arena on its own scientific methodology, there remains even now the blind spot – apprehension of immediate experience – created by its insistence upon an impossible objectivity. If a new hermeneutic is to be applied to this arena, it must remove the blind spot. The subjectivity of the witness must be given a place at least as significant as the inevitable subjectivity of the professional.

It may prove fruitful before proposing an alternative hermeneutic to allow the subjectivity of the witness to speak itself in light of the current hermeneutic.

The Witness on Interpretation

A Subjective Account

Mental illness is characterised by feelings of loneliness, fear, anxiety, sadness and restlessness. These begin as very ordinary human feelings. However, they begin to dominate life as more and more time is given to asking oneself questions that do not seem to be of concern to anyone else ... and the journey into isolation and insanity begins. The questions themselves are indistinct, nebulous and apparently without answer. Yet they seem unavoidable, as though they rise, unwanted, from the depth of one’s own being. They are questions about meaning and purpose – ultimate meaning and purpose. While it seems

⁴⁶Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission, *Human Rights and Mental Illness* (Canberra: Australian Government Publishing Service, 1993), 11.

⁴⁷ The words in this paragraph placed in inverted commas are actual professional diagnoses according to the mentally ill persons who responded to the survey. See appendix A.

the rest of the world is busy getting on with life, you are almost paralysed with concerns and fears about life; fears that prevent you from getting on with life.⁴⁸

At first the notion of seeking medical treatment for feelings – ordinary human emotions – seems incongruous. But the intensity of emotions, the paralysing effect of them on the ability to cope with the daily practise of living, coupled with subtle feedback that pre-occupation with questions of ultimate meaning are not normal, signals there is something wrong with you. Your brain is not functioning normally. You are ‘sick’.

Within the program of professional treatment you begin to feel ‘different’. You slowly become aware that you seem to have become an object under scrutiny. Your opinions of yourself and life are merely data, grist for the mill of analysis. Your ‘self’ becomes something you do not know. Only the doctor(s) knows what (not who) you are. Your ‘self’ and your life become a scientific curiosity. It is as though your membership to the human race has been cancelled and you are just finding that out. But that is not all. There is professional debate regarding “what” you are ... and you are deemed incapable of contributing to the debate.

None of you talked to me. Except of course to tell me what I was and how I might have become what I was. ... Maybe I’m psychotic, or I’m neurotic, or perhaps I’m just plain idiotic. Make up your bloody minds so you can fix mine! No one sees me the person. I am human you know. ... Oh please, somebody tell me I’m human. Tell me I matter. Stop talking about me and talk to me. Tell me you care. About me! ... Don’t turn me into a case history, a statistic. Don’t record science on me. Don’t process data on my torture. Listen to me! I can talk. I have something to say. ... Not all of me is crazy. Some of me is rational. ... Please, oh please, won’t somebody listen to me.⁴⁹

But nobody listens!

An Objective Account

The theme of not being heard is repetitive – resoundingly repetitive. As was noted in the preface to this dissertation, Brian Burdekin commented on this recurring theme that emerged from *every* independent inquiry into mental health care services since the first

⁴⁸Pierce, *Ordinary Insanity*, 9-15.

⁴⁹This paragraph was written during the time of my insanity. Several portions from what might be called a reflective journal were included in this and other books by me. Pierce, *Ordinary Insanity*, 58.

person was diagnosed in Australia in 1801.⁵⁰ In the survey (see Appendix A) when asked whether the doctor understood their problem only 45.7% said ‘yes’, and this after an average of thirteen years under professional care. A majority 75.5% said ‘getting well’ would mean ‘discovering a new way of life’. Most of those combined ‘discovering a new way of life’ with ‘learning to cope with the life I have now’ giving that response the even greater majority of 89.6%. Significantly not one witness ticked the box that said “I do not believe it is possible to get well”. That is to say 100% believed in the possibility of recovery. It would seem the mentally ill themselves retain hope long after science has given up! It leads one to wonder what theology, which avows such hope, would make of the voice of the witness if it heard that voice speak its experience in the theological contexts of spirituality and pastoral care.

The Transcendent Dimension in the Mental Health Arena.

Concerns about ultimate meaning and purpose, the reality of a spiritual dimension, existential concerns – however we wish to name the transcendent dimension – underpin mental illness irrespective of the specific ‘diagnoses’. While it is a rare occurrence, at least one professional has given a hearing to the voice of the witness, those he calls “silent voices”, asking the question himself: “Where are the voices of people with mental health problems?”⁵¹ John Swinton seeks out silent voices and gives them a hearing – a place to speak their experience as experience. From this the preoccupation with existential questions is pronounced.⁵² It has been the case from the very inception of modern psychology. Both Sigmund Freud and Carl Jung noted the connection of the transcendent dimension to mental illness. Freud blamed belief in God for anxiety and neuroses in the human condition.⁵³ Jung stated that neuroses are more the domain of the pastor or priest than the psychologist or psychiatrist.⁵⁴ When asked about the relevance of God in their lives, 82.9% of respondents in our survey claimed that God was relevant, and 98.9% claimed that loving others was important (see appendix A).

⁵⁰*Human Rights & Mental Illness*, 5.

⁵¹Swinton, *Spirituality and Mental Health Care*, 94.

⁵²Swinton, *Spirituality and Mental Health Care*, 112-130.

⁵³Almost all Freud's work makes this point, though it is emphatic in some. Sigmund Freud, *The Future of an Illusion* reissue ed. (U.S.A.: W.W. Norton & Company, 1990).

⁵⁴Jung, *Modern Man*, 262.

The hermeneutics currently employed to discern mental illness may deny the transcendent dimension all it wants, but human preoccupation with existential concerns will not go away. Every human person wonders at the very least: What should I do? What is the right decision in this instance? It is almost as though these questions are addressed to someone or something in a 'beyond' where the 'right' answer exists. It would seem that we implicitly acknowledge the primordial caller, though we have lost the ability to hear the call.

If psychology will not include this dimension in its interpretations, theology must ... and not just for those deemed to be sane, but also for those suffering a mental illness, especially when there appears to be an inherent link between existential concerns and mental illness. Unfettered by objectivity, theology understands that "interpretation is deeply rooted in man's religious quest, i.e., in man's rereading of his existence in search of meaning and in terms of binding himself with the Absolute thus, relinking himself."⁵⁵ When we speak of the human search for meaning, human nature demands that it include transcendent meaning as a priority, acknowledging that "the Absolute is the principal referent for meaning."⁵⁶ Our culture may have banned the Absolute from the landscape, but it cannot dissolve the need for a referent for meaning. Is mental illness one result of inadequate, impotent referent(s) for meaning in the absence of the Absolute?

The voice of the witness would suggest that what we call mental illness has more in common with the spiritual experience known to theology, through the work of Teresa of Avila and John of the Cross, as 'the dark night of the soul' than it does with organic/biological disease. That is to say, it is more spiritual dis-ease than it is mental disease.⁵⁷ The difficulty lies in determining what is spiritual, what is psychological, and what a confusion of the two is. A growing number of mental health professionals admit of this confusion. Gerald May is one.

There are psychological reactions to spiritual experiences, spiritual experiences that are mistaken for primary psychological changes,

⁵⁵Marcario Ofilada Mina, "Mystical Texts as Disclosures of Mystagogical Worlds: Hermeneutics and the Question of Religious Language" in *Studies in Spirituality* 14 (2004) 342.

⁵⁶Olifalda, "Mystical Texts", 340.

⁵⁷Throughout this issue there are several articles that explore what is becoming a more frequent issue in the mental health debate; correlations between spirituality and mental illness/mental health. *Balance: The Journal of the Mental Health Association* (Qld.) Inc. Spring 2002/ Summer 2003 – Double Issue.

psychological phenomena that masquerade as spiritual experiences, and a host of other combinations.⁵⁸

Such a profusion of confusion suggests that psychology and theology may be in need of one another towards a better understanding of what it means to be human. But what surely must be included if these two disciplines are to work together in the mental health arena is the voice of the witness. A new hermeneutic, able to include all parties at the table of understanding, is needed.

Post-Enlightenment Hermeneutics

It was Hans-Georg Gadamer's ground-breaking work *Truth and Method* which comprehensively questioned the veracity of understanding and the validity of interpretation of scientific methodology as it applied to the human sciences.⁵⁹ Gadamer's critique pointed out that what could be seen with "clarity and distinction" could be seen at all only through the filter of one subject's horizon of intelligibility, and this was all too often unlike that of another. Even the sacrosanct truth of science lay in the eyes of the beholder. Pristine objectivity was revealed as theory, impossible in practice: a revelation accepted by many professionals in the world of clinical psychology.⁶⁰ With this acknowledgement the human sciences can only concede the reality of inter-subjectivity in their interpretations.⁶¹

In the field of mental health Gadamer's insights have special significance. Apart from deconstructing pristine objectivity, Gadamer agreed with his teacher, Martin Heidegger, that genuine understanding requires common ground. "In interpretation, understanding does not become something different. It becomes itself. Such interpretation is grounded existentially in understanding; the latter does not arise from the former."⁶² Heidegger posits a primordial 'otherness' as the starting point for the pre-understanding

⁵⁸Gerald May, *Care of Mind Care of Spirit* (San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1982), 102.

⁵⁹Gadamer, *Truth and Method*.

⁶⁰Lacan, re-thinking psychoanalysis as a transference tool comments: "I would now like to make clear, astonishing as the formula may seem to you, that its [transference] status of being which is so elusive, so unsubstantial, is given to the unconscious by the procedure of its discoverer". Jacques Lacan, *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psycho-Analysis* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1977), 33.

⁶¹*The Hermeneutic Tradition -From Ast to Ricoeur*, G.L. Ormiston and A.D. Schrift eds. (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1990), 255-279.

⁶²Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1967), 188.

necessary to the hermeneutic circle. This 'otherness' comes to expression through works of art and poetic language.⁶³ Gadamer proposes a conversation along question-answer lines where an I-thou structure seeks to establish a common or communal foundation from which the dialogue partners can proceed to expand their hermeneutic circle. Heidegger has 'otherness' emerging through the reappropriation of a founding or significant historical event. Gadamer calls upon a "fusion of horizons" which he understands as eternal dialogue that translates into application toward a higher universality which entails a belief in the inter-connectedness of history.⁶⁴ Put another way, Gadamer claims the event of understanding expands the hermeneutic circle when the horizons of past and present become so fused that something new comes into being.

With the deconstruction of pristine objectivity there was need for a new, reliable, authoritative reference source. Gadamer's appeal to 'the tradition' did nothing to satisfy this need. Rather it raised valid criticism, igniting the well known debate between himself and Jurgen Habermas.⁶⁵

Habermas pointed out the flaw ever present in the concept of 'tradition'.⁶⁶ 'The tradition' might be nothing more than the ruling regime guarding its self-interest. As one example, he cited Marxist ideology. Gadamer's introduction of inter-subjective understanding had raised several issues including language, culture, prejudices - both personal and cultural - historical situatedness and socially accepted norms. However, it had situated no authority, no referee outside the subject which could guard against error. With some justification, Habermas feared the installation into social norms and culture of what he called "systematic distortion". Who or what would guard society from the power-plays of such distortions? Apparently assuming society was not already flawed by these, Habermas demonstrated a profound trust in expert or authoritative opinion, one of the very issues in question, by utilising the situation of psychotherapy to illustrate his point with regard to systematic distortion.

⁶³Martin Heidegger, *Existence and Being* (Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1949), 233-361.

⁶⁴Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 235-341.

⁶⁵Georgia Warnke, Chapter 4 "Hermeneutics and the Critique of Ideology" *Gadamer – Hermeneutics, Tradition and Reason* (California: Stanford University Press, 1987), 107-138.

⁶⁶Jurgen Habermas "On Hermeneutics Claim to Universality" in Kurt Mueller-Vollmer, *The Hermeneutics Reader* (New York: Continuum, 1989), 293-329.

Along with the rest of society, Habermas accepted that the patient's worldview, including speech, was systematically distorted. Indeed, this very distortion was what rendered the patient mentally ill. There was need for the psychotherapist to occupy an objective position Habermas called "scenic understanding". To this end he armed the psychoanalyst with a "lexicon of the meanings", via which the systematically distorted language of the patient could be deciphered and given meaning.⁶⁷ The origin of his 'lexicon of the meanings' was never sited. Gadamer in turn pointed out that while psychoanalysis might legitimately appeal to assumptions about normal communication, it must be remembered that these assumptions are bound to specific cultural prejudices as to what is normal. Such psycho-analytic interpretations have no trans-historical, trans-cultural or objective status. The standard used by psychoanalysts is at best the evaluation of 'normal' by a particular individual or group at a given time, in a given situation.⁶⁸ The long vacated position of *authority* was becoming conspicuous if only by its absence.

Recognising that the main issue in the Gadamer-Habermas debate was that of an external reference point, Paul Ricoeur entered the debate with a possible solution.⁶⁹ He suggested the introduction of an eschatological position, a forward-looking, liberating vision as the focus of the dialogue partners. If each focused on the "proposed world" or "the world in front of the text" this would reduce, if it did not negate, the potential for power-play within the hermeneutic circle. Thus a new dimension was added to the hermeneutic circle which, until then, had recognised "the world behind the text" (the context) as well as the text itself.

Can this more universal hermeneutic give equality and credibility to the voice of the witness? Can it create communal ground allowing analyst and analysand to work collaboratively toward a world of hope 'in front of the text'?

Gadamer's Hermeneutics in the Mental Health Arena

None of the several voices involved in this debate raised crucial issues relevant to mental health care. None addressed the *mis*-understanding that might occur when the existential belief of one dialogue partner is alien to the other. For example, if a spiritual

⁶⁷Ormiston & Schrift eds. *The Hermeneutic Tradition*, 257.

⁶⁸Warnke, *Gadamer – Hermeneutics*, 127.

⁶⁹Paul Ricoeur, *Hermeneutics*, 63-100.

language is being interpreted by secular ears, the fact that both dialogue partners speak English (or any other language) is superfluous. Paul Ricoeur, quoted above, reminds us that technical hermeneutics is beyond grammatical hermeneutics. Technical hermeneutics is the proper task of hermeneutics, and its task is to pass over language to reach the ‘singularity, indeed the genius, of the writer’s (or speaker’s) message.’⁷⁰

To render one partner mute on the ground that their language is systematically distorted is to destroy, before it has begun, all hope of dialogue which might lead to understanding. It seems extraordinary that Habermas, whose main concern was the power-play of ideology, should have chosen a situation where, not only has the voice of a very significant ‘other’ not been heard, but society expects and even demands that it not be heard. Much ignorance and misunderstanding issues from the silence so imposed.

The constant reference in electronic media (news/documentary, television programmes, motion pictures) to mentally ill persons becoming irrational due to cessation of their medication is one example of ignorance issuing from imposed silence.⁷¹ The currently muted voice of the witness might alert us to the experience of withdrawal symptoms from a powerful, addictive, mind-altering drug. Anyone who has given up smoking can relate to behavioural difficulties in the throes of withdrawal symptoms. We might then be tempted to research whether the irrational behaviour is due directly to the cessation of ‘healing’ medication, or if it is more reaction to withdrawal symptoms. We might then ask why this is the one illness known to humanity where the sufferer remains reluctant to take the medication which at least *appears* to control their illness, apparently assisting them, at least in the short term, to maintain a normal life. While no official research has been done to explore this anomaly, thirty years of anecdotal evidence would suggest that whatever might be the benefits of psychiatric medication, there is an intrinsic belief in sufferers that medication serves only to control them, not their illness, making them ‘manageable’ while robbing them of their ability to know and to be who they are – however good or bad that might be.⁷² It would seem the mentally ill have the same

⁷⁰Paul Ricoeur, *Hermeneutics*, 47.

⁷¹In spite of the power American lobbyists in the mental health arena have, they were unable to force the producers of the movie “A Beautiful Mind” to acknowledge that John Nash did not recover his mental health due to a change in medication, but rather to the cessation of all medication. A world-wide e-mail was sent out seeking signatures to petition for the acknowledgement. Nash himself was a signatory to this petition, as was I. It failed.

⁷² In 1979 and again in 1990 the World Health Organisation (WHO) investigated the effectiveness of neuroleptic (anti-psychotic) drugs. Their findings do not reflect popular perception

inherent desire all human persons have: to be ‘true self’. All that being said this dissertation in no way advocates for the immediate cessation of medication for those currently on mind-altering drugs. Such a move would prove as disastrous for sufferers as it might be for society in general.

Gadamer effectively deconstructed objectivity as an authoritative reference point. The Gadamer-Habermas debate served to highlight the need for a wise and trustworthy reference source to guard against misunderstanding and power-plays, inadvertently revealing the presence of these, long hidden in pristine objectivity. However, the vacated position of *authority*, though it remained vacant, was none the less acknowledged. The vacancy left space for an ‘other’ – a wise and trustworthy reference source – to arbitrate, or even to enter the dialogue.

Raimon Panikkar’s refinement of Gadamer’s hermeneutics, with its focus on inter-religious dialogue, fills this vacancy.

The Hermeneutics of Raimon Panikkar

Panikkar commences his work on hermeneutics by distinguishing a threefold hermeneutics.⁷³ His threefold hermeneutics he names *morphological* (form), *diachronical* (across time), and *diatopical* (across place). Morphological hermeneutics embodies cultural norms, values, beliefs; it operates well within a single tradition, transmitting the culture’s values to the young. Diachronical hermeneutics also operates well within a single tradition, covering the gap between interpreter and interpreted, seeking to reach across time. Panikkar’s diatopical hermeneutics is of great significance in the mental health arena, for it answers the questions classical hermeneutics have been unable to answer: How do we come to understand something that appears alien to us? How can we establish communal ground, the pre-understanding so vital to the hermeneutic circle? It is in answering these questions that Panikkar’s hermeneutics – as we shall see – demonstrates its value to practical theology in its task of understanding. His hermeneutics clarifies the point made earlier: “To understand is very different than to know.”⁷⁴

that these medications are either helpful or healing, but rather do more harm than good; available from http://www.who.int/topics/mental_health/en/ Internet; accessed 12 May 2006.

⁷³Panikkar, *Myth, Faith and Hermeneutics*, 8-11.

⁷⁴Veling, *Practical Theology*, 10.

Panikkar, with his interest and experience in inter-religious dialogue, an area where there is high emotional content, reaches beyond intellect and seeks to establish communal ground at the only level which has the potential to create the necessary pre-understanding: the "translogical realm of the heart"; the space wherein considerably more than minds can meet; the space wherein the vitally necessary *authority* can both enter and arbitrate in the task of understanding.⁷⁵ This he seeks to do with diatopical hermeneutics, employing the methodology referred to earlier of 'dialogical dialogue'.

It is dialogical dialogue that gives the voice of the witness equality and credibility. How does it do this? Gerard Hall, whose understanding of Panikkar's hermeneutics is well established, explains: "Dialogical dialogue begins with the assumption that the other is also an original source of human understanding".⁷⁶ It can only proceed in a climate of trust. It cannot assume a single vantage point. Though developed to cultivate inter-religious dialogue, the

fundamental principles can be equally applied to intercultural dialogue. ... He [Panikkar] conceives dialogical dialogue in terms of seeking a 'new revelatory experience'. ... For Panikkar, revelation is the uncovering of any living symbol which discloses the 'whole', connecting us to something 'beyond', to transcendence or to any ultimate human horizon. ... The 'new revelatory experience' ... is the goal of diatopical hermeneutics. Dialogical dialogue is the suggested method for achieving it.⁷⁷

Practical theology, concerned as it is with new understanding, seeks a 'new revelatory experience' aimed towards transformative praxis.

While dialectics relies upon the value of reason and weighty arguments, dialogue relies on "the subjective consistency of the dialogical partners".⁷⁸ It is worth repeating that as a pre-requisite "these include a deep human honesty, intellectual openness and a willingness to forego prejudice in the search for truth".⁷⁹ A new way of dialoguing comes

⁷⁵Panikkar, *Myth, Faith and Hermeneutics*, 9.

⁷⁶ Gerard Hall, *Intercultural & Interreligious Hermeneutics: Raimon Panikkar*, 6; available from http://www.mcauley.acu.edu.au/theology/ghall_panikkar.htm; Internet; accessed 3rd April 2004.

⁷⁷Hall, *Intercultural & Interreligious Hermeneutics*, 7.

⁷⁸ Panikkar, *Myth, Faith and Hermeneutics*, 243.

⁷⁹ Hall, *Intercultural & Interreligious Hermeneutics*, 7.

into view. “Panikkar searches for a strategy that comes from the ‘imperative’ versus the ‘comparative’ method.”⁸⁰ The imperative method challenges us to learn from the other, “allowing our own convictions to be fecundated by the insights of the other”.⁸¹ The dominance of one dialogue partner in the mental health arena is ended by dialogue which “refuses to enter the deadly ‘game of domination by comparison’”.⁸² The mentally ill person can speak and be heard as an “equally original source of understanding”.⁸³ Their experience as testimony cannot be discarded.

This new way of dialoguing demands a radically different process of communication, and Panikkar presents this in communication categories he has named *mythos*, *logos* and *pneuma*. With these categories he creates a trinitarian paradigm for dialogical dialogue that meets the need such dialogue has to enter, and reciprocally share, the inexhaustible world of symbol: living symbols that include a more primordial communication process. Theology can certainly accommodate this. In dialogical dialogue psychology too may find symbols of primordial communication under different names and different interpretation(s), for example primordial instincts and urges could be interpreted as symbols of primordial communication.

A Trinitarian Process of Communication

Mythos

The concept of *mythos* is not new.⁸⁴ In the language of hermeneutics it is recognised by others as the context of human consciousness, even when it is given a different name. It may be that psychology’s primordial instincts and urges can be understood to some extent as *mythos*.

In his book *Practical Theology* Terry Veling has dedicated a full chapter, quoting from several credible reference sources to describe what is here meant by *mythos*.⁸⁵ He

⁸⁰ Hall, *Intercultural & Interreligious Hermeneutics*, 9-10.

⁸¹ Raimon Panikkar, *Invisible Harmony* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995), 173.

⁸² Hall, *Intercultural & Interreligious Hermeneutics*, 10.

⁸³ Panikkar, *Myth, Faith and Hermeneutics*, 9.

⁸⁴ Apart from its use by Panikkar scholars such as Scott Eastham and Gerard Hall, the word ‘*mythos*’ in a similar context is engaged by Karen Armstrong in her book *A History of God: The 4,000 Year Quest of Judaism, Christianity and Islam* (New York: Ballantine Books 1994).

⁸⁵ Veling, “To Dwell Poetically in the World” in *Practical Theology*, 194-214.

tells us that Bernard Meland calls it *appreciative consciousness* or a ‘felt wisdom’. Jacques Maritain suggests that our use of reason ‘functions like a thin layer of oil that is floating on a deeper body of water’. The deeper body of water he calls *intuitive reason*. Paul Ricoeur suggests that it is the realm of the poetic and symbolic that ‘gives rise to thought’.⁸⁶ Panikkar’s claim is that: “Human life lives, first of all, out of myth. The mythical context is always the first given”.⁸⁷

In spite of so many recognising its reality, *mythos* remains difficult to grasp. It seems myth is that which we believe so intrinsically, so spontaneously, we do not realise we believe it. The difficulty in articulating *mythos* is perhaps due, as already noted by Ricoeur and Maritain, to the fact that *mythos* is the context out of which rational discourse emerges. Panikkar’s description supports this claim.

You cannot look directly at the source of light; you turn your back to it so that you may see - not the light, but the illuminated things. Light is invisible. So too with the myth - myth here is not the object of discourse, but the expression of a *sui generis* form of consciousness.⁸⁸

This is not unlike culture in the world of rational thought. Definitions of culture abound, but the culture we *live* is difficult, if not impossible to grasp.

Part of the problem is that we are swimming in culture; it is like an ocean surrounding us, as water surrounds a fish. Or it is like the air we breathe. Or it is like a lens we see through, without us consciously noticing that we are wearing spectacles. ... No one “from outside” can ever fully share it, and no one “from inside” can ever fully describe it.⁸⁹

Mythos operates interiorly as culture operates exteriorly. It is not going too far to say that what is here meant by *mythos* is the primordial cultural context of every human person, the common ground no human person can fully describe because every human person lives “from inside” this mystical, transcendent culture. It is the cultural context in which every human person is made “in the image and likeness of God” (Gen.1: 26); the cultural context

⁸⁶Veling, *Practical Theology*, 202-203.

⁸⁷Panikkar, *Myth, Faith and Hermeneutics*, 15.

⁸⁸Panikkar, *Myth, Faith and Hermeneutics*, 4.

⁸⁹Veling, *Practical Theology*, 159.

that forms the common ground for human understanding across all exterior divisions. The belief in a ‘true self’ shared by both theology and psychology, seems to emanate from *mythos*. Neither discipline seems able to clearly articulate (*logos*) this belief that acts as a communal myth, making possible the dialogical dialogue here undertaken.

Logos

Logos is the gift of reason. It is the ability to coherently articulate the cultural ‘knowledge’ of *mythos* so that we might locate ourselves in the spatio-temporal dimension of concrete reality. *Logos* gives expression to this universal, originating culture as “a canvas of possibilities for expressing human creativity.” It is intended to be “an authentic avenue of human insight”.⁹⁰ Certainly this includes logical analysis, but the primary purpose of articulating ourselves in the spatio-temporal dimension is connection in I-thou relationships. The reduction of all things to logical analysis misses the primary purpose of *logos*. Psychology is not unaware of the benefits of loving I-thou relationships. It may be simply a matter of recognising the priority these have in human life-formation.

An excellent symbol of *logos* in this sense is the *Logos* of the Second Person of the Christian Trinity, the eternal link between the Primordial Mystery (symbolised by *mythos*) and the spatio-temporal world of the human family. When *mythos* emerges seeking articulation, it needs acceptance of its authenticity that it may be truthfully translated by *logos*. *Mythos* translated in isolation – an ‘I’ without a ‘thou’ – presents as irrational.⁹¹ Yet there is an obscure rationality in place even here. One of the most common delusions of mentally ill men is “I am Jesus Christ”. This delusion does not afflict men of any religious tradition except the Christian tradition. It rises from *mythos* which, among other things, is the vehicle of faith. Because its origin is *mythos* this delusion can only be partially described in words, briefly the belief that ‘to be my true self I have to be Christ (like)’. Where there is dialogical dialogue, that is, where an I-thou relationship exists, irrational articulation is negated. It is I-thou relationships, rather than logical analyses, that facilitate understanding, banishing irrationality.

⁹⁰ Veling, *Practical Theology*, 159.

⁹¹ This position becomes clearer when the function of ‘witness’ is explored as it will be shortly. There is some resonance here with Jesus of Nazareth. When giving witness in fidelity to his mission he was thought by some to be insane. *The New Jerusalem Bible* translates Mk. 3:21 “they said ‘He is out of his mind’”.

In the psycho-therapeutic arena where it is accepted that the analysand needs the analyst to make the world intelligible, one is left to wonder at the plight of the analyst who is also human and has exactly the same need. Psycho-therapeutic discourse might 'feed' the intellect of the analyst, but it could hardly be called an I-thou, life-giving encounter.

The primary purpose of *logos* is not the gathering and accumulation of knowledge or facts about the spatio-temporal dimension for their own sake. The primary purpose of *logos* is the facilitation of relationships, the ability to understand and reciprocally, even creatively, share perceptions of reality. This might be called the primary purpose of hermeneutics and, indeed, the primary purpose of practical theology. "The art of interpretation is intimately tied to the art of creativity, and this is as it should be, for the *creativity of a work* necessarily calls forth the *creativity of the interpreter*."⁹² Practical theology needs a communication process open to creativity, to transformative praxis.

Pneuma

Panikkar crowns his hermeneutics with *pneuma*. *Pneuma* is a 'space', a place of hope, of creativity. Dialogue partners open to each other in dialogical dialogue need a place of trust in which to meet. This is the space wherein Panikkar places the long absent *authority*, an authority here called the Absent Presence.⁹³ Such presence may be called love, absent inasmuch as it is present as potential, waiting to be actualised. It might also be called truth. As love it functions as the arbiter of reality. As truth it is an implicit partner in dialogical dialogue. But here truth is vulnerable. There is no method, no set of rules, no external governing criteria or authority to guard it. Truth is open to violation and abuse by one or more of the dialogue partners. Its only safeguard is the openness and honesty of the partners.⁹⁴ But here truth demonstrates its strength, its authority, its immutability. It is neither subjective nor objective. It simply *is*. It can withstand error. It can bear with disagreement. It is patient with debate. It is immovable in the face of doubt. Its integral unity with love becomes apparent while its correlation with faith denies the pride of certainty.

⁹²Veling, *Practical Theology*, 27.

⁹³Christians may hear the echoes of Scripture: "Where two or more are gathered in my name there am I in the midst." Mat. 18: 20. It was this scriptural connection that led me to coin the term 'Absent Presence' in a mental health manual *Ordinary Sanity* (Sydney: Pierce Publisher 1995).

⁹⁴ A point noted earlier by Hall. *Intercultural & Interreligious Hermeneutics*, 7.

Within this space of *pneuma* a new reality can be created 'a new revelatory experience' encountered, a new myth born out of the incessant movement between *logos* and *mythos*, a movement necessary to the ever expanding horizon of shared understanding. "Man cannot live without myths, without indeed a plurality of *mythos* that intertwine and follow upon one another in a way that allows the continual passage from *mythos* to *logos*, and the constant re-sourcing of the *logos* in new *mythoi*."⁹⁵ But we need to be very careful about what we mean by creating a new reality. *Pneuma* can give birth to the irrational as well as to the rational.

The real is a given. The real still in potential, not yet actualised into a concrete given, is a given nonetheless. Put another way we might say we can think of no reality however wise, beautiful, or profoundly creative that does not already exist 'in the mind of God', as St. Augustine might say. It is less that we create a reality that is not than that we need creativity to actualise a reality that is not-yet, to bring about transformative praxis. This is precisely the task of practical theology. God creates. Humans participate.

While Panikkar's *pneuma* shares much with Ricoeur's proposed world it is somewhat different in its location. Ricoeur's eschatology is located in a forward position, in the world in *front* of the text. Panikkar's eschatology or hope is located more *between* and *above* (transcendent to) the dialogue partners, maintaining the trinitarian pattern or paradigm evident throughout his dialogical dialogue. In Panikkar's hermeneutics this is consistent with the location of truth, placing truth and hope in harmonious collaboration. For psychology *pneuma* might function as the 'space' between dialogue partners where truth, honesty, integrity, compassion seek creatively for 'true self' – the creative reality in front of the text.

It would be a grave error to identify the Spirit, or spiritual or spirituality with *pneuma* or indeed with *mythos*.⁹⁶ Rather the Unifying Power that *moves through the eternal passage* – through *mythos* through *logos* through *pneuma* – this is the Spirit. Spirit is the *authority* that engages *in*, as well as arbitrates *throughout* dialogical dialogue. It is the breath, the voice of the primordial caller. It cannot be grasped, pinned down, identified,

⁹⁵Panikkar, *Myth, Faith and Hermeneutics*, 100.

⁹⁶Panikkar was careful of his choice of the word '*pneuma*' rather than spirit. He writes "I use *Pneuma* because neither Spirit nor *Geist* really expresses what is meant." *Myth, faith and Hermeneutics*, 342.

or defined. The possibilities are endless; the potential unthinkable. "As the Alpha is always more original, so the Omega is always more ultimate."⁹⁷

Panikkar's work, including his books, has demonstrated the benefits of dialogical dialogue in the vital and emotion-charged area of inter-religious and inter-cultural dialogue. There it underpins tolerance, fostering and nurturing understanding. Would it bear similar fruit in the mental health arena?

Panikkar's Hermeneutics in the Mental Health Arena

It is not difficult to appreciate that Panikkar's *mythos* involves the full experience of life, along with an interpretation (accurate or otherwise) of each experience, as well as legion connections between all experiences. Legion connections would naturally involve the intermingling of thought, feeling, action and outcomes of each experience.

Panikkar's contribution to understanding in the mental health arena is that, while psychology places emotion at the foundation of behavioural problems, Panikkar places them within *mythos* where they become an integral part of 'self'. For psychology emotions are something of a tangle of cerebral wires to be unravelled. For Panikkar they are part of a mystery to be reciprocally shared.

Across the spatio-temporal borders human beings are interconnected by emotion. It is the quality of compassion, integral in the very nature of being human, that reaches across the translogical realm to unite first hearts, and then offers understanding to minds. A very simple example is fear. When two people experience fear of the same 'other', let us say snakes, they share a bond of understanding beyond mere intelligibility. A fear which apparently contradicts intelligibility also creates this bond. Two people afraid of water would have this shared understanding ... not necessarily of their fear, nor of the water, but of *one-an-other*, or even *one-as-other*.

Compassion is not stopped at the border of sameness. A compassionate heart, combined with an empathetic mind, has a remarkable ability to engage the imagination to reach communal ground. One who has never left home, on listening to another describing the emotions of homesickness, can call upon their own experiences of similar emotions: nostalgia, sadness, longing, to reach enough comprehension to allow communal ground to form. In trans-religious dialogue no Christian or Muslim will agree upon the historical significance of their respective religious founders. However they would have no difficulty

⁹⁷Panikkar, *Myth, Faith and Hermeneutics*, 347.

finding common ground in their *feelings* of reverence for their respective founders. Compassion and empathy interconnect, discovering a communal myth in a realm that is intellectual in as much as it is not irrational, but is yet more than intellect of itself can achieve.

There are no boundaries to the translogical realm except the boundary ‘fear-of-other’ which manifests itself in prejudice and ideology. These obstacles, as Habermas has argued, will always collapse the hermeneutic circle in power-play. When ‘other’ is accepted on equal terms of respect the dialogue partners are interacting beyond dialectics. They are interacting on the level of dialogical dialogue, and it is in this dialogue that “I open myself to the other as I am, allowing myself to be discovered by him - and reciprocally, without either of us taking refuge in a neutral objectivity.”⁹⁸ The relationship between analyst and analysand would be radically transformed by the process of dialogical dialogue, as would the language used to describe the human experience of mental illness. What might a different language tell us? Could it assist in bringing forth a new revelatory experience?

In Panikkar's dialogical dialogue the entire person, the context (*mythos*) the text (*logos*) as well as hopes and dreams (*pneuma*) engages in dialogical dialogue. In any ordinary, even mundane human encounter, both parties walk away knowing, however unconsciously, that they have met more than the *mind* of the other person. Sadly psycho-therapeutic discourse operates differently. One mind is known, not as it is, but as it has been *logically reconstructed*. Whatever is more than mind is merely ‘stuff’ supporting the reconstruction. The other mind has been busy reconstructing rather than sharing. Whatever is more than mind of the one reconstructing is detached and impersonal ‘authority’, not dialogue partner. In psycho-therapeutic discourse there is little room for ‘other’ as an equally original source of understanding, without which there can be no I-thou relationship. How can there be human understanding?

In dialogical dialogue the context, myth, is demythicized when it encounters the text, *logos*, as the partners dialogue. The passage from *mythos* to *logos* is the natural process of meaningful communication which is sharing rather than judging or evaluating – imparative, not comparative as describe above. A vital component in dialogical dialogue is therefore tolerance. Does tolerance and understanding flow through the arena of professional mental health care? If so, what delivers the intolerance and misunderstanding, the fear and prejudice that flow across the social landscape?

⁹⁸Panikkar, *Myth, Faith and Hermeneutics*, 21.

Regarding tolerance Panikkar offers what he calls the golden rule. "*The tolerance you have is directly proportional to the myth you live and inversely proportional to the ideology you follow*".⁹⁹ This certainly squares with the openness necessary to compassion and its obstacle, fear-of-other, be its manifestation prejudice or ideology. It is when ideas close off, refusing to transcend their own temporality, that prejudice and power-plays develop, collapsing the hermeneutic circle. We see this in daily life where even long term friends can have a falling out because one has adopted a belief the other can neither agree with nor tolerate. It is one of the reasons the almost joking remark is made that people should discuss neither religion nor politics. In these situations there is an implicit belief by one or both parties that 'their idea' is right; is in some sense superior. Is this not what arrests understanding in the mental health arena – the notion that the professional is superior, their interpretation is right?

Panikkar sees tolerance as much more than tolerance.

Assuming I succeed in understanding the other as other, this is insufficient, for the other does not understand himself as "other" but as "self". Therefore, I shall not really understand the other until I am able to perform on the intellectual-spiritual plane a feat similar to the moral injunction: Love your neighbour as your self (not *as* your neighbour, but as your *self*).¹⁰⁰

This understanding of tolerance removes the very potential for estrangement. This is far and away beyond the tolerance which is forced to tolerate what it cannot annihilate, or the tolerance which will tolerate only that which it feels confident will not destroy it, or even the tolerance which tolerates only in order to be tolerated. It is tolerance intrinsic to loving relationship.

Given the focus of this dissertation it is fortuitous that Panikkar casts his eyes upon the field of mental illness in his own search for examples of what he calls an ideology's index of weakness.

The example of the mentally ill may be especially enlightening. The ideology of each culture fixes what we might call the index of tolerability of 'abnormals'. For example, in countries where hysteria and certain types of schizophrenia still have a mythic dimension and have not yet been

⁹⁹Panikkar, *Myth, Faith and Hermeneutics* (italics original), 20.

¹⁰⁰Panikkar, *Invisible Harmony* (italics original), 25-26.

ideologically diagnosed as illnesses, no one would dream of confining or isolating these people; the threshold of the tolerable is fixed as a function of ideology, not of myth.¹⁰¹

Western culture's index of tolerability of abnormals becomes terrifying when one examines the *Diagnostic and Statistics Manual* (DSM)¹⁰² there to find listed among its many syndromes such things as post-traumatic stress, obesity, conversion disorder, sexual identity, insomnia, hypersomnia, substance abuse, bladder and bowel disturbance, attachment problems, oppositional and conduct disorders, delinquency, menstrual cycle, infertility, pregnancy loss, and menopause. These and many other ordinary human inadequacies are all too often 'diagnosed' as symptoms of a mental illness, dependent upon professional opinion – an ideology – of their level of 'normal'. If there is no empathetic relationship between analyst and analysand, the function of *logos* in this vital arena can only be to compare and judge. But compare what to what?

An ideology given exclusive right to pass judgement on the 'normalcy' of ordinary inadequacies not only indicates a low level of tolerance but is potential for a grotesque power-play. For example, a little known paper was tabled in the New South Wales Parliament at the end of 2004. It encountered little interest or debate until it was taken up by various religious groups. The proposed legislation sought to remove various sections in the 1990 Mental Health Act. The sections (currently under review) protect individuals from being declared insane on grounds of political affiliation, religious beliefs, and sexual preference, among other things. In the absence of a criteria of the norm, the danger inherent in being declared insane on such grounds leaves every person open to a 'diagnosis' of insanity, dependent upon those same perceptions in the consulting psychiatrist.¹⁰³

The power of this ideology is made almost impregnable by the misuse of the word 'diagnosis'. In western culture this word has all the weight scientific certainty can bring to

¹⁰¹Panikkar, *Myth, Faith and Hermeneutics*, 26.

¹⁰²American Medical Association, *Diagnostic and Statistics Manual IV*. (Washington: American Psychiatric Association, 1994).

¹⁰³The section relevant to this dissertation is contained in Section 2, Part 3: page 11, "Mentally Ill and Mentally Disordered Persons". (See appendix B). The removal of present protections is said to be based on the fact that these 'protections' are unnecessary because they are not used as a basis for determining mental illness!! "Review of the Mental Health Act 1990" *Discussion Paper 2: The Mental Health Act 1990*. New South Wales Health, July 2004.

it. Yet the very existence of the *DSM* denies the validity of the use of the word. The *DSM* itself speaks to an understanding of mental illness as a collection of symptoms, grouped together and called 'syndrome'. Is this not interpretation hollow of understanding?

It must be remembered also that the ideology which rejects can also embrace. Homosexuality once listed as a mental illness (*DSM* III) is now accepted as normal (*DSM* IV). This is not a judgmental statement about the normality of homosexuality. This is merely recognition of the power of a particular ideology to include or exclude. Jesus the Christ afoot in western culture today would, by the catalogue of syndromes in the *DSM*, be 'diagnosed' a paranoid schizophrenic with delusions of persecution and illusions of grandeur. Imagine modern ideology interpreting the religious experience of St Paul as he journeyed to Damascus! His visual and auditory hallucinations, along with his bout of hysterical blindness, would make him a very definite candidate for anti-psychotic medication. While these statements might seem to be extreme, rejection of a transcendent dimension is not far away from them.

So what is being rejected as 'not normal'? What is denounced as insane by professionals who have yet to construct a paradigm of the normal? The experience of the witness would surely throw light on these questions.

The Need to Hear the Voice of the Witness

Panikkar brings into the circle a voice unique to his hermeneutics, a voice vital to the event of understanding, vital to the task of practical theology. This voice speaks in a monologue. It is the voice of any of the dialogue partners when they declare that they "have a different source of knowledge that forces them to give testimony."¹⁰⁴ Special status is given to the voice of the witness. Testimony by a witness allows a speaking and hearing of that which may be unfamiliar and inexplicable even to the witness. The witness as witness does not surrender her/his "inalienable dignity ... he is an end in himself and a kind of absolute."¹⁰⁵ That the experience of the witness is unfamiliar, even initially alien, does not render the testimony inauthentic. The most radical and truthful voice ever heard is the witnessing voice of Jesus of Nazareth.

¹⁰⁴Panikkar, *Myth, Faith and Hermeneutics*, 242.

¹⁰⁵ Panikkar, *Invisible Harmony*, 117.

Witnessing is not about objective truth. It is about relational truth.¹⁰⁶ “You bear witness to a loyalty, not to a truth.”¹⁰⁷ Every attempt to share psychic phenomena belongs to the order of testimony, for psychic phenomena as inner experience/known belongs to the realm of *mythos*. You bear witness – you share the experience – in fidelity to an *experiential* truth. If the voice of the witness in the ordinary events of life was not given a hearing, the human family would not have moved forward so much as to have invented the wheel.

The place of testimony in the dialogue for understanding mental illness is vital. Hall tells us that “notions of testimony and witness highlight the fact that dialogical dialogue is primarily the meeting of persons”.¹⁰⁸ It is more than a meeting of minds. Testimony is evidence that there are other points of view, other experiences, other sources of knowing which may not be familiar to the dialogue partner(s). Testimony stands alone – *for* other rather than *with* other. It must be heard in the openness of *pneuma* and accepted without the reduction dialectics might impose upon it.

Wanting to master the witness, to reduce his testimony to dialectics or even to dialogue, suffocates the Spirit, straitjackets the freedom of God and Man. Wanting to dictate the rules of witnessing, to manipulate its reality, may succeed for a while until asses and even stones begin to testify.¹⁰⁹

Dialogue partners may bear witness to one another as often as is necessary to bring about or expand understanding. It is understanding that creates communal myth. Communal myth can be mutually integrated into a larger horizon giving birth to a new myth.¹¹⁰ Where there is a common myth testimony flows from *mythos* through *pneuma* to *logos*. A new revelatory experience awaits birth.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁶This is Daniélou's point quoted in chapter one. “On the level of testimony, truth leaves the world of things to enter the world of persons”. Daniélou, *God and the Ways of Knowing*, 108.

¹⁰⁷Panikkar, *Myth, Faith and Hermeneutics*, 247.

¹⁰⁸Hall, *Intercultural and Interreligious Hermeneutics*, 8.

¹⁰⁹Panikkar, *Myth, Faith and Hermeneutics*, 245.

¹¹⁰This is also Gadamer's point on the interconnectedness of history – a sharing – as distinct from Dilthey's *assumption* that one can enter mentally into the history of another.

¹¹¹This is Hall's point made earlier. Hall, *Intercultural & Interreligious Hermeneutics*, 7.

Witnessing to a spiritual experience before an audience which is at best suspicious of the existence of such a dimension is precisely what brings about the *mis*-understanding that results in the witness being ‘diagnosed’ insane.

There is no testimony without a hermeneutic of that testimony by an audience. This hermeneutic implies a common horizon we have called the mythic communion between the witness and the audience. Otherwise the would-be witness is sent to an asylum for the insane.¹¹²

There can be no validity granted to the witness in the current mental health system. Life-giving dialogical dialogue is as necessary in the arena of mental health as it is in ordinary daily living. Whatever is allowed into the circle of friendship belongs in the circle of mental health.¹¹³ To deny a ‘category’ (such as witnessing) because it does not meet the requirements of a certain ideology is to impound the humanity of the mentally ill. To impound their humanity is to impound their mental health.

The testimony of the witness cannot be subjected to analysis. Analysis immediately destroys its value as testimony. While unquestioned acceptance may on the surface appear to be incredibly gullible on the part of the audience, Panikkar reminds us “it is through authentic martyrs – through witnesses – in every field that humanity does not wander aimlessly but journeys toward a positive eschatology”.¹¹⁴ Perhaps this is a gentler way of reminding us that ‘the tradition’, so highly prized by other hermeneutists, was built by the voices of those with the courage to bear testimony to what was often unique only because it had not previously been articulated. Certainly authentic authority should command respect, but the tradition or authority which denies the voice of the witness denies its own life-blood. Such a ‘body’ will ultimately exhibit *rigor mortis*, however well it manages to conceal its death. Indeed “it was Aquinas himself who had written in his *Summa Theologica* that ‘authority is the weakest source of proof’”.¹¹⁵

¹¹²Panikkar, *Myth, Faith and Hermeneutics*, 248.

¹¹³The need for friendship is recognised by at least one professional in a book that has only recently come to my attention. The insights of this author we have already met in his recognition of the ‘silent voices’ of those who suffer with ‘mental health problems’. Swinton, with good justification, is careful of his terminology. John Swinton, *Resurrecting the Person: Friendship and the Care of People with Mental Health Problems* (Nashville: Abingdon 2000).

¹¹⁴Panikkar, *Myth, Faith and Hermeneutics*, 241.

¹¹⁵Tarnas quoting Aquinas, *Passion of the Western Mind*, 299.

Perhaps what we need today is not so much intellectuals saying what has to be done, or scholars writing what is the case, or, for that matter, preachers proclaiming the truth, but people living it, people writing with their blood and speaking with their lives.¹¹⁶

Those who witness to the experience of mental illness need their testimony to be heard, and heard without corruption of the text. To be heard without corruption it must be accepted as the testimony of an authentic witness. As testimony it cannot be removed (let alone transplanted!) from its context.

Conclusion

This chapter has explored and compared Enlightenment hermeneutics with other methods of interpretation, including those proposed by Hans-Georg Gadamer, Jurgen Habermas and Paul Ricoeur. It then introduced and explicated the hermeneutics of Raimon Panikkar, with attention to the suitability of Panikkar's hermeneutics to both the mental health arena and to a practical theology of mental health. This included a full explication of communication categories Panikkar calls *mythos*, *logos* and *pneuma*. It was noted that these communication categories will be engaged throughout this dissertation, and the reasons for this were made clear.

The exploration of Enlightenment hermeneutics found it wanting, found it incapable of dealing with truth outside the material world. Our exploration discovered that Enlightenment hermeneutics, far from offering the analyst an insightful observation post, substitutes the experience of the witness for the opinion of the analyst.

The need to hear the witness speak her/his experience as experience has been revealed. It is this hearing that insists that attention be paid, if not to the reality of a transcendent dimension, then certainly to the universal concern that a) such reality may exist, and b) how one might discover and beneficially deal with such reality ... if it exists.

The universality and persistence of existential questions seeking transcendent meaning demand that such questions be admitted to the table of understanding what it means to be human and what it means to be mentally healthy. A response that virtually relegates the interlocutor to the ranks of the insane, or worse, drugs them to suppress consciousness, is not only unacceptable, but given the universal nature and persistence of the questions, it is unscientific.

¹¹⁶Panikkar, *Myth, Faith and Hermeneutics*, 16.

Could it be that the *fundamental contradiction* between theology and psychology is as simple as a *mis*-interpretation? Could it be that when psychology tapped into a primary truth – a non-conscious level of knowing (*mythos*) – it misinterpreted that truth, distorting it in the process? Theology has always claimed that at the deepest depths of human *being* there is an un-knowing, an un-knowing we have called *mythos*; an un-knowing that is not demonic drives and instincts depriving the human person of freedom. Rather theology acknowledges this un-knowing as the context for all knowing, the context in which ‘true self’ is made known in a transcendent freedom that challenges us to *be*.

It just may be that our mental health, our ‘true self’ is to be found in the silent womb of *mythos*, in an embryonic knowing that is the ‘un-knowing’ often called faith. It just may be that reason itself is of necessity knowledge emergent from and permeated by faith. Our next chapter acknowledges the ‘un-knowing’ as it breaks the silence, so to speak, and emerges from the experience of the witness. Our next chapter is about the birth of faith.

Chapter Three

Faith

Naming the Issue

In the previous chapter *mythos* was explicated as the originating context of every human person.¹ In this chapter faith is explicated as the *intuition* of that context. It is therefore distinct from belief, which, as a working premise in this dissertation, is faith that has been articulated. This brings the task of practical theology very much to the fore. That is to say understanding the distinction between faith and belief, and how these are experienced and applied in ordinary, daily life.

Faith is posited as a constitutive dimension of the human person.² Speaking theologically, faith is the human person's ontological link to the Absolute. It is faith that makes it possible to hear the voice of the primordial caller as a distinctly personal call. The human person emptied of faith is separated from their originating context: the context that alone can reveal life's meaning. This is distinctively different from giving meaning to life. This is not private, personal meaning, much less ambition. This is meaning intrinsic and universal to life. Life without ultimate meaning, without hope everlasting, for a being "designed to function in the realm of faith", suicide is a reasonable option.³

The idea of suicide is the most rational thing in the world when you are going through all that pain. It's the people who try to stop you that you think are off their heads. Why would you want to go on living if you felt like that?⁴

Scientific ways of knowing have brought much benefit to human society. This dissertation does not seek to deny or demote the value of such knowing. It simply asserts that knowledge of objective reality, of itself, does not and cannot meet the human need for ultimate or transcendent meaning. The primary function of *logos*, as explicated in the previous chapter, is not utilitarian, but relational: to realise, foster and nurture I-thou

¹Velting, "To Dwell Poetically in the World" in *Practical Theology*, 194-214.

²This is Panikkar's claim. Panikkar, *Myth, Faith & Hermeneutics*, 190.

³Panikkar, *Myth, Faith and Hermeneutics*, 189.

⁴Swinton quoting the 'witness', *Spirituality and Mental Health Care*, 120.

relationships with the whole of creation.⁵ Knowledge of objective reality is of value to the extent that it serves the needs of I-thou relationships. That is to say it is faith that informs and in-forms reason. Without faith reason is truncated, forced into the harness of logic. The impact on human life and human life-formation, of reason so truncated, is catastrophic. Reconnecting text (*logos*) to context (*mythos*) is vital to the journey from insanity to sanity. It is vital to a meaningful life.

To avoid any misunderstanding, a post-script is necessary. What is here meant by faith is presented not as the last – but perhaps the first – word ‘spoken’ by a silent unknown. This in no way displaces, much less replaces, the wealth of wisdom and insight already available in so many religious traditions that have articulated their faith into a belief system. While there can be no belief without faith, neither can there be faith without belief.⁶

Setting the Parameters

Understanding the need for the reconnection of *mythos* to *logos* is the task of practical theology. This is the focal point of this chapter. That this is a *bona fide* need is verified by:

- listening to the voice of the witness give testimony to the experience of reconnection as the moment of consciousness that ‘hears’ the voice of the primordial caller – the epiphany of faith;
- recognising the origin of separation between *mythos* and *logos* and the contribution of that to the subtle but real societal pre-disposition to mental illness;
- explicating levels of consciousness in the interest of re-establishing the validity of different ways of knowing;
- exploring and acknowledging both the need and the danger of articulating the faith resident in *mythos* in a language that makes it, not only acceptable to the intellectual cohesion demanded by *logos*, but faithful to its original intuition by:
- recognising the need for collaboration between psychology and theology, especially in the counselling arena.

⁵This is the fundamental point made by Raimon Panikkar, Martin Buber, and Emmanuel Levinas. Raimon Panikkar, *The Cosmotheandric Experience*; Martin Buber, *Between Man and Man* (New York: Collier Books, 1965); Emmanuel Levinas, *Is It Righteous To Be? Interviews with Emmanuel Levinas*. ed. Jill Robbins (California: Stanford university Press, 2001).

⁶Raimon Panikkar, “Faith and Belief: A Multireligious Experience” in *The Intrareligious Dialogue* (New York: Paulist Press, 1978) 2-23.

The witness, speaking to the experience of faith, narrates insights that came, not only at the time of the experience, but also in hindsight. The witness is given much lee way in respect of the fact that the experience is raw, unformulated, and difficult to articulate. It is often incommunicable – except in hindsight. The witness’ testimony is tested throughout the critical conversation, not for credibility, but for validity in the ongoing search for the truth about mental illness and mental health. In light of the testimony of the witness, and before the critical conversation can begin, the current situation comes under scrutiny. What happens to human knowledge and understanding when *mythos* and *logos* are divided? Does the faith resident in *mythos* die? Apparently it does not! Why not? Does faith’s persistence in the human heart and mind demonstrate that faith is indeed a constitutive dimension? What might an exploration of human consciousness tell us about faith? It is at this point that the critical conversation begins.

Raimon Panikkar explicates consciousness in reference frames that elucidate the need for a partnership between *mythos* and *logos*. In Panikkar’s *kairological* consciousness – a term that will be fully explained in its proper place – comes what he calls the ‘moment’ when faith attracts the attention of psychology. The voice of psychology is heard through the works of James Fowler, Jane Loevinger, and Lawrence Kohlberg, among others.⁷ It becomes apparent that psychology does not allow for an ontological link to the Absolute. There is no ‘space’ from which the primordial caller can ‘speak’. It may be that this lack of ‘space’ where *mythos* and *logos* connect (*pneuma*) is why psychology’s call to ‘true self’ can come only from ‘self’. The difference between *logos* articulating the faith resident in *mythos*, and *logos* articulating a ready-made belief system, becomes significant. This is fully explored.

The voice of the witness concludes this chapter with reflections on the significance of faith to the healing journey, and the more spiritual apprehension of reality it produces.

Voice of the Witness

Leaving a mental hospital after weeks of intensive treatment, accepting that the professionals, well-intentioned though they may be, are incapable of healing one’s mental

⁷James W. Fowler, *Stages of Faith: The Psychology of Human Development and the Quest for Meaning* (Victoria: Dove Communications, 1981); Jane Loevinger, *Ego Development* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1977); Lawrence Kohlberg, *The Philosophy of Moral Development: Moral Stages and the Idea of Justice* (U.K. HarperCollins 1981).

illness, brings a peculiar sense of acceptance. When the easy way, the medical quick-fix fails and the futility of analysis and counselling become too wearisome and confusing, a veiled suspicion, present at the outset of mental illness, slowly emerges. The peculiar acceptance is simply an acknowledgment from which one hides for as long as possible. It is acknowledgement that a frightening emptiness (the absence of *mythos*?), experienced from time to time, and believed to be the source of insanity, is in reality a spiritual pain beyond the reach of medicine and psychology. Physical death – suicide – often seems like the only reasonable option, the only possible escape.

I've had experiences where faith was, at the time, the last thing I wanted, because I felt it trapped me into living, because I ... I suppose it was when I was most suicidal ... the only thing that I could think of was killing myself and so the fact that I knew God and had a faith made it very difficult for me because I knew deep down that God wouldn't particularly want me to kill myself, so I would be going against his word I suppose, to actually do it. And so it was like a trap because I couldn't get out of that.⁸

But then comes fear, not of something, but of 'no-thing' – fear beyond all comprehension, and ultimately surrender that is absolute. "While I had told the terror story many, many times, I had never been game, nor had I the words to tell the story of what lay beneath the terror. I spoke about Reality and the despair that perhaps there was none."⁹ But all words failed to convey the sense of emptiness, of an inexplicable horror that there was no escape, even in death: from what? The journey into insanity not only disintegrates into terror, for many it begins with terror. Of those surveyed (see Appendix A) 28.7% claimed that their mental illness 'began as something terrifying'.

In absolute isolation, in an agony beyond description, despair eventually brings one to surrender to the terrifying, empty nothingness from which one has run for so long. This is not the act of one seeking healing. This is the act of one who has nowhere else to go. It is the final act of a search that has now ended in worse than death, for this is not physical death. This is the death of whatever one has called 'self' for as long as 'self' has had life.

This experience is insightfully described by Emmanuel Levinas. He describes it as the "impersonal, anonymous, yet inextinguishable 'consummation' of being, which murmurs in the depths of nothingness itself." He names this inextinguishable

⁸Swinton quoting a 'witness', *Spirituality and Mental Health Care*, 120-121.

⁹Emma Pierce, *Ordinary Sanity* (Sydney: Pierce Publisher, 1995), 6.

consummation of being the “*there is*”, while further describing it as “universal absence”, that is paradoxically “a presence, an absolutely unavoidable presence. ... We do not grasp it through a thought. It is immediately there.” He recognises that “the rustling of the *there is* .. is horror.”¹⁰

Thomas Merton describes a similar terror.

The Promethean instinct is as deep as man’s weakness. That is to say, it is almost infinite. It has its roots in the bottomless abyss of man’s own nothingness. It is the despairing cry that rises out of the darkness of man’s metaphysical solitude – the inarticulate expression of a terror man will not admit to himself: his terror at having to be himself, at having to be a person.¹¹

Allowing the experience to engulf ‘self’ brings surrender – total, absolute, utter, naked, humble surrender. It is abandonment of ‘self’ to the horror Levinas calls ‘*there is*’.

Absolute surrender to the empty nothingness, surrender to a death more real than physical death, reveals at last the truth that heals.¹² At the deepest recess of ‘self’, deeper than the empty nothingness, filling all that is, including Levinas’ “*there is*”, there is an infinite silence in which voice of the Primordial Caller is heard. Intuitive understanding dawns: to be a human person is to be an *invitation to union* with the Divine.¹³

The sense of being called is so real, so vivid, it is experienced as recollection. While it has not been ‘heard’ before, its ‘sound’ is familiar, making it a reality beyond question, beyond analysis, beyond understanding. It is a knowing that knows what cannot be made known by intellect, yet a knowing that is supported by everything that is intellect. The reconnection of *mythos* to *logos* has been effected, and the only contribution the ‘self’ has made to this monumental event is absolute surrender of ‘self’.

The only thing that holds the unity in question, unconsummated, is freedom. There remains the lifelong right to say yes, or no, to the invitation that one *is*. That is,

¹⁰Emmanuel Levinas, *The Levinas Reader*, ed. Seán Hand (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1989), 30-32.

¹¹Thomas Merton, *The New Man* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Cudahy, 1961), 23-24.

¹²The echoes of Scripture can be heard here. “Anyone who wants to save his life will lose it; but anyone who loses his life for my sake will find it.” (Matt. 16:25).

¹³“Of this great universe I am a part, more than the sun and moon. And I am not a necessity, not in the fullest sense, therefore, I must be a want. And if this great Being wants me, who am I to argue?” Pierce, *Ordinary Insanity*, 65.

accepting the invitation *to be* requires life-long commitment. It requires a lifetime of listening, discerning, and responding “here I am” to the primordial caller. The choice ever remains to refuse to listen, to hear, to respond, and therefore refuse *to be*. Abdication of responsibility for ‘self’, which clinical psychology sanctions, is revealed as integral to mental illness.¹⁴ Accepting responsibility for ‘self’, which theology sanctions, is revealed as integral to mental health.

We are completely responsible before God for what we make of ourselves finally and definitively in our free self-realization or self-refusal by our acceptance or rejection of the divine act which is the cause of our inexhaustible transcendence.¹⁵

Immediately the division between ‘self’ and the rest of the human family, a division articulated and consolidated by the ‘mentally ill’ label, disappears. Yet there is no definition of ‘self’. The experience is a ‘moment’ of consciousness that closes all divisions, even the division between human and divine. That is, there is no consciousness of division between ‘self’ and the divine one is invited to be. There is an indistinguishable, but none the less intimate (as in personal) connection to the entire cosmos; a sense of being part of a reality greater than, but not separate from self.

Thomas Merton seems familiar with this sense. “The secret of my identity is hidden in the love and mercy of God. But whatever is in God is really identical with Him, for his infinite simplicity admits no division and no distinction.”¹⁶ Karl Rahner also describes this experience of unity, noting that we receive and are aware of the ‘other’ “in such a way that as sentient knowers we could not separate ourselves from it.”¹⁷ Fear and anxiety are dispersed. There is nothing to fear where there is irrefutable unity. Neither is there any expectation that life will suddenly change, suddenly become a rose

¹⁴In areas other than mental health, psychology can actually promote responsibility, for example the several forms of motivational psychology. But in the mental health arena, from psychoanalysis to psychiatric medication there is an implicit belief that mentally ill people cannot and should not be held responsible. There is little if any insight into the fact that abdication of responsibility is itself part of the problem.

¹⁵Carmichael C. Peters, *A Gadamerian Reading of Karl Rahner's Theology of Grace and Freedom* (New York: Catholic Scholars Press, 2000), 309.

¹⁶Thomas Merton, *New Seeds of Contemplation* (New York: New Directions, 1961), 35.

¹⁷Karl Rahner, *Spirit in the World*, trans. William Dych (New York: Herder and Herder, 1968), 117.

garden. Nothing on the outer landscape has changed, or is expected to change. It is the inner landscape that has changed, and changed dramatically. While this *metanoia* is a life-giving experience, life must ever be drawn from it in the practice of daily living, making it the ‘stuff’ of practical theology. The crucial, fundamental point is that the existential questions and concerns that drove one into insanity do not stop. It is *anxiety about them* that stops. The need to know *definitively*, to be certain *absolutely* disperses. Anxiety is replaced by trust in an ‘un-knowing’ that eludes intellect and is destroyed by analysis.¹⁸ Anxiety is replaced by faith.

What remains in the realm of intellect is the desire to articulate faith, to share the un-knowing. But just as importantly there is return of the desire to get on with ordinary, daily life and living – in very practical terms. All the ordinary attributes of the human person turn from being destructive to supportive. We are creatures of habit. This simple fact holds us in mental illness. But with *metanoia*, this simple fact can carry us into mental health. The will to live not only returns, but is enhanced by the challenge to *be*.

While this experience as related here seems extraordinary, it is in practical terms a regular occurrence in human life. Perhaps for the mentally ill person it is the preceding despair that makes the experience so momentous. Many lives record something of this moment of epiphany. St Paul experienced such a moment on the road to Damascus. St Augustine records his own moment of surrender to the divine call.¹⁹ Nelson Mandela’s growing awareness of a reality greater, but not separate from himself, emerges from his story.²⁰ Then there are those who seem ever to have been attuned to the primordial caller. Two who immediately spring to mind are St John Mary Vianney, the Curé of Ars, and St Thérèse of Lisieux.²¹

Much of Gerald May’s work records the occurrence of and desire for what he calls ‘moments of unity’. “Sometimes they are called peak experiences. Sometimes they are

¹⁸Panikkar asserts that analysis destroys in the crucial area of ‘un-knowing’. We will meet this assertion again further on in this chapter. Panikkar, *Myth, Faith and Hermeneutics*, 39.

¹⁹ St. Augustine, “Book VIII” in *Confessions* (U.S.A.: Signet Classics, 2001).

²⁰ Nelson Mandela, *Long Walk to Freedom* (Boston: Back Bay Books, 1995).

²¹ Leon Cristiani, *The Village Priest Who Fought God’s Battles*, trans.M.A. Bouchard (U.S.A.: St Paul Editions, 1970); Thérèse de Lisieux, *The Autobiography of Thérèse de Lisieux*, ed. Robert Backhouse (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1994).

seen as religious. They are certainly mysterious. And they are inevitably spiritual”.²² The occurrence comes without expectation.

Sanity bursts forth like the Phoenix and fire rains. It all comes crashing down. The point. The point of total despair. The point where giving up happens. There is no further choice. Nothing new worth doing. No more hope for the future. No more aspiration. There is some deep factor in people that makes a difference here. Something beyond the realm of predictability that determines how one gives up.²³

The desire for peace, for security, for a cosmic harmony that humans work so hard to achieve, yet instinctively know is ever beyond their capacity to deliver, suddenly descends, enveloping the one upon whom it descends.

People sense deeply but unclearly, that freely being would bring relaxation, rest and peace. As if they realize that *not* freely being requires a lot of work. As if they know that *trying* to live and *working* at self-control are burdens one longs to set down. All of these perceptions are correct. They are the voice of sanity.²⁴

The voice of sanity is the voice of the primordial caller, the voice one is so afraid of hearing that it is all too often drowned out in feverish activity at a furious pace ... until some of us simply go crazy!

Whether the ‘moment’ is experienced as a sudden realisation, a growing awareness, or an eternal companionship, it carries the same overtones; it is a personal, intimate call to be one-with the whole of creation; a peace that brings its sense of cosmic harmony.

For several months after the initial experience life is lived with an accompanying sense of wonder. In time the practised habit of listening to the ‘voice’ of the primordial caller, which comes with increasing clarity through I-thou relationships, seems so simple. It is not easy. Indeed at times it can be extremely difficult. But as confusion disperses and anxiety disappears, it is as if the simplicity of childhood returns.

²²Gerald May, *Will and Spirit: A Contemplative Psychology* (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1982), 51.

²³ Gerald May, *Simply Sane: The Spirituality of Mental Health* (New York: Crossroad, 1982), 7.

²⁴ Gerald May, *Simply Sane*, 16 (italics original).

The difficulty lies more in practical living than in the process of discernment. In the process of discernment there is a confidence akin to infallibility. It is not so much confidence in one's discernment and/or decisions, but confidence in the ultimate outcome of creation. Paradoxically there is no certainty, no guarantee. Panikkar grasps this sense and aptly names it 'cosmic trust'. "Authentic infallibility entails the most complete assumption of risk, for the greatest risk is to accept the infallibility of each moment of our life."²⁵ One wonders how life became so complicated in the first place. It is almost as though society itself has a pre-disposition to mental illness.

Societal Pre-disposition to Mental Illness

It may well be that the faith resident in *mythos*, at least to the extent that it is beyond question, was what René Descartes sought when he brought his considerable mental powers to bear upon what he perceived to be truth, or at the very least, certain knowledge.²⁶ Perhaps assuming knowledge was the exclusive domain of intellect, Descartes relied rigidly upon intellect in his search. Not until he had discovered what he believed to be the path to certain knowledge did he realise that the only thing he knew for certain was his own thoughts, his own subjectivity, his *cogito ergo sum*. He knew that he existed but his existence was paralysed, unable to relate to the rest of reality because he could not be certain that the rest of reality existed. This division between subject and object today bears his name – the Cartesian split. It has been the preoccupation of philosophy ever since to explain if not to close this gap.

Yet Descartes believed he had closed the subject – object division. He reconnected himself to the rest of reality by positing a theory; a theory philosophy rightly calls a circular argument; a theory that did not meet his own criteria for discerning reality. Declaring "whatever I understand, it is certain that I understand it correctly, for the ability to understand comes from God and it cannot contain the ability to be mistaken", he thought he had successfully closed the division.²⁷ However, he had succeeded only in affirming the

²⁵Panikkar, *Myth, Faith and Hermeneutics*, 412-413.

²⁶René Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy*, (USA: The Bobbs-Merrill Company Inc., 1960).

²⁷René Descartes, "Fourth Meditation" in *Meditations and Other Metaphysical Writings* (London: Penguin Books 1998), 48.

sovereignty of human intellect, subjecting the reality of God to individual interpretation. God has been an issue of intellectual debate ever since.

With rigid reliance upon intellect, the primary purpose of *logos*, to foster and nurture I-thou relationships, has been reduced to apprehending objects, ever incapable of knowing whether or not the objects apprehended are real. Reality has become a matter of opinion, of individual interpretation. And the reality to be interpreted is predominantly the immediate world of objective reality.

With the Renaissance, human life in this world seemed to hold an immediate inherent value, an excitement and existential significance, that balanced or even displaced the medieval focus on an afterworldly spiritual destiny. Man no longer appeared so inconsequential relative to God, the Church, or nature.²⁸

Descartes hobbled rather than progressed human understanding. Today knowledge of objective reality rises like a cacophonous crescendo, drowning out the voice of the primordial caller. Has it been left to mystics, and perhaps madmen, to bear witness to *mythos*, to testify to the voice of the primordial caller? Is it they who remind us that the reality of God can only be experienced? Is this reality an experience that incorporates intellect, but cannot be apprehended by it?

Minus *mythos*, the not inconsiderable power of human knowing is reduced to, and concentrated upon, the horizontal, to the exclusion of the vertical. Within this horizon mystery is merely knowledge not yet attained. Possibilities are truncated.

A horizon can exist only in relation to what lies beyond it; its limits are defined in a decisive sense by what lies beyond those limits. It is the very nature of limit not to be the final word; the notion of limit itself is unintelligible without the open space into which it is projected – the open space of transcendence.²⁹

Openness to mystery is fostered and nurtured by *mythos* where, in faith and trust the possibilities are endless. Without *mythos*, *logos* can only grasp the material. Faith and trust are replaced by knowledge and control. Knowledge hollow of understanding becomes

²⁸Tarnas, *Passion of the Western Mind*, 224.

²⁹D.C. Schindler "Surprised by Truth: The Drama of Reason in Fundamental Theology" in *Communio* 4 (Wint. 2004) 611.

the power to control: “You will be like gods, knowing good from evil.” (Gen. 3:5.). At best majority opinion decides what is real. At worst individual opinion reigns by force. Knowledge is prized above, or equated with, wisdom. And still there is no authority able to arbitrate what is true knowledge. We barely suspect that interpretation without an arbiter can become distortion rather than understanding of reality.³⁰ In terms of mental illness and mental health, reality is whatever the ruling regime decides it is.³¹

The greatest loss is the voice of the primordial caller. The denial of *mythos* silences the voice of the primordial caller interiorly. Loss of the significance of I-thou relationships silences that same voice exteriorly.

With the wisdom of hindsight, especially in light of post-Enlightenment hermeneutics, it seems reasonable to say that rather than making of knowledge, or truth, or reality – however we might wish to call it – an object available to intellectual scrutiny, Descartes made of it a subjective enterprise. Pristine objectivity, the position from which reality-in-itself is perceived with ‘clarity and distinction’, does not eliminate individual interpretation.

But there has ever been individual interpretation. Indeed diverse perceptions of reality are part and parcel of the rich heritage of human consciousness. The originating cultural context of the human family, *mythos*, is infinitely open to the myriad ways humanity strives to interpret and understand reality.³² Perhaps it is when *mythos* and its resident faith, alive and well in spite of decades of neglect, are permitted to in-form and inform *logos* that mental health returns to those who have lost it. Perhaps mental illness speaks to the need to learn to trust the un-knowing of *mythos* while not neglecting the knowing of *logos*.

Human Consciousness – Kairological Moments

While the majority have followed the trend toward intellectualising knowledge, there have always been those who have intuited the artificial ground constructed when the

³⁰Hume maintained that human beings by an act of will could, contrary to experience, combine the idea of a belief with any other idea and thereby cause themselves to believe anything. David Hume, *Treatise of Human Nature* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000).

³¹This was Gadamer’s response to the critique of Habermas regarding psychoanalysis, already noted in the previous chapter. Warnke, *Gadamer – Hermeneutics*, 127.

³²Panikkar poignantly makes this point. Raimon Panikkar, *The Intrareligious Dialogue* (New York: Paulist Press, 1978).

context of human knowing was discarded.³³ In the modern era, thinkers like Teilhard de Chardin and Karl Rahner, and more recently Denis Edwards, David Tacey and Elizabeth Johnson to name but a few, capture something of a *mythos-logos* re-connection.³⁴ Their work echoes with knowing that has reclaimed its context in the *mythos* of un-knowing. This reconnection allows human consciousness to move on its evolutionary journey, a journey that is not chronological but one that Panikkar calls *kairological*.

It is kairological consciousness, in conjunction with his communication categories of *mythos*, *logos* and *pneuma*, that demonstrates the value of Panikkar's theological anthropology to the event of understanding sought by practical theology in the arena of mental health. Of kairological consciousness Panikkar writes: "The movement of consciousness is neither straightforward nor chronological, but rather spiral and kairological."³⁵ It embraces past, present, and future, in the immediate moment. A similarity can be seen in Gadamer's hermeneutical "fusion of horizons" where understanding emerges from the horizons of past and present, fused in such a way that something new comes into being.³⁶ It is apparent that understanding, as distinct from knowing, requires a consciousness that is kairological as distinct from one that is chronological.

While de Chardin and Rahner, Edwards, Tacey and Johnson express something of the content of evolving human consciousness, Panikkar has captured something of its process. He describes this development in 'snapshots' of each of three 'moments', careful to distinguish between *chronological* and what he means by kairological moments. This he does to stress the qualitative character of *kairological* moments.³⁷ He claims that "not only is each of these three moments present in the other two, but all three are compatible with

³³For example Blaise Pascal, John Henry Newman and Jonathan Edwards could not be accused of lacking in intellect – an intellect they put at the service of revealing 'knowing' as substantially more than intellectual.

³⁴Karl Rahner, *The Spirit in the Church* (London: Burns & Oates, 1979); Teilhard de Chardin, *The Prayer of the Universe* (New York: William Collins & Sons, 1968); David Tacey, "Rising Waters of the Spirit", *Studies in Spirituality* 13 (2003) 11-30; Denis Edwards, *Breath of Life: A Theology of the Creator Spirit* (New York: Orbis Books, 2004); Elizabeth A. Johnson, *Women, Earth, and Creator Spirit* (New York: Paulist Press, 1993).

³⁵Panikkar, *The Cosmotheandric Experience*, 21.

³⁶Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 235-341.

³⁷ Panikkar's three 'moments' he names 'Ecumenical', 'Economic', and 'Catholic'. These will be fully explicated shortly.

more than one of the schemas proposed by scholars in the field”.³⁸ While there may be a chronological sequence of the three moments, the kairological dynamism “should not be confused with a linear conception of ‘progress’ or a rigid notion of development or ‘evolution’”.³⁹ This last point marks an important distinction between kairological and chronological developments of consciousness: one might even say between theological and psychological developments of consciousness. As Panikkar’s kairological consciousness unfolds in ‘three moments’, breaking through to the transcendent dimension, revealing faith as a constitutive dimension of the human person, the voice of psychology is heard speaking its position.

The First Moment:

The first moment of kairological consciousness Panikkar names the **Ecumenic Moment**. It applies to and describes “Man of Nature”.⁴⁰ In this moment the divine is subsumed in nature, which is not merely natural, but sacred.⁴¹ But here also there is no division between human and nature: human and nature are one. The union of divine-nature-human is not intellectually apprehended by ‘Man of Nature’. It is simply what *is* at the level of *mythos*: a belief transparent to the believer. If ‘Man of Nature’ could articulate his perception of reality he would say it is relational.

In modern western culture there is still a residual sense of inescapable unity if only in superstition. There are sports people who demonstrate this trait with their attachment to various accoutrements of their sport. Lleyton Hewitt refused to wash the cap he wore when he first won the U.S. Open. Cricketers often have their favourite bat, or shirt, or cap invested with belief in ‘good luck’ or ‘good karma’ or ‘destiny’ attached to their presence. Stephen Waugh always carried a red scarf he used for polishing the ball when he bowled, declaring some belief in its power to bring good luck whether or not he bowled. Many people have a lucky charm. Some still have a taboo against ordinary things, like breaking a mirror or walking under a ladder. Many still believe that good and bad things ‘always come in threes’. Astrological charts are still in use long after many of the myths attached

³⁸Panikkar, *The Cosmotheandric Experience*, 20.

³⁹Panikkar, *The Cosmotheandric Experience*, 21.

⁴⁰Panikkar, *The Cosmotheandric Experience*, 24.

⁴¹Mircea Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1959); Emile Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life* (U.S.A.: The Free Press, 1995).

to star patterns have been dissolved. Myths linger in what are now called “old wives tales”, but surely everyone has experienced an inexplicable ‘knowing’, something called a hunch, or gut sense, or intuition.⁴² While the reality of *mythos* is denied, *mythos* itself remains in pockets of human consciousness, even if it often appears irrational.

Psychology does propose a level of consciousness – the Freudian Unconscious – with similarities to *mythos*, predominantly the consciousness of the Ecumenic Moment. However the Freudian Unconscious is intensely individual and ego-oriented, incapable of perceiving unity. Jung posited a Collective Unconscious, but with the emphasis on *un*-conscious in a chronological development, the kairological dynamism escaped him.⁴³ Jung believed the extent to which the individual was able to emerge from the Collective Unconscious, to separate her/himself from the horde, measured the maturity of the individual.⁴⁴ Any perceived similarity between the Collective Unconscious and the originating culture of *mythos* ends with the need to sever I-thou relationships in favour of individual growth. I-thou relationships are of no significant concern in Jungian theories of human life-formation.

The Second Moment:

The **Economic Moment** echoes Descartes ‘*cogito ergo sum*’: the turn to the subject. Here “Man discovers the laws of the universe, the objective structures of the real; he distinguishes, measures, experiments”.⁴⁵ This might be called the recognition if not the discovery of *logos*. The human being recognises ‘self’ separated from if not independent of the divine. In this moment the Greek philosopher Xenophanes affirmed that humans find that which is better through their own seeking.

The emphasis on personal search, and on the need for time, marks this [Xenophanes’ statement] as the first statement in extant Greek literature of the

⁴²s.v. “Intuition” instinctive knowing (without the use of rational processes); s.v. “Hunch” an impression that something might be the case. Word Reference.com. Available from <http://www.wordreference.com/definition/hunch> Internet; accessed 4 April 2005.

⁴³Walter A Shelburne, *Mythos and Logos in the Thought of Carl Jung: The Theory of the Collective Unconscious in Scientific Perspective*, (New York: State University of New York Press, 1988).

⁴⁴‘Horde’ is used here because it is Jung’s word. Jung, *Modern Man*, 227-228.

⁴⁵Panikkar, *The Cosmotheandric Experience*, 33.

idea of progress in the arts and sciences, a progress dependent on human effort and not – at least not primarily – on divine revelation.⁴⁶

The distinction between kairological and chronological moments of consciousness here becomes apparent.

The Economic Moment has what Panikkar terms two interludes. The first of these he calls Scientific Humanism. In this interlude, not only is the human mind the criterion of intelligibility, but in the absence of *mythos*, perhaps even of reality.⁴⁷ The individual can “defy traditional authorities and assert a truth based on [his/her] own judgment.”⁴⁸

It is in this moment, when the human mind turns to examine human consciousness, that modern psychology takes up its stand. “Man not only knows that he is a knowing being, but turns this very knowledge into the object of his reflection. Man here is caught in the very act of examining his power to know.”⁴⁹ Examining the power to know, the human mind becomes aware of consciousness as a growing, developing, process. Research in the modern era is about knowledge in order to control.⁵⁰ Theories regarding the growth and development of consciousness, and how to better promote that growth and development abound, but we will dialogue here with the two mainstream theories.

The first theory is that of development believed by some to be psychosocial. Called the maturation model, it is marked by stages of growth which emerge from experiences of life. Erik Erikson’s *Eight Stages of Man*, Daniel Levinson’s *Seasons of a Man’s Life*, Roger Gould’s *Transformations: Growth and Change in Adult Life* are some of the theories to be found under the maturation banner.⁵¹ Consciousness that develops from experiences of life does have the potential to re-connect *mythos* with *logos*. Why this has largely not occurred is something that will be examined a little further on.

⁴⁶W.C. Guthrie, “The Earlier Presocratics and the Pythagoreans “ in *A History of Greek Philosophy* Vol 1 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1962), 300-400.

⁴⁷Panikkar, *The Cosmotheandric Experience*, 33.

⁴⁸Tarnas, *Passion of the Western Mind*, 224.

⁴⁹Panikkar, *The Cosmotheandric Experience*, 34.

⁵⁰Knowledge for the purpose of control has stood as a paradigm for science since at least the time of Francis Bacon. John C. Briggs, *Francis Bacon & the Rhetoric of Nature* (U.K.: iUniverse, 1999).

⁵¹Daniel A. Helminiak, Chapter Three “Stages of Human Development” in *Spiritual Development: An Interdisciplinary Study* (Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1987), 45-75.

The other theory is known as the constructivist model. This favours psychological growth analogous to the growth of an organism. It has grown out of research projects involving the study of children and their development from childhood to adulthood.⁵² Jean Piaget and Lawrence Kohlberg are the best known adherents of the constructivist model, which places great emphasis on cognitive development while not ignoring moral development.⁵³

Jane Loevinger has attempted a convergence of the two models, making Ego the point of coherence.⁵⁴ However her Ego runs into difficulty in terms of defining precisely what it is. She claims Ego is a process, not a thing. While it is a central core of personality, it is also that which seeks to make sense of the full experience of life. On the one hand ego is the key organizational factor, while on the other hand it is the *tendency toward* organization. That is, whether it is the ‘receiver’ of experience as an essence that is at once personality, or whether it is a ‘sorter’ of experience which, in its sorting, formulates personality is not clear. Notably Loevinger’s Ego is substantially different from Freud’s in as much as Freud’s Ego is rigidly individual, while Loevinger’s Ego “would never come into being for a person raised in isolation”.⁵⁵ Her Ego arises in social interaction.

There is sufficient validity in both the maturation and constructivist models to allow them to open to the reality of *mythos*. However, the potential for the emergence of *mythos* in both is arrested by the chronological order imposed on them by their adherents. Knowledge that follows a linear cause-effect dictate overlooks the apparently arbitrary. Giving credence to the arbitrary would rebuff the ability to control. A profoundly personal call from the primordial caller would certainly negate control.

An indepth study of the above named authors (Erickson, Levinson, Gould, Piaget and Kohlberg) might lead one to believe that there is an element of confusion emergent from psychological theories that address the *development* of human consciousness. Psychology explains this developmental confusion as mystery. But what does psychology mean by the word mystery? Is there any similarity with ‘mystery’ in its theological garb?

⁵² Jean Piaget, *The Child's Conception of the World: A 20th-Century Classic of Child Psychology* (Pennsylvania: Littlefield Adams, 1975); Lawrence Kohlberg, *Child Psychology and Childhood Education: A Cognitive Developmental View* (U.K.: Longman Group, 1987).

⁵³ Helminiak, *Spiritual Development*, 45-54.

⁵⁴ Helminiak, *Spiritual Development*, 62-70.

⁵⁵ Jane Loevinger, *Ego Development* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1977), 64.

In their book *Social Psychology: Unravelling the Mystery*, Kenrick, Neuberg, and Cialdini examine mystery from a psychological perspective.⁵⁶ Why would a poor black washerwoman give away her hard-earned life-savings? What psychological forces led the Dalai Lama to forge a lifelong friendship with a foreign vagabond openly scorned by Tibetan peasants? Why would a boy falsely confess to murdering his own mother? Theology might hear the voice of the primordial caller at work here. Psychology searches for logical reasons behind apparently arbitrary actions. A culture dominated by purely intellectual ways of knowing tends to give the weight of credibility to explanations supported by logic.

Mystery for psychology is that which has yet to be discovered. For theology mystery is “something hidden which has been revealed, something unapproachable which invites entry, something unknowable which offers true understanding.”⁵⁷ Mystery is therefore paradox, beyond the scope of intellectual ways of knowing. But is it beyond the scope of human ways of knowing? Is there a level of consciousness other than intellect? Is there a consciousness that knows mystery as un-knowing?⁵⁸ These are questions that arise out of the contradictions between theology and psychology regarding human consciousness, its growth and development. They are questions that demand the attention of practical theology.

Psychology has developed its theories in a linear, cause-effect, chronological framework, as though nothing outside of the empirical world could impact upon the evolution of human consciousness. Kairological consciousness, a concept developed by a theologian, is understandably at the service of mystery, allowing a dimension to consciousness that transcends the empirical. More importantly in terms of this dissertation, kairological consciousness validates faith, allowing the voice of the primordial caller to play a part in the evolution of human consciousness. This raises the question: how do modern psychologists deal with faith? Do they have a logical explanation in keeping with their linear cause-effect understanding of human consciousness? Or is faith an anomaly beyond logic?

⁵⁶D. Kenrick, S. Neuberg and R. Cialdini, *Social Psychology: Unravelling the Mystery*, (Arizona: Allyn & Bacon, 2005),

⁵⁷Philip Gleeson, s.v. “Mystery” in *The New Dictionary of Theology*, eds. J. Komonchak, M. Collins & D. Lane (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1990).

⁵⁸Karl Rahner, “The Concept of Mystery in Catholic Theology”, *Theological Investigations* Vol IV trans. Kevin Smyth, (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1966), 36-73.

James Fowler, who famously developed six stages of faith, was strongly influenced by both Piaget and Kohlberg.⁵⁹ It is fascinating to note the way in which an intellectual approach to apprehending faith led Fowler back to the context, back to *mythos*.

Faith, rather than belief or religion, is the most fundamental category in the human quest for relation to transcendence. Faith, it appears, is generic, a universal feature of human living, recognizably similar everywhere despite the remarkable variety of forms and contents of religious practice and belief. ... Faith, classically understood, is not a separate dimension of life. Faith is an orientation of the total person, giving purpose and goal to one's hopes and strivings, thoughts and actions.⁶⁰

Panikkar is obviously not alone in his contention that faith is a constitutive dimension. Fowler brings other credible authorities into view. "Faith, so Niebuhr and Tillich tell us, is a universal human concern. Prior to our being religious or irreligious we are already engaged with issues of faith."⁶¹

Again Panikkar's warning (quoted above) that evolving consciousness should not be confused with a 'linear conception of progress or a rigid notion of development or evolution' is significant. Human growth and development, especially the growth of consciousness, is not equivalent to a snake shedding its skin. Progress from one level of consciousness to another is more reductive than constructive if the previous level is discarded.

Fowler, who commences from a position of mystery, on the verge of re-discovering *mythos*, moves back to intellectual theories in his endeavour to explicate faith. He brings forward theories closely linked with organic stages of life. His structure incorporates elements of both the maturation and constructivist models of psychological development. While this is not without merit, it leaves the impression that faith, once admitted, though it has no origin in logic, can be explicated in the arena of logic, of psychological development. His 'faith' stands, psychologically speaking, on irrational ground. This succeeds only in demonstrating Panikkar's insight: "when you make myth into an 'object'

⁵⁹James W. Fowler, *Stage of Faith: The Psychology of Human Development and the Quest for Meaning* (Victoria: Dove Communications, 1981).

⁶⁰Fowler, *Stages of Faith*, 14.

⁶¹Fowler, *Stages of Faith*, 5.

of knowledge, you make it the subject-matter of analysis, you destroy it as myth.”⁶²

Mythos can only serve *logos* if it is allowed to remain what it is.

While human intellect has a great capacity to objectively interpret what it perceives, without *mythos* it cannot transcend the empirical horizon to become truly *logos*. Only *logos* – reason – is able to grasp reality beyond the perception of intellect. Confined by logic, intellect runs out of reason. The bubble bursts and the dilemma of the post modern era gushes forth to drown hope with its nihilistic non-vision of a future that has no future. Hegel gives voice to this futility “which only ever sees pure nothingness in its result ... [and] cannot get any further from there, but must wait to see whether something new comes along and what it is, in order to throw it too into the same empty abyss”.⁶³

Panikkar calls this futility the second interlude of the second moment of kairological consciousness, and names it the Ecological Interlude. It comes when human intellect realises it cannot penetrate the empirical horizon. It is in this interlude that despair, the product of still-born faith, produces a variety of irrationalities, one of which is insanity.

In terms of mental illness, the Ecological Interlude brings the realisation that there is a reality that cannot be mastered. It is the “inner discovery of the limits of Man, limits whose cause is not some lack of factual know-how, but something deeper, something ultimately unfathomable.”⁶⁴ In spite of intellectual brilliance, able to connect one logical thought and/or fact to another, human beings have failed to create their dream of a truly humane civilization.

Theoretically we can eradicate poverty, injustice, hunger and exploitation, we can dominate Nature to an astonishing degree, we can live in peace without lethal ideological conflicts, we can build a world without want, we can attain all the freedom and well-being of which Man has dreamt since time immemorial. And yet modern Man feels more than ever in the grip of a fate he can in no way control.⁶⁵

⁶²Panikkar, *Myth, Faith and Hermeneutics*, 39.

⁶³G. F. Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Spirit* trans. A. Miller (London: Oxford University Press, 1977), 51.

⁶⁴Panikkar, *The Cosmotheandric Experience*, 39.

⁶⁵Panikkar, *The Cosmotheandric Experience*, 38.

The reality of I-thou relationships has escaped us. Suddenly we are confronted with the wisdom of the Christian scriptures: humans cannot live on bread alone. (Mat. 4:4).

There seems to be no resolution to this agonising dilemma. All attempts to 'go back' fail, as demonstrated, because we cannot but destroy that which we seek when all our 'tools' are intellectual. While the need for more than bread begins to dawn upon us, we are still ignorant of what more is needed and, as Hegel suggests, doubt that there is any more.⁶⁶ There is no hope unless we go forward to the third kairological moment.

The Third Moment

This moment Panikkar calls the **Catholic Moment**, and pinpoints it as the moment of a radical *metanoia*. In this moment there is the potential to gain a new innocence. Caught in the second interlude of the Economic Moment, we cannot turn back, nor forge ahead indiscriminately. Paradoxically we are forced to

overcome knowledge by non-knowledge, by a leap of faith, confidence, feeling, intuition. ... Only redemption can bring about the new innocence. Whatever existential form this redemption might take, its structure is marked by the experience of the intrinsic limitations of our consciousness.⁶⁷

This limitation of consciousness may have gone unacknowledged, but it is not unnoticed. It is awareness of this limitation that is the soul-agony of mental illness. It is awareness of this limitation that feeds the nihilism of the present day. It is hardly surprising that personal experience of faith at the level of *mythos*, described by the witness earlier in this chapter, initiates the healing journey.

Psychology has not developed a level of consciousness that perceives a future full of hope, of joy, of peace, of redemption. It would be unreasonable to expect that it should do so. Psychological solutions to the human condition, especially to the condition of mental illness, are confined within the empirical horizon of its expertise. It has great power to generate motivation, to foster and nurture ambition, to bring about personal achievement. But is that sufficient to regain, or even maintain mental health?

⁶⁶Philosophically speaking the 'insights' of Friedrich Nietzsche heralded in the nihilism of what some call the post modern era; s.v. "Nietzsche Friedrich" in *Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy* ed. Robert Audi (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

⁶⁷Panikkar, *The Cosmotheandric Experience*, 51-52.

The Catholic Moment is not yet upon our society. Perhaps the witness, who has experienced this third moment, can shed light on how this moment brings a new innocence, new hope, redemption.

Reflections of the Witness

What brings about healing can be described in terms consistent with the reference frames engaged in this dissertation. Intellectual despair penetrates so deeply it pierces the abyss to reach the realm of *mythos*. Undifferentiated consciousness where ‘self’ is one with the divine is fused with the interlude of Scientific Humanism. All that one has been, has known, has experienced, is not and cannot be denied. There is rather a fusion of ways of knowing. *Mythos* and *logos* are reunited, allowing consciousness to expand – kairologically. This is experienced as the birth of a new consciousness, a vision that opens upon an awareness of redemption as a reality. Redemption is here experienced as already accomplished. All that was previously missing was the realisation of it. *Logos* alone cannot see what the eyes of faith can show it.⁶⁸

The new consciousness brings hope. The ordinariness of time plays its healing role. Through it all the new consciousness remains, continually expanding to become one’s habitual way of perceiving reality. In time, any other way of perceiving reality is no more than a dim memory. This is the Catholic Moment of kairological consciousness. “If our ex-istence and our world are intrinsically graced, then our consciousness is transcendentally (and not merely ‘historically’) effected and affected.”⁶⁹ The perception is that every human person is already saved – if she/he chooses to be. The single most important thing in life is to *be* the invitation to divine union that one was created to be. In practice that simply means to listen, discern, and respond “here I am” to the primordial caller. This is not auditory hallucination. This is the voice of every ‘other’ that calls us to loving relationship in all circumstances.

For one who has lived long years in existential doubt, the most extraordinarily ordinary part of the whole experience is the implicit trust in the experience of hope.⁷⁰

⁶⁸Polanyi attempts to unite faith and reason and fails, essentially because he engages analysis rather a unifying myth – a *metanoia* able to ‘see’ redemption. Michael Polanyi, “Faith and Reason” in *Communio* 28 (Winter 2001), 860-874.

⁶⁹Peters, *Gadamerian Reading of Karl Rahner*, 5.

⁷⁰“I believe that getting well will mean discovering a new way of life” was a statement in the survey (see Appendix A) with which 75.5% agreed. No one indicated they thought it was not possible to get well.

Without demonstrable cause, with no concrete foundation, bearing on the surface all the hallmarks of self-induced, delusional certainty, the reality of this experience, in spite of the fact that it cannot be articulated, cannot be denied.

I really knew with unshakeable conviction that I felt hope. Not a passing hope; not a self-induced hope. This was not a hope that needed propping up with positive thinking. This was not a hope that relied on anything but the very kernel of reality itself. This was a hope that would be there, forever and for always, whether I was mad or sane, whether I ever got well or stayed sick for all eternity. This hope was absolute reality.⁷¹

There is no miraculous cure-all, no sudden leap into a new, mentally healthy being. The experience of faith is miracle enough! All the ordinary steps of becoming need to be made that the reality of *being* an invitation not be violated.⁷²

It is at this stage of the journey that the influence and guidance of others becomes crucial. I-thou relationships emerge as the fabric of reality. For that very reason relationship has the ability to reveal or obscure reality, including one's coming-into-being. Embryonic faith needs expression in both word and action. The need for an authoritative reference source in the interpretation of reality, a need that never ceases, is, in the initial healing 'moment' consciously recognised and emphatically acknowledged. The experience of mental illness, of being one's own arbiter of reality, delivers one of its precious gifts: the humility to admit the human need for guidance.

Faith Articulated

Faith is not only an ontological link to the Absolute, it is the realisation of the unity of all reality. "By faith Man is *distinguished* from other beings. But precisely because of this, faith is a human characteristic that *unites* mankind".⁷³ Faith needs "an intellectual vehicle or even, in most cases, a conceptual system to express it".⁷⁴ We spontaneously reach out to one another in faith, seeking assurance and affirmation.

⁷¹Pierce, *Ordinary Insanity*, 66.

⁷²"I knew in some intrinsic way that the reality [faith experience], while it had not conquered my fear, had at least given me a weapon with which to strike at the heart of wherever that fear is born." Pierce, *Ordinary Insanity*, 66.

⁷³Panikkar, *Myth, Faith and Hermeneutics*, (italics original) 58.

⁷⁴Panikkar, *Myth, Faith and Hermeneutics*, 198.

The searcher who has foundered in confusion for long years now becomes passionate, but cautious, in seeking out reference frames in *logos* which resonate with the treasure discovered in *mythos*. *Logos* is necessary not only that one might locate 'self' in a spatio-temporal dimension, but also that who 'self' *is* can translate through rational thought into action, allowing the *being* of 'self' to become synonymous with the *doing* of 'self'. In simple terms this is the way the ordinary, honest person lives life. Relationship with others becomes not only significant, but crucial.

The searcher in this endeavour is not helped by those who place doctrinal boundaries around the very subject in question. What is sought in *logos* is a belief system faithful to its mythical context. The object of the exercise is a difficult one; to give coherent expression to an un-knowing; to articulate and explore the faith of *mythos* in such a way that it is not betrayed by its articulation. In spite of the need for articulation, or perhaps because of it, the searcher is not easily convinced by intellectual arguments. The searcher knows with the weight of experience that intellectual arguments are able to foster and nurture un-reality with the same convincing resonance with which they foster and nurture reality. The most powerful arguments do not convince. They silence.

Acceptance of the dialogue partner(s) as an equally original source of understanding is vital. If respect for 'other' is not reciprocal, the danger is that what will be articulated will be the belief system of the dialogue partner considered to be superior. Openness that allows the witness to articulate the embryonic faith experienced is vital. Doctrinal formulae are not helpful, but in fact detrimental, at this stage of the healing journey. This is not to say that there should not be doctrinal formulae. Indeed doctrinal formulae are vitally necessary to any belief system. However, the witness striving to articulate the experience of faith needs openness to explore, to personally discern the formulae that is faithful to the truth intuited at the level of *mythos*. While guidance is vital, dictatorial direction is futile and can actually be destructive. Faithful doctrine is faith-filled doctrine; a truthful expression of faith.⁷⁵ What is being sought, unbeknown even to the witness at this early stage of the journey, is a reliable reference source, an authority that can be trusted, an audible voice on the human landscape that truthfully, unerringly articulates the faith intuited in *mythos*.

⁷⁵Thomas Norris, "Newman's Approach to the Act of Faith in Light of the Catholic Dogmatic Tradition" in *Irish Theological Quarterly* 69 (2004): 239-261.

Faithful articulation of faith demonstrates the merit of kairological consciousness. The wisdom of John Henry Newman, who had never heard the term ‘kairological consciousness’, was not lost on Thomas Norris.

Newman was alive to the fact that since Descartes a part stood for the whole person. He felt the separation of mind and matter, soul and body. However he stressed the truth of his integral humanity. “I am *a unity* composed of various faculties.”⁷⁶

The scholastics were also clear on the matter of faith with their assertion *crede ut intelligas*, - believe so that you may understand. For them faith was a ‘knowing’ that preceded articulation. The very essence of faith is openness to truth which does indeed bring understanding, but is not preceded by it. The articulation of faith into a belief system is what establishes authority and tradition. While authority and tradition cannot be re-invented with every new interpretation of faith, new interpretations themselves cannot be summarily dismissed. It is the ability to re-interpret the same truth, anew in every age, which marks authentic authority from inauthentic authority, avoiding ideology and fundamentalism.⁷⁷ Psychology is not, and cannot, be an authority on matters of faith. It has no tradition to support itself as such an authority. However psychologists are human persons, and as such their personal experience of faith would be integral to the theological/psychological dialogue.

The Clash of Faith and Doctrinal Belief

Psychology does not formally recognise the transcendent dimension. However increasing numbers of mental health professionals find themselves, for a variety of reasons, unable to ignore this dimension.⁷⁸ That in itself says something! With no formal

⁷⁶Norris, “Newman’s Approach to the Act of Faith”, (*italics original*) 242.

⁷⁷The need for re-interpretation of fundamental truths was, according to Murray, one of the great insights to come out of the Arian controversy. “By its passage from the historical-existential categories of Scripture to the ontological or explanatory categories exhibited in the homoousion, Nicaea sanctioned the principle of the development of doctrine”. John Courtney Murray, *The Problem of God* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1964), 51.

⁷⁸Included in this group are well known names such as Rollo May, Abraham Maslow and Victor Frankl, as well as more recent authorities including John Swinton, Julia Head, and Glenn Morrison. Rollo May, *The Discovery of Being: Writings in Existential Psychology* new ed. (New York: W.W. Norton & Co Ltd., 1995); Victor Frankl, *Man’s Search for Meaning* new ed. (London: Rider & Co., 2004); Abraham Maslow, *Toward a Psychology of Being* Richard Lowry ed. revised edition (New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons Inc., 1998); John Swinton, *Spirituality and Mental Health Care: Rediscovering a ‘Forgotten’ Dimension*. (London and Philadelphia: Jessica Kingsley

recognition of a transcendent dimension, and no consensus for how such dimension is best addressed in the mental health arena, counsellors bring their personal belief systems, whatever they may be, to their counselling processes – even if they try to bracket them out!

It will take collaboration between psychology and theology to appreciate that the quest for truth by those seeking to journey from mental illness to mental health is a very personal and critical journey. The guide through such a journey needs all the skills, wisdom, tolerance and openness needed in inter-religious dialogue.⁷⁹ Perhaps this is the key feature that makes Panikkar's theological anthropology so apt to a theology of mental health. The need for guidance in the matter of faith – toward regaining mental health – cannot be overemphasised. Yet silence plays a key role. The guide who understands the value of silence is vitally necessary. This does not mean simply a guide who knows when to be silent, but just as importantly, a guide who is able to teach the one seeking guidance how to listen to silence. In this dialogical dialogue, more directly than in any other, the voice of the primordial caller can be made audible, or muted: divine wisdom 'heard' or usurped by human wisdom. The ear of practical theology is called to attention.

The confusion between belief and faith causes the same agitation in the mental health arena as it can do between religious factions. For mental health, banning issues of faith does not solve the problem. Neither is the problem solved by ready-made belief systems. Life itself demonstrates this. When human persons ponder their deepest concerns, the issue of faith in a transcendent dimension emerges as a profoundly personal concern. The mentally ill person is no more willing to accept 'second-hand' faith than the mentally healthy. The openness necessary to the personal quest for truth is closed by counsellors who either do not understand that those they counsel are on such a quest, or are insufficiently secure in their own belief systems to allow the unrestricted open stance necessary to the searcher.

Rather than re-invent the wheel, Panikkar's wheel is understandably tailor-made for translation into this arena. He names three attitudes – exclusivism, inclusivism and

Publishers, 2001); Julia Head, *Mental Health, Religion & Spirituality*, (London: Quay Books, 2007); Glenn Morrison, "Phenomenology, Theology And Psychosis: Towards Compassion." in *Heythrop Journal*, 48/4 (561-576) 2007.

⁷⁹The guidance I received through this 'obstacle course' came from a spiritual director (Fr. Michael Whelan sm.) who had the openness to allow the exploration necessary. Emma Pierce, "Finding Wholistic Sanity" in *Mental Illness: Fact & Fiction* (Sydney: Faiththrough, 1997), 104-139.

parallelism – which flaw the process of dialogical dialogue, truncating the searcher's quest.⁸⁰ The exclusivist attitude is described by Panikkar.

A believing member of a religion in one way or another considers his religion to be true. It is God's rights you defend when asserting your religion as 'absolute religion'. This attitude presents its difficulties. First it carries with it the obvious danger of intolerance, hybris and contempt for others. It further bears the intrinsic weakness of assuming an almost purely logical conception of truth and the uncritical attitude of an epistemological naiveté.⁸¹

Counsellors who carry this attitude are intolerant of belief systems other than their own.

Any system that proposes to solve human problems apart from the Bible and the power of the Holy Spirit (as all of these pagan systems, including the self-worth system, do) is automatically condemned by Scripture itself.⁸²

Questions about God, if they are tolerated at all, are translated into the counsellor's belief system and answered from that perspective. There is no exploration, no sharing, no dialogical dialogue. Exclusivistic counsellors seem to perceive their function as instilling into the searcher the 'true faith', which is naturally their own. It is on these grounds that the searcher's questions are overridden, if they are not dismissed altogether, by a pre-constructed belief system. For the searcher the quest is over before it has begun.

Panikkar describes the second attitude:

[inclusivism] will tend to reinterpret things in such a way as to make them not only palatable but also assimilable. You can follow your own path and do not need to condemn the other. On the other hand, this attitude also entails some difficulties. It also presents the danger of hybris, since it is only you who have the privilege of an all-embracing vision and tolerant attitude, you who allot to others the place they must take in the universe. You cannot avoid claiming for yourself a superior knowledge even if you deny that your conviction is another point of view.⁸³

⁸⁰Panikkar, *The Intrareligious Dialogue*, xiv-xix.

⁸¹Panikkar, *Intrareligious Dialogue*, xiv-xv.

⁸²Jay E. Adams, *The Biblical View of Self-Esteem, Self-Love, Self-Image* (Eugene: Harvest House, 1986), 65; Paul Vitz, *Psychology as Religion: The Cult of Self Worship* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1977), 91; (expresses similar sentiment in less harsh language).

⁸³Panikkar, *Intrareligious Dialogue*, xvi-xvii.

This attitude carries within it an overt tone of patronisation felt intensely by the vulnerable dialogue partner.

I launch myself into the therapeutic relationship, having a hypothesis, or faith, that my liking, my confidence, my understanding of the person's inner world will lead to a significant process of becoming.⁸⁴

Most counselling, spiritual or otherwise, is permeated by this attitude. The counselee feels like a sounding board for the counsellor's ego. It is fair to say that this attitude is what makes most people, mentally ill or otherwise, averse to the very notion of counselling. Human beings do not like relationships that subject their experience, for its validity, to comparison.

People pursue irresponsible ways of living as a means of defending against feelings of insignificance and insecurity. In most cases these folks have arrived at a wrong idea as to what constitutes significance and security. And these false beliefs are at the core of their problems.⁸⁵

Authentic dialogue inevitably involves disagreement. When this is glossed over in a humouring attitude, rather than thrashed out in an arena of mutual respect, it does not further the quest for 'self'. It certainly does not further the quest for truth. Comparison invalidates one's experience and leaves the authenticity of one's personhood in question. This leaves the humoured dialogue partner feeling their humanity has been betrayed.

The third attitude is parallelism.

If you cannot dismiss the religious claim of the other nor assimilate it completely into your tradition, a plausible alternative is to assume that all are different creeds which, in spite of meanderings and crossings, actually run parallel to meet only in the ultimate, in the *eschaton*, at the very end of the human pilgrimage. It flatters every one of us to hear that we possess *in nuce* all we need for a full human and religious maturity, but it splits the family of Man into watertight compartments, making any kind of conversion a real betrayal of one's own being.⁸⁶

⁸⁴Lawrence Crabb quoting Carl Rogers in *Effective Biblical Counselling*, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1977), 96.

⁸⁵Lawrence Crabb, *Effective Biblical Counselling*, 69.

⁸⁶Panikkar, *Intrareligious Dialogue*, xviii-xix.

This attitude denies to the searcher the very thing for which she/he is searching. The vulnerable partner feels their concerns dismissed at best, belittled at worst. The offer of an olive branch in such words as: “The concept of grace is a theological way of saying I’m OK – You’re OK” is no olive branch at all.⁸⁷ It is the equivalent of saying ‘what we believe is irrelevant.’ This does not facilitate the search for truth. “Every profound human encounter in which faith is left to one side can only appear hypocritical.”⁸⁸ The very focus of concern for the searcher cannot be bracketed off to one side. Otherwise the dialogue becomes a monologue, and the encounter empty of meaning.

Exclusivism, inclusivism and parallelism are obvious ways counselling is peppered with religious overtones. Issues of faith have already invaded the mental health arena – if they ever left it. They have invaded as the belief system of the counsellor, not open to scrutiny by traditional religious authority. This holds true for atheism and agnosticism which are also belief systems.

Counselling that answers to the charge of exclusivism, inclusivism or parallelism is ultimately, if unintentionally, a power play. Its covert message is ‘I know who you are and what you are meant to be doing.’ In the Christian tradition, pastoral care, hand in hand with spirituality, says ‘only God knows who you are and what you are meant to be doing, but I’m happy to explore the possibilities with you.’ This is leadership that leaves room for the voice of the primordial caller. It is leadership that is not exclusive to the Christian tradition.

Whether a man has heard the name of the Saviour of the world or not ... he has within his breast a certain commanding dictate, not a mere sentiment, not a mere opinion, or impression, or view of things, but a law, an authoritative voice bidding him do certain things and avoid others.⁸⁹

It is not leadership within a closed horizon of ideology aimed at converting others to that ideology. It is leadership open to dialogical dialogue on an imparative horizon, seeking to

⁸⁷Thomas Harris, *I'm OK You're OK* (New York: Harper & Rowe Publishers, 1969), 277.

⁸⁸Panikkar, *Myth, Faith and Hermeneutics*, 192.

⁸⁹Norris quoting Newman, “Newman’s Approach to the Act of Faith”, 243.

learn as much as to teach, allowing personal convictions to be fecundated by the insights of the other.⁹⁰

This does not mean that the good counsellor is one who is uncertain, without strong personal conviction. Indeed only strong personal conviction can be truly open to imparative learning.⁹¹ Jesus of Nazareth was open to learning from others. When the Canaanite woman gained his attention by shouting persistently at him to heal her daughter he tried to answer her request with ‘I was sent only to the lost sheep of the House of Israel.’ Her response of ‘Yes, Lord, but even little dogs eat the scraps that fall from their master’s table,’ helped Jesus to understand the universality of his mission. ‘Woman,’ he told her ‘you have great faith. Let your desire be granted.’ (Mat. 15: 22-28). Exploring faith at the deepest level of human intuition needs divine guidance which may come *through* ‘other’, but is not *of* ‘other’. If Jesus of Nazareth could learn from others, surely professional counsellors can do the same.

The Need for Collaboration

What constantly remains in the current counselling arena is the platform of authority which is never relinquished to allow a dialogue between equally original sources of understanding. This breeds a sense of inferiority in the searcher and overt or covert resentment which undermines the ground upon which authentic dialogue might form. The concern is not whether any belief system is right or wrong. The concern is that those in search of the truth need open dialogical dialogue to facilitate their personal quest. The authentic dialogue partner is not necessarily one who has a superior or specialised education, but rather one who has made:

a real, heartfelt, unselfish effort – a bold and hazardous one – to understand the belief, the world, the archetypes, the culture, the

⁹⁰‘Imparative’ as opposed to ‘comparative’ was explicated in chapter two: Panikkar, *Invisible Harmony*, 173; Hall, *Intercultural & Interreligious Hermeneutics*, 9-10.

⁹¹Most authorities in the field of inter-religious and inter-ideological dialogue acknowledge that there is a need for those who enter into such open dialogue to do so from a strong personal conviction, otherwise the dialogue becomes dialectic rather than communicative. Not only Raimon Panikkar and Gerard Hall, but also Leonard Swidler, Hans Kung and John Hick would be such authorities. Leonard Swidler and Paul Moijzes. *The Study of Religion in an Age of Global Dialogue* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2000); Hans Kung et al, *Christianity and World Religions: Paths of Dialogue With Islam, Hinduism, and Buddhism* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1993); John Hick, *God and the Universe of Faiths* 2nd rev. ed. (Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 1994).

mythical and conceptual background, the emotional and historical associations of his fellows from the inside. In short, he seriously attempts an existential incarnation of himself into another world. ... Man needs a kind of conaturality to go through the venture in a genuine way.⁹²

Is this not a good description of what pastoral care strives to do in I-thou relationships?

Pretensions to superiority die in this endeavour.

In light of this, mental illness may well be a divine gift, painful though it is, as the very personal journey of transformation, not just for mentally ill persons, but for those who are engaged in assisting them regain their mental health. From a ready-made intellectual belief system (usually the product of a specific religion or culture) that has come under intense scrutiny, if it has not broken down altogether, this journey takes the searcher into an abyss where one is emptied of all pretensions of knowledge. When all pretension is gone *mythos* can recover its rightful place.

This Catholic Moment of kairological consciousness comes in the 'space' of *pneuma* which gives birth to a new consciousness. In this new consciousness there is boundless space for collaboration. *Pneuma* is open to creativity, to dialogical dialogue, to the voice of the primordial caller. The Absent Presence arbitrates from this position.⁹³ When dialogical dialogue is the method of counselling, *logos* translates *mythos* in the existential 'space' of *pneuma*, not only so that the human person might situate her/himself in a spatio-temporal dimension, but also that demythicized myth may be re-mythicized in an incessant, perichoretic dance.⁹⁴

On this trinitarian landscape faith can emerge to encounter a *logos* open to mystery and the creativity of *pneuma*. The potential for human growth in both faith and understanding is limitless, but indispensably it is faith *through* understanding and

⁹²Panikkar, *Intrareligious Dialogue*, 12.

⁹³My own religion, the Catholic religion, eventually returned as my belief system, not because others told me what I must believe, but because my own journey of discovery disclosed (for me) the indisputable validity of its fundamental doctrines. Pierce, *Mental Illness, Fact & Fiction*, 60.

⁹⁴"*Perichoresis* is a word used by John Damascene (c. 675-749) to describe the being-in-one-another, the mutual dynamic indwelling of the trinitarian Persons. It comes from *perichoreo*, meaning to encompass, and it describes reciprocal relations of intimate communion. The word suggests a communion in which diversity and unity, rather than being opposed, are understood as directly related to each other. It points to a unity in which individuality and diversity find full expression in interrelationship with others." Edwards, *The God of Evolution*, 21.

understanding *through* faith. If *mythos* is negated, the potential (*pneuma*) is arrested. Growth cannot be actualised. If *logos* is negated, the potential (*pneuma*) is arrested. Growth cannot be actualised. Not just the dialogue partners as persons, but also their ways of knowing, their levels of consciousness, that is, *mythos* and *logos*, need to be respected as equally original sources of understanding. With this recognition psychology and theology can share their insights regarding human life-formation – the concept of ‘true self’ – on the communal ground of pastoral care. The contradictions between theological and psychological perceptions of what it means to be human would be on their way to resolution and genuine mental health care made possible.

Mythos and *logos* are merely words which attempt to capture a greater reality: the human person, a pilgrim through time, on a journey into eternity. In this context, the journey is one of faith seeking understanding. But how can faith rise to a level where it encounters *logos* without disappearing, or, at the very, least distorting?

This difficulty occurred to our ancestors in the Christian faith who never ceased to respect the native partnership of *mythos* and *logos*. The Latin Middle Ages called this difficulty “the incompatibility between the *cognitum* and the *creditum*, that which is known and that which is believed.”⁹⁵ It presents a challenge to the most stable of minds. How does it present to the mind that has lived long years in self doubt?

***Cognitum* and *Creditum* – Voice of the Witness**

At the final frontier of human intellect, where mental illness is presumed to occur, there is a sanity that recognises Reality. Reality here with a capital ‘R’ implies God in Him/Herself and as the author of all that is real. When all known landmarks of the mind have failed, there emerges a knowing that is an un-knowing, an experience of Reality which transcends intellect without contradicting it. The Reality encountered might be called the myth of faith. Even so, it is beyond us to receive something of which we know *absolutely* nothing. “We cannot inquire about something absolutely unknown, since every inquiry starts by positing as known to some extent that about which it inquires.”⁹⁶ Perhaps for this reason there is, integral to this encounter, an *experience* (not a perception or image) of ‘self’. ‘Image and likeness of God’ (Gen. 1:26) is the descriptive phrase which best suits the experience of ‘self’ to emerge from this un-knowing. Put another way, the encounter

⁹⁵Panikkar, *Myth, Faith and Hermeneutics*, 5.

⁹⁶Karl Rahner, *Hearer of the Word* (London: Sheed & Ward, 1969), 29.

with Reality cannot occur until 'self' is emptied of ego. In this utter emptiness 'self' may experience its 'self' as image and likeness of the Reality encountered.

The dominant sense to emerge from this experience is freedom. The primordial call to *be* is heard. Responding "here I am" to that call is freedom. It is freedom to *be* and to become; freedom to seek the Reality discovered at the centre of self; freedom to be 'self' discovered at the centre of Reality. "Nothing seems to be left but a pure freedom indistinguishable from infinite Freedom, love identified with Love."⁹⁷ There is no self-image as such. There is no objective reality as such. There is call and response. 'Self' resides in the response, yet paradoxically the call resides in the 'self', emanating from the deepest depths of 'self'. Ego is lost in the unity.

'Self' separated from the greater reality of which 'self' is a part, might be described, paradoxically, as a unique centre of reflective consciousness *immediately* aware of 'self' as an inseparable part of Reality. Response without a call cannot be response. Reality resides in the very heart of the heart; close, personal, intimate, loving. All this is known by the encounter, the experience. It is foolishness to argue intellectually for or against such experience. Thomas Merton uses visual language to convey the same meaning.

Since our inmost "I" is the perfect image of God, then when that "I" awakens, he finds within himself the Presence of Him Whose image he is. And, by paradox beyond all human expression, God and the soul seem to have but one single "I". They are (by divine grace) as though one single person.⁹⁸

'Self' is real because 'self' reflects the Real. No other 'self' than the reflection of the Real is the real 'self'.

Recognition of the Real within the 'self' and 'self' within the Real becomes the context out of which life is lived. Ever more in search of the Real, within and without, life becomes simply that search: listening, discerning, where, how, can the Real be found? This searching transforms the landscape of life into a harmonious relationship of love as the search for, and recognition of, the Real, in all its fragmented, sometimes disfigured beauty, becomes the peaceful, passionate pursuit that is life. This pursuit might be

⁹⁷Merton, *New Seeds of Contemplation*, 283.

⁹⁸James Finley quoting Thomas Merton, "The Inner Experience: Notes on Contemplation" *Merton's Palace of Nowhere* (Notre Dame: Ave Maria Press, 1978), 87.

described as ‘doing’ practical theology. It applies as much to those with no formal education as it does to those who have such education.

But this does not answer the question asked earlier: ‘How can faith rise to a level where it may encounter *logos* and become belief without disappearing, or, at the very least, distorting?’

The Reality encountered is the myth of faith. “Myth is not the object of thought, nor does it give food for thought. Rather it purifies thought, it bypasses thought, so that the unthought may emerge and the intermediary disappear.”⁹⁹ What translates into *logos* is the *relationship* between ‘self’ and Reality. To *be* invitation to divine union is to be *relationship-with* the divine. The believer saying ‘I believe in God’ from the depths of faith means simply: I do not know God as the object of my belief. I know only my relationship-with God. In terms of the faith resident in *mythos*, I believe in the symbol that is God, because I cannot know God.’ What is defined ever more clearly, as the faith journey continues, is that relationship-with the Reality I image is synonymous with who I am. Faith at the level of *mythos* is never disturbed because what expresses belief, “what carries the dynamism of belief – the conscious passage from *mythos* to *logos* – is not the concept but the symbol.”¹⁰⁰ The symbol is God. The concept is relationship-with that defines who I am.

The inability to conceptualise the divinity has been noted by all those we call mystics. Without exception they tell us that when one encounters the divine, intellect is superfluous. It becomes significant only for purposes of communicating the encounter to others who are part of the same reality. None of this is new. What is new to the searcher recovering from mental illness is a new ability to discern the real, an ability that emanates from a vision of unity. While it may seem incredulous that one, lost in isolation and even alienation for so long, would, with apparent suddenness, become finely tuned to reality, it is in fact natural.

The *metanoia* of the Catholic Moment of kairological consciousness delivers its gift. It is analogous to the way in which one hears music. If one is listening to a symphony, seeking to hear discord, every note is suspect. If one is listening to the melody, lost in the harmony, a discordant note shrills itself forth, and that even in a melody one has never before heard. For the short period of time that one is still under professional care, the

⁹⁹Panikkar, *Myth, Faith and Hermeneutics*, 4-5.

¹⁰⁰Panikkar, *Myth, Faith and Hermeneutics*, 6.

melody of ‘self’ to emerge from the myth that is faith, protects against the discord that is only the intellectual opinion of those who do not share the same myth, who cannot hear the harmony.¹⁰¹ This protection is sought first in relationship-with the primordial caller.

Faith as relationship-with the divine needs to be fostered and nurtured as does any relationship. While the searcher certainly moves out to participate in all that is real on the landscape of life (friendship is vital and it is in this that self and mutual help groups prove their worth), discernment of the real is heard as a harmony that resonates with the Real within. Dialogue with the divine – prayer – develops into a daily habit, no longer perceived as religious duty. For the one recovering sanity in a culture which denies the possibility of recovery, this touchstone of reality is often the single reference point of affirmation which continually actualises the potential for recovery.¹⁰² In time one comes to appreciate that this single reference point has the power to make recovery not only possible, but inevitable. When ‘the Absolute is the principal referent for meaning’, sanity is assured.¹⁰³

Conclusion

This chapter listened to the voice of the witness testify to the experience of faith, ‘hearing’ in that experience the voice of the primordial caller. Cultural deafness to the voice of the primordial caller was located and explored where it occurs – in the division between *mythos* and *logos*. Different levels of consciousness were revealed and explicated, validating different ways of knowing. The benefit and danger of faith at the level of *mythos* being interpreted at the level of *logos* emerged as an area much in need of collaboration between psychology and theology.

There is far more to reality than the human intellect of itself can grasp. To continue to deny this is, on the one hand, to maintain the nihilism to which western culture is prone and on the other, to create, foster and nurture mental illness. We must face the truth of human ways of knowing; the un-knowing of *mythos* in partnership with the knowing of

¹⁰¹Pierce, *Ordinary Insanity*, 113-118; these pages record my difficulty with setting aside the doctor’s opinion that I could never cope without psychiatric medication. More than 30 years later I can say he was incorrect.

¹⁰²Asked ‘if God is relevant is he willing to help you?’ (see Appendix A) 78.7% responded ‘yes’.

¹⁰³Mina, “Mystical Texts as Disclosures”, 340.

logos if we would foster and nurture understanding. This is the first task of practical theology without which transformative praxis cannot occur.

Hermeneutically speaking, Panikkar locates truth in relationship. Ricoeur locates it in an eschatology of hope.¹⁰⁴ Both are consistent with discernment of the real to emerge from the personal encounter with Reality at the level of *mythos*. It is the ongoing search for the resonance of Reality that is the ‘stuff’ of life, the ‘doing’ of practical theology. All human ways of knowing are necessary to the task. Without *mythos*, *logos* is an empty cacophony. Without *logos*, *mythos* breeds insanity. Both are needed, not just for human mental health, but for peace and happiness. Mind, heart and soul are needed in a communal sharing that respects every human person as an equally original source of understanding. Only then will the redeemed landscape in all its profound beauty become visible, its resonance harmonious.

When redemption is visible there is no division. Notions of sacred and secular no longer make sense. There is no Cartesian split. From a Christian perspective reality is trinitarian. Raimon Panikkar’s word ‘cosmotheandric’ connotes the same meaning: that reality is unity – not uniformity.¹⁰⁵ This perception of life might be called ordinary. It is here called spiritual. It is this vision of an ordinary landscape, permeated by the Greater Reality of which one is a part, which is called the spiritual life. Spirituality is not an interlude in life trotted out on religious occasions, or glimpsed fleetingly in unique moments of wonder. The spiritual life is the life of ‘doing’ practical theology. It is life lived in constant, mundane, ordinary, routine practice. But it is all this seen through the lens of a *metanoia* that has changed the hue and resonates with the call to *be*. The next chapter examines in more detail the meaning of the spiritual life.

¹⁰⁴See chapter two this dissertation.

¹⁰⁵Raimon Panikkar, *The Cosmotheandric Experience: Emerging Religious Consciousness* (Bangalore: Asian Trading Corporation, 1993).

Chapter Four

The Spiritual Life

Naming the Issue

The experience of faith that initiates the healing journey, as described in the previous chapter, brings about a *metanoia* that radically alters one's perception of reality. Interpreting, or more accurately re-interpreting, the perception brought about by that experience demands a lifetime of 'doing' practical theology. The landscape of life is so permeated by the spiritual that no separation can be 'seen' between sacred and secular. It is this unity that demands a theology that is more than theory; a theology that is practical application; a theology that inevitably brings about transformative praxis.

This dissertation posits spiritual life as synonymous with ordinary human life. Perceptions of reality that exclude the spiritual or sacred are distortions of reality. Perceptions of reality that exclude the secular or concrete are distortions of reality. Spirituality that presents as a private, periodic escape from the empirical world is a betrayal of spirituality. The authentic spiritual life perceives every dimension of reality in a 'tempiternal' time frame.¹

In the reference frames of this dissertation what *is* cannot be seen without the native or natural partnership of *mythos* and *logos*. This indissoluble marriage gives birth to what has here been called the catholic moment of kairological consciousness. In this moment what *is* can be described as redemption. Not redemption waiting to happen, but redemption already accomplished. Redemption is what *is*, and redemption includes the harmony of all that *is*.² Disclosing this is the task of practical theology.

This chapter seeks to demonstrate that true spiritual life combines ordinary, routine activity with what is often called the contemplative life. There is as much distortion of reality by those who hold spirituality on a pedestal so high it evades ordinary people as

¹We will meet 'tempiternity' in the next chapter where its meaning as "timefullness" is best clarified in a relational reality. Panikkar, *Invisible Harmony*, 8.

²"Whatever else redemption might mean, it involves a sense of unity with the real that does not blur all the differences." Panikkar, *The Cosmotheandric Experience*, 53.

there is by those who deny the reality of the spiritual dimension. All reality is necessary to the spiritual life. All reality is necessary to genuine mental health.

Setting the Parameters

If faith is a constitutive dimension of the human person, as explicated in the previous chapter, then a perception of reality that integrally embraces the spiritual dimension is as natural to the human person as breathing. Explicating spirituality or the spiritual life is the challenge to present ordinary human life in all its elegant simplicity. This is done by:

- paying attention to the vision of reality ‘seen’ by the witness;
- exploring the part imagination plays in unfolding reality unavailable to physical sight and the inherent dangers in this;
- acknowledging the universal desire for a better world and a better life as the universal intuition of redemption;
- exploring the ways in which humans attempt to effect their own redemption, and the ultimate futility of this;
- acknowledging redemption as divine initiative and accomplishment beyond the capacity of human endeavour.

All of this entails deconstructing the complicated, often sophisticated intellectual constructs that seek to explain (away) a dimension of reality that defies explanation. What emerges is a living, practical theology that demonstrates that this theology has an important, indeed an irreplaceable role to play, in dialogue with psychology in the interest of authentic human life-formation, and therefore in mental health care.

The simpler something is the more difficult it is to describe. For example, both Thomas Merton and Raimon Panikkar describe spiritual perception as it is when the *mythos* – *logos* partnership is undisturbed. Merton writes: “It is not ‘consciousness of’ but *pure consciousness*, in which the subject as such ‘disappears’”.³ Panikkar writes: “Myth is not the object of thought . . . Rather it purifies thought . . . so that the unthought may emerge and the intermediary disappear.”⁴ The intermediary is ego-centred, the ‘subject matter’ that must disappear so that life can be seen for what it is. ‘What it is’ in this dissertation has

³Thomas Merton, *Zen and the Birds of Appetite*, (New York: New Directions, 1968), 24 (italics original).

⁴Panikkar, *Myth, Faith and Hermeneutics*, 5.

been posited as response to a call. Without call, response has no meaning. Explicating the spiritual life is less about disclosing what *is* than removing the convolutions that obscure what *is*. This chapter seeks to remove those convolutions as they obscure faith and distort imagination, returning to spirituality its childlike (not childish) quality.

As with the previous chapter, this one commences with the voice of a witness, narrating her perception of reality as it emerged and developed from the *metanoia* of the experience of faith described in the previous chapter. The critical conversation then unfolds in reference to, and in light of, that testimony with ongoing input from the witness. This process facilitates understanding – the first task of practical theology.

Valid questions arise with regard to perceptions of reality. The central issue is imagination and the ability to discern reality from un-reality. The power of imagination is engaged, not just to touch the transcendent, but also to cultivate a better future for human life on earth – the ultimate task of practical theology. In either case, the imagination is as capable of delivering un-reality as it is of delivering reality. How can we know which is which?

We begin with the word ‘redemption’ invested with meaning first at the secular level, including psychology, then at the sacred level.⁵ These two levels are then brought together and explicated, not as either side of the same coin, so to speak, but rather as integral to one another, connaturally permeating creation. The sacred level that refuses to embrace the secular betrays reality. The secular level that refuses to embrace the sacred betrays reality.

Coherence and the stated desire to create a lexicon of meanings demand that we continue with Panikkar’s theological anthropology, using his reference frames of kairological consciousness and communication categories of *mythos*, *logos* and *pneuma*.

While there are several beautiful examples of the benefits of imagination to spirituality (the Ignatian spiritual exercises for example), most focus upon the imagination as it contemplates what is already believed. In his work *Imagine Believing*, Adrian Lyons

⁵Schillebeeckx explicates redemption as he perceives its appliance on several levels: insights for new life, gift of the Holy Spirit in personal and communal harmony, including not only religious, but also ethical insight, redemption that is immediate ‘now’ as well as yet to come, redemption as freedom on both political and spiritual planes, redemption that is forgiveness and through that, peace in brotherly love, redemption as renewal of the material world. Edward Schillebeeckx, *Christ The Experience of Jesus as Lord* (New York: Crossroad, 1983), 468-496.

addresses imagination as it journeys towards belief.⁶ This is crucial to this explication of spirituality because it addresses the issue of imagination as it applies to (or emerges from?) faith. Faith in a reality unavailable to sensory perception is a major concern in mental illness where illusion, delusion and hallucination are the product of imagination metamorphosed into irrational belief.⁷ But is that always the case? The question already asked is asked again with slightly different nuance. How can we know whether or not what we imagine/believe is real?

Perceptions of reality that are beyond the sensory are presumed to be the special domain of theology.⁸ They are the ‘stuff’ of experience for many whose sanity is not called into question. No one would claim Thomas Merton was less than sane. The practice of relegating some, on the grounds of their encounter with such experience, to the ranks of the mentally ill serves only to demonstrate the need for collaboration between psychology and theology in the field of mental health care. If what we shall call spiritual experience is to be a benchmark of sanity, then we have no alternative but to rule that all those who *have* such experience are insane, or all those who do *not have* such experience are insane. Either that or remove spiritual experience as a benchmark of sanity and invite theology into the psychological evaluation of such experience. Removing the incongruence of secular science ruling on the reality of sacred experience would do much to remove the contradictions between psychological and theological perceptions of what it means to be human.

In every belief system or religious tradition there is a variety of spiritualities. In the Catholic tradition we speak of Ignatian spirituality, Augustinian spirituality, Carmelite spirituality, Benedictine spirituality and so forth. Each has its own ethos, its own rich heritage, its own consciousness of reality both visible and invisible. While different, they are not contradictory. One might say difference, for finite consciousness, is the richness out of which unity emerges in such a manner that it avoids reduction to uniformity. What

⁶Adrian Lyons, *Imagine Believing: Explorations in Contemporary Faith* (Melbourne: David Lovell Publishing, 2003).

⁷Coté posits imagination as a constitutive dimension of faith. Imagination, he asserts, opens us to the unseen and *invites or hinders commitment*. Imagination facilitates ‘boundary crossing’ of which Lazarus is the symbol. Do we cross the boundary of reason, or merely embrace otherwise impossible reality? Richard Coté *Lazarus, Come Out! Why Faith Needs Imagination* (Ottawa: Novalis, 2003).

⁸In the first chapter of his new book Sulmsay notes the difficulty members of the medical profession have distinguishing between ethics and spirituality. Daniel P. Sulmsay, *A Balm for Gilead: Spirituality and the Healing Arts* (Washington: Georgetown University Press, 2007).

is explicated here as spirituality in no way contradicts the richness of such spiritual traditions.

Before proceeding further it is necessary to remind the reader of what has already been declared. The author's faith is biased towards the Christian religious tradition, specifically the Catholic tradition. A reminder is here necessary because one's religious affiliation is significant to one's language, to one's articulation of the spiritual life. This is not to deny the position of any other faith. It is merely to acknowledge that when *logos* is articulated out of *mythos* it seeks the communal vehicle that most accurately contains and conveys its intuition. The Catholic tradition is, for this author, that vehicle.

Seeing the Whole Picture – Voice of the Witness

There is a paradox attached to describing reality where the spiritual permeates the perception of reality. While this spiritual vision might, with justification, be called an intensely personal perception, it cannot be described in intensely personal terms. The paradox is that spiritual vision is of such unity that 'self' loses its sense of 'self' as separate from the rest of reality. At the same time 'self' is intensely aware of itself as part of the whole. Efforts to articulate the vision continually cross the line, so to speak, from the universal 'thou' to the intensely personal 'I'.

The encounter with Reality in the depths of self described in the previous chapter brings *inner* division to an immediate halt. This does not mean that one suddenly knows which direction to take and goes without wavering in that direction. It simply means that the internal tug-of-war ceases and the search for truth begins, healing each division as it is encountered in the natural order of awareness and growth. What disappears immediately is the *intensity* of anxiety inherent in the unknown.

I knew in some intrinsic way that the reality, while it had not conquered my fear, had at least given me a weapon with which to strike at the heart of wherever that fear is born.⁹

Something of a permanent, all embracing trust, a 'cosmic trust' pervades, transforming anxiety about the unknown into acceptance of mystery.¹⁰

⁹Pierce, *Ordinary Insanity*, 66.

¹⁰Panikkar, *Invisible Harmony*, Chapter 9: "A Universal Theory of Religion or a Cosmic Confidence in Reality?" 145-182.

As the very word suggests (especially in Latin – *fiducia*), the “trust” entails a certain “fidelity” to oneself, “con-fidence” in the world as cosmos, “loyalty” in the struggle itself, and even (as perhaps etymologically hinted at) an attitude rooted in the soil of Reality like a “tree”, a basic “belief” in the human project, or rather in the worthwhile collaboration of humans in the overall adventure of being.¹¹

One continues to seek answers to the existential questions, but with quiet confidence rather than intense anxiety. It is not confidence in finding the right answer, but trust in a reality that allows one to live in peace, even if the answer is an eternal silence.

‘Hearing’ the answer(s) demands openness to truth that is often mystery. For example, whether or not there is a God. “Either there is God or there is no God, either the individual does have ultimate value or does not, either the cosmos is a living organism or it is not.”¹² What Panikkar calls ‘cosmic trust’ allows one to search for truth open to all the possibilities; to accept that personal opinions and beliefs, however strong, may be erroneous. There is recognition of the simple reality that truth is what *is*, irrespective of what one believes. That is, there is realisation that truth is a discovery, not a decision. It may sound strange, but cosmic trust brings the courage to *peacefully* question one’s deepest convictions, the very questioning that first brought the anxiety that drove one into insanity. It is threatening to the healthiest mind to question ‘the ground on which one stands’. It is also the only way to open oneself to truth and transformation – redemption.

There is an intuitive recognition of the need for guidance. No mind knows better than the one that has been lost in irrationality, the need for guidance from a source outside itself. No mind knows better than the one that has been led astray, the dazzling deception the human mind can fashion out of logic. Becoming one’s own self is, paradoxically, not a matter of individual choice.

The idea that you can choose yourself, approve yourself, and then offer yourself, fully “chosen” and “approved”, to God, applies the assertion of yourself over against God. From this root of error comes all the sour leafage and fruitage of a life of self-examination, interminable problems and unending decisions, always making right choices, walking on the razor edge of an impossible subtle ethic.¹³

¹¹Panikkar, *Invisible Harmony*, 175.

¹²Panikkar, *Invisible Harmony*, 154.

¹³Thomas Merton, “Obstacles to Union With God” in *Life and God’s Love*, Tape 6B, The Thomas Merton Tapes, ed. Norm Kramer (Chappaqua: New York: Electronic Paperbacks, 1972).

If the journey from insanity to sanity offers a primary, significant wisdom, it is the realisation that 'self' is a truth, a discovery, not an ego decision. 'Self' becomes comfortable with change that is not simply *apparent*, but change that is actually transformation. 'Self' does not have to be what everyone else believes 'self' to be, and 'true self' cannot be an orchestration of 'self's' own making. 'Self' is response to a call. 'Self' is so focused on listening and responding that pre-occupation with 'self' dies a natural death.

The secret of my identity is hidden in the love and mercy of God. Therefore, there is only one problem on which all my existence, my peace and my happiness depend: to discover myself in discovering God. If I find Him I will find myself and if I find my true self I will find Him.¹⁴

The significant question moves from 'how do I see myself?' to 'how does God see me?' The psychological term 'ego identity', to which professional carers have given such priority is quite inadequate, even misleading. As response to call, 'self' cannot be discerned in isolation. According to Thomas Merton 'the secret of my identity' is in relationship-with the divine. It is with this sense of 'self' that the new spiritual vision resonates.

The importance of the shape and form of embryonic faith, the birthing belief system, is implicitly recognised. There is a period of testing, exploring, falling down and getting up again, not unlike the first steps of a child learning to walk. It is at this stage that dialogical dialogue about matters of faith is crucial.¹⁵

Mental illness is experienced as more about habitual, if often incoherent and incongruent thought, feeling and action, than about physical affliction. Conversely mental health is experienced as cohesion between thought, feeling and action. This cohesion is not fixed, but flexible, congruent with the changing circumstances of life. Changing from destructive to constructive habits takes time and perseverance, needing support, affirmation

¹⁴Thomas Merton, *New Seeds of Contemplation* (New York: New Directions, 1961), 35-36.

¹⁵This need was explicated in the previous chapter.

and challenge in I-thou relationships in order to succeed. “We are the world but we are it as redeemed. Then we see right away that the world is a question of interpenetration.”¹⁶

What one does grasp immediately, and holds forever after, is an implicit recognition that when another human person – any other human person – puts on the hat of judgement, so to speak, he/she immediately loses the ability to know and reflect for me who I am.¹⁷ The same is true in the other direction. Immediately I put on the hat of judgement and presume to judge another, I lose the ability to know and reflect their reality.¹⁸ An intuitive sense guides this insight. In time one recognises that there is a mysterious correlation between love and knowledge.¹⁹ Knowledge brought to light by logical analysis becomes suspect. Knowledge that comes to light out of love is the knowledge one invests with trust.

The struggle to discern reality, including reality that is not available to sensory perception continues, but now it continues in peace rather than anxiety. How does one come to know reality not available to sensory perception? It is here that the obstacle course of imagination is negotiated. As necessary as it is, this is a dangerous course for the one whose imagination has led one into insanity. Yet it is the very experience of irrationality generated by imagination that can help guide one through the obstacle course. It is easier to recognise a ‘dead end’ when one has previously visited that dead end. Past experience raises ‘don’t go there’ signs, but it takes much more than that to negotiate the hazards and draw reality out of imagination. It is here that tradition and authority play a vital role.

The natural starting point is an established belief system. It is as natural as breathing to go back to one’s own past belief system and test it for its validity.

I’d already decided that the way to get to know Christ was to allow my imagination, armed with knowledge of the New Testament and 10 years solid tuition in a convent boarding school, to follow Christ through his life. ... It wasn’t so much that I wanted to question, to criticise the character of Christ, it was just that I couldn’t be good friends with someone I really didn’t know. ... I watched him wake up and yawn, and get out of bed and paddle out to see what his mum was cooking for breakfast. He smiled and kissed her cheek and ruffled her hair. He said

¹⁶Merton, “Obstacles to Union with God”, Tape 6B.

¹⁷“I open myself to the other as I am, allowing myself to be discovered by him - and reciprocally...”. Panikkar, *Myth, Faith and Hermeneutics*, 21.

¹⁸The wisdom of Panikkar’s ‘imparative versus ‘comparative’ knowing of human persons is revealed here.

¹⁹This correlation is explored in Chapter Six “Morality”.

good morning to his dad and asked about the work they had to do in the carpentry shop that day.²⁰

Time and patient, cautious searching reveals the relational nature of reality. Each step is taken with reference to the Reality of inner experience, but just as significantly that experience must dialogue with the voice of tradition and authority. It is something of an intra and inter-personal dialogue. One is listening for the way tradition and authority echo – or not – with the primordial voice heard in the depths of self. It is the desire to know truth that leads one forward to the primary focus of life – Reality – called by many names, but by this witness, called ‘God’, and eventually re-embraced as the Christian God.²¹

The Central Issue

Within the reference frames of this dissertation, what we currently call insanity is articulated *mythos* that is not anchored by intellect and will. It is *mythos* denuded of rational expression in *logos*. Put another way, it appears as wishful and/or fearful thinking given substance and credibility by the person caught in the abyss of insanity. However it is fair to say that the other side of this coin belongs to those whose reality is articulated by a *logos* denuded of the intuitions of *mythos*, those whose apparent wishful and/or fearful thinking is denied both substance and credibility, thereby denying veracity to intuitions of soteriological faith and eschatological hope – as if that was sane! Wishful and fearful thinking, as imagination, to a greater or lesser extent influence both *mythos* and *logos*, for better or for worse.

Imagination accompanies almost every facet of the mind capable of reflective thought. Mary Warnock asserts it is imagination that both tidies up the chaos of sense experience, helping to make it cognitive, and at a different level, untidies it.²² Perhaps it is the universality of imagination that breeds fear and prejudice with regard to mental illness and mentally ill people. Who can be absolutely certain that what they intuit is not simply

²⁰Extracted from a more complete description in these pages. Pierce, *Ordinary Insanity*, 130-132.

²¹Of the witnesses surveyed (see Appendix A) 82.9% said they believed God was relevant in their lives and 78.7% said they believed God was willing to help them.

²²Mary Warnock, *Imagination* (London: Faber, 1977).

what they imagine? On the other hand, who can be absolutely certain that there is no hidden reality to be intuited?

Reports continue to surface of non-believers sensing a Presence whose name they do not know. The mother of a new-born catches herself in prayer, surprised by this since she has not prayed for years. A man in his latter years does something wonderfully out of character, and confesses to friends his unaccountable sense of being guided to it. Once a person begins noticing these, and subtler moments, in which one's receptive and active selves coincide – and begins to trust the experience – what develops is a conviction of being led providentially.²³

There is here no proof of reality. There is only a trust that emerges from so deep within 'self' that it can only be called an un-knowing that defies proof.

The ability to imagine a non-existent reality, whether of good or evil, belongs to every reflective mind. For example, 'the moon is literally made of gold'. We now know that is not true but we can still imagine it. But does not the ability to imagine what is *not* real contain as a corollary the ability to imagine what *is* real, though imperceptible? Does memory itself not teach us this?²⁴ These are fundamental questions with regard to sanity and insanity. They are also fundamental questions with regard to faith and reason. Even the assertion that revelation underpins religious beliefs is dependent for acceptance (not veracity) upon faith. Is it imagination that conveys *mythos* to *logos*, or is there something even more mysterious involved?²⁵

The Power of Imagination

The ability to believe in what is not-yet on the concrete landscape inspires the imagination into action. Armed with this imagery of 'not-yet' the human person sets about exploring the potential of this not-yet image, seeking to prove or actualise what the imagination has divulged – and finds her/himself face to face with the problem of

²³Lyons, *Imagine Believing*, 107.

²⁴Gerard Hall, *Society of Mary: Community of Memory and Hope* Marist Studies, Rome, 1984; Research Publication: (Sydney: Marist Fathers, 1984).

²⁵Karl Rahner, "The Concept of Mystery in Catholic Theology" in *Theological Investigations* Vol IV, 36-73.

discerning truth from fantasy.²⁶ Does the voice of the primordial caller assist in this discernment process? And if it does, what if one cannot hear that voice?

There are those who choose to overcome the problem by denying all that logical analysis cannot validate. Reality, even not-yet reality, is then restricted by human conception. Even so, the human mind has a remarkable capacity, via analysis, for separating fact from fiction. The human mind is capable of conceiving great invention(s) when aided by the mighty power of imagination. From the wheel to the atomic bomb imagination has played its part.²⁷

What of those who confront the problem of discernment with openness able to hear the primordial caller? One might say imagination is then engaged, not to imagine what is not-yet, but to envisage what *is* as-yet unseen. Paradoxically the unseen ‘what *is*’ can be beyond imagination; it may be *unimaginable*.²⁸ If there is reality beyond imagination, what human faculty for ‘knowing’ is able to grasp – or be grasped by – the unimaginable? Is it not unimaginable reality that in some mysterious way guides the imagination so that it is able to discern truth from fantasy, reality from un-reality? Surely what guides imagination must be external to it? Otherwise imagination guiding imagination risks un-reality – insanity. To some extent this question was answered in the second chapter and is worth repeating here:

The real is a given. The real still in potential, not yet actualised into a concrete given is a given nonetheless. Put another way we might say we can think of no reality however wise, beautiful, or profoundly creative that does not already exist ‘in the mind of God’, as St. Augustine might say. It is less that we create a reality that is not, than that we need creativity to actualise a reality that is not-yet. God creates. Humans participate.²⁹

²⁶While fairy tales are acknowledged to be the product of imagination their ‘reality’ belongs to the realm of morality. In the realm of spirituality they would present an unnecessary and confusing diversion.

²⁷Hefner explores technology as a mirror of human nature, concluding that human nature and human freedom are brought into focus when we reflect on the central role of imagination in technology. Philip Hefner, “Technology and Human Becoming” in *Zygon: Journal of Religion and Science*, 37: 3. (Sept. 2002), 655-665.

²⁸The Triune God remains ever beyond imagining – given as revelation to the believer. So too the personal, intimate Power encountered by every mystic in the cloud of human un-knowing must be called revelation on a personal, intimate level. Mental faculties are acknowledged superfluous to this experience/revelation.

²⁹Chapter two page 52 this dissertation.

For the believer, spirituality is the gift of vision – faith – to see what *is* and to participate in the creative enterprise of bringing about what *is* not-yet. *Mythos* and *logos* are both necessary. If *mythos* dominates, the intellect and will necessary to the creative enterprise are deficient. If *logos* dominates, divine will is obscured by human will. There can be no creative enterprise, merely the achievement of personal ambition.

Is personal ambition enough to inspire the human person to venture into the terror of un-knowing, into the limitless horizon where all known landmarks fail? What lies hidden from imagination, from the mind, from *logos*, yet inspires the human person to reach ever outward, beyond mind, beyond *logos*, and even stretches imagination to suspect there is ‘that’ which is beyond imagining? Is it not a fundamental belief that not only the human person, but life itself can be perfect, can be peaceful and happy? If this was not so, practical theology’s claim to seek transformative praxis would be empty rhetoric.

Human beings hope for redemption, even when they do not believe in a transcendent dimension. But what is meant by redemption confined to the empirical horizon?³⁰

Redemption as Human Achievement

Science has taught and we have believed that modern science will teach us how to perfect not just the world, but the human person.

The romantic belief in progress holds that human knowledge of and control over nature will increase indefinitely and that consequently humanity is finding its way towards a state of complete worldly happiness. It is an assumption that sits deep in our culture. It finds its home in the precincts of science and technology and of political and social theory because it is these that are expected to provide life without distress.³¹

Has science delivered? Can it deliver? We can only presume to answer such questions by tracing human efforts at redemption as they have and are occurring, not just in the fields of medicine and psychology, but also in the arena of politics and social science. Politicians

³⁰Schillebeeckx looks at redemption as it is experienced and then interpreted conceptually. Schillebeeckx, *Christ The Experience of Jesus as Lord*, 62-64.

³¹Andrew Murray “From Progress to Disillusionment” in *The Catholic Weekly* (August 3, 1997).

across the globe have ever promised a ‘better world’ under their leadership. Even those firmly committed to atheism are now, as ever, committed to peace, happiness and fulfilment for the individual and for the whole human family. For such people, according to Alister McGrath, God is superfluous to, or even an obstacle on, the path to ‘redemption’.

If atheism were generally accepted, every form of religion would be destroyed, and cut off at its roots. There would be no more theological wars, no more soldiers of religion – such terrible soldiers! Deaf to all other voices, tranquil mortals would follow only the spontaneous dictates of their own being, the only commands which can lead us to happiness.³²

If our perfecting lies in the organic evolution of civilisation we should follow the guidance of those who perceive ‘redemption’ in this light: Emil Durkheim for example.

Durkheim was so convinced that ‘redemption’ lay in the hands of civilisation that he divinised civilisation, giving it credit for our apparently inherent religious bent.³³ Durkheim’s paradigm held that the collective conscience had given birth to morality and it was this communal morality that would continue to shape, govern and ultimately perfect the human species.³⁴ But denial of the transcendent dimension leaves human intellect to arbitrate what is moral, and human intellect has a remarkable capacity for constructing logical arguments supporting positions that are diametrically opposed: for example, euthanasia and abortion. Without an independent arbiter all things can be made to appear morally right.³⁵

It could be argued that Hitler presumed a moral right to establish a civilisation that tolerated only one race of people. For Hitler the Second World War was merely a prelude to the establishment of a civilisation that would seek to shape the life of every individual

³²Alister McGrath quoting from *L’homme machine* in *The Twilight of Atheism* (New York: Doubleday, 2004), 33.

³³Emil Durkheim, *Sociology and Philosophy* (London: Cohen & West Ltd., 1953).

³⁴Emil Durkheim, *Elementary Form of the Religious Life* (London: Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1956).

³⁵Michael Whelan, *Without God All Things Are Lawful*, (Sydney: St. Paul’s, 1995); Fyodor Dostoyevsky, *The Brothers Karamatzov* (New York: Modern Library, 1950), 719-722 & 768.

under its umbrella.³⁶ Stalin's communism was another political paradigm seeking to establish a civilisation, built this time, on dialectic materialism.³⁷

There are other theories more psychological and less political offered by modern science for the betterment of the human species. One theory is that of self-construction generated by the power of positive thinking.³⁸ This theory suggests that self-actualisation is the key to self-identity and happiness.³⁹ Some schools of thought invite individuals to become the reality of their own choosing. The assertion is that we can be anyone we choose to be "from Michael Jackson to the Marlboro Man".⁴⁰ Others invite individuals to control their imagination (with the help of a therapist who can safeguard the ego) and fashion self-becoming by having the Ego dialogue with the Unconscious.⁴¹

Perhaps none of the above theories hold the key, but there are other scientific theories we might examine. We are defined, scientifically speaking, as an evolutionary process. Could we become perfect by the development of physiology or biology? Is our perfecting thwarted by virus, bacteria, chemical aberration, faulty genes or other such concrete realities? If this is true then our perfecting lies in the hands of the more concrete sciences, in their ability to unlock the secrets of biology and physiology, to predict how nature needs to be manipulated. Science can implement such manipulation especially now with the genetic code of our DNA broken wide open. Will this manipulation deliver redemption?

³⁶Victoria Barnett, chapters 5 & 6, *For the Soul of the People* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992).

³⁷ "The empires of the future will be empires of the mind.' In speaking these words to a wartime audience at Harvard University in 1943, Winston Churchill attempted to express a transition he discerned within Western culture, with immense implications for the postwar era." McGrath, *The Twilight of Atheism*, XI.

³⁸Norman Vincent Peale, *The Power of Positive Thinking* (Surrey: World's Work Ltd. 1953); Douglas Kellner, "Popular Culture and the Construction of Post Modern Identities" in *Modernity and Identity*, ed. S. Lash and J. Friedman, (London: Blackwell Press, 1992).

³⁹Abraham Maslow, *Motivation & Personality*, (New York: Harper and Row 1970), particularly chapters 11 and 12.

⁴⁰A very imaginative vision of identity is offered by Kellner in *Modernity and Identity*, 141-143.

⁴¹Verena Kast, *Imagination as Space of Freedom: Dialogue Between the Ego and the Unconscious*, trans. Anselm Hollo (New York: Fromm International Publishing Corporation, 1993).

A rigidly scientific model means that thought is a secretion of the brain and human free-will an illusion born of desire – from wherever that desire arose.⁴² It would mean that our very cognisance is the product of brain physiology/chemistry. Every aspect of our knowing would therefore be subject to and governed by physical properties and scientific laws of causality. More than that, as we attempt to perfect ourselves down this scientific path, manipulating the very (biological) processes by which we know, how can we avoid the repercussions of the inevitable erroneous experiments so integral to scientific methodology?⁴³ Can we retrace our steps if we succeed in *erroneously* altering the processes by which we know?

The short answer is of course ‘yes’. The long answer is that we can afford the errors only if we are prepared to sacrifice some of our number to scientific experimentation.⁴⁴ While such experiments might not be perceived to be humane, they are necessary if the human person is to be perfected down this particular path.⁴⁵ Will genetic engineering become the flagship for human redemption? And will that equate with inner peace and happiness?

Psychological Redemption

With no official recognition of spiritual life or sacred reality, ‘soul’ is a word applied, if it is applied at all, to the psyche. ‘Soul’ is rarely used for it carries connotations of a past meaning rendered obsolete. ‘Psyche’ is far more expressive of what is posited by psychology as the core of the inner life, the foundation of ‘human person’.

There are two branches of science that deal with the inner life. Psychology is one branch. It follows a paradigm that supports essentially intellectual solutions. Psychiatry is

⁴²Machination is seen to be the best kind of freedom. Sydney Hook, “Determinism and Freedom” in *The Age of Modern Science* ed. Sidney Hook (London: Collier-Macmillan Ltd., 1958), 30.

⁴³Thomas Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, 2nd Ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962/70).

⁴⁴Vance Packard, *The People Shapers* (London: Futura Books, 1977).

⁴⁵To the best of my knowledge, after much research, no country in western culture has legislation which prevents experimental treatment on psychiatric patients. Lack of such legislation was one of the reasons why those responsible for so many deaths due to experimental treatment at Chelmsford could not be brought to account. They had broken no law. (The Royal Commission into the deaths at Chelmsford sat from 1988-1990). Available from internet <http://www.library.usyd.edu.au/subjects/government/reports.html>. Accessed 15 December 2006.

the other branch. It follows the paradigm that essentially supports the more concrete solutions already outlined above.⁴⁶

The intellectual solutions branch posits a theory whereby a repressed force, endeavouring to make its way into activity, is held in check by a repressing force. Structurally, an unconscious is opposed by a conscious. The variations on this basic theme are many and varied. What they have in common is they render the human person more or less powerless before forces that inhabit the depths of the psyche. Not even the imagination, that mighty arm of intellectual freedom, can escape these forces. Yet in some incongruent way forces beyond one's own control can be understood and mastered by another finite mind. Psychology struggles with this 'mystery dimension' in the human person, seeking to unravel confusion (not mystery) and render it subservient to logic. This could be beneficial if human peace and happiness have no need of a transcendent dimension. However if there is such a need (a question theology is better equipped to answer), it may be that much that is taken to be inner confusion is the un-knowing of *mythos*, striving to articulate itself in a world where it is no longer recognised. And we have arrived back at a significant insight of chapter two, where it was learned that logic and analysis applied to *mythos* can only destroy it, often interpreting insanity in the process.

There are of course a variety of splinter groups which mix and match the intellectual and concrete solutions paradigms, leaning now one way, now another. These as a collective probably constitute the majority.

Psychological/Spiritual Redemption – A Hybrid

Several splinter groups from the intellectual solutions branch have given a small amount of ground back to spirituality. That is to say the spiritual dimension is allowed to the extent it can be governed by, and subjected to, scientific laws of causality. Intellect is still the yardstick by which reality, sacred reality, in this case, is measured.

The sacred or spiritual content in psychology, always subject to intellect, was first given credibility by Carl Jung.⁴⁷ For Jung the psyche, of which the soul was merely a part,

⁴⁶ A fact apparently not well known in the social arena is the difference between psychiatry and psychology. A psychiatrist must have a medical degree which is then supplemented by post-graduate (2 years) studies in psychology. A psychologist must have a formal university degree (4 years) in psychology. The anomaly is that 'diagnosing' mental illness is effectively a psychological evaluation. This is formally recognised only if made by a psychiatrist – the professional less formally educated to make such an evaluation!

⁴⁷ Carl G. Jung, *Modern Man in Search of a Soul*, 240-241.

held the key to unravelling the inner life. This key turned upon the comprehension of human intellect which, via a process of analysis, including analytical therapies such as hypnosis and dream interpretation, drew the unconscious content out of the psyche into the clear light of the conscious. This process brought forth the desired result: “consciousness to a superlative degree”.⁴⁸ The individual who achieved this level of consciousness Jung acclaimed as the ‘modern man’.⁴⁹

For Jung consciousness to a superlative degree involves the courage to face one’s shadow side, to courageously admit the demonic that resides at the depth of self. The necessity and benefits of such self-honesty can be seen in the ‘first step’ of the Twelve Step programmes of both Alcoholics Anonymous and GROW. The need to ‘embrace’ the shadow side is an insightful wisdom. However the incongruity in Jungian spirituality is that from this embrace of the demonic, one whose origin is “dreary filth” is able to *intellectually* grasp the good, the true, the beautiful. According to Jung “even our purest and holiest beliefs can be traced to the crudest origins”.⁵⁰

Saul owed his conversion neither to true love, nor to true faith, nor to any other truth. It was solely his hatred of the Christians that set him upon the road to Damascus, and to that decisive experience which was to decide the whole course of his life. He was brought to this experience by following with conviction the course in which he was most completely mistaken.⁵¹

Without going into the question whether or not Saul was ‘most completely mistaken’, he apparently has a sudden infusion of wisdom. From where? It seems that absorption in his ‘shadow side’ ultimately brought Saul his *metanoia*, his own ‘superlative consciousness’ able to recognise the evil in his murderous hatred for the Christians.

Jungian spirituality is by his own admission unmistakably gnostic.⁵² Saul’s experience, like every other human spiritual experience, did not come from any source

⁴⁸Jung *Modern Man in Search of a Soul*, 227.

⁴⁹Jung *Modern Man in Search of a Soul*, 238-239.

⁵⁰Jung *Modern Man in Search of a Soul*, 47.

⁵¹Jung *Modern Man in Search of a Soul*, 261-262.

⁵²Jung, “The Spiritual Problem of Modern Man” in *Modern Man in Search of a Soul*, 226-254.

beyond Saul. It came from the depths of Saul's own psyche, from his own courage in facing the shadows deep within his own psyche.⁵³

I do not believe that I am going too far when I say that modern man ... turns his attention to the psyche with very great expectations; and that he does so without reference to any traditional creed, but rather in the Gnostic sense of religious experience.⁵⁴

While there are grains of wheat worth picking from the chaff of Jungian spirituality, one must tread very carefully.

David Henderson has placed the spiritual positions of Carl Jung and Thomas Merton side by side, demonstrating that Merton was more apophatic, accepting of darkness and negation – trust – towards discovery of ‘real self’. Jung was rigidly kataphatic, subjecting inner experience to analysis and evaluation. Intellect was the yardstick by which he measured the validity of what he called individuation. In other words, while there are ‘spiritual’ solutions to the human condition, these can be discovered and implemented by unaided human intellect.⁵⁵ For Jung, according to Henderson, it is human need on the horizontal, not the vertical, that *drives* human life. These needs can be identified and satisfied. On the other hand, as Henderson points out, the spiritual dimension that is beyond human comprehension (apophatic) sees human *desire* rather than need as the *drawing* force of life. Desire, as distinct from need, can never be satisfied. It is insatiable.⁵⁶

It could be said that the difference between the spirituality of Jung and Merton is considerably more than the difference between the kataphatic and apophatic. It could be said that they take up their spiritual positions in opposition to one another. Jung reduces all to the level of intellect. Merton, in the contemplative tradition, raises all to the transcendent. For example, in *The Rule* of St. Benedict Chapter 31 we read (of the role of

⁵³Jung *Modern Man in Search of a Soul*, 232-237.

⁵⁴Jung *Modern Man in Search of a Soul*, 239.

⁵⁵David Henderson, “Carl Jung and Thomas Merton” in *Studies in Spirituality* 13 (2003), 263-291.

⁵⁶Henderson, “Carl Jung and Thomas Merton” 278-279.

the cellarer) “He will regard all utensils and goods of the monastery as sacred vessels of the altar.”⁵⁷ Commenting on *The Rule*, Timothy Fry writes:

Human life is a whole and everything in creation is good. There is no aspect of life in the world that cannot, if rightly understood and used, contribute to leading us to our final end. Temporal reality and human endeavours are reflections on the perfections of God. Material things are *sacramenta*, symbols that reveal the goodness and beauty of the Creator.⁵⁸

The insight that material things are *sacramenta* is described in the Catholic tradition as sacramentality.⁵⁹ Sacramentality or *sacramenta* permeates all of Merton’s work, and for that matter, the writings of most of those called mystics and contemplatives. It is concisely articulated by Michael Whelan:

Sacramentality refers to the ordinary process whereby *we experience the ‘more-than’ in the here and now human reality*. *Through the material we encounter the immaterial, through the physical we encounter the divine, through the comprehensible we encounter the incomprehensible, through the senses we touch the untouchable*. ... In the end, the human reality suggests the Divine Reality.⁶⁰

In other words material reality is symbolic. “Each and every being points to Being, each and every sense opens us to reality ‘beyond,’ reality that cannot be sensed by the five senses.”⁶¹ This fusion of sacred and secular is integral to the ordinary perception of reality, here called ‘spiritual’.

On the other hand there is a dichotomy and fundamental incongruity at work in Jungian spirituality as it struggles to make sense of sacred and secular, sometimes reducing these to the categories of good and evil.⁶² Jung posits the origin of human beings in very

⁵⁷The following paragraphs, except where indicated, are distilled from: Michael Whelan, “Introduction to Catholicism”, class notes to a course given at the Aquinas Academy, June 2006.

⁵⁸Timothy Fry, editor, *The Rule of St Benedict*, (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1981), 370.

⁵⁹The value of imagination in perceiving sacramentality is well documented; for example: Paul Collins “The Catholic Imagination” in *Between the Rock and a Hard Place* (Australia: ABC Books, 2004); Andrew Greeley, *The Catholic Imagination* (California: University of California Press, 2000)

⁶⁰Whelan, “Introduction to Catholicism”, 25 & 27, italics original.

⁶¹Whelan, “Introduction to Catholicism”, 25.

⁶²White states that in an essay entitled “Aion” Jung posited a “Divine Quaternity, with a fourth and ‘evil’ hypostasis, in a fashion which orthodox Christians must find quite inadmissible” *God and the Unconscious*, 95.

derogatory terms. "It is painful – there is no denying it – to interpret radiant things from the shadow-side, and thus in a measure reduce them to their origins in dreary filth."⁶³ Intriguingly from this dreary filth emerges a consciousness which develops to reach toward the heights of the divine. That such a consciousness knows there is a divine to reach toward, given its origin in dreary filth, is what is incongruous.

In the reference frames of this dissertation Jungian spirituality could never give birth to the embryonic faith that it is here asserted is constitutive of the human person. With its origin in 'dreary filth' *mythos* could never hope to be the ontological link to the divine, the silent womb from which faith emerges seeking articulation in *logos*. Jung has the process reversed. *Logos*, in some incomprehensible way, distils wisdom from a demonic *mythos*, which wisdom it then fashions into happiness and fulfilment for the 'modern man'.⁶⁴

If we stretch credibility far enough to grant that human intellect can, of itself, recognise and reach toward divine radiance, it can only do so, according to Jungian theory, by denying the most fundamental doctrine of Christianity. The Trinity, with all its implications for a relational reality, must be set aside from the very outset.

The Jungian spiritual journey is intensely individual and elitist. There is no hint of relationship or communal harmony in this spirituality. In fact for Jung 'others' are more hindrance than help to self-actualisation. Relationship is more about self-to-self – consciousness to unconsciousness – than it is about self-to-other or self-to-Absolute. The select few Jung believed were worthwhile, his modern men, and the spiritual journey as described by Jung is very much the fruit of individual effort with little or no contribution (theology would say grace) from the divine. He writes:

The modern man is rarely met with. There are few who live up to the name, for they must be conscious to a superlative degree. The man whom we can with justice call 'modern' is solitary. He is so of necessity and at all times, for every step towards a fuller consciousness of the present removes him further from his original '*participation mystique*' with the mass of men. A great horde of worthless people give themselves the air of being modern by overleaping the various stages of development and the tasks of life they represent. They appear suddenly by the side of the truly

⁶³Jung, *Modern Man in Search of a Soul*, 47.

⁶⁴The 'demonic' in psychology does not anticipate Satanic but rather the dark, chaotic madness of the human. This is congruent with the meaning of 'demonic' throughout this dissertation.

modern man as uprooted human beings, bloodsucking ghosts, whose emptiness is taken for the unenviable loneliness of the modern man and casts discredit upon him.⁶⁵

Such a perception makes it difficult to see Jungian spirituality as other than anti-Christian in as much as it is anti-trinitarian.

Fortunately not all psychology shares the Jungian dichotomy. The psychiatrist Rollo May speaks for a more integrated view that respects the dimension of mystery in symbolism.

We forget at our peril that man is a symbol-making creature; and if the symbols (or myths, which are a pattern of symbols) seem arid and dead, they are to be mourned rather than denied. The bankruptcy of symbols should be seen for what it is, a way station on the path of despair.⁶⁶

There is room here for dialogue between theology and psychology on the meaning and value of myth and symbol, and the significance of these in human life-formation.

Jungian spirituality presents a complex obstacle course more in need of intellectual expertise than spiritual guidance to negotiate the hazards. Thomas Merton's 'self' that cannot be known because it cannot be objectified, is lost in the need for precise and technical self-knowledge.⁶⁷ *Logos* denuded of *mythos* is exposed as text without context. Context cannot be theorised from text. Context is what it is.

The denial of *mythos* reduces *logos* to nothing more than intellectual apprehension ignorant of the transcendent, opening the door to despair, anxiety, and ultimately insanity. Collaboration between psychology and theology would be vitally necessary if this was the only consideration in the mental health arena. The human person whose personal *mythos* has been destroyed is left an empty shell.

I spoke about Reality and the despair that perhaps there was none. Was there a God or not? If there was, who was He? Where was He? Why was He? Why was I? Or was I?⁶⁸

⁶⁵ Jung, *Modern Man in Search of a Soul*, 227-228 (italics original).

⁶⁶ Rollo May, *Power and Innocence* (Scotland: Fontana Books, 1976), 70.

⁶⁷ Henderson, "Carl Jung and Thomas Merton", 277.

⁶⁸ Pierce, *Ordinary Sanity*, 6.

Psychology is rendered mute before existential questions. Only in collaboration with theology can it hope to break intellectual boundaries and come to a more complete understanding of what it means to be a human person. It is this collaboration that exemplifies the task of practical theology, both in understanding and in transformative practices, the fruit of such understanding.

As soon as man is understood as the being who is absolutely transcendent with respect to God, ‘anthropocentricity’ and ‘theocentricity’ . . . are not two opposites but strictly one and the same thing, seen from two sides.⁶⁹

Humans without God can be many wonderful things. They can be clever, cunning animals able to manipulate the material world to an astonishing degree. They are capable of exploring the laws of nature and harnessing much of nature’s power. They are perhaps capable of exploring the created universe from one end to the other. But without God can humans be god-like? The concept of human dignity appears as empty rhetoric outside the context of divine-human partnership in the story of creation. Do we call insane those who intuit this simple truth, in however distorted a manner?

It defies even logic that from the depths of the psyche, seen to be seething with the irrational and the demonic, the reasonable and ultimately angelic should emerge into the light of consciousness. That our culture embraces this irrationality is testimony to its sanction of intellectual constructs, whether or not they defy reason. There is here a contradiction between theology and psychology with regard to what lies at the deepest depth, the very foundation of the human person. Are we grounded in the demonic or the angelic?

Contradictions in Hybrid Redemption

The confusion becomes pronounced when psychological redemption encounters spiritual redemption. Psychological redemption takes control of ‘self’. Spiritual redemption surrenders ‘self’ to divine will. Is there real or only perceived contradiction? Is it intellect taking control at its own behest? Might it not be *logos* translating divine will discerned at the level of *mythos*?

⁶⁹Peters quoting Rahner, *Gadamerian Reading of Karl Rahner*, 285.

Gerald May, a psychiatrist whose writings recognise the spiritual dimension, as do many other mental health professionals, was unable to clear the confusion.⁷⁰ Dr May is of interest because he acknowledges the apparent contradictions without trying to gloss over them, in spite of the fact that he was unable resolve them.

Unfortunately the predominant ‘solution’ has been, either to hold spirituality and psychology apart, or to subordinate the spiritual to the psychological. In the absence of formal collaboration, theology is as guilty of supporting this division as psychology. Dualism, the antithesis of spirituality, is alive and well. It is inevitable that the vision of many very intelligent, caring men and women in the field of mental health is clouded, and their efforts confounded by the simple, yet gargantuan error of perceiving the process of healing to be the equivalent of separating *mythos* from *logos*, drawing forth from the unconscious ‘knowledge and/or experience’ unknown to the conscious. These are then interpreted by *logos* – the *logos* of the therapist. Human wisdom is the most psychology can offer. Theology however can discern the voice of the primordial caller. Would this ‘hearing’ close rather than endorse division? Here the task of practical theology in the role of interpreter comes into play.

The very clinical conditions of psychological analysis and interpretation demand detachment and objectivity. The dualistic paradigm is maintained, denying authentic spirituality and probably fostering and nurturing insanity, if by insanity is meant the denial of the human person’s infinite openness to transcendence. What the psychologist hears is *mythos* spoken in the fragmented language of imprisoned *logos*. Imprisonment is enforced by the prejudices of a culture dominated by intellectual ways of knowing; a culture unaware that it is itself locked out of wholeness by ideology; a culture that constructs ideology, not to explain, but to guard and justify its own limitations.⁷¹

Of course isolated *mythos* sounds distorted, insane, as indeed it is and will continue to be while it remains in isolation. *Mythos* is a level of consciousness incommunicable

⁷⁰For several months prior to his death I had the privilege of an ongoing e-mail dialogue with Dr May. He commenced with an emphatic “No” to my suggestion that there was a correlation between the dark night of the soul and mental illness. In time he conceded that he could see the dark night of the senses in some of my writing in this dissertation, but said he would need to read much more before he could concede the correlation I suggested. Unfortunately he passed away before that could occur. Gerald May, *Care of Mind Care of Spirit*.

⁷¹This position was explicated in chapter two this dissertation.

without *logos* that respects it – *mythos* – as an equally original source of understanding.⁷² When the intuitions of *mythos* are explored, examined and analysed by an-other *logos*, particularly a *logos* presumed to be superior, it is more than likely that “mental health professionals are proposing to solve problems that they themselves have helped to create.”⁷³ Collaboration with theology might assist psychology to understand that levels of consciousness are more than different ways of knowing. They are also different ways of communicating. Some understanding of this might allow psychology to concede the possibility of a primordial caller.

Dr May has won much deserved acclaim in the field of mental health, writing extensively of the need to acknowledge the spiritual dimension in the human person in the interests of human mental health. However he agrees with his professional colleagues in the need to differentiate between the irrationalities of *logos* and the authentic intuitions of *mythos*. The title of his book *Care of Mind, Care of Spirit*, speaks to his belief in the need to differentiate. The content discloses the difficulty in doing so. A large part of the problem seems to be how to evaluate authentic from inauthentic intuition.

To attempt too strict a separation, to try to divorce mind from spirit, would be artificial and not at all helpful. To look to the spirit without also addressing the mind is as absurd as caring for the mind without attending to physical health. ... To invest oneself in separating psychodynamics from the revelations of God can become a distortion not unlike excessive spiritual warfare; it can become as much of a distraction as seeking God solely *through* psychology. ... Spiritual development is characterized by a plethora of experiences in which mind, spirit, and heart all play a role.⁷⁴

It is a tribute to the integrity of Dr May that he allows the confusion to speak itself rather than attempting to intellectualise it away. This is not to say that there is no distinction between the authentic intuitions of *mythos* and the irrationalities of isolated *logos*. This is merely to say that understanding what it means to be human and healing mental illness lies in closing the division rather than extending it. When *mythos* and *logos* unite they tend to clarify vision, clearing much confusion.

⁷²The benefit of Panikkar's trinitarian paradigm of communication (*mythos, logos, pneuma*) to intra-personal dialogue was noted in chapter two under the sub-heading “Dialogical Dialogue – a Trinitarian Paradigm”.

⁷³ W.K. Kilpatrick, *Psychological Seduction* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1983), 23.

⁷⁴May, *Care of Mind Care of Spirit* 15 & 42.

For all its apparent indepth analysis psychology turns to the past on a horizontal plane, seeking answers to the present and future. This approach is more a linear history that actually excludes understanding. On the horizontal plane the need for change is recognised and strategies for implementing change can be planned and put into action. This is redemption on psychological ground where:

imagination is a meditative laboratory for the creation of the self, and the creation of psychic multi-dimensional 'superstrings' which allow the human being to enter into empathic communion with another who is very other. ... Rather than fantasy, projection, resistance, avoidance, escapism, dogma or pretence, or withdrawal, imagination may pave the way to empathy. An imaginal world allows for a more connected world.⁷⁵

Imagination placed in the service of change can bring about change that is beneficial. However change is not transformation. Ultimately it is transformation not change that heals, that redeems.

When the sense of selfhood is effectively expanded to become cosmic, every other being is a centre of consciousness with whom or with which one can identify. 'Self' and all 'other selves' are experienced as arising together out of their deeper common ground. ... There is 'union of self with self' such that one is able to love the other not just as one 'loves oneself', in ordinary parlance, but as literally oneself.⁷⁶

The significant difference between change and transformation is the apparent contradiction between psychological and theological perceptions of redemption. Change can be effected by human intellect and will. Transformation is divine initiative. They do not necessarily contradict one another. Change may facilitate transformation, but cannot implement or control it. Would formal collaboration between psychology and theology bring to light insights currently 'lying on the surface' waiting, not so much to be discovered, as to be recognised?

While change has its place it is constructive rather than creative, in keeping with its intellectual framework. The human agent can orchestrate and implement change, maintaining the conditions of change for as long as the human will holds control. This

⁷⁵Beverly Zabriskie, "Imagination as Laboratory" in *Journal of Analytical Psychology*, 49 (2004), 240.

⁷⁶Felicity Edwards, "Becoming What We Know" in *Studies in Spirituality* 13 (2000) 244.

certainly has benefits in healing mental illness. But the human agent cannot bring about transformation. Theology appreciates and affords the spirituality necessary to touch creativity, a more upward, transcendent movement than the linear movement of change. We can facilitate and co-operate with the Spirit that transforms. We cannot control it.

Transformation is too deep, too enduring, too spiritual, and too real to be orchestrated. It eludes all attempts at orchestration and is negated by control. It needs faith to actualise it and trust to maintain it. *Logos* bereft of *mythos* cannot enter the creative space of *pneuma*, and transformation needs creativity. The inability of psychology to transform, coupled with its considerable power to generate change, needs investigation and clarification if we are to do justice to the place of psychology, and justice to the place of Spirit (meaning infusion of divine grace, the agent of transformation) in the healing world. The need for psychology and theology to enter, in a context of pastoral care, into dialogical dialogue is paramount in facilitating transformation, a venture vastly different from implementing change. Psychology has a good grasp of the horizontal. Theology has a good grasp of the vertical. Both are necessary to understanding the deepest depths of the human person. The task of practical theology here is to so fuse the vertical and horizontal that a harmonious reality – understanding – becomes ‘visible’.

It is beyond question that human beings bury within themselves all kinds of destructive emotions and urges. It is also undeniable that many of these tendencies are banished, with time, to a realm of the mind where memory has difficulty locating them.⁷⁷ When past experience *needs* to be addressed toward present healing, (and this may not always or even often be the case) it is best addressed by the person who owns the experience.⁷⁸ The assistance of an-other may be necessary as a sounding board for *mythos* to translate rationally to *logos*, but authority to translate or interpret *mythos* cannot be usurped by the *logos* of an ‘other’. That being said, what psychology has failed to explain is why destructive tendencies, forgotten or not, cause the problems they cause to the inner life. If the psyche is the home they have ‘built’, or their very origins, why do such

⁷⁷“The counsellor had advised that he should keep seeing her until they sorted out why he gambled. ‘That’s as silly as looking for the venomous snake that bit you. You can find and kill the snake but that won’t cure you. The venom is now running in your veins. It doesn’t matter a damn why you started. You continue gambling because it’s a habit. Welcome to the human race! We’re all creatures of habit.’”; Emma Pierce, *An Everlasting Love*, (Sydney: Faithrough, 2002), 40.

⁷⁸In more than 20 years attending weekly groups with mentally ill persons I can remember only one who needed the ‘resurrection’ of a long forgotten event to assist his healing.

tendencies sit so uncomfortably in their own 'home'? The same question might be phrased in several ways. Another way is to ask: Is the human person created a receptacle for the demonic or the divine?

Spiritual vision, whether of the demonic or the divine, governs the way we live and relate to the rest of reality, if by spiritual vision is meant perception of reality. Practical life demonstrates that humans live out of their deep, inner convictions, however much they might prefer to live by a code of logic. This applies as much to the mentally ill person as it does to the mentally healthy person. It may well be that it is the very lack of 'ordinary' criteria applied to the mentally ill that fosters and nurtures their illness.

While words such as 'ordinary' and 'natural' may be perceived by many to convey a meaning that is anything but sacred, it is the contention of this dissertation that drawing demarcation lines between the ordinary and the apparently extra-ordinary does more to disfigure truth on the human landscape than to reveal it.⁷⁹

The nature of a spiritual being and its supernatural elevation are not like two things laid one beside the other, or one against the other ... The supernatural elevation of man is the absolute (although unmerited) fulfilment of a being which, because of its spirituality and transcendence towards infinite being, cannot be "defined," i.e., "confined," like sub-human beings. ... We experience our nature where we experience grace; grace is only experienced *where by nature* there is spirit.⁸⁰

For example Jesus the Christ, sometimes called the *Logos* by Christians, is the perfect paradigm of the ordinary/extraordinary sacred/secular fusion; the God-man, the epitome of truth, the reality that IS without demarcation lines.⁸¹

If we stop intellectualising and analysing and simply observe the practice of daily living, it becomes obvious that human beings live out of a partnership – however tenuous – between *mythos* and *logos*. In everyday life the ordinary act of extending the hand of

⁷⁹"The so called 'pure nature,' that is, a human existence in which divine grace has no part to act, has never existed. The call to grace owes its origin to the divine presence in our actual history."; P. Fransen, *The New Life of Grace* (New York: Seabury Press, 1969), 156.

⁸⁰Karl Rahner, *Nature and Grace* (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1963), 136-137 (italics mine).

⁸¹"But for the Christian the norm cannot be provided by his own opinion, or by some general ethical consideration. For him, because what is involved is the following of the supreme example of the God-man, the norm itself must be divine."; Hans Urs Von Balthasar, *A Theology of History* (London: Sheed and Ward, 1964), 98.

friendship to a stranger on nothing more than ‘gut instinct’ that this stranger is trustworthy, demonstrates that *mythos*, unnamed and unacknowledged, is alive within us.

As we do in private life, so we attempt to do in communal life. In his book *Proletarian Imagination* Mark Steinberg asks and attempts to answer why ordinary workers joined the revolutionary movement in Russia in the years preceding and immediately after 1917. He claims that they “grappled with the nature of civilization and culture, the imperatives of moral and ethical truth, and the possibilities of realizing in future life what they could imagine in their minds.”⁸² History demonstrates that we attempt to do at a social level what we seem unable to do at the intra-personal level: create unity. In his book *Theopolitical Imagination* William Cavanaugh advocates a world where the ‘true politics’ implicit in different Christian practices such as the Eucharist, be engaged to re-frame the world according to the Kingdom of God.⁸³ Cavanaugh commences his argument by positing *mythos* (his word) as the nation state hero who saves society by slaying the chaos monster of religion. This of course turns out to be a false *mythos* and a false monster. But Cavanaugh still misses the fundamental point. People who are internally divided cannot re-frame a unified world. Thus far every political solution to social problems has been exposed as a flawed cultural choice probably on precisely that ground.

Dualism – A Flawed Cultural Choice

How did western culture arrive at this impasse? A landscape void of the transcendent was certainly not the landscape of the prophets of what has become the new religion, human intellect. The exile of the transcendent dimension did not happen immediately. Most historians seem to agree that the modern age of atheism was heralded in by the French Revolution, paving the way for “three giants [who] emerged to lay the intellectual foundations of atheism with a rigor and permanence denied to others.”⁸⁴ Those three giants were Ludwig Feuerbach (1804-72), Karl Marx (1818-83) and Sigmund Freud (1856-1939).

⁸²Mark D. Steinberg, *Proletarian Imagination: Self, Modernity, and the Sacred in Russia, 1910 – 1925* (London: Cornell University Press, 2002), 282.

⁸³William T. Cavanaugh, *Theopolitical Imagination: Discovering the Liturgy as a Political Act in an Age of Global Consumerism* (London: T & T Clark, 2002).

⁸⁴McGrath, *The Twilight of Atheism*, 47; see also Chapters One and Two.

In western culture science could only move forward with theological justification, presuming the divine light in human intellect. This position was supported by the metaphysics and epistemology of the scholastics.⁸⁵ "Oh God, I think thy thoughts after thee!" was Newton's joyful exclamation. For Newton "God had established the physical world and its laws, and therein lay the world's continuing existence and order." Copernicus celebrated astronomy as a "science more divine than human". Kepler declared astronomers were "priests of the most high God with respect to the book of Nature," while Descartes "interpreted his vision of the new universal science as a divine mandate for his life's work: God had shown him the way to certain knowledge."⁸⁶

Within a couple of hundred years of the Enlightenment, intellect, courtesy of modern science, was being translated out of its context as *one* way of knowing into the *only* way of knowing.⁸⁷ Undoubtedly many factors contributed to this paradigmatic shift in epistemology, but one such factor, at least in the Human Sciences, was surely the death of myth, a corollary of which was the death of God, the primary and primordial myth. Having killed off the primordial myth, modern science, seeking to clear the landscape of all its irrationalities, then sought to explain (away) myth in rational terms.

The Renaissance neither introduced nor reintroduced myth to the European world; it only provoked a more or less rational reflection on myth. Thus that hybrid and even self-contradictory science called *mythology* was born. In fact, by virtue of their very natures, as soon as one approaches *mythos* with the instrument of the *logos*, myth can only disappear. Mythology is the death of myth. Myth is not an 'object' It cannot become the object of the *logos* without degenerating. Here we already have the whole problematic: when you make myth into an 'object' of knowledge, you make it the subject-matter of analysis, you destroy it as myth.⁸⁸

⁸⁵Tarnas, "Science and Religion: The Early Concord", *Passion of the Western Mind*, 298-301.

⁸⁶Tarnas, *Passion of the Western Mind*, 300.

⁸⁷Jacques Maritain explores the several ways human beings have of knowing, covering metaphysics, epistemology, science, philosophy, biology and psychology – and several sub-sections of these such as necessity and contingency. He notes that Metaphysics is anathema to science, and philosophy holds its ground on logical terms; Jacques Maritain, *The Degrees of Knowledge* (London: Geoffrey Bles, 1959).

⁸⁸Panikkar, *Myth, Faith and Hermeneutics*, 39.

When the Myth that is God is destroyed, so too is the human person's ontological link to the divine.⁸⁹ Faith that is constitutive of the human person cannot emerge from a barren womb. But none of the above caused inner division. It merely tried to explain that division in logical terms.

Division – The Condition of 'Fallen Humanity'

While Descartes has long been blamed for division on the human landscape, such division has been there probably for as long as the human person has had a reflective mind. Division was known long ago to arise in the human heart. A more spiritual age interpreted it as the conflict between good and evil. Perhaps this has as much to do with the blanket acceptance of Descartes' mind-body split as all the scientific 'reasons' that serve only to give the 'divided soul' legitimate reasons for being and remaining divided.

Michael Casey captures the situation well in a single sentence. "The state of a person with a double soul is characterized by inner division, the experience of conflict in decision making and in frequent inconsistency of external actions with inner aspirations."⁹⁰ In the same book, Casey notes a number of very credible reference sources dating back several hundred years, all of which warn against inner division. The Christian Scriptures resound with warnings against inner division. A very clear example Casey quotes is found in the letter of St James. "Anyone who has a double soul will be unstable in all their ways." (Jm. 1: 8). Western culture seems to have lost its fear, along with its recognition, of inner division as the underlying cause of fragmentation, the bearer of anxiety and what we now call depression.⁹¹

Those who suffer a mental illness, irrespective of the specific diagnosis, will recognise their inner conflict in the above scriptural quote.⁹² Psychology calls this inner

⁸⁹The Myth that is God' is a term explained in the previous chapter.

⁹⁰Michael Casey, *Fully Human, Fully Divine: An Interactive Christology* (Australia: John Garrett Publishing, 2004), 52.

⁹¹"My thoughts, my feelings, my behaviour were all in contradiction to one another and to themselves. I could not hold any decision for more than five minutes. My view of life changed from one position to the other leaving me in a constant state of confusion and mental exhaustion."; Pierce, *Ordinary Insanity*, 28.

⁹²The Grow program in a tiny "Blue Book" has several affirmations to assist sufferers to overcome this division; e.g. "When the time to keep a resolution has come, don't weigh the pros and cons anymore. Just do it!", "I will go by what I know, not by how I feel."; C.B. Keogh, *GROW: The Program of Growth to Maturity* (Australia: Grow, 1957/2005), 32 & 10.

division schizophrenia or bi-polar disorder. It is worth noting the language used: schizophrenia meaning split-mind and bi-polar meaning two opposites.⁹³ Beyond these two major mental illnesses there is an array of other mental illnesses or conditions that can be accounted as manifestations of inner division, for example obsessive-compulsive disorder. If this seems to be a reduction of all the mental illnesses to a single cause, that is because it is!⁹⁴

What causes insanity? I would put it down to two words – misplaced importance. If there's a single cause for insanity that's it. ... If you've got your priorities in order you're never going to go mad.⁹⁵

Mental illness has as many faces as the human soul has issues over which it is divided. In the hands of science which can only deal with observable phenomena, the ever increasing list of mental illnesses can only continue to increase.⁹⁶

While inner division remains, habits surrounding the division not only increase, but become entrenched. A simple example is what proceeds from addiction. Depending on the nature of the addiction, it is labelled anything from Obsessive Compulsive Disorder to simple alcoholism. It is in effect any habit which dominates life. The desire to join friends for a friendly, relaxing drink can take an undue priority in one's life leading to neglect of family and responsibilities. Guilt for the neglect rises to confront the ordinary desire for a relaxing drink. Anger at a guilt that seems unjust rises to confront the guilt – and inner conflict is born.

Out of the conflicts that arise from any addictive habit a myriad of rationalisations give birth to an amazing array of other habits which also become addictive. The wisdom in the letter of St. James quoted above – unstable in *all* their ways – is self-evidently real.

⁹³S.v. "Bi-polar" Psychology,psy.rin.; available from <http://psy.rin.ru/cgi-bin/eng/dictionary.pl?page=2&literal=B> Internet; accessed 27 January 2006; The word 'schizophrenia' is not listed in any internet Dictionary of Psychology; 'Mental disease marked by a breakdown in the relation between thoughts, feelings and actions, and often with delusions and retreat from social life. adj. & n. [Greek schizō split, phrēn mind].'; *The Australian Pocket Oxford Dictionary* 4th ed. 1996, s.v. "schizophrenia".

⁹⁴This assertion is fully explicated in Chapter Six "Morality".

⁹⁵Caroline Jones interview "Emma Pierce" *The Search for Meaning Collection* (Australia: HarperCollins Publishers, 1995), 198.

⁹⁶The increase in mental illnesses, according to this author is less about real illness than it is about social construction, evidenced by the increase of 'illnesses' in the DSM (from DSM 1 to DSM 4). Allan V. Horwitz, *Creating Mental Illness* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2002).

Take for example alcoholism. Understanding of this addiction was made clear by Alcoholics Anonymous. It is no longer shrouded in psychological mystique. As a result of too many hangovers it is easy to fall prey to procrastination, ultimately making of it a habit. Habits of dishonesty including the telling of lies can also develop out of a need to guard the 'secret' of one's addiction. These habits usually remain as separate issues even after the causal habit has been broken.⁹⁷

A more subtle but equally destructive habit is conformity. In ways too subtle to be noticeable, we say and do what is not a true reflection of ourselves in order to find acceptance or to attract accolades from peers.⁹⁸ This can develop in such proportion that we lose touch with the reality of who we are and so become the image we try to portray, with all the habits, both good and bad, of that image. This presents a myriad of problems when we attempt to retrieve the truth of ourselves, discovering one false habit after another in our journey to 'self' that is true, regaining the freedom to simply be.⁹⁹

A scientific approach to human problems must deal with each division as a separate problem, a separate issue. With each and every issue psychology is confined by its scientific methodology. It can grasp that this person is not at peace within, that he/she does not 'like' him/herself. It can facilitate change of 'bad' habits and institute 'good' habits on an issue by issue basis, employing cause-effect logic. It can seek to bring into appearance a more acceptable, more likeable 'self'. But that is as far as psychology can go. It is hamstrung by what might be called inescapable scientific ignorance. That is, it is incapable of knowing that the human person is intrinsically ordered to the supernatural life. "Everywhere and in everything we can and must seek out that *unutterable mystery* which

⁹⁷CNN News report on a study of 14 people called 'internet addicts'; nine of the 14 had manic-depression at the time of the interview, and 11 had it at some point in their lives. Half had an anxiety disorder such as "social phobia". Three suffered from bulimia or binge eating, and six had an eating disorder at some time in their lives. Four had conditions involving uncontrollable bursts of anger or buying sprees, and half reported such impulse-control conditions during their lives. Eight had abused alcohol or some other substance at some time in their lives. "Study: internet addicts often show other disorders"; available from <http://www.cnn.com/HEALTH/9805/31/internet.addiction/> Internet; accessed 11 December 2003.

⁹⁸"He didn't like my friends so I didn't have any. I didn't like his friends so I made overtures that said I did. ... I tried to become what John said I should be. I failed. And I failed to become myself. At twenty-eight years of age I was nobody and nothing and I didn't want to be anybody or anything. I just wanted to stop existing as though I had never been." Pierce, *Ordinary Insanity*, 20.

⁹⁹"By inches I negotiated the hazards of becoming. In time I would come to understand that I was learning the very ordinary art of being. That is, I was moving from practising being me to simply being me. The contrived, controlled me was dissolving into a natural, comfortable reality." Pierce, *Mental Illness – Fact and Fiction*, 116.

disposes over us, even though we can hardly name it with words ... speech which the theologian must *utter*".¹⁰⁰

It is not possible for the human person to be happy with a 'self' not grounded in truth. It is not 'self' that is disliked in the first place. It is the stranger, the untrue, the orchestrated 'self', the 'self' so well known because it is of our own making. It is this 'self' that is not, and cannot be liked. Healing is less about changing this practice for that practice than it is about coming to know and to be 'self' that is real. Change implemented is then merely facilitation towards transformation – towards reality/redemption. But transformation is divine initiative. If we reject the divine, we reject all that the divine offers, including transformation. Implemented change is then all we have.

The healing of internal division is a pre-requisite to healing external division. It requires the healing of both to realise spiritual redemption, the mystery of potential already actualised, needing only the *practise* of faith to be realised.

Spiritual Redemption

Understanding the spiritual nature of transformation is what makes human life-formation spiritual at every level. The supernatural life is the human person's deepest dynamism and final goal. This is the life of grace, a power and vitality beyond the grasp of human intellect and human control. Certainly this life emerges from *mythos* seeking *logos*, but there is an additional element beyond the scope of the natural environment, available only to the supernatural milieu. To repeat: "The supernatural elevation of man is the absolute (although unmerited) fulfilment of a being which, because of its spirituality and transcendence towards infinite being, cannot be "defined," i.e., "confined," like sub-human beings."¹⁰¹ The divine gift of grace removes limited vision that obscures reality: redemption that is already accomplished.

While there has been an amount of debate with regard to grace, whether it is an intrinsic or extrinsic gift (essentially to protect the freedom of God in the gifting of grace) what stands apparent is the need for faith to receive the gift.¹⁰² Without delving too

¹⁰⁰Peters quoting Rahner, *Gadamerian Reading of Karl Rahner*, 285 (italics original).

¹⁰¹Karl Rahner, *Nature and Grace*, 137.

¹⁰²Jesus of Nazareth used the same expression over and over when he made available the gift of grace. "Your faith has made you whole", or words with the same meaning can be found thirteen times in the four gospels of the New Testament. The further eleven times in the same gospels that Jesus speaks of faith, it is of the need for faith to engage the power of God, e.g. "If

deeply into theological debates about the gift of grace, the position of Karl Rahner, ultimately accepted by Vatican II, demonstrates that the gift of grace is both existential and supernatural.¹⁰³ Rahner is distressed that “theology has been too long and too often bedevilled by the unavowed supposition that grace would be no longer grace if it were too generously distributed by the love of God.”¹⁰⁴ He claims:

If God gives creation and man above all a supernatural end and this end is first ‘in intentione’, then man (and the world) *is* by that very fact always and everywhere inwardly other in structure than he would be if he did not have this end, and hence other as well before he has reached this end partially (the grace which justifies) or wholly (the beatific vision).¹⁰⁵

So while God freely bestows upon human beings the gift of the divine in grace, the offer must be as freely accepted by the recipient. God gives this grace freely and universally, just as *mythos* is given freely and universally. However *mythos* and the faith conceived in *mythos* are intrinsic to human nature in as much as they are constitutive of the human person. Grace is not of the natural, but the supernatural order, yet a free gift available to all. However, it is a gift which requires acceptance. It can be rejected “without thereby having *inwardly* the experience of losing its end”.¹⁰⁶ One might say grace is an optional extra that can be rejected without the human person suspecting the effects of its rejection. The ‘loss’ of *mythos* is not rejection of an extra, but denial of what is constitutive. Recognition of what is constitutive opens spiritual sight to the necessity of grace for the completion of *being* that is human. Denial of what is constitutive is fragmentation, the divided ‘self’ that breeds insanity.

Is it an indictment against theology that it appears to have lost its faith in the power of faith? I do not mean faith that accepts ‘impossible’ events, such as the miracles described in the New Testament. I leave these to those better qualified to interpret. No, I

your faith is the size of a mustard seed you will say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there,’ and it will move; nothing will be impossible for you.” (Mt. 17:20.).

¹⁰³Karl Rahner, “Concerning the Relationship Between Nature and Grace” in *Theological Investigations* Vol I (London: Darton, Longman & Todd 1965), 297-317.

¹⁰⁴Rahner, *Nature and Grace*, 180.

¹⁰⁵Rahner, *Theological Investigations* Vol I, 302-303.

¹⁰⁶Rahner, *Theological Investigations* Vol I, 298.

mean faith that believes in *actual* redemption – the reality of transformation – the power to heal mental illness – and many other sufferings of the human condition now left to the Human Sciences to ‘fix’. This is an instance of how theology is subordinated to the Human Sciences, to the detriment of human life-formation. The result is that the healing of bad habits, once recognised as overcoming temptation, is deemed impossible. When the huge effort is made to overcome addictions, to recover from mental illness, to relinquish a life of crime, social perception is that those who have made such an effort are ‘acting out’ healing; that their past behaviour (perhaps grounded in genetic and/or environmental heredity?) is their ‘true self’ and may break out at any moment. We have a parochial phrase to cover our disbelief in human transformation: ‘the leopard never changes its spots.’ The lack of equation between the leopard’s skin and human interiority passes unnoticed.

Transformation is a hidden miracle. It is gift of the divine. Yet it is more real than evident change. Change is in need of eternal vigilance on the part of the ‘changed’ person. Transformation needs only faith and trust willing to collaborate in partnership with the divine gift of grace. Perhaps it is an implied desire for this that underlies the 78.7% of those surveyed (see Appendix A) who said they believed that God was willing to help them. Spiritual redemption – transformation – is the ‘supernatural elevation of man/woman’, his/her ‘absolute (although unmerited) fulfilment’. There is nothing impossible where there is seamless unity between divine and human will. Without the leadership of theology even the most spiritual mental health professionals are left ‘blinded’ by intellect, victims of their own education.

I am choosing my words carefully here. Deliverance *enables* a person to *make* a change in his or her behaviour; in my experience deliverance does not *remove* the addiction and its underlying attachments. Something obviously happens to the systems of the brain when deliverance occurs; either the addicted systems are weakened or the ones seeking freedom are strengthened or both. I have witnessed many healings of substance and non-substance addictions and many other disorders. In none of these miraculous empowerments were people freed from having to remain intentional about avoiding a return to their old addictive behaviours. The real miracle was that avoidance became possible.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁷Gerald May, *Addiction and Grace* (San Francisco: HarperCollins Publishers, 1988), 153 (italics original).

Dr May might have been surprised (and delighted) to learn that for those who experience transformation from addiction, or any other disorder, the miracle is not the ability to avoid repetition. The miracle is transformation, usually in hindsight, in an often times humorous reflection that one ever engaged in such destructive behaviour. Rather than the need for intentional avoidance, it would take a concerted effort to convince oneself to re-engage in such behaviour.¹⁰⁸

Psychology can assist the human person to harness internal division into some kind of working order and maintain control over the order established with will power. This takes constant effort, concentration, vigilance, and can be utterly exhausting. While this can be beneficial in as much as it facilitates transformation, too much emphasis on self-control, self-belief, self-love, and positive thinking truncates spiritual life. The human person can only be redeemed, transformed, by an infusion of grace – pure, unadulterated, divine gift. *Belief* in ‘self’ rather than control of self can usurp belief in the divine, in redemption. Paradoxically it is disbelief in transformation that gives weight to self-belief.

Theology must make its voice heard in every arena of human life-formation, especially those arenas where the human condition is exposed in its naked, vulnerable, flawed condition. When the once afflicted are denied affirmation that their healing is real, it serves only to deprive them of the faith and hope necessary to receive the gift of transformation. The voice of the primordial caller comes – or not – more often than not through I-thou relationships. Many who strive for freedom from what is ordinary human weakness are defeated before journey’s end, defeated by the prospect of a lifelong battle, the exhausting need for eternal vigilance. With no prospect of transformation there is no hope of redemption and the peace that comes with redemption. The eternal battle can appear pointless. Theology must explicate redemption in terms that are meaningful for the needs of today.

On the one hand the crisis [of explicating redemption] lies in the fact that Jesus is still regularly explained to us as salvation and grace in terms which are no longer valid for our world of experience, i.e. in terms of *earlier* experiences; and on the other hand in the fact that we seem no longer capable in words or action to ‘make a defence for the hope that is in us’ (I Peter 3.15).¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁸Pierce, *Ordinary Insanity*, chapter 16 is dedicated to describing my struggle against addiction to psychiatric drugs. Many years later when informed of the death of one of my sons the suggestion that I use tranquilisers as a coping mechanism was rejected by me as abhorrent.

¹⁰⁹ Schillebeeckx, *Christ: The Experience of Jesus as Lord*, 63.

Psychology can speak of change, the demonstrable willingness to be transformed. But it is theology that must speak out and affirm the reality of transformation/redemption, testifying to the voice of the primordial caller that calls each one of us to *be* in I-thou relationship. The mentally ill are not different from the rest of the human family. Their needs are the same. Perhaps they are those who have greater insight in as much as they are more aware that vital needs are not being met.

Conclusion

This chapter exemplifies our methodology for ‘doing’ practical theology. This is only natural given that the spiritual life was here posited as the ordinary, mundane, routine of daily living. We have paid attention to human experience, sought to understand that experience and translate that understanding into transformative praxis. After attending to the testimony of the witness we explored the part imagination plays in seeing reality unavailable to physical sight, noting the danger of delusion, but also acknowledging the reality of the unimaginable. The desire for a better world was acknowledged and an exploration of attempts to create a better world, the product of human imagination, was made, revealing the futility of any redemption that is not divine initiative.

If redemption is the healing of division, that healing begins with the ability to perceive reality as unity, a perception available in the catholic moment of kairological consciousness. The partnership between *mythos* and *logos* is of paramount importance because it closes the division between levels of consciousness, uniting ways of knowing. This might be the primary focus of a theological/psychological dialogue. Of necessity this would address the distinction between change – a psychological proficiency – and transformation – a theological detection.

When *logos* is invested with meaning by *mythos* it recognises that its primary function is to facilitate I-thou relationships. This is a precious insight that emerges from the spiritual life, revealing a relational structure to the fabric of reality itself. It is this relational structure to reality that is the subject of the next chapter.

Chapter Five

Relationship – A Trinitarian Paradigm of Reality

Naming the Issue

In the endeavour to facilitate dialogue so that the primary task of practical theology – understanding – might emerge, this dissertation commenced by positing the human person as response to a call. Both disciplines recognise the power of relationships which is another way of translating response to call. For psychology that power is acknowledged in the expression ‘peer group pressure’. That is, we can be driven into becoming what we are – or are not – by I-thou relationships. In the Judeo-Christian tradition I-thou relationship is the essence of human *being*.¹ The human is called forth – drawn, not driven – into being by the Primordial Caller. It follows from this that for the human person reality is synonymous with relationship. Relationship is the *ontological* category that distinguishes what is real. Emmanuel Levinas, although uncomfortable with the term ‘ontology’, nonetheless provides a telling description.

Ontology is not accomplished in the triumph of human beings over their condition but in the very tension where this condition is assumed. ... It is not because of the human being that there is truth. It is because being in general is inseparable from its *openness*, because there is truth, or, if one likes, because being is intelligible, that there is humanity.²

Openness to truth which is apprehended by being (from which it is inseparable), posits an ethical ontology and it is this ethical nature of ontology, what Levinas describes as ‘being inseparable from its openness/truth’, that is of significance. Being inseparable from openness and truth is very much in keeping with the hermeneutics of Raimon Panikkar, used throughout this dissertation. Truth unites called with Caller. In the Judeo-Christian tradition, the Primordial Caller is Love: love calls the human person to *be* – to be-in-truth. Reality is therefore relationship woven by love from the fabric of truth.

The paradigm of reality presented here is trinitarian in keeping with the author’s bias towards the Catholic religious tradition. In this tradition relationship is more penetrating than

¹Velting, *Practical Theology*, 31-32.

²Emmanuel Levinas, *Basic Philosophical Writings*, Ed. Adriaan Peperzak, Simon Critchley and Robert Bernasconi (Indianaapolis: Indiana University Press, 1996), 3 (*italics original*).

a triadic bonding between two (or more): it is triune. Relationship/reality is “the way one being exists in another and expresses the radical interdependence of all that exists.”³

Far from reality being whatever we choose to make of it, reality is first a discovery: the ability in each person to hear the voice of the primordial caller, the voice of love that calls in and through all loving relationships. Only after the discovery is made can the choice be made to participate in reality, or not: to love or to not love. In this sense choosing reality is choosing truth, choosing what *is*.

It is love that generates ‘the way one being exists in another’. Love actualises potential reality/relationship in the creative enterprise of being response to the primordial caller who is Love. The whole of reality is embraced; the whole of creation is called to *be*. “The comprehension of being does not presuppose a merely theoretical attitude but the whole of human comportment. The whole human being is ontology.”⁴ The ontological category posited in this dissertation is love-as-truth.⁵

Setting the Parameters

Setting parameters within which relationship/reality is to be explicated may seem foolhardy. The most that can be hoped for is a common sense explication of reality that is relational as opposed to one that is impersonal (cause-effect). In this chapter the witness speaks a dialogue of reflection. After attending to *reflections* from the witness relationship/reality is explicated by:

- exploring current interpretations of both reality and relationship, including the relationship between knowledge and knower;
- engaging in conversation regarding cause-effect and relationship as these emerge in reference to human life-formation, distinguishing ‘change’ from ‘transformation’;
- exploring the manner in which ideology objects to, and denies, transformation;
- revisiting faith and spirituality as they relate to a relational reality;

³Panikkar, *Myth, Faith and Hermeneutics*, 23.

⁴Levinas, *Basic Philosophical Writings*, 3.

⁵Levinas focused, with some justification, on obligation and responsibility to what he called “the face”. Freedom to love – or to not love – seems far from his thoughts. His emphasis remained with obligation and responsibility. These removed freedom rather than issuing from it. Obligation to ‘other’ dominated, painting a picture of life as a self-sacrificing enterprise. There is much fruit in this perception, but it leaves the terrible gift of freedom – without which there can be no love – out of the equation. When the emphasis is love rather than obligation or responsibility, self-sacrifice pales into insignificance, a truth to which most parents would testify.

- explicating reality as a theological concept. For Christianity this is divine-human relationship that inherently includes human-human relationships.

The claim here is that, scientifically speaking, reality may be manipulated to be other than it would be without human interference. Theologically speaking reality is loving response to the primordial caller. Whether human influence on reality is actually, rather than only apparently, beneficial, is dependent upon whether or not it is carried out in a spirit of divine-human co-operation: as a relational enterprise. The human capacity to beneficially influence the real is therefore dependent upon human ability/willingness to hear and respond to the primordial caller. This in turn is dependent upon the primordial caller communicating his/her will to the human person – the word of God: revelation – which is dependent upon faith for acceptance. Therefore only the eyes of faith can see, not only a vision of actual reality, but also the vision of potential reality which may be actualised.

Manipulations of reality outside divine-human co-operation account for much of the insanity evident in so many political power-plays throughout human history. Several of these were mentioned in the previous chapter as human attempts at redemption. Much ecological and environmental damage in more recent times could lay equal claim to insanity. Examples of destructive human interference are used in this chapter to demonstrate that a cause-effect paradigm of reality in the science of psychology leaves professionals, and those they seek to assist, as ill equipped to deal with the most fundamental human need on a personal level as do political power-plays at communal level. That fundamental need is posited here as loving relationship, commencing with the primordial relationship that calls forth creation.⁶ There can be no peace on earth until there is peace and harmony, first within, and then between, human persons.⁷ An explication of what Panikkar calls mystical tolerance is employed to exemplify a pathway to loving relationship at both intra and inter-personal levels.

It is the *reflective* voice of the witness that leads the way forward into critical conversation and speaks reflectively throughout this chapter. Experiencing relationship-with

⁶Typing “relationship+psychology” into an internet search engine reveals many hundreds of sites where psychology deals with relationship in the context of conflict resolution strategies. Whether conflict resolution is the only relational expertise with which psychology is equipped is questionable. What is not questionable is that relationship for psychology commences with recognition of an individual – an ‘I’ without a thou. The most psychology can do from that position is build relational bridges. While this of itself is valuable, it is not a position able to recognise relationship as the fabric of reality. From its current position psychology can only acclaim relationship as an option – not a necessity: a very fruitful option, but an option none the less.

⁷This realisation shines through all of Panikkar’s work in-forming his efforts to promote inter-religious dialogue. His theological anthropology is so apt for this dissertation for precisely this reason.

in a way that redefines one's reality is a foundational event that is, in the immediate, beyond articulation. The ability to articulate this radically altered perception comes slowly. Reflection over time brings the intelligibility out of which reference frames develop that allow the new perception to be articulated.

The author's bias toward the Judeo-Christian tradition has strongly influenced the articulation of relationship as the fabric of reality. However it is the *articulation* of relationship that is so biased, not necessarily the reality. The reality of relationship may well be expressed by other religious traditions in reference frames unfamiliar to this author. It seems incongruous that the structure of reality be made available to only one religious tradition. The triadic or trinitarian structure is perceived not only by Panikkar to be evident in other religious traditions.⁸ Exploring these is outside the purview of this dissertation.

The primary purpose of this chapter is to redefine reality as perceived when the spiritual permeates the landscape as described in the previous chapter: to define it as loving relationship. The claim is that living outside the fabric of reality, outside loving relationship, is insanity. As a corollary mental illness and mental health are re-defined. While spiritual vision can see relational reality and appreciate it as the divine initiative of transformation, psychology has much to contribute by way of implementing change which can facilitate transformation. Together they can make redemption concretely visible.

Reflections from the Witness

The experience of insanity, whatever may be its cause, is predominantly one of isolation. There is a sense of having been cast out certainly by society, but more importantly by God ... if there is a God.⁹ The question of God, irrespective of one's belief system, including atheism, is of primary importance.¹⁰ There is also, incomprehensibly, a sense of isolation from 'self'. All that one has believed of 'self' and one's personal history prior to mental illness is thrown into question and confusion by analytical interpretations that disclose a 'self' alien to the self one has thus far believed to be one's own self. With this fracture

⁸Raimon Panikkar *Trinity and the Religious Experience of Man*, (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1973); Gavin D'Costa, *The Meeting of Religions and the Trinity* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2000).

⁹The very phrase 'dark night of the soul' speaks to the experience of isolation, especially from God. Well known to mystical experience, the contention here is that this spiritual dis-ease is, to a greater or lesser extent, a universal human experience, whatever we call it.

¹⁰Appendix A: To the question: "Is God relevant in your life?" 82.9% responded "yes", 13.8% responded "no", 1.06% did not answer and 2.1% were "not sure".

between past and present, the future presents no comforting familiarity. The sense of isolation is complete.

The fact that preoccupation with existential questions is what gives birth to such universal doubt is neither recognised nor understood either by the mentally ill person (except in hindsight) or professionals in the field of mental health. The potential good within such questioning is not only not affirmed, but negated, ridiculed, avoided, and/or rejected. Persistent though such questions continue to be, the searching is not encouraged by a science that excludes the dimension of reality in which the search is concentrated.

One can only wonder at the healing that might be effected by a collaboration between psychology and theology. Acknowledgement of the spiritual dimension would assist psychology to appreciate this search as the desire for, if not the beginning of, relationship with Holy Mystery. But in the absence of such recognition the search for Holy Mystery is precisely what marks one out as mentally ill. As a mentally ill person you are deemed too irrational to contemplate the big picture. If you cannot accurately interpret reality (whatever that means!) ready-made answers are the order of the day.¹¹

In the current mental health system the intuitive search for primordial relationship meets a treatment designed to thwart the search. Feelings of isolation are constantly reaffirmed in a variety of ‘therapies’ with attendant ‘diagnoses’ that would drive a sane person mad.¹² For example, drugs that disorient and give the sane person hallucinations are presumed to cure that very condition in the insane. All hope of normalcy is razed by a ‘diagnosis’ and prognosis that reinforce the sense of being other than the rest of the human race.¹³ This so reinforces the sense of isolation that it quickly becomes alienation.

¹¹“Psychology has become something of a substitute for old belief systems. ... While in the past the common reference point was the Bible and its commentaries and commentators, the common reference today is a therapeutic language and the success stories of mostly secular people changers.” Bernie Zilbergeld *The Shrinking of America: Myths of Psychological Change* (Boston: Little Brown & Company, 1983), 5.

¹²“If we present a man with a concept of man which is not true, we may well corrupt him. ... We feed the nihilism to which modern man is, in any case prone.” Victor Frankl, *The Doctor And The Soul*, U.S.A: Alfred A Knopf Inc, 1955 – Preface.

¹³Robert Whitaker examines the epidemic of mental illness, noting that it has spread in ‘lockstep’ with the ever-increasing use of psychiatric drugs. He raises the obvious question. Does psychiatric medication cause at least as much mental illness as it claims to treat? His statistical figures are impressive – and accurate given their sources. Robert Whitaker, *Mad in America: Bad Science, Bad Medicine and the Enduring Mistreatment of the Mentally Ill*. (U.S.A.: Perseus Publishing, 2003); LSD (trade name Delysid) was developed by Swiss pharmaceutical company Sandoz Laboratories and promoted as a psychiatric miracle drug ... until banned for its brain damaging effects!; available from <http://www.well.com/user/woa/fshallu.htm> Internet; accessed 10 May 2005.

It is hardly surprising that for those recovering their sanity the first hint of the relational structure of reality is the experience which breaks the isolation. This experience was described in chapter three as the ‘un-knowing’ of self as invitation to divine union: self called to *be* by the primordial caller who knows who one *is*.¹⁴ In time one comes to believe that one’s mental illness was the product of an aborted search for the Real. It is hardly surprising that the miracle of faith – encounter with the divine – brings healing. Suddenly there is redemption! Suddenly there is relationship! It is, paradoxically, relationship with the ground of one’s own being as much as with the divine. All this is integrally ‘known’ within the experience. It breaks the incomprehensible isolation *within* self (self from self) as immediately and effectively as it breaks the isolation *of* self (self from others).

As experience, especially for those who do not have the education that would provide reference frames within which such experience could be articulated, there is little or no objective understanding.¹⁵ There is only subjective experience, undeniable in its strength and ultimately its healing power.

In the terminology of this dissertation experience of the primordial relationship could be said to emerge from *mythos*. Intellectually the concept of faith as a constitutive dimension is not available. Hindsight and learned reference frames make it possible to say that a being that is constituted as much in relationship as in faith (faith is always faith-in, inherently relational) is immediately oriented towards *logos*, seeking to articulate and live out in *logos* the relationship-with intuited at the level of *mythos*. As experience it is a new, but somehow old level of consciousness, a re-birth of consciousness.

It is a knowledge that, having come to light, is recognised by some deep internal core as having always been known because it was always true. There is immense relief in the conscious recognition, and conviction so strong it not only needs no proof, but utterly defies proof.¹⁶

The dominance of *logos* is ended. *Mythos* is reclaimed. The indissoluble marriage between *mythos* and *logos* is acknowledged. Reason, the offspring of the two, is unveiled. What emerges is sanity that is truly sane because it is balanced and whole.

¹⁴This call is often made and heard as the ordinary call of love made in and through other human persons.

¹⁵My own entry into theological study did not commence until almost twenty years after I had recovered my sanity.

¹⁶Pierce, *Ordinary Insanity*, 67.

One of the great gifts of mental illness for those recovering is the recognition that so much in western culture that is called ‘reason’ is less reason than it is isolated intellect. Theology, which does not suffer from this fragmented perception, has long argued correctly that there is no conflict between faith and reason.

Reason and faith cannot be separated without diminishing the capacity of men and women to know themselves, the world and God in an appropriate way. ... There is thus no reason for competition of any kind between reason and faith: each contains the other, and each has its own scope for action.¹⁷

The union of *mythos* and *logos*, faith and reason, is not unique to the Christian tradition. Cultures and religious traditions, even non theistic traditions such as Buddhism, where there is absence of self-as-ego at ultimate level, capture the relational nature of reality as it emerges from this union.¹⁸

The *awareness* of fragmentation, the gift of mental illness, compels one to understand that not only is there no conflict, but reason without faith cannot be reasonable. For theology intellect is always ‘reason’ and therefore always in partnership with faith. The apparent conflict emerges onto the human landscape when the knowing available to faith and the knowing available to intellect are separated, inferring that there are two separate ways of knowing. The conflict is magnified when one way of knowing is denied validity. The irrational, the non-real, emerges less from a troubled mind than it does from a divided mind, from the division between *mythos* and *logos*. The confusion noted earlier in Dr May’s book *Care of Mind Care of Spirit* becomes self-evident. The question often asked, ‘is it mind or spirit that is troubled?’ echoes with the division that is itself the problem.

The healing journey reveals a relational reality that removes all division. The dominant perception is one of simplicity. Life is relationship. Reality is relational. ‘Self’ is *not* except ‘self’ is relationship-with, beginning with the primordial relationship and unfolding in a myriad of I-thou relationships.¹⁹

¹⁷ John Paul II, “Fides et Ratio” [Faith and Reason]. Encyclical Letter (15th September 1998). *Papal Encyclicals* [Internet]. Rome: The Vatican, Available from <http://www.papalencyclicals.net/all.htm> accessed 5 May 2005.

¹⁸ Panikkar, “Forms of Spirituality” in *Trinity and the Religious Experience of Man*, 9-40.

¹⁹ Martin Buber reveals in this little book the beauty of I-thou relationships very similar to what is meant here. Martin Buber, *I and Thou* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1958).

Interpretation Revisited:

Current Interpretations of Reality

‘Reality’ is an ethereal word that defies description though it is applied in a variety of ways.

Reality, in standard philosophical usage, how things actually are, in contrast with their mere appearance. Appearance has to do with how things seem to a particular perceiver or group of perceivers. Reality is sometimes said to be two-way-dependent of appearance. This means that appearance does not determine reality. First, no matter how much agreement there is, based on appearance about the nature of reality, it is always conceivable that reality differs from appearance. Secondly appearances are in no way required for reality: reality can outstrip the range of all investigations that we are in a position to make.²⁰

The human person’s belief in his/her ability to know reality was undermined by Descartes’ *cogito ergo sum* which produced the belief that knowledge of reality rests upon certainty. Certainty, as we have already seen, becomes that which is clear and distinct to the intellect.²¹ Reality becomes facts distilled from distinguishing and measuring what is clear and distinct to the intellect.

Armed with this knowledge the human person experiments, ‘mixes and matches’ the objective structures of the real, interferes with the laws of nature in order to orchestrate and manipulate reality to produce a different, *apparently* more beneficial reality. The ability to tamper with cause in the interests of manipulating effect has made possible the belief that reality is whatever human beings choose to make of it. Yet if we examine human interference where it is possible to examine it, in the environment, even a cause-effect reality is forced to acknowledge that it has some impact on relationship.

Current Interpretations of Relationship

In western culture relationship is apprehended as connection in a cause-effect, connect-the-dots world. There is very little if any transcendence attached to perceptions of relationship. What is termed relationship is a connection that is either accidental or

²⁰ *The Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy*, ed. Robert Audi (Cambridge University Press, 1995) s.v. “reality”.

²¹ Assertions, arguments and debates about whether or not the objective structures of reality can be known, and in what way they can be known have haunted philosophy and science for centuries.

deliberate for pragmatic purposes. Relationship is perceived to be: “1) connection; a particular connection; 2) connection by blood or marriage; 3) an emotional connection between people, sometimes involving sexual relations”.²² Relationship in western culture is deemed, for the human being, to be discretionary rather than necessary. It is presumed one can choose to be or not to be in relationship, even with one’s parents, without such choice impacting on the rest of reality. In this the west could learn much from the east where some cultures have an enduring, even eternal relationship with parents and ancestors.

Without the need for a bonding agent, neither truth, nor love, nor any other transcendent value is necessary for there to be a relationship, a connection. Effect proceeds directly from cause. If transcendent values have any place at all, that place is specific to the individual relationship. One might say that for western culture, relationship is singularly horizontal with no depth dimension, no vertical. When a specific relationship demonstrates the presence of transcendent values it is deemed extraordinary, unusual, even heroic.

Yet a cause-effect connection is not the ordinary experience of relationship lived in practice. Every loving human relationship, be it parental, marital, friendship, or any other, is experienced in a trinitarian context. There are always the two (or more) in relationship, and the bonding agent(s) of love, or respect, or trust, or loyalty, or a combination of any or all of these, between them. Humans *live* a relational reality even if they do not recognise – intellectually – that they do so.

The Relationship Between Knower and Knowledge

In chapter two it was noted that what is perceived to be real is largely a matter of interpretation, and a variety of human experience will inevitably deliver a variety of interpretations, as is evident in the creation myths of different cultures.²³ However with faith, spirit, intuition – in a word mystery – eliminated, and intellect elevated to principal referent for meaning, differences in interpretations are no longer accepted as different perceptions of the same reality. When intellect arbitrates reality, ego enters the arena with judgement. Knowledge is perceived to be synonymous with truth and is the personal possession of the intellect that has acquired it as another object distinct from itself. This perception contradicts the claim of St. Thomas Aquinas: that the thing known exists in some

²²*Macquarie Dictionary*, s.v. “relationship”.

²³Greek creation myths are compared to those of other cultures. *Encyclopedia of Religion* 2nd ed. s.v. “Cosmogony”; Robert Graves, *Greek Myths*, Vol I (London: Folio Society, 1996-2003).

way in the knower. “It is not to be explained in terms of any action of the knower upon the thing known. What is caused is the new way of existing, that is, in the knower”.²⁴

When knowledge is personal possession reality becomes what it *appears* to be to the intellect that has claimed possession. That is, reality becomes an intellectual cause-effect construct which can be manipulated by the intellect that ‘owns’ it. Comparative judgement rather than imparative (relational) sharing is made the context for reality *and* relationships – not reality as relationship. Separated from reality, relationship can give birth to power-plays and exploitation.²⁵ Intellects that possess the most knowledge can assume a position of superiority.

In this paradigm modern science finds its ground and its ability to tamper with reality, unfettered by a referent for meaning outside itself. Division inexorably opens upon the human landscape when one interpretation believes it necessary to deny and/or invalidate another. This is the second moment of kairological consciousness described in chapter three, currently the predominant moment for western culture. With time and the development of modern science the human person has given more and more credence to the reality available to intellect, ultimately arriving at the position where intellect is the criterion of reality itself.²⁶

The position of intellect as principle referent for meaning is now unassailable ... except it be challenged by other intellects ... maintaining division and conflict without end on the human landscape. Community has more to do with a collection of individuals sharing the same interpretation(s) of reality – a power play – than it does with relationship on a trinitarian paradigm where the referent for reality is transcendent.

Knower and Knowledge of God

Presuming the ability to objectify and understand the rest of reality, and ultimately her/himself, it was inevitable that the human person would arrive at the underlying divisive decision – to subject God, intellect’s predecessor as principle referent for meaning, to intellectual scrutiny; to decide intellectually whether or not God exists. This has been done unceremoniously and, for all science’s insistence that its knowledge is clear, distinct and

²⁴Joseph Owens, "Aquinas On Cognition as Existence" *Philosophical Association* 48(1974)75.

²⁵The above paragraph was distilled from Panikkar’s explication of ‘comparative’ and ‘imparative’. Panikkar *Invisible Harmony*, 173.

²⁶“Most significant was Parmenides’s declaration of the autonomy and superiority of the human reason as judge of reality.” Tarnas, *Passion of the Western Mind*, 21.

certain, it was done unscientifically. ‘God’ was not permitted to remain even as the prevailing hypothesis until research could remove – or substantiate – divine reality. Individual intellects merely made the decision to accept or reject the reality of God: to be theist or atheist. Brilliant intellectuals like Ludwig Feuerbach and Auguste Comte posited convincing arguments for alternatives to God.²⁷ The main contender for the position of ‘god’ was the human mind. God, it was claimed, was merely the figment of human imagination and could be easily – and beneficially – removed. Removing God from the human mind was Freud’s self-appointed mission. In western culture today God is given credence – or not – on predominantly intellectual grounds. Personal experience of God is held suspect, even by many who profess to be believers.

The pre-Enlightenment wisdom of *crede ut intelligas*, believe that you may understand, is largely reversed. It is now: ‘understand so that you may believe’. The wisdom that knew the reality of God to be beyond human comprehension, beyond intellectual apprehension, is lost. The naïve faith born in primordial consciousness no longer carries credibility. Or does it?

Cause-Effect and Relationship: A Conversation

There are those who perceive reality to be an impersonal, sometimes random, cause-effect process.²⁸ There is much to support this perception, for certainly effect proceeds from cause and is the appearance of reality. But is it merely appearance, or is it actual reality? That is to say, is cause-effect all that there is to reality, or is reality something deeper that is manifested in cause-effect. Then there are those who perceive reality to be personal and purposeful, nothing random about it; in a word, relational.²⁹ Both perceptions acknowledge that while effect proceeds from cause, effect can, in significant ways, be made to be other than it might be by one with the knowledge and imagination to make modifications. But are these modifications creative transformation? Are they potential that is coming-into-being reality? Or are they changes to a cause-effect structure made to serve the individual – an abstract concept outside the I-thou relational structure? Environmental changes can

²⁷McGrath, *The Twilight of Atheism*, (New York: Doubleday, 2004), 48-83.

²⁸Brian Greene, *The Fabric of the Cosmos: Space, Time and the Texture of Reality* (New York: Random House, 2005).

²⁹Denis Edwards, *The God of Evolution* (New York: Paulist Press, 1999). We will meet several more who share this perception later in this chapter.

certainly appear to be creatively transformative, except that time often exposes them to be so non-relational as to be destructive.

One example should suffice to demonstrate the meaning here. I think of the rabbit infestation on the Australian landscape when that animal was introduced to a landscape alien to it. Was that infestation the effect of a specific cause (lack of natural predator) or was there more to it? Was it alteration of relationship with the rest of reality, in this case the rabbit's reality? Did the alien landscape have an effect, even now unknown, upon the reality of the rabbit? Darwinian theory would suggest it did. Did the rabbit have an effect, even now unknown, upon the landscape to which it was alien ... in which it relationally did not belong? The answers to these questions cannot now be known in full measure.

It is not difficult to find a myriad of other examples where human manipulation of cause and effect has had detrimental effects. Neither is it difficult to find a myriad of examples where manipulation has demonstrated itself to be beneficial. Is it merely random chance that the human person's interference is beneficial or detrimental? Or is there a referent for what is real outside of human intellect? A parallel can be seen here between change and transformation as explicated in the previous chapter. Re-examining the issue here with a different nuance may yield some insight.

Change versus Transformation: Continuing the Conversation

There are those who, with the aid of analysis, have demonstrated quite effectively that the human being is a creature governed by cause and effect, just like the rest of reality, however apparent the ability to make choices might be: for example, Sigmund Freud's Pleasure Principle. On the other hand there are those who reject this negation of freedom, demonstrating their position with equal effectiveness. Victor Frankl is such a one.

Denying the cause-effect structure of the Pleasure Principle, Frankl upheld the authentic freedom of the human person to choose how to *relate* to the rest of reality in the face of 1) the instincts, 2) inherited disposition, and 3) environment. He supported his position with a variety of examples covering all three situations.³⁰

Noting the availability of freedom to choose how to respond even (or perhaps especially) to suffering demonstrated by those in the concentration camp of Auschwitz, Frankl deconstructed the denial of freedom inherent in Freud's cause-effect analysis. Surely

³⁰Victor Frankl, *The Doctor and the Soul* (New York: Random House, 1955) xviii – xix.

suffering is the one area of the human condition where the human person would, if she/he could, rework the cause-effect paradigm.

Freud once said: “Try and subject a number of very strongly differentiated human beings to the same amount of starvation. With the increase of the imperative need for food, all individual differences will be blotted out, and, in their place, we shall see the uniform expression of the one unsatisfied instinct.” But in the concentration camps we witnessed the contrary; we saw how, faced with the identical situation, one man degenerated while another attained virtual saintliness. Thus, man is by no means merely a product of heredity and environment.³¹

What would inspire any human person to accept and endure, perhaps even embrace suffering, if not a referent for meaning outside individual ego? The alteration to life on the human landscape – to a greater or lesser extent – made by such choices is witnessed by each of us virtually every day. Every parent of a wayward child understands suffering that is willing to suffer. Why? To what ‘meaning’ is the endurance and acceptance of suffering a response? Is love not the meaning to which suffering willingly (but not happily) responds? But love does not meet cause-effect criteria. From a scientific perspective, suffering – all suffering – is evil. Is the ability to embrace suffering therefore a masochistic imperative inherently present in some individuals? Or does suffering, in some mysterious way, actually bring about transformation?

B.F. Skinner, the author of *Walden Two* explicated his fictional novel in a more factual work where he asserts that the human person has no indwelling personality, no will, no intention, no self-determinism and no personal responsibility.³² He insists that modern concepts of freedom and dignity have to fall away so humans can be *intelligently* controlled to behave as they should. Only intelligent control can salvage the human condition.

What Skinner failed to do, except in his fictional *Walden Two*, was produce the necessary intelligence.³³ Even in *Walden Two* the necessary intelligence was more the result of an accident than deliberate intention. It had to be. There was not the intelligence to produce the necessary (uncorrupted by the desire for power), intelligence! Skinner remained convinced that intelligent control would ultimately remove all suffering. In this he merely demonstrated his lack of understanding of human nature with its inherent desire for freedom.

³¹Frankl, *The Doctor and the Soul*, xix.

³² B. F. Skinner, *Beyond Freedom and Dignity* (U.S.A.: Knopf 1971).

³³ B. F. Skinner, *Walden Two* reprint (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company Inc., 2005).

Frankl's insight quoted above came out of suffering inflicted by Nazi 'intelligent control', one of the many failed attempts at political redemption mentioned in the previous chapter.

Is the presumption of intelligent control, so obviously bizarre in Skinner's vision, so very different from the 'healing' of mind altering drugs for the mentally ill? From depression to psychosis mind altering medication is not only socially acceptable but often legally (justifiably?) enforced on the sufferer. In the mental health arena acceptance of suffering is unacceptable, and willingness to suffer is unadulterated madness. Yet if we face the issue squarely all we have, as Gadamer pointed out in the Gadamer-Habermas debate covered in chapter two, is an 'in power' group imposing its ideology on an 'out of power' group. One group must suffer if only from the deprivation of freedom, the same deprivation imposed by political ideologies.

Ideology – Lack of Tolerance

To restate briefly, the concern of Habermas was the potential for ideology and its resultant prejudice to undermine understanding. Gadamer's appeal to 'the tradition' to arbitrate between dialogue partners was justifiably rejected by Habermas on the ground that 'the tradition' might be nothing more than the ruling party protecting its self interest.

Even a cursory look at ideology discloses that it is fundamentally a lack of tolerance, a perception of reality circumscribed by a given notion.³⁴ By ideology is meant the intellectual framework constructed to defend a given position. Intellectual frameworks are necessary to communicate a position, a belief, and as such they can dialogue with other positions, other thoughts, and other beliefs. It is when explanation is reduced to a formula for *defending* rather than explaining a given position that ideology is born. Even religion, that human vehicle of transcendence, can become ideological. While this is obvious in religious fundamentalism, it lives in less obvious, more subtle concepts with claims to being religious.

When transcendence becomes an idea, a concept, and is no longer a myth, it shows its internal contradiction. The concept of absolute transcendence denies what it supposedly affirms: that there is something 'beyond' the very idea of this beyond.³⁵

³⁴In these pages Panikkar presents an indepth exploration of ideology and its attendant lack of tolerance. *Myth, Faith and Hermeneutics*, 25-34.

³⁵Panikkar, *Myth, Faith and Hermeneutics* 28.

We seem to be irredeemably trapped in a conceptualised version of reality that requires proof, certainty, before we accept it. The deeper reality, relationship, seems lost.

Intolerance – Reflections from the Witness

The realisation that one's beliefs, however strong and sincere they may be, are not the criterion of what is real soon reveals that the society in which one lives is deeply entrenched in ideology, if by ideology is meant a belief or opinion not open to question.³⁶ Take for example the societal disbelief in recovery from mental illness. The impact of this upon the one who is recovering has the potential to so undermine recovery that it may defeat it altogether.

Months of trying to reassure well meaning acquaintances that one is fully recovered seems futile. Worse, it is not possible to relate ordinarily to others who subtly infer that one's mental and emotional stability are fragile and not be trusted, nor should they expect to be trusted. It is enough to drive a sane person mad! Time and patience eventually reveal the ideological nature of societal disbelief. Sadly it is evident across the whole human landscape. The alcoholic is forever an alcoholic, the drug addict eternally a drug addict, so too for the criminal, the paedophile and so on. Professional healers seem especially reluctant to allow the reality of transformation, of redemption.³⁷ Obvious change such as giving up alcohol or drugs, or acting like a normal person after having been 'diagnosed' mentally ill, seems to mean that one is acting out a part. The 'real self', the drug addict or alcoholic, or schizophrenic, or whatever, is ever lurking in the background, threatening to break loose. Society does not believe in redemption! There are voices that preach redemption: pastors, priests, ministers of various religions, but few seem to believe in it as an accomplished reality, awaiting only recognition and affirmation.

For the witness whose recovery from mental illness is initiated at the level of *mythos*, societal norms eventually lose whatever authority they may have had as the touchstone of reality. An implicit, unreflected insight is validated: belief, however strong it may be, is no

³⁶Both A.A. and GROW name admission of error as the first step (each has a 'Twelve Step' programme) to recovery. Humility about personal opinions/convictions is integral to the healing journey.

³⁷My own recovery came close to failing due mainly to the 'prophetic' voice of professionals who did not believe in redemption – I could never cope without medication. I was saved by the primordial voice as it resonated within me, and was echoed by friends who did believe in redemption. GROW has a beautiful affirmation, not written, but heard often in leadership meetings: "You love people well." Pierce, *Ordinary Insanity* 113-128.

guarantee of truth. With this insight the belief or disbelief of others loses its ability to arbitrate one's reality, and therefore the ability to fashion one's *being*. It is the primordial voice that calls forth being and it is the resonance of this voice that is sought ever after in human relationships. It is relationship-with the primordial caller that gives one the strength to stand alone – if and when necessary – ultimately delivering mental health.

Freedom for those trapped in social ideology requires reciprocal good faith. The ongoing question, in one form or another: “How are you now dearie?” with its attendant nuance, eventually drew from me the standard reply: “I’m well and truly over my mental illness, thank you. I can’t wait until you get over it.” Many friendly acquaintances accepted the challenge, broke the confines of the social ideology to become very good friends. Freedom, when it is truly freedom, frees both oppressed and oppressor.³⁸

If there is any proof that reality is relational it is tolerance that provides that proof. Learning to be tolerant becomes the equivalent of extending and enhancing relationships, transforming the concrete landscape in the process. The transformative praxis of practical theology becomes visible.

Mystical Tolerance

The word tolerance carries negative connotations that in many ways do not fit the *metanoia* of the spiritual vision, the relational reality being posited here. However Panikkar's definition of mystical tolerance is an excellent fit. In the interests of simplicity and cohesion his word ‘tolerance’ will be used with an understanding of his glossary that mystical tolerance is “the way one being exists in another and expresses the radical interdependence of all that exists.”³⁹ This definition, quoted earlier, renders mystical tolerance synonymous with relationship.

Panikkar describes what he calls ‘four moments of tolerance’.⁴⁰ The first he describes as political tolerance. This is the tolerance which best embraces the generally accepted meaning of this word. “You put up with a burden, you tolerate a lesser evil”. The second he describes as theological tolerance. While tolerance is a practical necessity “genuine tolerance would rather *not* be necessary, it would like to become superfluous, it lives in the

³⁸This point is made by both Mandela and Freire. Nelson Mandela, *Long Walk to Freedom* (Boston: Back Bay Books, 1995); Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* trans. Myra Ramos (London: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2000).

³⁹Panikkar, *Myth, Faith and Hermeneutics*, 23.

⁴⁰Panikkar, *Myth, Faith and Hermeneutics*, 22-25.

hope of disappearing.” The third he describes as philosophical tolerance. This tolerance is born of reason and respect. “It rests on the respect due to what I do not understand. It leads us to respect someone else even though we do not agree with his ideas and/or actions.” The fourth he describes as mystical tolerance and it is this tolerance, in harness with the other three, which brings the openness necessary to creatively develop potential throughout the game of life, the rhythm of life for the mentally healthy person. The rhythm of life is marked by the ever diminishing role of tolerance that is not mystical, and retreats before a growing tolerance that is mystical.

Mystical tolerance brings a harmony that is the healing of all division, beginning from within and spreading ever outward. It is visible in the catholic moment of kairological consciousness, very apparent to spiritual sight. It begins in the silence of *mythos*, in the knowing that is self-as-faith. This ‘self’ is immediately, naturally (as in spontaneously) acceptable, needing no substantiation, only affirmation from *logos*. ‘Self’ is not ‘acceptable because ...’. There is only ‘self’ acceptable because self *is*. The psychological effort to find reasons why self is acceptable appears in this mode of consciousness to be superfluous. Mystical tolerance first embraces ‘self’.

Mystical tolerance bears significantly at the intra-personal level not least because of its power to fruitfully embrace suffering – and so much suffering is generated by habitual human failure and inadequacy. The need *of* self *for* self to embrace suffering in a context of forgiveness of self is not adequately recognised either by the mentally ill or those who professionally treat them. There may be an intuitive recognition demonstrated in the survey (see Appendix A) when 67% said ‘yes’ to the question: “Do you sometimes feel there is something worthwhile to be discovered by your illness?” Indeed the ability to forgive one’s self (as opposed to excusing) for being less than one was created to be is, for the mentally ill person, the primary lesson of mystical tolerance at the intra-personal level. It is self-belief grounded, not in ‘self’, but in the primordial relationship, bearing the inherent challenge to discard excuse and rationalisation and *become*.

Mystical tolerance “presupposes that you may be capable of assuming what you tolerate. You redeem, you raise up what you tolerate; you transform it, and this transformation purifies the active agent as well as the passive agent of the tolerance.”⁴¹ In a word, mystical tolerance delivers the ground for non-judgmental relationship, even, or perhaps especially, with self. A healthy relationship with one’s self accepts fault without

⁴¹Panikkar, *Myth, Faith and Hermeneutics*, 22-23.

abdicating responsibility, either for the fault or for correction of it.⁴² The acknowledgement of faults and failings ceases to equate with either rationalising or excusing them. Tolerance of self involves 'putting up with' what cannot immediately be changed as one strives for change. With time 'you redeem, you raise up what you tolerate; you transform it.' There are no 'victims' on the redeemed landscape. Self-acceptance, while 'putting up with' what cannot be immediately changed, is where the contribution of psychology could bear much fruit. If challenge and affirmation replace excuse and rationalisation the relational nature of reality would bear as much healthy fruit as it now bears poisonous fruit.

The courage to make mistakes and forgive them opens one to accept and forgive the mistakes of others.

Mystical tolerance represents a non-objectifiable vision of the world and implies the conviction that every human act has a value that is not purely objective. This notion of tolerance implies that all reality is redeemable because it is never immutable.⁴³

Human failure and inadequacy are never immutable. They are always capable of change. More than that, all human failure and inadequacy can be transformed, redeemed. Reality is relational; it is always open to transformation.

Mystical tolerance does not 'put up with' diversity; it embraces and celebrates it. Born at the mythical level, it is defined and spoken onto the human landscape in the imperative of *logos*, of self opening to other. When *logos* loses touch with its context *mythos* (the context of every human person) diversity is rejected rather than embraced.⁴⁴ It is *rejection* of diversity, not diversity itself that fragments harmony. The divine-human dialogue (prayer), practised daily to foster and nurture the primordial relationship becomes the paradigm for dialogue in all relationships, a profound paradigm given the magnitude of the diversity. In this dialogue, when it is truly dialogical, the focus moves dramatically from self-concern to Other-concern.

The fruits of mystical tolerance can be seen in a variety of human communities colloquially called self and mutual help or support groups. When permeated by mystical

⁴²Both GROW and Alcoholics Anonymous place significant emphasis on the need for members to: a) acknowledge their inadequacy, and b) to be 'at home' with themselves even while striving to overcome inadequacy.

⁴³Panikkar, *Myth, Faith and Hermeneutics*, 23.

⁴⁴ See chapter two.

tolerance such communities are very successful in drawing strength from weakness.

Alcoholics Anonymous is one such community. GROW is another. These are perhaps the two best known, but support groups of all sorts seem to be increasing at a significant rate. A relational reality continues to manifest itself, whether or not it is acknowledged.⁴⁵ In such a climate there is the confidence to reveal personal *mythos* which in the revelation becomes *logos*. Then in the space of *pneuma*, where potential is discovered without the limits *logos* might impose upon it, new *mythoi* are created on an ever expanding horizon.⁴⁶

Compassion in this climate carries no hint of the pity that so often leaves the receiver feeling inferior. Neither is there any opportunity for playing the victim. Shared experience negates both pity and ‘tragic hero/heroine’ role-plays. Compassion in a climate of *shared* experience carries an implicit flavour of challenge. The focal point is not primarily the suffering. The focal point is growth through suffering; redemption, raising up, transforming. A long forgotten wisdom is rediscovered: the need to embrace one’s own suffering in order to share compassionately with others.

Suffering is not merely something to be endured because it cannot be avoided. Instead, suffering becomes the vehicle by which we encounter ourselves more fully. ... In our fallen literature, as Cardinal John Henry Newman called it – the examples of redemptive suffering are scarce, and one has to look deep to read the ambiguous signs of its presence.⁴⁷

It is not possible to meet ‘other’ with the compassion necessary to embrace all the pain of the human condition unless one is willing to embrace suffering, both of self and other, in mystical tolerance.⁴⁸

⁴⁵There are now probably several hundred support groups where members share a common concern or experience. The spontaneous movement of people toward one another in a spirit of sharing, seeking loving/understanding relationship speaks volumes for a relational paradigm of reality.

⁴⁶Panikkar gives an insightful explication of this process, quoted briefly in the second chapter of this dissertation. Panikkar, *Myth, Faith and Hermeneutics*, 100-101.

⁴⁷Paul Mariani, “The Unshapeable Shock Night”, *America*: 180:5 (1999) 16-21.

⁴⁸Tillar points out that Johannes Baptist Metz’s overriding concern with remembered suffering reverberates in Schillebeeckx’s theology, and their shared emphasis on the realization of salvation within secular history largely accords with the viewpoint of Hebrews. A non-dualistic conception of history and salvation is essential to a theology of suffering that is focused on the realization of the *humanum*; Elizabeth K. Tillar “Critical Remembrance and Eschatological Hope in Edward Schillebeeckx’s Theology of Suffering for Others”, *Heythrop Journal* 44 (Jan 2003) 15-42.

The success of Alcoholics Anonymous and GROW is perceived to lie in their various programmes, which are certainly part of their success. However the unparalleled power of relationship in a context of mystical tolerance has been largely overlooked. In the openness of dialogical dialogue entrenched attitudes (that which we believe so strongly we do not realise we believe it - *mythos*) are exposed, leaving one amazed at the irrationalities by which one has lived (*logos*), and new ways of thinking and living evolve (*pneuma*).

Under psychiatric care much time had been spent analysing me, exploring my past, my childhood, the depths of my psyche. Now with this self and mutual help group which would prove to be so beneficial, I was told to forget about analysing myself, and get on with ordinary living – as though I was a normal person! ... What is so ridiculous to me now is that I argued in favour of the medical approach, which I knew with the strength of my own experience did not work!⁴⁹

Relational communities such as support groups remove the intense focus on ‘self’, which is not only symptomatic of the sickness, but incorporated into treatment under professional care. There is an implicit movement outward from self to other, implicit but so strong it is more love of neighbour *as self*, than it is love of neighbour as neighbour. While it is only natural that compassion for ‘other’ flows readily where human beings share similar experiences of life, mystical tolerance, with its implicit desire to raise up, to transform, brings forth a compassion void of pity; compassion that is synonymous with the self-love that is a gospel, rather than a psychological value: the desire for one’s own perfection, rather than acceptance of one’s inherent weaknesses. There is need for both on our human journey. The primordial relationship fosters and nurtures the self-love that is a gospel value, while yet forgiving the weakness that thwarts perfection. We seek the echo of the primordial caller across the human landscape in: relationships that both forgive us for ‘not being’ while challenging us to be all that we can be; relationships woven by love from the fabric of truth; relationships lived out in ‘good faith’.

⁴⁹Pierce *Mental Illness, Fact & Fiction*, 73-74. The precise events leading to the discovery of the futility of analysis and the destructive nature of ego-focus are described in Pierce, *Ordinary Insanity* 89-94.

Faith Revisited

We are used to placing the word ‘faith’ in a theological or transcendent context. While this is not incorrect it overlooks the reality that faith plays a part in ordinary, everyday life.

‘Good faith’ is an expression common to quite a few languages. Obviously this cannot be identified with theological faith, but we think some pertinent observations on this subject are possible in the overall problematic of the relations between *mythos* and *logos*.⁵⁰

Good faith is innocent, deprived of all knowledge. Good faith accepts knowledge on trust. It does not analyse. It stands weak, impoverished before scrutiny. Good faith believes in what it does not see, does not know. Good faith participates in truth by being so unitary it permits no reflection, protecting truth from becoming an issue of debate. Good faith is practised to a greater or lesser extent in everyday life by everyday people, often implicitly, but just as often explicitly. Strangers meet in a bar, share information about who they are, and leave believing they have gained some genuine knowledge of one another.⁵¹

Speaking of good faith implies there is also bad faith. Bad faith seeks to prove what is true. It deals in fact, not truth; it proceeds upon critical reflection, ever under scrutiny. One might say bad faith is what good faith becomes when it seeks to ‘prove’ itself.

As soon as good faith submits to judgement, as soon as it becomes problematic and wishes to justify itself, to be proven, to defend itself instead of turning the other cheek, it ceases to be ‘good faith’ and becomes good (or bad) science or even ‘bad faith’ should it insist on being called faith.⁵²

This is not to say that good faith has no content of intellect. Unity does not exclude the intellectual. It merely transcends it. However transcending intellect demands a position of trust many might perceive to be an unacceptably credulous position. But isn’t this precisely the issue? How could people do something as mundane as extend their circle of friends without practising good faith? Indeed how could they have a circle of friends to expand

⁵⁰Panikkar, *Myth, Faith and Hermeneutics* 213.

⁵¹This paragraph and the next were distilled from: Panikkar, “Excursus on Good Faith” in *Myth, Faith and Hermeneutics*, 213-218.

⁵²Panikkar, *Myth, Faith and Hermeneutics*, 215.

except it was developed initially by good faith? A mundane example might best clarify what is meant here by an embrace of intellect that both includes and transcends intellect.

Faithfully Playing the Game of Life

Life lived in a climate of trust, of good faith, might be called ‘the game of life’.⁵³ Paradoxically it is in the arts and leisure activity such as sports that the solemnity that is the game of life is best preserved. At the same time levels of consciousness are unified, allowing the inclusion of intellect while yet transcending it.

The savage himself knows no conceptual distinction between being and playing; he knows nothing of identity, of image or symbol. And that is why it may be asked whether the mental condition of the savage in his sacred observances is not best understood by retaining play as the primary term.⁵⁴

Hans-Georg Gadamer redeemed the meaning of play from the subjective sense with which it had been invested, returning it to the rhythms of the natural order where it is released from player manipulation and allowed once more to be itself, a free-flowing interaction with the rest of reality.⁵⁵ This allows the player to enjoy subjective freedom, to engage in a game played for its own sake, carefree with regard to the ultimate outcome. “The player experiences the game as a reality that surpasses him.”⁵⁶ Fully, freely playing the game of life entails trust, good faith, letting go of control. “The structure of play absorbs the player into itself, and thus frees him from the burden of taking the initiative, which constitutes the actual strain of existence.”⁵⁷ Playing the game of life is free flowing spiritual activity rather than controlled pursuit of individual ambition. Playing the game of life in this sense is ‘doing’ practical theology.

⁵³Gadamer, “Play as the Clue to Ontological Explanation” in *Truth and Method*, 101-110.

⁵⁴Gadamer quoting Huizinga, *Truth and Method*, 104.

⁵⁵“I wish to free this concept [play] of the subjective meaning that it has in Kant and Schiller and that dominates the whole of modern aesthetics and philosophy of man. When we speak of play in reference to the experience of art, this means neither the orientation nor even the state of mind of the creator or of those enjoying the work of art, nor the freedom of a subjectivity engaged in play, but the mode of being of the work of art itself.” Gadamer, *Truth and Method* 101.

⁵⁶Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 109.

⁵⁷Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 105.

Spirituality Revisited

Playing the Game of Life – a Spiritual Activity

Having a sense of purpose with attendant ambition to achieve something is not under attack here. What is under attack is a focus so narrow it demeans or excludes considerations other than those conducive to individual achievement; a focus that tends to exploit relationship in its effort to manipulate reality for individual benefit. When it succeeds it manifests itself in pride or power-play. When it fails it can leave the player feeling that life is not worth living.

Excessive focus on individual achievement tends to lead the ambitious to ‘play self’, to enact a role before an audience for a specific purpose. The more open and trusting attitude is to ‘play life’ so utterly absorbed in the game that *cause-effect materializes merely as visible proof* that reality is relational. Rather than needing to control and/or manipulate reality to one’s advantage, it is in the very playing that creative transformation takes place. In this way it is not change that is implemented but transformation that emerges. Change is restricted to the limitations of intellect. Transformation emerges beyond the confines of intellect where infinite openness allows creative possibilities that include but also surpass the range of intellect.

Take a specific example such as the game of tennis. In order to play it successfully the player needs to learn the rules, to practice long hours until the various strokes are mastered and can be executed so spontaneously that during the game the choice of stroke is more reflexive than reflective, responding to the rhythm of the game. So too with life, learning the rules and practising long hours equates with education and lessons learned from experience. However when the game itself is played seriously, it is played in spontaneous obedience to the rules and lessons learned in practice. It is *play* in as much as it is openness that flows with the rhythm of life. It is the ordinary, everyday practise of life as it is lived by ordinary, everyday people who are unaware that their consciousness precedes, includes and extends beyond intellect. Life is not lived on an intellect only plane.

Almost anyone can learn to play a sport. Almost anyone can learn to paint a picture. Almost anyone can learn to play a musical instrument. Yet when one gazes at a great work of art, or listens to a melody played by a great musician, or watches a great sports person perform, one is aware that there is something more here than an impersonal product of cause-effect. There is something deeper, more spiritual. More than that, in some sense great ‘play’ involves the spectator. It has an impact on the coming-into-being of the spectator. It touches

the reality of those who watch so they too participate in the ‘game’. We are drawn into relationship with the art, the music, the game – and those who play for the love of it.⁵⁸

The game of dialogue is the greatest potential between human beings for relationship to emerge and reveal itself as the fabric of reality. It is therefore precisely in dialogue that such potential can be aborted by one or more dialogue partners seeking to hold control, changing the rules or even changing the game. Manipulation and control destroy the natural rhythm of the game, turning it from one of dialogue to one of power-play.

One begins to understand that relational reality necessarily has a principle referent for meaning external to the dialogue partners. This authority, this referent for meaning arbitrates during dialogical dialogue from the open space of *pneuma*, revealing a trinitarian paradigm to a reality that is relational.

Dialogue is an indispensable step along the path towards human self-realization, the self-realization both of each individual and of every human community. Although the concept of “dialogue” might appear to give priority to the cognitive dimension (*dia-logos*), all dialogue implies a global, existential dimension. It involves the human subject in his or her entirety; dialogue between communities involves in a particular way the subjectivity of each.⁵⁹

Dialogue that involves the entirety of the human subject involves intellect, sentiment and volition. It is not the absence of intellect that fosters good faith, but openness to transcendence that accepts that intellect is not the ultimate referent for meaning.

Comparative or scientific knowledge is valid and even beneficial while it remains in its own domain. But even here it cannot be its own ultimate referent for meaning. Science reveals the objective structures of reality that allow it to interact with the *appearance* of reality, with cause and effect. If its interaction is determined by meaning circumscribed by human intellect it will inevitably lack vision. On the visible landscape time will reveal its erroneous conclusions – and humanity may have to pay a terrible price for those conclusions.

When science presumes to interact with the reality of the human person, any erroneous conclusions, while perhaps not immediately visible, can be horrendously

⁵⁸This paragraph distilled from Gadamer, *Truth and Method* 105-110.

⁵⁹John Paul II, “*Ut Unum Sint*” [May They be One]. Encyclical Letter (25th May 1995). *Papal Encyclicals* [Internet]. Rome: The Vatican, Available from <http://www.papalencyclicals.net/all.htm> accessed 5 May 2005.

destructive. Humanity has paid and continues to pay a terrible price for science's perceptions of human mental health, especially when it betrays faith or acts in bad faith by announcing as factual that which is not factual. I refer here to the 'diagnosis' of mental illness and the even more destructive prognosis of 'incurable', as though an illness whose cause is unknown could be faithfully pronounced 'incurable'.

A Summary of the Alternatives

Pandora's box has been opened and cannot now be closed. Human progress demands that good faith retreat before the march of scientific knowledge. The spiritual vision that would perceive unity is denied the optic nerve of its sight. It is denied faith.

More and more Man takes his daily existence in hand and for this he needs to know more and more and to believe less and less. Or, better said, human knowledge advances because it usurps the domain of belief, the realm of 'good faith'.⁶⁰

The Judeo-Christian myth of Man's expulsion from paradise is played out in human history. The original fall seems to be an originating fall and original sin an originating sin "repeated in each person and each generation in an eschatological crescendo."⁶¹ We seem unable to dialogue openly with one another. Intellectual concepts replace *pneuma* with ideology. Can we find a way out of this impasse?

When Raimon Panikkar placed truth above and between the dialogue partners, as described in chapter two, he implicitly connected them to the Weaver of the fabric of reality, if there is a Weaver and if reality is relational. If dialogue partners remain eternally open, the Weaver of the fabric of reality is capable of actualising the potential that is creative possibility as only the Weaver can. The human person cannot create. The human person can only participate in creativity, just as she/he can only participate in truth.

If cause and effect are the fabric of reality, then reality is whatever the stronger dialogue partner decides it is. In place of the Weaver, as in the relational structure, control by the stronger dialogue partner is necessary. Without control, without manipulation or orchestration of reality, the randomness of cause and effect would take over and the human

⁶⁰Panikkar, *Myth, Faith and Hermeneutics*, 215.

⁶¹Panikkar, *Myth, Faith and Hermeneutics*, 216.

being would be nothing more than a pawn in a game of chance played by an impersonal cause-effect fate, in modern times called pre-destination or pre-determination.

Relational reality is a possibility as one interpretation among others, not in contradiction to reason, but there is not and cannot be scientific proof to support this position. Neither is there scientific proof to support the cause-effect position. In logical terms both cause-effect and relational reality stand on equal ground. Cause-effect may be the manifestation of a relational reality. Relationship may be the effect of a specific cause. Reality, as previously noted, is two-way dependent of appearance.⁶²

Exploring a relational structure to reality obviously cannot proceed by the same methodology used to explore a cause-effect structure. The only method we can use is the ancient 'believe in order to understand'; a theological interpretation is required.

If there is a Creator of the universe, that is, One who has made all that there is out of nothing (and human beings are incapable of comprehending nothing) then the universe must reflect the Creator, for until creation, Creator is all that is. It is first and foremost from creation that we learn of the Creator. If the Creator is relational then the fabric of reality is relational, and if the fabric of reality is relational, then the Creator is relational. Reason insists it cannot be otherwise. This point was well made by St Thomas Aquinas.⁶³ And so we must proceed on faith, acknowledging that if reality is woven from a relational fabric, that fabric is visible only to the eyes of faith. But faith is faith. Faith may inform and in-form reason, but it is not 'constructed' by it.⁶⁴ Articulating faith-fully is bringing forth into *logos* the faith resident in *mythos*. Embryonic faith comes forth, first and foremost as experience, and experience covers the full spectrum of life, both concrete and spiritual.

Mythos and Logos – Closing Division

If self is real to the extent that it participates in the divine life, how can reality be anything but relational? But self also participates in the humdrum activity of daily life in the world. How can that life be a participation in the divine life?

Rahner's analysis discloses human ex-sistence to be essentially a '*worldly-being-towards*' an absolute horizon. In this transcendence, we always find

⁶² *The Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy*, s.v. "reality".

⁶³ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*. Translated by English Dominicans (New York: Benziger Brothers), 1947, 1. 2. 2.

⁶⁴ See chapter three.

ourselves already ‘outside’ as we ceaselessly reach for the absolute. As indicated earlier, this reaching is never an abstract activity but always the concrete “condition of the possibility of what we ... have to be and always also are in our most humdrum daily life”⁶⁵

Why do we tend to see two separate realities, one spiritual, the other the humdrum activity of daily life?

A summary of *mythos*, *logos* and *pneuma* as communication categories necessary to a relational paradigm of reality will here be helpful if only to remind the reader of what has already been said regarding these categories. They are vital to the task of understanding; vital to the task of practical theology throughout this dissertation.

Mythos and *logos* are distinct, but so too they are inseparable. Neither can deliver reason without the other. The translation of *mythos* into *logos* demands the infinite openness of a wisdom no less than truth. It demands *pneuma*. *Pneuma* is not of itself truth but a place of trust, of openness to divine authority that might be termed the ‘bonding agent’ between dialogue partners. Without truth there can be no bonding; there can be no authentic relationship-with. Truth is not knowledge *about* the objective structures of reality. Truth is *participation in* reality.

We are reminded of the words of Emmanuel Levinas quoted at the beginning of this chapter: “It is not because of the human being that there is truth. It is because being in general is inseparable from its *openness*, because there is truth, or, if one likes, because being is intelligible that there is humanity.”⁶⁶ Jesus of Nazareth did not say “I speak the truth”. He said “I am Truth” (Jn. 14: 6). How can we *be truth* as we live the ordinary, mundane, daily routine we have here called ‘playing the game of life’? How can we ‘do’ practical theology?

Mental Health: Playing the Game of Life

The inability to maintain the mundane, routine habits necessary to the ordinary living of life is, to a greater or lesser extent, a universal ‘symptom’ of mental illness regardless of specific diagnosis. It is certainly important to provide organised activity, arts and crafts, bushwalking, picnics and similar activities arranged for groups by professional carers. But attention should also be given to very ordinary things: when the mentally ill person gets out

⁶⁵Peters, *Gadamerian Reading of Karl Rahner*, 296 (italics original).

⁶⁶Levinas, *Basic Philosophical Writings*, 3.

of bed; whether they shower regularly; eat adequate meals at appropriate times; keep their dwelling place reasonably clean and tidy; perform a reasonable number of tasks each day, such as mowing the lawn or weeding the garden. Professionals [i.e., carers, psychiatrists or psychologists] need to give sufficient weight to these aspects of life's daily rhythms for the mentally ill.⁶⁷

The realisation that the trivia of daily routine is significant comes coherently through the voice of witnesses who bear testimony to the mysteries of life, the rhythm of life they have discovered in the living.⁶⁸ It is this testimony, repeated many times over, that gives weight to the claim that what matters is the present moment – the now. Rahner's words quoted earlier echo with the realisation that coming-into-being is a 'condition of the possibility of what we have to be and always also are in our most humdrum daily life'. Emphasis is placed on the one dimension of time essentially ignored by mental health professionals; the present, in which one learns to integrate the past toward hope for the future. Psychology places emphasis on the past in an attempt to explain how one arrived at the present level of difficulty. On the other hand theology places its emphasis on the future, sometimes ignoring the present. Dialogue between the two disciplines might help both to appreciate the sacredness ever present in the *now*.

Appreciating the *now* comes from shared experience rather than analysis. The ordinary practice of living is engaged to heal the wounds of life. Slowly the insight of Victor Frankl quoted earlier is learned. That is, it is less the experience of life than the way one chooses to interpret and deal with experience that is either growthful or destructive. Life is not a skill to be learned or an event to be analysed. It is an experience to be shared. Comparative judgement is replaced by imparative sharing when persons who respect one another as an equally original source of understanding are willing to learn as they teach.

We cannot compare (*comparare* – that is, to treat on an equal – par – basis), for there is no fulcrum outside. We can only *imparare* – that is, learn from the other, opening ourselves from our standpoint to a dialogical dialogue that does not seek to win or to convince, but to search together

⁶⁷The GROW programme focuses strongly on what it calls 'Practical Tasks'. Each person is given a task at each group meeting, and asked to report on that task at the following meeting. These tasks are aimed at restoring to life the normalcy of routine, daily activity. That something as simple as ordinary, daily routine impacts dramatically on the restoration of mental health comes as a surprise even to the mentally ill person. Only in the living experience is the value of such activity appreciated. Pierce, *Ordinary Insanity* 90-91.

⁶⁸There is an almost sacrosanct section in both A.A. and GROW for what is call 'Personal Testimony'.

from our different vantage points. It is in this dialogue where we forge the appropriate language to deal with the questions that emerge in encounter.⁶⁹

In dialogical dialogue attention is focused on the present moment. Such presence to the present is captured in analogous circumstances for the contemplative, revealing the spiritual dimension as an element so ordinary it escapes attention. Total absorption in the present moment makes time timeless. There is no focus on a past to regret or a future to fear. The game of life absorbs the player in the moment of the playing.

The Contemplative Mood calls forth certain images; Socrates eagerly learning a new tune on his flute the night before he was to die; Luther deciding to plant an apple tree in the morning of the day on which the world would come to an end; St Louis Gonzaga continuing to play during recreation time even if he learned his death would come that very night; the delight of the Zen Master in watching the struggle of an ant in spite of the fact that he's hanging over an abyss, tied by a rope that is soon to be cut. These are examples of the contemplative attitude, whether it is called mindfulness, awareness, enlightenment, concentration, or contemplation.⁷⁰

For the one living in what Panikkar calls the tempiternal sphere, past and future do not cease to exist – that would be unreality – they simply recede, one into the past, the other into the future, and the present takes centre stage.

Tempiternity is neither an everlasting time nor a timeless eternity, but the very soul or core of time, as it were. It is not experience of a past regained or a future suddenly grasped in prophetic ecstasies; on the contrary, it is the discovery of the irreducibility of the present, the fullness of time in the now. Tempiternity is timefullness.⁷¹

The power of the present is a healing power. The game of life is played in a rhythm that vibrates in the here and now.

By inches I learned to stop focusing on myself, my problems. As I practised ordinary daily routine, re-educating my thoughts and emotions as I went, I noticed a subtle but vital change in the focus of my mind. ... Only now as I focused on the immediate present did I realise that I had not

⁶⁹Panikkar, *Invisible Harmony*, 172.

⁷⁰Panikkar, *Invisible Harmony*, 4.

⁷¹Panikkar, *Invisible Harmony*, 8.

ever tackled the daily activities in my life with any sort of care or attention. I did what needed to be done with greater and greater reluctance until decisions about small tasks became mammoth because small tasks became unimportant – because I was always dreaming about what used to be or wishing for what was not.⁷²

Now-time is presence: presence of self-to-God; presence of self-to-other; presence of other-to-self, or if you will, an awareness so spontaneous it is less intellectually aware than it is simple being-with. There is no room for excessive focus on ‘self’. Presence of self-to-self (better named as self-absorption), the isolation in which insanity lives and grows, simply dies unnoticed leaving only, in hindsight, the footprints of its absurdity.

Anxiety about the existential questions which began the decline into insanity is gone, replaced by a trust grounded in the primordial relationship. Wonder at the mystery of life is congruent with trust in the Author of life. Anxiety is transformed through trust into a peaceful sense of adventure filled with an anticipation only hope can know. This is Panikkar’s living of the new innocence on a redeemed landscape. “Man comes to silence the question: It lacks meaning. He no longer asks, he lives and has regained innocence on a higher plane.”⁷³ Questions demanding answers are replaced by silence content to *be*.

Relational Reality – A Theological Apprehension

Explicating a theological apprehension of reality can only proceed in the context of a specific religious tradition. The religious tradition upon which this dissertation must proceed is that of the author, the Judeo-Christian tradition, the only tradition with which the author is sufficiently familiar.

The God of the Judeo-Christian tradition is indisputably a relational deity. At the dawn of creation, according to the myth, there was personal relationship between God and human. “Let us make man in our own image, in the likeness of ourselves.” (Gen. 1:26). But God did more than that; he “blew the breath of life into his nostrils, and man became a living being.” (Gen.2:7). It was God’s own breath that breathed life into the human person. Life here corresponds with participation in the life of the Creator.

Expulsion from paradise was a consequence of the human person’s betrayal of relationship with God. The bonding agent in that primordial relationship was, for the humans, trust. It was trust that Adam and Eve betrayed when they ate the fruit of the only

⁷²Pierce, *Mental Illness Fact & Fiction*, 77-78.

⁷³Panikkar, *Myth, Faith and Hermeneutics*, 268.

tree in the garden of paradise whose fruit was forbidden them.⁷⁴ “You are free to eat of all the trees in the garden. But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you are not to eat; for, the day you eat of that, you are doomed to die.” (Gen. 2:17). Even as he expelled the first humans from the Garden of Eden, God made a veiled promise to redeem them. In his curse to the snake which had succeeded in tempting them to betray the trust of relationship, God said: “I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; it will bruise your head and you will strike its heel.” (Gen. 3: 15-16).

From the beginning the Old Testament is, on the one hand the story of a people who continually break the terms of a covenantal relationship with God; on the other hand it is the story of a God who is unable to give up on a people who seem incapable of fidelity to him. The Old Testament is the history of a stormy relationship between Yahweh and his people. Again and again his people break the covenant, the rules which govern the relational agreement he has made with a people he calls his own. “They will be my people and I shall be their God.” (Ezek. 11:20). Again and again Yahweh allows them to be punished by empirical forces from natural disasters, to wars, to subjugation by alien kingdoms, in his efforts to make them repent and return to relationship with him. Again and again he cannot leave them to their deserved fate, constantly reiterating his promise of redemption. “A new shoot will spring from the stock of Jesse, a new shoot will grow from his roots. On him will rest the spirit of Yahweh.” (Is. 11: 1.) “But you (Bethlehem) Ephrathah, the least of the clans of Judah, from you will come for me a future ruler of Israel.” (Mi. 5: 12). The resounding promise of a redeemer, the Messiah, sustained the Israelites through their many hardships, including the Roman occupation under which they were groaning when Jesus of Nazareth, the promised redeemer was born.

The Concept of a Redeemer

Not unreasonably the Jews expected a saviour who would present as a visible leader. Perhaps he would be a king. Perhaps he would be a commoner who would rise to the status, if not of king, then at least the equivalent of a king. There were few in his lifetime who came to accept Jesus of Nazareth as the saviour, the promised Messiah. Those few were untroubled by his humble origins and lack of political and/or religious ‘clout’ in the community. However it is fair to say that even these few did not fully comprehend that Jesus was the Son of God until after his resurrection from the dead. While he walked with them

⁷⁴The next chapter “Morality” explores human betrayal of pristine relationship with the divinity, noting that pride in self-reliance fostered and nurtured the lack of trust that initiated the original Fall.

on earth, an ordinary man with all the appearance of an ordinary man because indeed he was an ordinary man, he revealed a triune God (John. 14) and himself as one of the three Divine Persons in that Trinity. “The Father and I are one”. (John.14: 30). “Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father”. (John. 14:9). Warning them of his coming death, resurrection and finally his ascension, when he would return to his Father, he promised they would not be alone. He promised the Paraclete, the third Person of the Trinity, would be always with them. The transcendence that is inherently relational was revealed as “the Spirit of truth whom the world can never accept since it neither sees nor knows him; but you know him, because he is with you, he is in you.” (John. 14: 17.).

More than a bonding agent between two or more, the Spirit of truth resides at the deepest level of dialogue partners open to the Alpha and the Omega. Only the Spirit of truth can remove the pride of intellect. Only then can man see with the eyes of faith. Only then can reason acknowledge the truth that is itself Wisdom.

At the deepest level, the autonomy which philosophy enjoys is rooted in the fact that reason is by nature oriented to truth and is equipped moreover with the means necessary to arrive at truth. A philosophy conscious of this as its ‘constitutive status’ cannot but respect the demands and the data of revealed truth.⁷⁵

More than a Hermes, a messenger of God, Jesus was in his human personhood not merely the revealer of God, but in himself the very revelation of God. What he disclosed was on the one hand ordinary and reasonable, a reality that could not be other than it was – trinitarian. On the other hand he disclosed a truth that was scandalous. He spent his life delivering a message, painting a picture of a reality we have yet to fully comprehend. Reality is relationship-with; the human person is not an object, a creature selected and invited to divine union, but rather *invitation in his/her very being* to union with the divine. Again the voice of Levinas is heard: “The comprehension of being does not presuppose a merely theoretical attitude but the whole of human comportment. The whole human being is ontology.”⁷⁶

The human mind has struggled to articulate this reality. Theologians of recent times who have struggled with this include Catherine La Cugna, Paul Fiddes, Denis Edwards and

⁷⁵John Paul II, “*Fides et Ratio*” [Faith and Reason]. Encyclical Letter (15th September 1998). *Papal Encyclicals* [Internet]. Rome: The Vatican, Available from <http://www.papalencyclicals.net/all.htm> accessed 5 May 2005.

⁷⁶Levinas, *Basic Philosophical Writings*, 3.

John Zizioulas. La Cugna writes: “*All of reality, since it proceeds from God, is personal and relational. Both Greek and Latin theology affirm communion as the nature of ultimate reality.*”⁷⁷ Paul Fiddes notes that “if the universe is relational in nature, then society in some sense pre-exists the individual within it.”⁷⁸ Here I would suggest that more than society pre-existing the individual, it is communion or relationship-with that pre-exists society. Society is after all only a collection of individuals. Denis Edwards agrees: “I want to go further to suggest that the notion of God’s being as radically relational suggests that reality is *ontologically* relational. The very *being* of things is relational being.”⁷⁹ Zizioulas shares his view. “There is no true being without communion. Nothing exists as an ‘individual’, conceivable in itself. Communion is an ontological category.”⁸⁰ His entire book seeks to demonstrate that without relationship-with there could be no existence, no *being*.

When Adam and Eve refused to *be* invitation in Eden God did not annihilate them. God’s hand was stayed by the only thing that could stay the hand of God – love. God loves the human person with an infinite, eternal love. That was and still is the great scandal of the God-human relationship. While God asked Adam and Eve to trust him, God on his side of the relationship *loved* his human creatures. It is this that is beyond intellectual apprehension. The human person is passionately, tenderly, eternally *loved* by the God who created her/him. “God so loved the world that he gave his only Son so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.” (John. 3:15-16).

Love has never been a ‘given’ available to apprehension, let alone comprehension. It is too spiritual to be apprehended by something as limited as intellect. Yet it is a force so powerful it creates. It also actualises potential, and thus is the very life-blood of human life-formation. Love gives the human person the power to participate in life, in truth, in creative possibilities. One might say love is the breath God breathed into humans making them ‘person’ – relational *being*; giving them the power to participate in the divine life, to be partners in ‘telling’ the creation story.

⁷⁷Catherine La Cugna, *God for Us* (U.S.A.: Harper San Francisco, 1993), 248 & 249 (italics original).

⁷⁸Paul S. Fiddes, *Participating in God: A Pastoral Doctrine of the Trinity* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2000), 19.

⁷⁹Denis Edwards, *The God of Evolution* (New York: Paulist Press, 1999), 26 (italics original).

⁸⁰John Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, (New York: St Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 1985), 18.

Relationship-with – The Potential for Redemption

Redemption is possible because reality is relational. Just as one man severed that relationship, so one man could redeem and restore it – provided that one man was also God! It is in the very nature of reality as relationship-with that the whole is present in, and therefore affected by, every part; more like a hologram than a jigsaw puzzle. Only a God-human could affect such redemption. Only a God-human could draw all of creation back into union with God. This God-human was Jesus of Nazareth. His mission was to draw all of creation into himself as both human and God. “As it was by one man that death came so through one man has come the resurrection of the dead. Just as all die in Adam, so in Christ all will be brought to life.” (1 Cor. 15:20-21). Only the God-human could draw the whole of creation back into the unity that is reality, reality as ‘the radical interdependence of all that exists’.

So incomprehensible is the God-human relational reality that when humans attempted to comprehend this truth intellectually, intellect revealed its inability to grasp the relational ‘nature’ of the Creator, a corollary of which is the relational structure of reality. Brilliant but limited intellect gave birth to the first heresy of the infant Christian Church.⁸¹ In exploring the Arian heresy as ‘the problem of God’ John Courtney Murray unfolds a relational God in the very name God called himself.

In the enigmatic play on words and in the Name Yahweh that embodies its sense, Moses and his people heard not the affirmation that God is or that he is Creator but the promise that he would be present with his people. God’s utterance of his Name is to be understood in the light of the promise to Moses that precedes it (“I will be with you”).⁸²

The Arian heresy gave rise to furious debate, understandably intense and passionate; debate that does not concern us here. What is relevant here is the inspirational theology born from that debate: Trinitarian Theology is evidence of the eternal partnership between God and the human person when relationship retains its reality in truth.⁸³ Intellectual comprehension,

⁸¹ *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, Vol 1 s.v. “Arianism”.

⁸² John Courtney Murray, *The Problem of God*, 9.

⁸³ J.N.D. Kelly, “The Creed of Nicaea” and “The Meaning and Use of the Nicene Creed”, *Early Christian Creeds*, 2nd ed. (London: Longmans, 1960) 205-254.

while engaged to its fullest capacity, was not allowed to dominate revealed truth: truth beyond the apprehension of intellect.⁸⁴

From the Church Fathers who formulated what is now the Doctrine of the Trinity, to modern day theologians who grapple to expand and enhance its implications, none pretends to comprehend it.⁸⁵ It may be that this difficulty has much to do with theology's neglect, until more recent times, of what it calls the Economic Trinity, the presence of the triune God in salvation history. The assertion here is that the triune God so permeates history – the whole creation story – that there is no history that is not salvation history.⁸⁶

Theology's understanding, inadequate as it is, of the relationship between the three Divine Persons, would surely lend valuable insight to the relationship-with paradigm that is here asserted to be reality. A single word, *perichoresis*, already introduced into this dissertation will serve as an example. “[The word] comes from *perichoreo*, meaning to encompass, and it describes reciprocal relations of intimate communion. It points to a unity in which individuality and diversity find full expression in interrelationship with others.”⁸⁷ ‘Reciprocal relations of intimate communion’ is a more personalised way of saying ‘the radical interdependence of all that exists.’ Certainly either phrase captures the meaning intended in this dissertation. Theology has a wealth of revealed wisdom to assist it to do what it is at long last beginning to do – explicate the truth of a relational reality.

Cause-Effect to the Eyes of Faith

If relationship is the fabric of reality, what then do we make of cause and effect? That effect proceeds from cause is so self-evident it hardly needs mention. It was asserted at the commencement of this chapter that cause and its resultant effect are the *appearance* or manifestation of reality on the human landscape. When humans do not recognise that reality is deeper than cause-effect, the appearance on the human landscape of what cannot be

⁸⁴H. Gwatkin, *Studies of Arianism* 2nd ed. (Oregon: Wipf & Stock, 2005).

⁸⁵Karl Rahner, *The Trinity* (London: Burns & Oates, 1970); Jurgen Moltmann, *The Trinity and the Kingdom of God: The Doctrine of God* (SCM Press, 1981); Walter Kasper *The God of Jesus Christ*, (Crossroads, 1984); John O'Donnell, *The Mystery of the Triune God* (London: Sheed & Ward, 1988); Anthony Kelly, *A Trinity of Love; A Theology of the Christian God* (Michael Galzier, 1989); Anne Hunt *What are They Saying About the Trinity?* (Paulist Press, 1998).

⁸⁶“Rather than speak about a history divided into the city of humankind and the city of God, a natural plane and a supernatural plane, or a secular history and a sacred history, there is an insistence on the oneness of history.” Tillar quoting Bradford Hinze “Critical Remembrance and Eschatological Hope”, 4415.

⁸⁷Edwards, *The God of Evolution*, 21.

explained by cause-effect is, on the one hand, rejected as superstition, fantasy, illusion or plain lunacy. On the other hand it may be called ‘miraculous’. This was the point made in chapter four when it was suggested that a seamless unity between divine wisdom and power, and human faith and will, makes possible that which is impossible to cause-effect. In this light the miracles of Jesus are very ordinary relationship-with events. There was seamless unity between the man Jesus and the God he called “*Abba*”.

The ability to alter the *appearance* of reality by engaging its relational structure was not confined to Jesus of Nazareth. This ability was granted to those in seamless relationship-with him, and therefore with his Father. “In all truth I tell you, whoever believes in me will perform the same works as I do myself, and will perform even greater works.” (Jn. 14:12).

As appearance in a relational structure, cause-effect may obscure reality as effectively as it may elucidate it. What one ‘sees’ is dependent upon what one believes. C.S. Lewis made this point in his book *Miracles*, claiming that those who did not believe in miracles would find a rational explanation even if they were eye-witnesses to a miraculous event.⁸⁸

The eyes of faith can see what is hidden from intellect. The human person does indeed need to believe in order to understand. Faith as a constitutive dimension of the human person is universal, yet profoundly personal. It is this faith as it emerges in search of understanding that has the potential to open one’s eyes to the relational structure of reality, revealing *mythos* as the cultural context of the whole human family. However the searcher stands in a position of crisis. There is much danger as well as potential. The intensely, profoundly personal inexorably seeks to declare itself for, paradoxically, it is inherently relational. *Mythos* faithfully articulated in *logos* speaks reality most eloquently onto the human landscape. However when *logos* betrays the faith in *mythos* the distortion to reality can be grotesque. Terrorism, the scourge of our time, is an example of reality grotesquely distorted by a *logos* that betrays the faith in *mythos*. How can the command ‘murder your brothers and sisters’ not be a violation of relational reality?

But the answer is not to play safe and reject *mythos* and its resident faith. That is simply the opposite error. Perhaps the greatest tragedy for those who refuse to ‘risk’ any reality that is not ‘clear and distinct’ to human comprehension is that they are unable to receive revelation – to know the Love that brought them into being. Some scorn what they call institutionalised religion. Others look for guidance to the same agency, naming it traditional authority. However, traditional authority is not the source, but the communal

⁸⁸C.S. Lewis *Miracles* (San Francisco: Harper San Francisco, 2001).

‘keeper’, the protector of revelation gathered from the living experience of those attuned to divine guidance: guidance that speaks at the deepest level of the human person. It is for this reason that theology can accept the testimony of the witness. Traditional authority has the urgent and necessary task of discerning, accepting or rejecting testimony, a task that is vital to protecting the communal repository of revelation from the distortions of individual egos. The mind once lost in distortion appreciates, perhaps better than most, the need for such protection.

Discerning Divine Guidance

The experience of self as invitation to divine union stirs a profound desire to become the invitation one was created to be. This desire is not exclusive to those who have had such an experience. It is a not uncommon desire in most ordinary, honest people. But how can one actualise potential perceptible nowhere except in a new self-consciousness? How can one even validate the belief, let alone actualise its insights? Even for those who have never suffered a mental illness there is difficulty in being sure that the ‘self’ coming-into-being is indeed the self the Creator intended to come-into-being. Who has the wisdom to know, or at least to discover the will of God in a single life? It is not a wise question to put to the rigidly scientific mind. Such a mind finds such questions cause for alarm. It is not a fair question to put to any finite mind, however wise and reasonable that mind might be. If the desire is to honour the will of the Senior Partner in the primordial relationship, then guidance must come from the Senior Partner.

The concept of internal guidance is not a new or even a strictly Christian concept. The Greeks referred to “the multitude of unnamed spirits that motivate and guide life as *daimons*.”⁸⁹ While there is “no single English equivalent” to the word ‘*daimon*’, John Rexine writes: “To categorize generally we would find it used of the Divine Power (the Latin *numen*). This would signify a superhuman force.”⁹⁰ Yet this superhuman force does not overwhelm us with its power. We can resist or refuse it in our lives.

Socrates lived his life according to the dictates of his *daimon*. Ficino in the fifteenth century recommended we seek the guidance of the *daimon* that is with us from the beginning. “Whoever examines himself thoroughly will find his own *daimon*.” Ficino warned against

⁸⁹Thomas Moore, *Care of the Soul – A Guide for Cultivating Depth and Sacredness in Everyday Life* (New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 1992) 298.

⁹⁰John E. Rexine “*Daimon* in Classical Greek Literature” *Greek Orthodox Theological Review* 30:3 (1985) 335-336.

living in conflict with the *daimon* within “lest you succumb to the worst kind of soul sickness” (mental illness?). Rainer Maria Rilke suggested “diving deeply into oneself in order to find one’s own nature: ‘Go into yourself and see how deep the place is from which your life flows.’” Cicero said “it is the *animus* – the Latin translation of *daimon* – that accounts for who you are.”⁹¹ From these sources it seems that collaboration is needed if divine guidance is desired.

The Judeo-Christian tradition leaves no doubt about the source of inner guidance, promised first to those with whom Yahweh made a covenant. The covenant bound them to a code of conduct by which to live, the static authority of ‘The Law’ until, in the fullness of time Yahweh’s promised redeemer fulfilled the Law.

I shall implant my Law, writing it on their hearts. Then I shall be their God and they will be my people. There will be no further need for everyone to teach neighbour or brother, saying “Learn to Know Yahweh!” No, they will all know me, from the least to the greatest. (Jeremiah 31: 33-34).

The incarnation of God into human restored the primordial relationship and the Spirit of Truth flowed freely through the relationship-with fabric of reality, crossing every ‘t’ and dotting every ‘i’ of ‘the law’. The covenantal code of conduct was neither discarded nor changed. It was transformed. The law was transformed into love by the Spirit that is both truth and love.

I shall ask the Father, and he will give you another Paraclete to be with you for ever, the Spirit of truth whom the world can never accept since it neither sees nor knows him; but you know him, because he is with you, he is in you. (Jn. 14:15-17).

Jesus the Christ (is) announced the fulfilment of the promise of Yahweh.

‘The Law’ pre-redemption, and the openness that is the embrace of love post-redemption, become visible to the eyes of faith opened in relationship-with.⁹² There is no division, no separation from law to love. There is only transformation. Love transforms the law from a controlling mechanism that holds change in place into a natural, spontaneous

⁹¹Moore, *Care of the Soul*, 298-299.

⁹²Now we are released from the Law, having died to what was binding us, and so we are in a new service, that of the spirit, and not in the old service of a written code. (Rom. 7:6).

desire to be one-with. No longer does the human person need to control his/her desires in obedience to 'the law'. Redeemed, the human person wants only loving relationship-with Reality and avoids whatever threatens that relationship. It is love that crosses every 't' and dots every 'i' of the law.

Do not imagine that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets. I have come not to abolish but to complete them. In truth I tell you, till heaven and earth disappear, not one dot, not one little stroke is to disappear from the Law until all its purpose is achieved. (Mat. 5: 17-18).

As a working premise in this dissertation the law directs the human person *through* change to transformation that is redemption. Understandably psychology sees 'human' instinct in its fallen, unredeemed condition. Such an opinion in the field of mental health can only foster and nurture the unredeemed condition it sees. This is another example of why collaboration is needed between psychology and theology. An apprehension of reality as *redeemed* relationship cannot exclude the redeemer.⁹³

Learning to Dialogue with the Divine

For those seeking to articulate embryonic faith into coherent belief, ongoing relationship-with Reality is the reference point by which translation is made. It is also the reference point by which the real is ultimately identified and verified. This is not an extraordinary reference point. It is no more extraordinary that human beings have daily, living-in-the-moment contact with Reality with a capital 'R' than that they have such contact with reality, small 'r'. The difference is simply that Reality becomes the reference point for discerning reality. That point needs repetition many times over. The primordial relationship is the paradigm of reality.

John Henry Newman long ago identified the voice of conscience as dialogue with Reality in the process of discerning what is real, what is good and true and beautiful.

Conscience is the voice of God in the nature and heart of man, as distinct from the voice of revelation. ... Conscience is not a long-sighted selfishness, nor a desire to be consistent with oneself; but it is a messenger from Him, who both in nature and in grace, speaks to us behind a veil.⁹⁴

⁹³Psychological and political redemption are doomed to failure without the capacity to discern divine will – Reality. This was the point made in the previous chapter.

⁹⁴John Henry Newman, "Letter to the Duke of Norfolk" in *Newman Reader* Section 5 (The National Institute for Newman Studies, 2004), par. 247-249.

The voice of conscience may be heard by every human being, though all do not listen, do not engage in the dialogue. Dialogue with the divine operates, as it must, on a human level, but words are not necessarily spoken. There exists an understanding that not only needs no words, but goes beyond meaning that could be captured by words.

Real words are not mere instruments in your hands or mine, they are part of the human, cosmic and also divine interplay and they mean *what we all agree that they mean* in the very act of the dialogical interchange. Otherwise, they are no longer living words; they are dead.⁹⁵

One does not – indeed cannot – speak to God with any other than living words.

Newman notes that conscience operates as “a constituent element of the mind, as our perception of other ideas may be, as our powers of reasoning, our sense of order and the beautiful, and our other intellectual endowments.”⁹⁶ If it were not so, then relationship with God would be as impersonal and objective as are so many inauthentic human relationships, especially ones where some form of power-play is in place.

Past notions of conscience have, according to George Aschenbrenner, contributed to a misrepresentation of the voice of conscience. “Ordinarily we rush to review, in some specific detail, our actions ... so we can catalogue them as good or bad. Just what we shouldn’t do!”⁹⁷ Conscience is the voice of the divine dialogue partner, and the divine dialogue partner treats us in this dialogue with divine forbearance as an equally original source of understanding.

We bring to the conversation muddled notions of right and wrong, rationalisations, ‘reasoned’ arguments for meeting our own ego needs before the needs of ‘other’, all of this in confusion, though at times with justifiable ego-concerns. Ego as instinct for survival is also gift of the divine.⁹⁸ Inch by inch the divine dialogue partner, just by listening and understanding and giving us feedback in the truth we intuit at the depth of ourselves, helps us

⁹⁵Panikkar, *Trinity and the Religious Experience of Man*; Preface, X (italics mine).

⁹⁶Newman, “Letter to the Duke of Norfolk” par. 247.

⁹⁷George A. Aschenbrenner, “Consciousness Examen” in *Review for Religious* 31 (1972) 17-18.

⁹⁸‘Father,’ he said, ‘if you are willing, take this cup away from me. Nevertheless, let your will be done, not mine.’ (Lk. 22:42).

to find what we seek – the good, the true, the beautiful. “What we are seeking here is that gradually growing appreciative insight into the mystery which I am. Without the Father’s revealing grace this kind of insight is not possible.”⁹⁹

In the language of this dissertation conscience as divine-human dialogue is a hermeneutic experience where, in the creativity of *pneuma*, wisdom embraces diversity bringing forth unity – and truth prevails. It is not different from the way a good parent teaches a child, needing to hold in perfect balance the tension between the primacy of wisdom and the primacy of freedom. In perfect balance it is love. It is indeed an excellent paradigm for authority; the Master who comes to serve.¹⁰⁰

Aschenbrenner captures the catholic moment of kairological consciousness when he speaks, not of a conscience examen, but of consciousness examen; the discerning consciousness he claims St Ignatius had when “he was *discerning* the congruence of everything with his true Christ-centred self.”¹⁰¹ It is indeed congruence, an embracing, eminently reasonable sense of wholeness that one coming out of the fragmentation of mental illness seeks: “We are talking about an experience in faith of growing sensitivity to the unique, intimately special ways that the Lord’s Spirit has of approaching and calling us.”¹⁰²

Scientific methodology operates on a cause-effect paradigm of reality. In this paradigm the mentally ill person is often perceived to be pre-determined toward mental illness, toward isolation and fragmentation. The healing journey suggests that the human person is inherently predisposed toward unity and wholeness. The question whether reality is structured on a cause-effect basis or woven from a relationship-with fabric is here raised. Is a genetic disease the cause of isolation and fragmentation? Or has the appearance of reality been distorted by analysis that ever separates parts from the whole? Is the meta-myth of psychology – that it can analyse, categorise, judge and understand human nature – the very distortion that fosters and nurtures the distortion that is insanity? Is the denial of transformation itself obstruction to transformation? If reality is relational then the influence of the counsellor on the counselee has far reaching consequences for the reality of both.

⁹⁹Aschenbrenner, “Consciousness Examen”, 17.

¹⁰⁰Do you know what I have done to you? You call me Teacher and Lord; and you are right, for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you. Jn.13:13-15.

¹⁰¹Aschenbrenner, “Consciousness Examen”, 16 (italics original).

¹⁰²Aschenbrenner, “Consciousness Examen”, 15.

Learning to Dialogue with the Rest of Reality

The faith experience of relationship-with brings the realisation that reality is of necessity the 'radical interdependence of all that exists'. Just as 'I' am invitation to relationship-with the divine, so is every creature capable of choosing to be – or to not be. The vision of this *metanoia* does not end there. 'There' is where it begins: where self-image is most clearly reflected – in loving relationship with 'other' capable of loving relationship. Growing discernment brings the vision of a cosmos woven by love from the fabric of truth; a balance so perfect it is fragile, and humans are gifted with stewardship over this cosmic harmony.¹⁰³

In this catholic moment of consciousness "Man learns mainly by obedience, i.e., by listening (*ob-audire*) to the rest of reality which speaks to him, addresses him, teaches him."¹⁰⁴ One learns to listen for the same harmony in discerning the real as one hears *from* the Real. The human person goes forward, in a sense, by going back into the relationship-with he/she once rejected. Discerning reality in the context of the primordial relationship, so often presumed to be the special domain of the religious and the mystic, unfolds as the natural, ordinary, only authentic interpretation of reality.

If we would return to God, and find ourselves in Him, we must reverse Adam's journey, we must go back the way he came. The path lies through the centre of our own soul. Adam withdrew into himself from God and then passed through himself and went forth into creation. We must withdraw ourselves (in the right and Christian sense) from exterior things, and pass through the centre of our souls to find God.¹⁰⁵

It is a turning back in as much as it is a return to Reality. It is a going forward in as much as it is a new innocence, a new relationship-with the divine.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰³Edwards, *The God of Evolution*, 45-55.

¹⁰⁴Panikkar, *The Cosmotheandric Experience* 48.

¹⁰⁵Thomas Merton, *The New Man*, 17-118.

¹⁰⁶"In this chapter we must raise some more detailed questions about how the metaphor articulates Augustine's thought, in particular about how the 'inner' as a category of thought and experience is to be distinguished from the 'outer' – for manifestly they are correlative, mutually defining terms." Denys Turner, "Darkness and Ascent: Augustine's *De Trinitate*" *The Darkness of God* (U.S.A.: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 74.

A new innocence is required because “innocence is innocent precisely because once spoiled, it cannot be recovered.”¹⁰⁷ There is no possibility of going back to ‘the way it was’. Much time is spent by mental health professionals seeking to rekindle interest in life ‘the way it was’, interpreting lack of interest in those they counsel as part of the sickness. It is those they counsel who intuit that ‘getting well’ will mean discovering a new way.¹⁰⁸ Sadly they are actively discouraged from seeking a new way which threatens old ideologies with excursions into the unknown. Perhaps it is that professionals perceive symptoms of insanity where there is only fear of their own personal encounter with the infinite. Dialogue with theology would surely reveal that fear of encounter with the infinite is a very ordinary human fear. To that extent it is more mental health than mental illness. Perhaps there is something of mental health we can all learn from those we call ‘mentally ill’.

The third kairological moment is a “conquest, the difficult conquest of a new innocence.”¹⁰⁹ The new innocence is grounded in the primordial relationship as the reference point of reality, not unlike the first moment of consciousness when human, nature and the divine are one. However in the second moment of consciousness the human has learned to differentiate, distinguish, measure, and experiment. None of this is denied or rejected. Neither should it be. The third moment contains the other two bonded in a *metanoia* of breathtaking beauty and harmony. In this moment the human person seeks to hear exteriorly the harmony heard interiorly; a harmony intensely personal, yet inclusive of all that exists.

Conclusion

This chapter has explored current interpretations of relationship, including the relationship between knower and knowledge. It has dialogued with relationship in reference to human life-formation, distinguishing cause-effect from transformation, noting the way ideology denies transformation. As a practical theology it has revisited faith and spirituality

¹⁰⁷Panikkar, *The Cosmotheandric Experience*, 50.

¹⁰⁸Appendix A. Participants were asked to indicate whether they agreed with a number of statements. The statements and results were as follows:

“I believe getting well will mean discovering a new way of life.” 75.5%

“I believe getting well will mean getting my life back the way it was.” 6.3%

“I believe getting well will mean learning to cope with the life I have now.” 89.6%

“I do not believe it is possible to get well.” Nil.

Most ticked two boxes combining ‘discovering a new way’ with ‘learning to cope with the life I have now’.

¹⁰⁹Panikkar, *The Cosmotheandric Experience*, 50.

as relational issues, revealing the transcendent dimension as integral to a relational reality, noting that relational reality cannot be seen without the eyes of faith.

If insanity is isolation and the disunity of fragmentation that brings forth the irrational, then healing mental illness is synonymous with creating, fostering and nurturing loving relationships. We have already visited the power of influence mental health professionals have over those whose mental health is in their keeping. Such influence itself is an emphatic argument for a relational reality. We have noted what others have called ‘the Jehovah effect’, where the analyst attempts to recreate the analysand in his/her own image and likeness. The question has been asked: How can one human person discern the reality, the potential coming-into-being that constitutes the reality, the authentic personhood of another human person? What is needed is for the mentally ill person to be assisted and guided toward the relationship they intuitively seek – the primordial relationship. This can only be done by those who have a truly awesome respect for the primacy of this relationship, those with the humility to be *empty* conduits for a healing power no less than the Holy Spirit of the Living God. Healing may come *through* others, but not *from* others. No ‘other’ has such wisdom. Human directing human coming-into-being is the equivalent of the blind leading the blind.

A relational structure to reality necessitates and validates sharing as the heuristic device most able to assist human persons to become all that they were created to become. This truth is born out by a wide variety of support groups, many of which bear much fruit in spite of the fact that the primordial relationship is seldom formally acknowledged. One can only wonder at the breathtaking beauty that might emerge from relationships where the image and likeness all parties consciously seek to *be* is the divine. Practical theology promotes this activity as a truly healing, transformative practice, not just for the mentally ill, but for the whole human family.

Growing from the soul-agony of mental illness to the peace of redemption leaves the witness as unashamed of acknowledging belief in a personal God as of acknowledging belief in ordinary human friendships. It is an acknowledgement of belief that is neither pious religiosity nor secular familiarity. It is spirituality at its ordinary, everyday best. It is ‘doing’ practical theology.

The healing journey is the journey of life. It is the eternal search for truth. It is the search for the immutable, transcendent Real that permeates and binds all that exists. The game of life is lived in obedience to the rule of the Real. Discerning that rule becomes the supreme quest of life. What does the Author of my life want me to be, to do, with my life?

These are the questions fundamental to sanity ... for every human person. They are fundamental questions underpinning not just morality, but the very *concept* of morality. These are the questions that can only be answered by the Senior Partner in the primordial relationship. This is the subject of the next chapter “Morality”, if by morality is meant fidelity to the primordial relationship.

Chapter Six

Morality

Naming the Issue

It is the assertion of this dissertation that morality is an innate intuition of order written into the being of the human person by the Author of creation. In a perfect world every response to the primordial caller would uphold that order, would be a moral response. But we have learned to question. “Man is a being who questions, and questions himself. ... The most primordial question – who am I? – is conditioned not only in its answer, but already in the very question, by the fallen existential situation of Man.”¹ In a perfect world the question ‘Who am I?’ would be superfluous. Every person would know him/herself to be response to the primordial caller.

We do not live in a perfect world. Evaluations of right and wrong have entered the human psyche and cannot now be dismissed. The ever present danger is the ego with its devastating ability to deceive itself, rationalising ego-concern into an objective ‘good’ or ‘right’, supplanting divine will with ego-desire.

Morality, like faith, is constitutive of the human person, an impress at the level of *mythos*. It is the faith in *mythos*, both the ‘good faith’ of the previous chapter, as well as theological faith that preserves the integrity of the moral, guarding it from the analysis of intellect that renders it an issue of debate. At this primordial level naïve faith-in (*mythos*) reaches toward relationship-with (*logos*) and the integrity of the moral is preserved in the mode of that outreach (*pneuma*). Morality is therefore fidelity to the call of the primordial caller heard in loving relationship – all loving relationships. One might say that the governing imperative of morality is to love neighbour as self.

The journey both into and out of insanity clarifies this position, identifying mental health as unqualified obedience to the primordial caller who is Love. Discerning the moral is therefore less about objectively evaluating right and wrong than it is about discerning what is truly loving relationship. Many horrendously immoral acts are committed in the name of the primordial caller, justified by rationalisations, including the blasphemy that such acts are committed in obedience to divine command.

¹Panikkar, *Myth, Faith and Hermeneutics*, 49.

Setting the Parameters

The objective of this chapter is to reveal that excessive moral concern coupled with moral confusion is the underlying cause of mental illness – all mental illness. Validating this claim will require an exploratory journey through several issues:

- the distinction between moral concern and moral confusion, revealing ‘sick’ and ‘bad’ as two different aspects of insanity needing collaboration between psychology and theology to discern which is which;
- the problems inherent in a morality governed by intellectual criteria;
- dealing with guilt, both psychologically and theologically;
- ethics as divine-command, natural-law and mutual-love, revealing the need for morality to be remythicized – to cease to be *ethos* in order to return to *mythos*;
- morality as integral to the relational structure of reality, healing both interior and exterior division – the solution to moral confusion;
- through every issue concerning morality, the need for an authoritative voice on the human landscape.

Morality is explicated as it is ‘discovered’ at the depth of *mythos* where it is the revelation of good, right, true, justice, beauty and love. These truths may be recognised as ways we have of naming the Real. More precisely they are names we give to aspects of the Real – which we cannot name. In naming parts we separate, forgetting that the Real is undifferentiated simplicity.² Confusion reigns when isolated *logos*, with its power to analyse, presumes to classify morality and delineate its boundaries. This strips morality of its mythical dimension where it is so integral to love that it is beyond analysis.

The subject matter of morality outside of ordinary, everyday living, for example warfare, ecology, alternative fertility, genetic manipulation, abortion, sexuality, pornography, euthanasia, racism, human rights issues, and other such considerations are not addressed in this dissertation. These are best left to experts in the fields of ethics and moral theology. The concern in this dissertation is explicating, not subject matter where evaluations of right and wrong apply, but the essence or source of morality.

The voice of the witness testifies to the effects of confusion coupled with excessive concern for what is moral, relating how this combination and the anxiety to which it gives

²Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*. Translated by English Dominicans (New York: Benziger Brothers), 1947, 1a, 3.

rise ultimately causes mental illness. The witness offers reflections throughout this chapter as it has done in previous chapters.

In the critical conversation the societal delusion that mental illness negates moral conscience is explored. It becomes obvious that moral confusion is not restricted to the mentally ill. Moral confusion prevails across the human landscape, inadvertently giving evil an 'escape clause' in 'mental illness'. Guilt is rendered a superfluous human emotion by a society that seeks to redeem itself from the human condition. We make mistakes, we do not commit sins! Attention therefore turns to the origin of moral confusion. In the Judeo-Christian tradition, the tradition from which this dissertation speaks, that origin is the rebellion of Adam and Eve. This leads into an exploration of divine command ethics, natural law ethics, mutual love ethics, as well as psychological interpretations of morality as they emerge from Lawrence Kohlberg's research on moral development.

The witness speaks with the wisdom of hindsight to the experience of rebellion, the illusion of freedom (as opposed to its reality) that initiates moral confusion, ultimately (though not inevitably) leading to mental illness. This is then examined, not with a view to validating the experience, but rather to examining whether or not it is verified historically. That is to say, if moral concern and confusion are the cause of mental illness, there should be evidence in the macrocosm of society that correlates with experience in the microcosm of the individual person. Moral authority emerges as the critical question. It is the resolution to this question that underpins mental health.

Mythos, *logos* and *pneuma* are the communication categories as they have been throughout this dissertation. The reference frames of kairological consciousness are retained for their efficacy in explicating evolving moral consciousness. Explicating morality and the need to preserve its mythical dimension is well described as an event of understanding. It is this understanding that underpins the decisions that lead to transformative praxis.

Perhaps more than any other, this chapter is dependent upon the voice of the witness. If a rationalised morality is the underlying cause of every mental illness, the voice of the witness is the voice best able to testify to this truth. Moral issues today place such demand upon *logos* that there is little attention paid to the origin of morality at the level of *mythos*, and almost no recognition that morality without faith, without at least the 'good faith' of the previous chapter, cannot maintain its own integrity. Attention in this neglected area has much to offer to the healing of mental illness.

A major purpose of this chapter is to demonstrate that moral and immoral, sanity and insanity have no ultimate meaning in the absence of a deity. This is not intended as a

judgemental statement about human morality. It is simply to say that morality without a reference source that is greater but not separate from the human family is open to whatever interpretation time and circumstance impose upon it. Unless there is a transcendent reference source, and moral values are invested, not just with universal, but with eternal meaning, then the concept of morality is empty of meaning. Indeed without a transcendent reference source life itself has no enduring meaning.

Voice of the Witness – Caught on the Horns of a Moral Dilemma³

Mental illness means all of one's reasoning powers are focused upon discerning what is good and bad, right and wrong, true and false with an intensity of concern beyond the norm ... and confusion reigns. It is not that one does not know there is a difference between good and evil, it is simply that the criterion of what constitutes good and evil is in doubt.

The agony isn't thinking you might be a vampire, or thinking that the earth is full of little green men.. The agony isn't thinking that everybody hates you or is talking about you. The agony is being so sure some of the time that your delusions are true, and being just as sure at other times that they are false.⁴

With no concrete touchstone good and evil become abstract ideas easily manipulated by ego concerns. This of itself seems insidiously evil one day and perfectly good and reasonable the next. The intensity of emotion and emotional 'reasoning' that move one from one position to the opposite (which cause psychiatry locates in biochemistry) begins with this passionate concern for good and evil, a passion which swings from a merciless demand for perfection to shattered confusion about forgiveness.⁵

Where once I had had only tragedy and triumph, now I had to contend with good and evil. I developed what I have since learned to call 'scrupulosity'. Scrupulosity is a demand for perfection. It leaves those

³ Psychiatrist Thomas Szasz contends that essentially the mentally ill are those caught on the horns of a moral dilemma. Thomas Szasz, *The Myth of Mental Illness: Foundations of a Theory of Personal Conduct*, rev. ed. (New York: Harper & Row, 1974).

⁴ Pierce, *Passion for the Possible*, 7.

⁵ The swing of emotion is one of the benchmarks used by professionals to identify Bipolar Disorder. That there is as much emotional swing in all the mental illness is evident from professional confusion in diagnosing precisely. See Appendix A: "Diagnoses by category". Terms such as 'professional uncertainty', 'undiagnosed depression' and 'several' are not uncommon.

who suffer with it little room for compassion, tolerance, understanding, and no room for loving forgiveness, either of self or others.⁶

‘Looking out’ from total isolation, unable to trust any internal or external reference source for making even small judgements, indecision ultimately brings paralysis. Periods of paralysis are manifest in every form of mental illness.

In my sick days I very often walked a six foot circle saying “I’ll wash the dishes. No I won’t. I’ll make the beds. No I won’t. I’ll do the washing. No I won’t. I’ll clean the bathroom. No I won’t.” Until all I could do was sit in the middle of the floor and burst into tears because I simply could not make up my mind what to do first. I couldn’t make even an unimportant decision.⁷

It would be easy if good and bad, right and wrong, beautiful and ugly did not matter. But they do!

Returning to sanity meant re-thinking many of my childish impressions of heaven, hell, God and the devil. Anyone who says that putting these things in order is not part of helping the mentally ill back to sanity ... doesn’t know what is going on inside the mentally ill person, irrespective of professional ‘diagnosis’.⁸

There is a vague desire that right and wrong should not matter. If this could be made so, then it would be impossible to be mentally ill, to be in so much agony, to be unable to get on with ordinary, everyday living. What can only be called inborn *nous* insists that right and wrong do matter. Even more confusing is that it is impossible to name why they matter. They just do! There is nothing which will remove this one, single conviction, this one, solitary certainty.

It is eerie that absolute doubt which shrouds all else, including the very ‘self’, has no power to touch this *concept* of right and wrong, abstract though it may be. The deep wish is to go so mad that right and wrong, true and false, no longer have any meaning. But that

⁶Pierce, *Mental Illness, Fact & Fiction*, 47.

⁷Pierce, *Passion for the Possible*, 6.

⁸Pierce, *Passion for the Possible*, 73.

never happens. The ceaseless desire to know what is real never stops.⁹ Concern for right and wrong is immovable, beyond the reach of doubt. Ironically this single certainty in an otherwise ethereal life seems to have no origin and no destination. Yet there it is, in supreme command over all that is, while all that is is shrouded in doubt. The concern seems to emerge from deep, deep within. Yet paradoxically it belongs to an order so transcendent as to encompass all that is.

From this place of isolation the societal schizophrenia becomes transparently obvious. However, the mind adrift in the limbo of existential doubt can place no trust in the evaluation of this, or any other view. More than that, as a mentally ill person you have been declared by society to be irrational. This translates across personal perceptions of right and wrong. If you cannot see the difference between suicide as wrong and euthanasia as right, it is because you are insane. If you do not understand that it is heroic to fight for life against a terminal illness, and weak and cowardly to accept it as the loving condition of your life from an infinitely wise author of life, it is because you are insane. Turning the other cheek paints a pretty picture if you happen to believe in that sort of thing, but it is insanity in the real world. If you want to believe that security lies in a cosmic trust grounded in the divine rather than a large bank balance, a valued place in the community, or other such concrete things, it is because you are insane. You may pay lip-service to these values. Indeed it is respectable that you should do so. But if you try to live them then you are either a fool or insane – one is not very far from the other. Hypocrisy is the norm, and you are not of the order of the norm. It would be funny if it was not so tragic that many who counsel you display this societal schizophrenia. They want you to trust them ... but how can you?

It would be easy if trust in 'self', in your own opinions eliminated concern for societal values, but there is no trust in 'self'. The same doubt which pervades all else pervades 'self', especially what 'self' thinks, for it is your very ability to reason that is in doubt. It would be easy if there was a vociferous voice speaking inflexible rules and claiming absolute moral authority. This would remove the dilemma, the confusion, the concern that inevitably attends personal discernment. No wonder people surrender their minds to fundamentalism, even militant fundamentalism!¹⁰ Oh for a voice to trust! A voice so true it could teach you how to

⁹In 25 years of mental health groups, encountering literally hundreds of mentally ill persons, as much as all wished, none were able to descend to a level of irrationality where being insane was a comfortable way to be.

¹⁰In more than 20 years of involvement in mental health groups I have seen more than one mentally ill person escape their moral dilemma by joining a fundamentalist religion.

trust yourself. But all the voices you hear want to rule you, or manage you, or make you be something they think you should be, or do what they think you should do. But there is no voice that knows how to give you back yourself, and the harder you try to reason things out for yourself the more confusing it becomes.

In the middle of all this muddle my brain still struggled to think, to reason. In my own fragmented way I wondered about the entrenched inconsistencies in the way the experts were treating me and my illness. If I had a chemical imbalance why couldn't they simply test and verify my chemical composition, and then give me whatever chemicals I was deficient in, and/or reduce the chemicals I had in excess. If it was a genetic problem why was there no medical test to verify, first the mental illness, and second, the presence of whatever needed to be present in whatever genes it needed to be present, thereby validating my mental illness? And if all this medical diagnosis stuff was true, why bother analysing me? What did it matter what my psyche thought? My genes and/or biochemistry would not change because I reflected on and tried to understand the past.¹¹

But no one affirms your thoughts. Your most trivial comments are not affirmed, or even allowed as ordinary. Your every thought and emotion is a manifestation of your illness.

I said to one of the nurses "Beautiful day outside, isn't it?" "Oh," she enthused as if I were a two year old who'd been a very clever little girl, "feeling much better today are we? That's a healthy sign." Anger burst in me. "No," I growled at her, "I'm feeling bloody lousy. I just thought it was a nice day." "My, my," she tutted, "we're not too sure how we feel today are we?" There was not a single, solitary soul in the whole place who could or would carry on an ordinary conversation, treat me as if I was an ordinary human being.¹²

It seems that overnight even family and friends relate to one as a 'condition' rather than as a person.¹³ The only response available is to retreat further into one's own world of madness.¹⁴

¹¹Pierce, *Mental Illness, Fact & Fiction*, 69-70.

¹²Pierce, *Ordinary Insanity*, 45.

¹³On the several occasions I have addressed ARAFMI groups (Association of the Relatives and Friends of the Mentally Ill) this simple 'fact' of their relationship with their loved one was acknowledged and acclaimed as a helpful insight. In follow-up discussions it was claimed by many to have vastly improved, not only their relationship with their mentally ill relative/friend, but the mental health of that relative/friend.

The constant rejection or mistrust of what appears to be natural reasoning processes leads to a rejection of all that is intellectual. Imperceptibly life becomes a tangle of emotion seldom anchored by reason. These emotions are intense, powerfully certain while they last, and utterly unreliable in their transience. It becomes part of the landscape of life that what is experienced as absolutely right and crystal clear today is just as wrong and cloaked in darkness tomorrow. Further, the intensity of emotion and the lack of intellectual content in the form of a reasoning process leave the memory and imagination operating in isolation. What was so absolutely right yesterday and absolutely wrong today is dislocated from memory so that you literally cannot remember why it seemed so right yesterday. The lack of imagination negates a translation into action. For example, a sense that euthanasia is wrong does not drive one out to start or join any social group opposing euthanasia. There is no imagination to drive the emotion into action.¹⁵ It remains an intense, even painful feeling which then changes tomorrow to be just as powerfully wrong, or at least clouded once more in doubt and indecision.

When one first commences attending a self and mutual help group it is comforting to know that so many people, with every variety of mental illness between them, weep their way through meetings with the same concerns that destroyed your own ability to think rationally. They weep for the starving millions in Third World countries, for the human lives extinguished by abortion, for the genocide committed throughout recorded human history, for wives and children battered by angry husbands and fathers, for husbands and fathers left emotionally crippled by domineering mothers, fathers and wives, and for a host of other social ills, both large and small. When they return to the meeting the following week, there is little if any concern for what overwhelmed them the week before. It is comforting to meet one's own irrationalities in so many others who wordlessly understand. Much healing comes from this simple sharing, alerting one, however intuitively, to the power of relationship. In hindsight one understands that the apparent genetic heredity in mental illness has less to do with organic transmission than it does with the power of influence in a relational reality. Moral values and/or confusion are not taught, they are caught.

¹⁴"He too [my husband] was out to humour me. I had lost the status of 'peer' in my most intimate relationship, lousy though it was. I didn't care. I just plain didn't care. I was used to being observed and humoured. Damn him, damn them all, I thought. Who needs them anyway. I'll get by." Pierce, *Ordinary Insanity*, 57.

¹⁵"The imagination is a powerful moral resource, not to be equated with mere fantasy or make-believe. Human behaviour is a function not so much of the moral propositions one holds as true, but of the imagination holding the images which give us a 'picture' of the world." Richard M Gula, *Reason Informed by Faith, Foundations of Catholic Morality* (New Jersey: Paulist Press, 1989), 145-146.

Over a period of time the intensity of emotion, the constant swing of the pendulum from one position to the opposite and then back again, the lack of trust in a reasoning process reinforced by professional diagnosis that you have an incurable illness which manifests itself in an inability to reason, leaves an impression which at long last stabilises! There is no purpose of worth, of good, of value to be served. It is pointless to get out of bed, to do the small, daily, routine things which make up the ordinary life. This sense of pointlessness invades the total fabric of one's being, emotion and will as well as intellect, bringing an apathy the weight of which crushes the life out of living.

Most of my days were spent in the cocoon of a drugged fog and I didn't want to come out. The moments when the fog lifted I wrote or cried or prayed. Too drugged to feel enough to care about anything, I sat almost taunting God. I'd been in hell. I was only just a foot-fall out of it. I didn't have to fear him anymore. He'd done his worst and I'd lost my will to fight back. Let him do what he liked.¹⁶

But at least there is relationship with God, stormy and rebellious as it often is. Somehow it never seems strange that God – if he exists – does not relate to one as a condition. He relates to one as a person. In this perhaps imaginary relationship one can maintain one's personhood.

Obviously there is no insight into reality as a relational structure. However reality needs no insight to be what it is. For a being constituted as relationship-with desperation can and almost inevitably does lead one to create a world of imaginary relationships. It is not surprising that this imaginary world, the only world where one is allowed to be a person, to have personal and equal relationships, sometimes takes over to such an extent that it 'escapes' the mind and invades sensory perception. Psychology rightly calls this invasion hallucination, either visual or auditory. Sadly it is not recognised as a 'solution' to moral dilemma for it is, paradoxically, the intuitive recognition of morality as fidelity to a relationship.

"Voices" telling one what to do demand blind obedience, and in fidelity to relationship the command is obeyed. Certainly this leads some mentally ill people to commit irrational and sometimes horrendous acts.¹⁷ But is it not in principle the absolute

¹⁶Pierce, *Ordinary Insanity*, 62.

¹⁷In more than 20 years at the coalface with mentally ill people I never saw nor heard of anyone who believed absolutely in an imaginary world. There is a strong desire to go so mad that one is permanently lost in an imaginary world, but as already noted, that never happens. The fact that

obedience demanded by divine-command ethicists? Is it not in principle the blind obedience of the fanatic, the extremist, the militant? Do these others not escape the label 'mentally ill' on the ground that 'rational' knowledge of what one is doing excludes the 'condition' of mental illness? If 'rational' rather than 'moral' is the arbiter of sanity, what are we calling rational? What are we calling moral? Is sanity and perhaps even morality whatever the prevailing power decides it is?

Reason today has been institutionalised. Indeed, it is of the essence of the power which institutionalised reason exerts that it is able to define what is out of power as "irrational".¹⁸

It is a tribute to the integrity of the majority of mentally ill people that in spite of the soul-agony in which they are trapped, they are unable to accept the equalisation of 'rational' with 'moral'. They remain unable to dismiss moral concern – for years on end!

Moral – Rational – Sane: A Conversation

A range of opinion with regard to what is moral has a long and complex history that speaks to humanity's evolving moral consciousness.¹⁹ What might be called the derailment of that evolution is another consequence of the severance of *mythos* from *logos*. Resultant from this is perhaps the greatest misunderstanding rampant in western culture today with regard to mentally ill people. That misunderstanding is the societal delusion that mentally ill people are unconcerned about right and wrong. The presumption seems to be that such persons have either lost or never owned a moral compass, considered a natural corollary to the ability to reason. This misconception is reflected in a legal system which allows persons charged with a crime to plead their innocence on grounds of mental (reasoning) incompetence: 'not guilty by reason of insanity'.²⁰ This position is supported by

society apparently believes such to be the case in some instances speaks more to the work of novelists and movie-makers. Even those who impose their own insanity on the human landscape (Hitler, Stalin, Saddam Hussein) know how to present themselves 'acceptably' in the society of 'normalcy'.

¹⁸John Caputo, *Radical Hermeneutics* (U.S.A.: Indiana University Press, 1987), 228-229.

¹⁹*New Catholic Encyclopedia*, Vol IX, (Washington: The Catholic University of America, 1967), s.v. "Moral Theology"; Bernard Haring, "Historical Survey of Moral Theology" in *The Law of Christ* Vol I (Plymouth: The Mercier Press Ltd., 1963), 3-22.

²⁰A history of insanity pleas as they have developed along legal lines can be found dating from the M'Naghten Ruling of 1843. The more precise term today is "incompetent to stand trial" (IST). Available from <http://www.psy.mq.edu.au/staff/kip/PL15.htm> Internet; accessed 6 May 2006.

psychological theories with regard to moral development, or more precisely the arrest of moral development, bringing with it a degree of suspension of responsibility.²¹

When rationality is the yardstick of measure even healthy minds that cannot agree on interpretations of reality will not agree on evaluations of right and wrong. It is unfair to expect any two minds to agree on the capacity of a third mind to evaluate soundly.²² Yet in the legal system that is precisely what is being evaluated: not the crime committed, but the aptitude of the perpetrator to distinguish right from wrong. Two examples might clarify the point here being made. Both examples concern professional evaluations of the mental competence of those who, all agree, have committed horrendous crimes. The question is ultimately whether the perpetrators should be held accountable and stand trial for their crimes. Two different conclusions raise questions regarding the criteria by which such evaluations are made. Both examples are factual.

In the first example a man who murdered the 6 year old daughter of his de-facto wife by placing her in a tub of boiling water, then inserting a spear into her vagina, was ruled incompetent to stand trial. He claimed he believed the child was possessed by evil spirits and his actions were an exorcism. After a successful insanity plea he was placed in a psychiatric facility. Three years later he is (the decision is currently pending) being considered for release back into the community. Setting aside the veracity of the man's claim, no one would argue his mental state was healthy.

The second example is well known. The Nazis brought to trial at Nuremberg for the Jewish holocaust were all given a psychological evaluation prior to trial. They were found competent to stand trial.²³ They were tried, found guilty and many were sentenced to death. Their reasons for their actions were, generally speaking, that they were soldiers carrying out the orders of superior officers. Again no one would argue that these men had healthy minds.

Would it have changed their psychological evaluation if they had claimed they were 'hearing voices' and carrying out God's orders rather than those of a superior officer? What

²¹Theories suspending responsibility include the personalist theories of Freud, varieties of repressionist theories of psycho-analysis, lack of values clarification, permissiveness and moral immaturity – on a variety of grounds. *Gale Encyclopedia of Psychology* 2nd ed. s.v. "Stages of Moral Development" (Gale Group, 2001) .

²²At the trial of John Hinkley Jr., who attempted to assassinate U.S. President, Ronald Reagan, several expert witnesses testified to Hinkley's psychological disturbance. Other expert witnesses testified for the prosecution disputing the defence's claims.

²³Gustav M. Gilbert, *Nuremberg Diary*, 2nd ed. (New York: Da Capo Press, 1995).

if they had claimed to believe their superior officers actually spoke for God? These claims are not unusual in insanity pleas. They are not unusual in militant fundamentalist religions. But how much credibility can be granted to such claims? In making their evaluations do mental health professionals ask if the perpetrator is deficient in morality, or do they question only rationality? If only rationality how is it called an evaluation of sanity? What is rational can be rationalised, as we have already seen. But what if morality is the criterion of sanity? How does one explain that his/her actions are in keeping, not with an objective understanding of right and wrong, but with loving relationship: not to a demand or command to commit a given act, but to the moral imperative – to love other as self? In other words, in evaluating competence to stand trial ask the moral question. Would the man in the above case have placed himself in a tub of boiling water as readily as he placed a 6 year old child in that tub? Would the Nazis have as readily subjected themselves to the same atrocious treatment as they metered out to their Jewish prisoners? A psychological evaluation based on moral rather than rational grounds might have rendered the same judgement in both these examples. It might have acknowledged that while both are insanity neither, or both, should escape justice on those grounds. The evaluation in both cases addresses only rationality. The implication is that rational knowledge of what one is doing, irrespective of moral content, precludes insanity. So what is rational knowledge?

Theology does not equate reason with rational.²⁴ Theology would claim that it is love that lifts the rational from a purely logical framework and places it in a context that can be called reasonable, that can be called moral. Rather than reason establishing what is moral, it is the moral that establishes what is reasonable.²⁵ The human person's guide to the moral is love, not intellect. Intellect without love is not reason, but only logic.

The foundational moral experience is a matter of the heart. It is affective, intuitive, imaginative, somatic. To bring sensitivity to moral analysis, then, is to engage artistic or mystical insight in the service of the moral life and moral reflection. To be moral and to be loving imply one another.²⁶

²⁴This point was made in the previous chapter.

²⁵Records the seeds of a growing realisation that love as opposed to reason establishes the moral. Pierce, *Ordinary Insanity* 62-68.

²⁶Gula, *Reason Informed by Faith*, 14.

If we accept Gula's position and equate moral with loving we arrive at the ancient debate regarding love and knowledge. Can we love what we do not know? Can we know what we do not love? Again the question arises: what does psychology in its evaluation call rational knowledge? What are the criteria by which 'rational' is claimed to be rational, let alone reasonable? The Nazis had a certain logic operating in their actions. The man exorcising the 6 year old child had a certain logic operating in his actions. Does not logic – knowledge vacant of love – demonstrate its inadequacy in evaluating both the moral and the rational? Could it be that the moral and the truly rational (or reasonable) are synonymous? Is it not precisely the lack of moral content that defines insanity – the irrational?

The contention that mental illness renders one incapable of reasoning assumes that 'reasoning' is a well understood, definitive process that can be measured for accuracy. This is not the case. The ability to reason is one of the great mysteries inherent in what it means to be a human person.²⁷ Theology would claim that reason is a 'property' of the soul making the capacity to reason synonymous with being human.²⁸ Both Thomas Aquinas and Karl Rahner assert that the human capacity to reason is grounded in mystery, specifically Holy mystery, however evidence-based may be the discoveries of reason.²⁹ Both theologians note that it is the capacity to reason that distinguishes the human being from all other beings. Both note that reason is not just intellectual, not merely a logical and thinking process. Reason includes loving and willing in free movement toward the ultimate goal – union with the divine. The loss of this capacity would mean the loss of one's humanity. If insanity truly meant the loss of the ability to reason then insanity would also mean the loss of one's humanity. Is this not the perception that underpins the societal fear of, and prejudice against, the mentally ill? Do we sanction inhuman treatment of the mentally ill because we believe, at least implicitly, that they are not really human?

[T]hose who are stark raving mad are isolated for the duration of their madness; they are locked naked in small cages or hutches, and food and water are introduced through holes and placed in copper basins secured by

²⁷ Rahner makes a case for 'human person' as synonymous with mystery - the recipient of holy Mystery. Karl Rahner, Lecture II "The Concept of Mystery in Catholic Theology" *Theological Investigations* Vol IV (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1966), 48-60.

²⁸"There exists an operation of the soul which so far exceeds the corporeal nature that it is not even performed by any corporeal organ; and such is the operation of the rational soul." ST. 1. 78. 1.

²⁹Rahner, *Theological Investigations* Vol IV, 38.

chains. He (Hoch) recommended that asylums be established in remote, isolated places since the wailing and howling of deranged patients disturbed all sane men and upset the whole community. ... The result was that their suffering was looked upon as self-evident and unalterable while the significance of their plight was never fully appreciated.³⁰

Those who wish to discard this horrendous description as long outmoded might be surprised to find similarly inhuman treatment that continues into our own time.³¹ The following quote is excerpts from a hand-written memorandum by the psychiatrist who was in charge of the psychiatric ward of Townsville General Hospital. It was presented as evidence at the Carter Commission of Inquiry (1990):

No one is allowed to be an individual. Do not tie people in chairs; we dope them out so much they don't move i.e. Chemical restraint rather than physical restraint. No use of anti-depressant drugs. Lots of Largactil. Sliding scale for medications; nurses have control. It is chaos-? Organised chaos-both together? Staff learn to cope with, or become easier with, silence. Unit promotes uncertainty and chaos to promote change, so brain wash during this period. Chaos=change. – Unit expects patient to change. Staff's 'right/duty' to change people; agent of society. Change – patient must improve within 24 hours. Herd concept – society rules – do as the group does. Raise anxiety/manipulate emotions -? hypnosis We don't tell them what they need/we just do it to them (various degrees of overt/covert manipulation (out manipulate)).³²

Experience from ordinary life suggests that one's humanity is depleted, not by the absence of ability to reason, but by the *deliberate decision* to refuse the moral imperative to love other as self: to 'rationally' choose to be unloving, to be deaf to the primordial caller, to reject (relational) reality.

This is not the choice made by the majority of those we call mentally ill. This is the choice made by those who will the insanity that is evil. Collaboration between psychology and theology would do much to clarify this confusion. Much evil escapes detection and

³⁰ Emil Kraepelin, *One Hundred Years of Psychiatry* (New York: Citadel Press, 1962) 11-12.

³¹ No patient of the psychiatric ward, Ward 10B at Townsville General Hospital dared give evidence before the Carter Commission of Inquiry (1990). Not until the Commission published its findings did Dr Mildenhall and myself dare to publish the personal accounts of patient treatment, feeling only then safe from legal prosecution. The Commission recommended that one psychiatrist be indicted for murder. That psychiatrist is still practising! Philip Mildenhall and Emma Pierce, *A Place of Safety* (Sydney: Pierce Publishers, 1992).

³² *Commission of Inquiry into the care and treatment of patients in the psychiatric unit of Townsville General Hospital between 2nd March, 1975 and 20th February, 1988*. (Queensland: Australian Government Printing, 1992), 42-45: 7.18 – 7.24 (punctuation original).

justice by masquerading as ‘mental illness’. There is great need for the insanity that is evil to be distinguished from the spiritual dis-ease we currently call mental illness. Clarity in this area would reveal excessive moral concern, coupled with moral confusion, as the difference between insanity that is evil and mental illness that is spiritual dis-ease. The one rejects or ignores the moral imperative. The other is overwhelmed with concern for that imperative.

But what do we make of those who have learned to ignore the moral imperative? Is not morality an innate intuition of order written in to *every* human heart by the Creator? Do we discard these as ‘evil’ and therefore beyond redemption? Ironically it is the spiritual dimension, or more precisely the lack of a spiritual dimension that leads professionals to ‘diagnose’ the ‘psychopath’ or ‘sociopath’ and discard them as untreatable, beyond redemption.³³ Spirituality with its transcendent dimension can and does face the reality of evil, perhaps because it has a solution. However in recent times more enlightened professionals in the mental health arena are beginning to recognise the need to confront the depth in the darkness of the human condition. Bob Johnson writes of the consequences to both patient and professional of depersonalising and dehumanising those deemed to be untreatable.³⁴ James Mathers challenges psychiatrists to be more courageous and compassionate when dealing with the ‘untreatable’, likening them to the ‘untouchable’ lepers of a past age.³⁵ Leaving such persons outside the medical system, with no hope of healing is to exacerbate the problem. While Mather’s insight and courage are to be applauded, I would suggest that no human science can of itself deal with insanity, whether it be ‘evil’ or ‘soul-agony’. Where healing the darkness of the human condition is concerned, it is a matter of transformation, not mere change. It is therefore as much a matter of redemption as it is of healing. There is in this a vital need for psychology and theology to collaborate.

Concern for morality lies at the heart of mental illness because it lies at the heart of human nature. At the deepest depths of *mythos* lies an integral knowing that there is a right and a wrong. Knowing and acting upon the discerned ‘right’ is fundamental to true self. It is as much the *being* of self as the doing. “The fundamental concern of morals is to answer the

³³D. Mercer, J. Richman, T. Mason “Out of the Mouths of Forensic Nurses: ‘a Pathology of the Monstrous’ Revisited”, *Mental Health Care* Vol 31. 61(2000) 197-200.

³⁴B. Johnson “Modern Day Lepers” in *The Church of England Board of Social Responsibility. Personality Disorder and Human Worth: Papers from a Conference Organised by the Board of Social Responsibility*. The Church of England Board of Social Responsibility 2001. Church of England.

³⁵J. Mathers “Nature and the Existence of Evil” in *Contact: the Interdisciplinary Journal of Pastoral Studies* 97: 14-24.

practical question, ‘What should I do?’”.³⁶ The paradigmatic example of doing and being as synonymous is Jesus of Nazareth. He did not say “I speak the truth.” He said “I am truth”. He did not say “I can show you the right way to go.” He said “I am the way.” He did not say “I can lead you to life eternal.” He said “I am life.” (“I am the Way, I am Truth and Life.” Jn. 14:6). Who ‘I’ am is, in a reality woven from the fabric of truth, synonymous with what ‘I’ do ... no matter how hard I may try to separate and at times rationalise any difference. If ‘I’ am not truthfully myself, then ‘I’ am not myself. Rather I am a hypocrite, an abstract ‘thing’ outside the fabric of relationship, outside the fabric of reality.

The power of peer group pressure or, in the language of this dissertation, relationship, is recognised almost everywhere – except in mental illness. If given recognition there it would cast a whole new light upon the question of genetic and/or environmental heredity. Society might then wonder, not at the number of family members (particularly parent-to-child for obvious reasons) who become mentally ill, but rather at the number who do not! But perhaps of more benefit, society might question its own cultural sanity and the impact that has on those it calls mentally ill. Perhaps it might then appreciate that the mentally ill are those who, caught up in the social moral confusion, lack the courage to make mistakes, the indifference necessary to discard moral concerns, or an ideology or reference point for right and wrong to which they adhere.

Dealing with Guilt

Paradoxically the area of greatest concern – doing what is right – is also the area of greatest confusion. Convincing intellectual arguments regarding moral issues can and do come from polarised positions on almost any issue of moral concern. Take for example abortion, euthanasia and even mass murder as ‘holy war’. These examples come from the arena of social concern where divergent personal interpretations translate into visible and divisive action. The same confusion, supported by opposing intellectual arguments, can interiorly divide the individual over almost any issue scrutinised through the lens of ‘right and wrong’. Should I choose this career path or that? Should I purchase this house or that? Should I burden my partner with my sick mother or put her in a nursing home? Every human person has encountered or will encounter the dilemma of making the ‘right’ decision, by whatever criteria ‘right’ is established, and know the internal confusion in the decision making process. What we might call situational confusion on questions of ‘right’ and

³⁶Gula, *Reason Informed by Faith*, 9.

‘wrong’, with its attendant potential for feelings of guilt, is part of the human condition. Guilt is the existential shadow that rides with moral concern, and therefore with the human person as human person.

Contrary to all currently fashionable attempts at self-justification, there are no islands of innocence in human history into which we may define ourselves and, thereby, claim them as our all-determining past.³⁷

The human person is and will “always remain co-determined by guilt.”³⁸ A complete absence of guilt in a morally imperfect being gifted with reflective thought would mean a complete loss of moral consciousness. This in turn would mean the absence of what constitutively makes a human being a human *person*.³⁹ Only the perfect could lay claim to an absolute absence of guilt. With limited vision the human person can never be certain that the ‘right’ decision is made. Guilt is the companion, whether or not it is justified, where there is moral uncertainty, and few indeed would be the lives completely free of moral confusion.

Concern for right and wrong can develop beyond reasonable anxiety into neurotic anxiety. It is neurotic anxiety, excessive and even irrational concern for what is right, coupled with fear of doing what is wrong, that lies at the heart of every mental illness. This insight was not lost on the founders of modern psychology. Sigmund Freud noted that feelings of guilt were the very substance of neuroses.

In the end we come to see that we are dealing with what may be called a ‘moral’ factor, a sense of guilt, which is finding atonement in the illness and is refusing to give up the penalty of suffering.⁴⁰

Jung supported this view in as much as he acknowledged that neuroses are more the domain of the pastor or priest than the psychologist or psychiatrist. “It is in reality the priest or the clergyman, rather than the doctor, who should be most concerned with the problem of

³⁷Peters, *Gadamerian Reading of Karl Rahner*, 313.

³⁸*Encyclopedia of Theology: The Concise Sacramentum Mundi* s.v. “Original Sin”. Karl Rahner ed. (New York: The Seabury Press, 1975).

³⁹In keeping with the concept of ‘person’ to come out of trinitarian theology and explicated in the previous chapter, ‘human person’ is a relational being while ‘human being’ is applied to individual existence.

⁴⁰Freud, *The Ego and the Id*, 71.

spiritual suffering.”⁴¹ Freud’s solution was consonant with his atheistic belief system. He believed guilt could be eliminated by removing fear of punishment by an imaginary ‘higher being’.

But even ordinary normal morality has a harshly retraining, cruelly prohibiting quality. It is from this, indeed, that the conception arises of an inexorable higher being who metes out punishment.⁴²

Jung’s solution was to expand consciousness so it was better able to claim supreme moral authority.

As soon as he (the modern man) has outgrown whatever local form of religion he was born to – as soon as this religion can no longer embrace his life in all its fullness – then the psyche becomes something in its own right which cannot be dealt with by the measure of the Church alone.⁴³

In a culture dominated by cause-effect logic, perceiving only a cause-effect reality, neither considered the relevance of relationship, divine or human, to the issue of determining either guilt or morality. Both enshrined ego as arbiter of the moral, as though doing what is ‘right’ could have no significant impact on any other than the individual – and confusion continued to reign.

Even a cursory look at moral choices made in everyday life demonstrates that not only do such choices have a significant impact on the world around us, but we are very aware of this. Why do we debate with ourselves and others over moral decisions? At some level we realise that what we do matters if only because what we do impacts on the way others relate to us. This was the significant point to which the author of *The Mark of Cain* addressed his work.⁴⁴ We are preoccupied with ‘doing what is right’ whether or not we recognise this preoccupation.

⁴¹In chapter XI “Psychotherapists or the Clergy” Jung makes it clear that he believes there is little if any distinction between ‘spiritual suffering’ and neuroses. *Modern Man in Search of a Soul*, 262.

⁴²Freud, *The Ego and the Id*, 80.

⁴³Jung, *Modern Man in Search of a Soul*. 233.

⁴⁴Reid Meloy *The Mark of Cain* (New Jersey: Analytic Press Inc., 2001).

Determining the Moral - Intellectually

Across all the spatio-temporal borders humans have engaged an incredible number of ways to assist in making the 'right' decision. Moral concern taken in its broadest interpretation across the range of human concerns asks what is best/right/good for self, or family, or community, or nation, or cause, or in keeping with the will of a deity. The question has been and is asked and answered from every belief system, religious or philosophical, across the entire span of human history. Indeed human history is saturated with decision-making processes seeking to ensure the correct decision is made. Methods and processes for making decisions range from soothsayers, oracles, fortune tellers, and astrologers in times gone by, to a variety of logical and theological analyses in more recent times.⁴⁵

Confusion often reigns in particular instances – should I do this or that – because people adhere to belief systems, personal or institutionalised, that have produced divergent ideologies or reference points for identifying the good, the right, the true. There is much debate and argument about what precisely constitutes the universal good, right, true, and this leads naturally to differences of opinion and ultimately confusion in discerning the good, the right, the true, of particular instances. If the concept of a universal good, right, and true did not prevail, then different interpretations would hardly matter.

Daily life demonstrates that we have an implicit understanding of choices that affect our relational reality and choices that do not. Whether I wear a red or blue dress is hardly likely to rouse much interest let alone conflict. Whether I have an abortion or not will certainly provoke debate and may lead to conflict. It is precisely because an implicit, if not explicit, concept of a universal good, right, true prevails that conflict and division arise, fragmenting the fabric of the human family as effectively as they fragment the fabric of individual personhood. If personal fragmentation reveals itself in socially unacceptable ways western culture calls it mental illness.

To gain unity and harmony for both the individual and the human family it would seem we need an external reference source with absolute authority to rule on moral issues. On the other hand if moral judgement is not a personal discernment, does that not negate and render absurd the great prize of freedom? How did this chaos come about? More importantly how do we find our way out of this conundrum?

⁴⁵ Jeremy Bentham's Utilitarian Principles, Freud's Pleasure Principle, Maslow's Pyramid, Kant's categorical imperatives and Bernard Lonergan's patterned discernment process all seek to ensure the 'right' decision is made.

The Origin of Moral Confusion

“The primitive follows his myth without question. The day he begins to ask why, he attains knowledge of good and evil.”⁴⁶ If we examine this statement in the light of Genesis, the story whereby the Judeo-Christian tradition explains the human condition, we find that God gave a command that the fruit of a certain tree not be eaten. He gave the command without any reason. In dialogue with the serpent the question of reason is raised. The serpent asks and Eve answers. “God said, ‘You must not eat it, nor touch it, under pain of death’.” (Gen. 3:3). A consequence was spelled out, but no reason for not eating the fruit was given. The serpent then offers a reasonable explanation for why God should give such a command. “No! You will not die! God knows in fact that the day you eat it your eyes will be opened and you will be like gods, knowing good from evil.” (Gen. 3:4). Reflecting on the serpent’s reasoning, Eve “saw that the tree was good to eat and pleasing to the eye, and that it was enticing for the wisdom that it could give.” (Gen.3:6).⁴⁷

Apart from attaining knowledge of good and evil the ultimate consequence of the disobedience of both Eve and Adam was the severing of their relationship with God.⁴⁸ They were banished from his presence, sent out into a wilderness now hostile as a result of their disobedience, where they would have to fend for themselves. Their disobedience was a manifestation of lack of trust in the one who had given the command they had disobeyed, the one who had created and bound together the relational reality with which they had broken faith.

What is often overlooked is that even if they had, on this occasion, chosen to disbelieve the serpent and obey the command, the very fact that they asked the question did some degree of violence to the divine-human relationship. When obedience is not spontaneous and must appeal to reason to justify it, then it is no longer obedience. It is rationally-based personal choice. There is no longer trust in God, but trust in human reasoning. At this basic, primordial level morality is unqualified obedience.⁴⁹ This is

⁴⁶Panikkar, *Myth, Faith and Hermeneutics*, 45.

⁴⁷There are several interpretations of this section of Genesis. The next two paragraphs were distilled from a reading of it by Panikkar. *Myth, Faith and Hermeneutics*, 45-51.

⁴⁸Without knowledge of good and evil – knowledge at the level of *logos*, morality cannot be an issue of debate.

⁴⁹“The Christian apostle Paul claimed that only through fideistic awareness of God’s activity can true justice be revealed, and that only absolute reliance on faith alone as the means of grace could deliver one from evil.” *Encyclopedia of Religion Vol 8. 2nd* ed. s.v. “Law and Religion: Law, Religion and Morality”, Lindsay Jones ed. (U.S.A: Thomson Gale, 2005).

morality in the first moment of kairological consciousness. It is morality that obeys blindly, trustingly, unquestioningly. It is morality innocent of 'knowledge'. It is the morality of divine command ethics.

A Case for Divine Command Ethics

Mythos 'knows' morality as unqualified obedience, perhaps better named today as fidelity to relationship, specifically the primordial relationship. But the consequences of the 'original sin' are not so easily avoided. Even before awareness of the primordial relationship had largely disappeared from the human landscape, as it has today, fidelity to that relationship had, for the most part, been corrupted into fidelity to 'The Law'.

The Israelites were given a gift, a 'guidance system' in the Decalogue, to maintain a covenant between themselves and Yahweh. They ultimately confused fidelity to relationship with God with fidelity to the law.⁵⁰ In the translation from *mythos* to *logos* fidelity to the primordial relationship often corrupted into blind obedience to the law. The Israelites are not alone in this confusion. Confusion with regard to obedience to the law and fidelity to the author or even enforcer of the law has reigned throughout human history. One is reminded of the not so ancient concept of the divine right of kings. Usurpation of *divine* authority by political and/or religious authority probably materialised on the human landscape earlier than recorded human history.

Today 'law' is often advanced by both secular and religious leaders, either implicitly or explicitly, as the will of God. While this is not of itself erroneous it certainly can be, and when it is it can be demonic as in today's scourge of terrorism as 'holy war'. Perhaps fidelity to sometimes irrational leadership arises from the human person's inherent un-knowing of self as response to the primordial caller: a replacement answer for an unmet need. When humans usurp the authority of the divine, distorting divine will for ego-purpose, the result can be catastrophic. Religious fundamentalism demands blind obedience, claiming divine authority to do so. The ground on which both individuals and institutions claim divine authority is a point too often unquestioned. Blind obedience demands that it be unquestioned!

⁵⁰"The Hebraic tradition, typified by the Ten Commandments, was structured around the community's faithful response to the laws of the God who created and sustained them." *Encyclopedia of Religion*, s.v. "Law and Religion: Law, Religion, and Morality"; "The most enlightened minds of the Old Testament were well aware of the law of love as a summary of the law." Bernard Haring, *The Law of Christ* Vol 1, (Cork: The Mercier Press, 1963), 3.

Where does that leave fidelity to the primordial relationship as opposed to fidelity to the law? Is it possible for there to be any relationship, let alone that relationship be the fabric of reality as asserted in the previous chapter, when the paradigm of morality is ‘master commands and slave obeys’? One is left to wonder if the alluring combination of personal charisma, at least analogous of relationship, along with an audible voice speaking ‘divine command’ is not the attraction of contemporary religious cults. Events such as the Jonestown massacre and the holocaust at Waco Texas, repeated often with less dramatic effects, would surely not be possible if charismatic leadership had not tapped into something deeply embedded in human nature.

Absolute obedience to God’s will as the basis of the moral life is still the position of those who adhere to divine-command ethics. What is moral is perceived to be directly and utterly dependent upon the will of God. Edward Vacek notes the words of Luther and the position of Karl Barth:

‘There are no good works except those works God has commanded, just as there is no sin except that which God has forbidden ... [The Christian] needs to know nothing more than God’s commandments ... [L]earn to recognize good works from the commandments of God and not from the appearance, size or number of the works themselves.’ And Karl Barth repeatedly insisted that God’s command, not human experience or analysis, determines which works are morally right.⁵¹

This position is certainly biblical. Obedience to God’s law is commanded again and again throughout the bible, and disobedience is punished severely in the Old Testament.

As Walter Brueggemann puts it, ‘Obedience is the primal form of biblical faith.’ Saul’s sin is instructive: instead of destroying ‘all that was good’ as he had been commanded, he saves and consecrates the best to God. God is greatly displeased with this reasonable, even devout act. The divine charge rings down the ages: ‘Obedience is better than sacrifice’. The intrinsic value of worldly goods, human life and even worship counts for naught. Complete submission to God is all.⁵²

But what is one to do when God apparently demands we violate the universal moral code integral in *mythos*?

⁵¹Edward Vacek quoting Luther “Divine-Command, Natural-Law and Mutual-Love Ethics” in *Theological Studies*, 57:4 (1996) 637.

⁵²Vacek, “Divine-Command, Natural-Law and Mutual-Love Ethics”, 636-637.

I gave them laws that were not good and judgements by which they could never live; and I polluted them with their own offerings, making them sacrifice every first-born son in order to fill them with revulsion, so that they would know that I am Yahweh. (Ezek 20:25-26).

The divine command ethicist would insist that God's will be obeyed. "God's command is not an additional reason for the rightness of something, but the reason for it."⁵³ In such a situation could not humans be forgiven for questioning the morality of obeying the divine command? The rationalising goes on and on demonstrating the fallen-ness of the human condition, without which debates about moral issues would not arise.

The concept of blind obedience is repugnant to a reflective being that has developed knowledge of good and evil. The point is a simple one, confusion with regard to the 'oughts' of human life and living permeates the whole of western culture, leaving no issue untouched. From birth to death and all points of any significance in between, a morality of logic reigns. The morality of *mythos* in the first moment of kairological consciousness has been supplanted rather than enhanced by a morality of *logos* in the second moment. All that remains of morality common to both *mythos* and *logos*, evident in the Ecumenic and Economic moments of consciousness, is the core; the human person's innate 'knowing' that there is a good, a right, a true to which she/he 'ought' respond. With the denial of *mythos* in contemporary western culture we are left with nothing but *logos* to light the moral path.

A Case for Natural-Law Ethics

A reasoned argument could be made that Adam and Eve rather than being at fault, were in fact heroic. They were exercising their divine gift of *logos*. They could be said to have entered the economic moment of kairological consciousness. He [Adam] "could have thought he was not obliged to obey; instead he might have felt a 'moral' obligation to risk the threat of death and to challenge the right of God."⁵⁴ Is this not the position of many today? A case could surely be made that the creature gifted with reflective thought has a 'moral' obligation to challenge the very concept of blind obedience to any authority, including God, especially when human rights are impinged upon. After all, it was God who gave the human person the ability to think, to ask the questions, to challenge the status quo. Out of such

⁵³Vacek, "Divine-Command, Natural-Law and Mutual-Love Ethics", 635.

⁵⁴ Panikkar, *Myth, Faith and Hermeneutics*, 50.

challenges much good has come. Democracy as opposed to dictatorship is one example among many.

Once humans learned to question, to challenge the status quo, it was only a matter of time before all law, including the sacrosanct Decalogue, was subjected to human analysis and challenged on a variety of ‘reasonable’ grounds. Abortion and euthanasia are two areas which spring to mind where, on the surface, reasoned arguments challenge the commandment which says with clarity and distinction ‘Thou shalt not kill’. We might say that those who challenge do so ‘heroically’ risking whatever might be the final retribution for their challenge. Yet there are those who make equally reasoned opposing arguments, not necessarily in favour of the divine command, but upon intellectual grounds as rational as those who challenge the command.⁵⁵

Natural-law ethicists take up their position in this second moment of kairological consciousness, where *logos* dominates the landscape. The rationale for this position, that divine-command ethics is “humanistically inadequate”, as Vacek puts it, surely has substance, though it apparently leans toward making God superfluous. Yet the great theologian, St Thomas Aquinas could take his place in the ranks of natural-law ethicists.

When Aquinas wrote, in an oft cited line, ‘We do not offend God except by doing something contrary to our own good,’ he himself opened the possibility of making our relationship with God superfluous for doing ethics. If the religious question of ‘offending God’ depends on the prior moral question of ‘our own good,’ then the moral question may be settled independently. One advantage of this position is that, since natural law is open to anyone who has reason, natural-law ethicists can discuss moral issues on an equal footing with people who do not share their religious tradition. Natural-law ethics can proceed under a rubric of ‘methodological atheism’.⁵⁶

Whether Aquinas meant that ‘our own good’ is the ‘prior moral question’, that is, a ‘good’ pre-existing relationship with God, is highly unlikely. The difficulty with this position, from the perspective of a redeemed, unified landscape, is that God is separated from the good. “An action is not right because God commands it; rather God commands it because it is

⁵⁵Home page “National Right to Life” has links to other sites involved in human rights abuses. The range of arguments from non theistic positions is overwhelming. Available from <http://www.nrlc.org/> Internet; accessed January 16 2006.

⁵⁶ Vacek, “Divine-Command, Natural-Law and Mutual-Love Ethics”, 640-641.

right”.⁵⁷ Suddenly ‘right’ is something other than God by which the very morality of God can be questioned and challenged. “Before we even consider obeying God, he ‘must achieve a high score on our tests for right and wrong.’”⁵⁸ All that being said, natural-law ethicists make a valid point.

[God is] a wise and good Creator who has structured creation well. Since the structures of this world embody God’s wisdom and goodness, it makes good sense for us to live in accord with these structures. In particular, since God has created human nature, including above all human reason, we should live in accord with this nature.⁵⁹

One might say that divine-command ethicists accept the goodness and rightness of God without question, while natural-law ethicists maintain that God’s goodness and rightness are embodied in the human nature God created: the pristine, pre-fall human nature. Together they present a relational reality now restored by redemption. So why on occasion are there polarised opinions of what is moral from one to the other? Perhaps it is simply that from the moment the disobedience of Adam and Eve introduced *knowledge* of good and evil confusion took up its place as potential. Fidelity to a relationship is beyond the realm of dialectics. A morality of logic easily lends itself to debate.

Psychology and Morality

With the Enlightenment came the onslaught of scientific ways of knowing that ultimately undermined the validity of any other way of knowing, and morality became just another subject for scientific scrutiny. In terms of making the ‘right’ decision the removal of soothsayers, oracles and astrologers to the realm of the irrational might be perceived to be a warranted cleansing from superstition. However the concept of divine guidance perceived to be present in the voice of conscience was removed to the same realm for the same reason. The internal voice once believed to be the voice of divine guidance, for so long called ‘conscience’ was supplanted by ego, or more precisely superego.⁶⁰ While the arbiter of the ‘good’ becomes the subject discerning the good, ‘moral’ becomes an adjective describing an

⁵⁷Vacek, “Divine-Command, Natural-Law and Mutual-Love Ethics”, 640.

⁵⁸Vacek, quoting John Ibberson “Divine-Command, Natural-Law and Mutual-Love Ethics”, 640.

⁵⁹Vacek, “Divine-Command, Natural-Law and Mutual-Love Ethics”, 639.

⁶⁰John W. Glaser, “Conscience and Superego: A Key Distinction” *Theological Studies*, 32:1 (1971) 30-47.

objective ‘something’ defined by and subject to analysis by the arbiter! Confusion is not only the result but the very ground of such moral ‘reasoning’.⁶¹

In spite of the subtle recognition of moral concern by Freud and Jung, the two main architects of modern psychology, formal recognition of this concern was not granted until more recent times. Psychology certainly recognised and attempted to deal with guilt, but incongruously guilt was detached from moral concern, becoming instead a ‘sickness’ of the ego.⁶² Governed by scientific methodology, psychology adhered to the prevailing positivist view that claimed that science, even human science, should be amoral, that is, value-free.

Ethics and science have their own domains, which touch but do not interpenetrate. The one shows us to what goal we should aspire, the other, given the goal, teaches us how to attain it. So they never conflict since they never meet. There can be no more immoral science than there can be scientific morality.⁶³

The conclusion can only be that the means is justified by the end.

Lawrence Kohlberg broke through this boundary in his doctoral thesis completed in 1958, establishing morality as a legitimate subject of scientific research in contradiction to Poincaré’s opinion quoted above. He developed his theory of moral development out of his research studies asserting that individuals progress morally in a linear direction through six unavoidable stages. These commenced with obedience motivated by fear or the desire for favour (Freud’s ‘earliest object-choices’), and ended with what Kohlberg called ‘social mutuality’ based on respect for universal principle and the demands of individual conscience.⁶⁴

It is difficult to retrieve divine guidance from Kohlberg’s conscience. His conscience seems to be more the voice Freud called super-ego, in keeping with his (Kohlberg’s)

⁶¹This is not the position of theology. This is the position in which psychology finds itself when attempting to deal with morality on purely psychological ground.

⁶²Roy F. Beaumeister et al. “Guilt: An Interpersonal Approach”, *Psychological Bulletin*, 115:2 (1994) 243-267.

⁶³Hugh Lacey, quoting Poincaré *Is Science Value Free?: Values and Scientific Understanding* (U.S.A.: Routledge 1999).

⁶⁴Lawrence Kohlberg, *The Philosophy of Moral Development* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1981).

constructivist theory of morality as analogous to the growth of an organism.⁶⁵ Freud's super-ego developed as a reaction to one's earliest object-choices.

The super-ego ... represents an energetic reaction-formation against those choices. Its relation to the ego is not exhausted by the precept: 'You *ought to be* such and such (like your father)'; it also comprises the prohibition: 'You *must not be* such and such (like your father)'. ... The super-ego retains the character of the father, while the more intense the Oedipus complex was and the more rapidly it succumbed to repression (under the influence of discipline, religious teaching, schooling and reading) the more exacting later on is the domination of the super-ego over the ego – in the form of conscience or perhaps of an unconscious sense of guilt.⁶⁶

The distinction between theology's conscience and psychology's super-ego, especially the way they are confused one with the other, is spelled out very precisely by John Glaser.⁶⁷ However the difference relevant to this dissertation is named succinctly by Thomas Merton. "Freud's concept of the super-ego, as an infantile and introjected substitute for conscience fits very well my idea of the exterior and alienated self."⁶⁸ One of the questions that collaboration between theology and psychology would need to address is whether or not moral development is the result of personal decisions or whether it is pre-determined psychological development influenced only accidentally by experience.⁶⁹

Kohlberg believed no developmental stage could be avoided, and there was no possibility of regression from a higher to a lower stage.⁷⁰ That the human person was locked into a moral development process with little room for flexibility was a position Kohlberg

⁶⁵Lawrence Kohlberg, "Stages of Moral Development as a Basis for Moral Education" *Moral Development, Moral Education, and Kohlberg* ed. Brenda Munsey, (Alabama: Religious Education Press 1980), 15-98.

⁶⁶Freud, *The Ego and the Id*, 44-45.

⁶⁷Glaser, "Conscience and Superego", 38.

⁶⁸Thomas Merton, *Spiritual Master – The Essential Writings* (New Jersey: Paulist Press, 1992), 315.

⁶⁹There is a variety of terminology in current use by both theology and psychology to describe the development suggested in this sentence. Current terminology might describe such development as 'linear, universal, hierarchical' and link it with theories such as socio-phenomenological theory, which is more concerned with personal decision's impact on moral development. While there is value in such terminology, there is also a tendency for terminology already in popular use to bring into any new situation its 'baggage'. Collaboration between theology and psychology is a new situation which surely warrants a new language.

⁷⁰*Moral Development, Moral Education, and Kohlberg*, 4-5.

apparently assumed without question, perhaps because he was so influenced by Jean Piaget's cognitive development theories which bear similar hallmarks. Both Piaget and Kohlberg favoured the model of psychological growth called constructivist as distinct from maturation.⁷¹ While Kohlberg apparently believed fervently in his sixth stage, he was unable to observe this stage in a sufficient number of persons over a quantifiable period of time.⁷² Scientifically speaking, the sixth stage remained an unsubstantiated theory.

Since Kohlberg there has been an upsurge of interest in moral development within the social sciences. Commencing with Carol Gilligan, Kohlberg's theories have been supported, challenged and modified.⁷³ The various issues raised regarding moral development and moral judgement as addressed by the social sciences are not of themselves of concern in this dissertation. What is of great interest is the understanding of what constitutes 'moral' the social sciences have displayed in explicating moral criteria. The diversity of opinion ranges from moral development as an organic, evolutionary process, to moral development as the product of one's experience of life. In other words the debates which emerged from perceptions of cognitive development theory emerge also from moral development theory, the two main camps supporting either constructivist or maturation models.

One might say psychology posits a *process* of growing moral awareness or moral development in the absence of an established criterion of the moral.⁷⁴ In other words, speaking analogically, the destination itself is unknown, while the road leading toward it is being meticulously mapped by cartographers using compasses that do not always agree on the north point.

Generally speaking, the will of God establishes the moral for divine-command ethicists while basic human goodness establishes it for natural-law ethicists. Psychology appears to equate the moral with what might be termed social conscience, making moral development the heuristic device of civilisation that leads no one seems to have defined or established a destination for civilisation as distinct from the individuals within it.

⁷¹Constructivist (organic) and Maturation (experiential) models of psychological development as they apply to faith were explored in chapter two of this dissertation. Helminiak, *Spiritual Development*, 45-54.

⁷²*Moral Development, Moral Education, and Kohlberg*, 4-5.

⁷³Editor's introduction: "This volume serves as a forum for interdisciplinary analysis of Kohlberg's developmental theory and his proposals for moral education." *Moral Development, Moral Education and Kohlberg*, 3.

⁷⁴While it is not our concern here, it needs to be noted that psychological theories of human development can loosely be termed 'descriptive' – based on what actually happens, or 'normative' – based on goals achieved or not, progression or regression.

Moral development theories naturally have different peripheral issues from cognitive development theories. For instance, whether morality can and should stand independent of religion. This in turn raises the question of faith. Does faith precede morality or is it vice versa? It seems the link between morality and faith so asserts itself, whether positively or negatively, it demands attention. Is a sense of morality inherent in the human being, or is it more a developmental aspect of human nature? Perhaps it is in matters of morality that the human sciences expose the inadequacy of human guiding human to become all that 'human person' can become ... if indeed the human person was meant to become anything other than the product of his/her own intellect (personally) or the work of social science (communally).

Debates about morality relevant to this dissertation can be found in the social sciences moral development theories versus religious educationist theories. Also of significance, given that it introduces relationship to psychology's perception of morality, is the Kohlberg-Gilligan debate. This will be explored further on. In the moral development versus religious educationist theories James Michael Lee writes:

Defenders of the theological approach argue that growth in personal morality as well as in other phases of Christian living comes from an extrinsicist source, typically identified as the mysterious and unfathomable action of the Holy Spirit. To understand development, therefore, the Christian religious educator should be a theologian.⁷⁵

From this he seems to assume that theologians perceive God to be outside human development, 'zapping in' such development with 'grace' from an extrinsic position. He rightly contests this position, stating that "if God does exist, then he works in and through the process of human development."⁷⁶ That would be a thoroughly acceptable argument if God was officially recognised in the arena of human life-formation. Indeed that is largely the thesis of this dissertation.

From Lee's perceptions it is not difficult to retrieve the issue as it is debated between divine-command and natural-law ethicists in the discipline of theology. In the former God's will, synonymous with morality, is 'zapped in' by divine grace. In the latter the natural process of human discernment arrives at a judgement of the moral. However it is difficult to see how morality can stand independent of religion, as Lee asserts it must, if by religion he

⁷⁵Lee, *Moral Development, Moral Education and Kohlberg*, 328.

⁷⁶Lee, *Moral Development, Moral Education and Kohlberg*, 329.

means the faith by which a regime for living is distilled, which is apparently what he does mean. Faith, for Lee, appears to be a construct not very different from institutionalised religion.⁷⁷ “Faith is a logical being and not a real being. Faith is a label given to a certain set of behaviours perceived to have similarity to one another. What exists is that set of behaviours which certain human beings classify as ‘faith’.”⁷⁸ The inability of the human sciences to grasp spiritual being as a reality is set by this statement in vivid relief against theological perceptions. From his position Lee agrees with Kohlberg’s findings and states: “membership in a particular religious denomination appears to have no pivotal relationship with ethical conduct, humanitarianism, altruism or nondelinquency.”⁷⁹

While scientific research has proven its veracity in a variety of areas, it seems to fly in the face of common sense in some areas of human life-formation. Observations of life as it is lived in daily practice offer a different and perhaps clearer picture.

There are several difficulties with Lee’s position. It is difficult to discern the *being* of ‘person’ in the midst of so much process. But that is perhaps due to the criterion of ‘moral’ remaining psychologically unestablished. That human *being* and human *doing* are, morally speaking inseparable, seems to have escaped psychology’s attention. Addressing Lee’s assertion that ‘membership in a particular religious denomination appears to have no pivotal relationship with ethical conduct, humanitarianism, altruism or nondelinquency’, it is difficult in the extreme to imagine a committed Nazi turning the other cheek. It is equally difficult to imagine a committed Christian murdering other human beings on the ground of their ethnic origin – or any other ground for that matter. However both Nazism and Christianity are belief systems. Indeed it is difficult to imagine a human being committing any act whatever without some ‘faith’ in the value of the act they commit. The self-evident need of humans to justify their actions – all their actions – speaks to faith as a constitutive dimension, (*mythos*) however distorted that faith may have become in translation to *logos*. Without faith there can be no belief – erroneous or otherwise. An understanding of the intrinsic relationship between morality and faith (as distinct from belief system) is a wisdom which can have profound healing effects in the psychological arena, if only because it raises

⁷⁷For the distinction between faith and belief system in this dissertation see chapter three.

⁷⁸Lee, *Moral Development, Moral Education and Kohlberg*, 330.

⁷⁹Lee, *Moral Development, Moral Education and Kohlberg*, 330-332.

the question of relationship in morality. Theology would say faith is always faith-in, equating morality with fidelity to what is believed.

Relationship and Morality as a Psychological Issue

Kohlberg's theory of moral development has given rise to an extensive interdisciplinary discussion that includes accusations of gender bias in Kohlberg's position. The bone of contention raised by Carol Gilligan is an ethic of justice versus an ethic of care. Gilligan reproached Kohlberg for paying attention to justice while neglecting the aspect of care, and then argued that this neglect rendered him guilty of sex bias. "Care is a typical female phenomenon."⁸⁰ She then argued oddly that certain conditions in early childhood, especially the relationship with the mother, produce this effect. The perception of care seems to be available if not exclusively, at least predominantly to females. Why it is not also available to males, given that they too were raised by mothers, is something of a mystery. While there may be a difference in the way that males and females demonstrate and respond to care, surely the fact that both *do* is the significant point. G. J. Vreeke says Gilligan presents:

justice and care as grounded in two aspects of the human condition which give rise to moral concern. She names these 'inequality' and 'attachment' and argues that these aspects of human relationships have a different structure and therefore are the basis of different moralities.⁸¹

Gilligan rightly pointed out that the work of Kohlberg had examined the moral development of males only and then claimed those findings to be normative for all.⁸² On the surface it appears that one morality, justice, operates for males while a different morality, care, operates for females.

If morality is taken to be a psychological development rather than a constitutive dimension of the human person, then its claims must meet a structure of logic apparent to psychological analysis. In such a structure it is logical that gender would create different perceptions of morality. "Differences of morality have to be assumed when questions of

⁸⁰G.J. Vreeke, "Gilligan on Justice and Care: Two Interpretations" in *Journal of Moral Education*, 20:1 (1991) 2.

⁸¹Vreeke, "Gilligan on Justice and Care", 2.

⁸²L. Kohlberg, *The Philosophy of Moral Development*, (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1981).

moral psychology, under the heading of justice and care, are discussed.”⁸³ Gilligan connects care with a self-conception of connectedness, while justice is anchored in a self-conception of separateness. The significance of these two self-conceptions is that they engage different ways of interpreting moral problems.

From the point of view of justice moral problems are regarded as conflicts between claims, especially between the rights and duties of individuals. From the viewpoint of care, on the other hand, moral problems are considered to be tensions or ruptures in relationships.⁸⁴

Such a distinction is governed by a difference in the process of reasoning which then arrives at different ‘reasonable’ conclusions. A justice ethic has its reasoning grounded in rules, standards or principles. Kohlberg claimed that these rules and principles were universal. A care ethic is what Gilligan calls context-relative. In the care ethic rules are less important than the particular situation, the parties involved, and the impact of any resolution on the relationship of the involved parties. The former is morality governed by universal laws external to relationship. The latter is morality governed by specific considerations relevant to the parties involved and their relationship with one another.⁸⁵

Poincaré’s distinction between goals to which one should aspire and how to attain those goals comes into focus. Kohlberg appears to be focused on the end result. Gilligan appears to be focused on the means to the end result ... which may or may not abort the end result. Efforts to resolve the differences, coming as they must out of logically structured analyses, create further division on the moral landscape. Vreeke identifies these divisions as ‘moral psychology’ and ‘moralities’ to a ‘two-level structure’ of moral thought.⁸⁶

If one broadens the terms of reference, remembering that all analogies limp, an analogy can be seen between psychology’s ethic of justice based on universal law, and theology’s divine-command ethics. Universal law/divine command is the ultimate authority, however personalised it may become. An analogy can also be seen between psychology’s

⁸³Vreeke, “Gilligan on Justice and Care”, 2.

⁸⁴Vreeke, “Gilligan on Justice and Care”, 3.

⁸⁵The argument here is not that one position is better or more ‘moral’ than the other. The argument here is that there is any argument at all! The whole point of this chapter is to demonstrate that a morality of logic is eternally open to interpretation, and therefore to debate – which gives rise to confusion.

⁸⁶This article is footnoted with a wealth of reference sources and a variety of opinions and solutions to the Gilligan-Kohlberg debate. Vreeke, “Gilligan on Justice and Care”.

context-relative ethic of care and theology's natural-law ethics. Law/divine command is suspended in favour of human consideration/evaluation without the moral arbiter being named as anything other than human consideration/evaluation. The fundamental difference is that theology's divine-command and natural-law positions first attempt to answer the question 'what is moral? or 'what is morality?' before addressing the resolution of moral dilemmas.⁸⁷ Psychology on the other hand approaches the moral issue as development in the human life-span, focussed on the *process* of moral reasoning. Even Gilligan who calls her morality 'context-relative' relates the relativity to the given situation rather than the fundamental goodness (natural-law ethics) of human nature. Psychology leaves the criteria of morality a question not only unanswered, but unaddressed.

In summary the Kohlberg-Gilligan debate addresses the age old problem of individual conscience and universal authority on moral issues: the good, the right, the true, as it is in itself, and the good, the right, the true, as it is assessed by, and applied in, the life of the 'individual'. Theologically speaking the need for an authoritative, audible voice on the human landscape is here demonstrated. It is at the very least a sounding board for individual conscience.

The voice of authentic authority does not gag the voice of personal conscience. It is the same voice, the primordial caller, that speaks *to* one (personal) and *through* the other (traditional authority). Certainly the voice of ego can so drown the voice of the primordial caller that insanity results from the cacophony, but the voice of traditional authority is the very safeguard against excessive ego. Psychology's 'two moralities', one of universal law and the other of context-relative care, does not solve the problem of the one and the many. It exacerbates it.

Foreword to the Voice of the Witness

Before listening to the voice of the witness on this issue, some clarification with regard to responsibility as it applies to mental illness is necessary. The insight of personal responsibility for one's mental 'illness' is not easily accepted. In fact any amount of responsibility – moral or otherwise – for the soul-agony of mental illness is an admission the

⁸⁷"In divine-command ethics, God's sovereign authority is the fundamental moral fact. In natural-law ethics, human nature is the fundamental moral fact." Vacek, "Divine-Command, Natural-Law and Mutual-Love Ethics", 6.

sufferer is not able to make for long months or even years *after* the condition is past – and even then only with gentle and wise guidance.⁸⁸

Forcing responsibility for moral regression onto those still struggling to overcome mental illness is likely to do more harm than good. Questions of moral responsibility were not included in the survey conducted for this dissertation for this very reason. Those drowning in a tidal wave of inexplicable guilt, doubt and confusion are not helped by demands that they face their own level of culpability, however small or great that may be. Insight into, and acceptance of, moral responsibility is the one area where purely spiritual guidance rather than psychological analysis/direction is necessary. Indeed admission of culpability, once called sinfulness, is a measure of mental health – the capacity to take responsibility. Many who recover to a functional level of sanity have yet to recover to a spiritual level that can fully embrace responsibility.⁸⁹

We have no word that I know which conveys the meaning I wish to convey. The closest I can come is to call it an encounter with reality; the reality not only of the ugliness of sin before God, but also of the mercy and forgiveness of God. ... For weeks I agonised and often wept at the sense of my own ugliness. I was tormented with the sense of myself, not as a sinner, but as sin itself. Nothing I did, nothing I said, no amount of ‘prettying up’ could cover the ugliness that was sin. I wished I had never begun this journey, but I could not now stop. Some part of me said I was facing reality, and if I would not face it, then I could not be part of it.⁹⁰

The term ‘spiritual level’ is engaged because realisation of forgiveness is necessary – *vitally necessary* – to assist one to face the ‘self’ responsible for suffering so horrendous ... even, or perhaps especially, because it is one’s own suffering. It is less forgiveness for the suffering self-inflicted than it is forgiveness of *self* that is so necessary. Forgiveness is divine initiative, *not* psychological development.

⁸⁸It was ten years after I had fully recovered functional sanity before I was able – very tentatively – through spiritual growth, to face the issue of responsibility for my own illness. References to this appear shortly. If the body of evidence left us by those saints call mystics is anything to go by, it is the courage to face one’s own culpability – sinfulness – that separates ‘saint’ from ‘sinner’ in the experience mystics call ‘the dark night of the soul’ and secular science calls mental illness.

⁸⁹The healing journey from functional to wholistic and even spiritual sanity is recorded in these pages. Pierce, *Mental Illness, Fact & Fiction*, 104-139.

⁹⁰Pierce, *Mental Illness, Fact & Fiction*, 107-108.

Voice of the Witness – Wisdom in Hindsight

Mental illness begins almost inevitably with a period of rebellion.⁹¹ The rebellion may be brazen and external, or subtle and internal, but it is rebellion none the less. It may be rebellion that has simmered for more than half a lifetime, but it is usually rebellion in its prime vigour at the time of adolescence.⁹² The rebellion commences as a statement of individuality, a demand for freedom, the right to think one's own thoughts, choose one's own belief system and decide for one's self what is right and wrong, good and true. In its first flush it is an exhilarating sense of freedom and it usually expresses itself most stridently against whatever is perceived to have been the supreme authority in one's life, be that parents, teachers, religious leaders, the state, or God himself.

Who the hell did the Pope think he was to tell me what I must believe?
What right did any church have to define the boundaries of my
conscience? How dare a bunch of silly, celibate old men formulate a
bunch of rules as silly as themselves by which I must live?⁹³

Psychology, as noted, once asserted that the onslaught of mental illness occurs predominantly in adolescence. It is *why* it emerges then that is so misunderstood.

Rebellion does not necessarily degenerate into mental illness. Where there is a relatively speedy return to acceptance of the traditional authority mental illness is avoided, but *mythos* able to hear personally the primordial caller is denied. Sometimes there is a settling into compromise between individual choice and traditional authority. This solution ever remains a shaky equilibrium in terms of moral concern. It usually means obedience to authority, as long as authority agrees with me, and ego-rationalisation when authority does not agree. Finally there can be a usurpation of the ego as the prevailing authority – no matter who does or does not agree. This has been the dominant 'stabilising' factor in western culture, to please myself (often given as the psychological advice 'be yourself'), a factor that is anything but stabilising. It is Descartes' turn to the subject on moral issues. It is

⁹¹In these pages my personal rebellion leading toward insanity is narrated. Pierce, *Mental Illness, Fact & Fiction*, 49-52.

⁹²In more than 20 years involvement with mentally ill people at the coalface, I cannot recall even one instance where rebellion could not be retrieved as the foundational event of mental illness. Psychology once recognised this, at least implicitly, in its assertion that mental illness usually manifested itself at the time of adolescence. A collaboration between psychology and theology might bring to light issues such as this which would benefit from collaborative research.

⁹³Pierce, *Mental Illness, Fact & Fiction*, 50.

ultimately ego-will usurping the authority that belongs to divine will. The only safeguard against rebellion is willing adherence to the primordial caller.

It hardly needs mention that promiscuity and licentiousness emerge from the 'ego-authority' solution, accompanied by logical arguments that such behaviours are the 'rights' of those who choose them. Freud's Pleasure Principle springs to mind. From such 'rational' choices the division between moral and sane emerges to offer a platform of irresponsibility on the grounds of ignorance/insanity when communal laws are broken. A simple example is addiction to alcohol. In the beginning it is easy enough for the budding alcoholic to say "I know I shouldn't have another drink but I feel like one." Eventually 'feeling like one' so dominates that there is a sense of powerlessness, an inability to say 'no, I won't have another drink'. This becomes so strong that it is easy to believe that one is physically incapable of saying 'no'. This position, reinforced by professional opinion, does not help the alcoholic to do anything other than abdicate responsibility for his/her own habitual behaviour. But no amount of social sanction can silence the deep, internal voice that continues to speak, however wordlessly, the innate moral intuition written into one's very being. Guilt without forgiveness draws anxiety in its wake.

The very fact that debates rage over a variety of moral issues speaks stridently to two realities. Firstly humans are relational and we need the approval of others to condone what we do.⁹⁴ Secondly we need to believe (or at the very least rationalise) that what we do is 'right'. In other words human beings are inherently orientated towards morality because we are inherently relational. What is moral is known at the deepest level to be a value that cannot be arbitrated by ego.

Insanity – The Macrocosm

If moral concern is the underlying cause of mental illness there should be evidence of this able to account for the overwhelming increase in mental illness in modern times. This dissertation commenced with the assertion that mental illness was one result of the absence of God on the human landscape. An exploration of human development on a global scale since the development of modern atheism should bear this out.

⁹⁴The strength to 'stand alone' comes authentically only from the voice of the primordial caller. It is this strength that demands we give the voice of the witness a hearing ... even, or perhaps especially when it is the only voice giving testimony not previously heard.

In his book *The Twilight of Atheism*, Alister McGrath explores the phenomenon of modern atheism with a view balanced by his own experience as an atheist turned theist.⁹⁵ He posits the French Revolution as the founding event of modern day atheism. In the reference frames of this dissertation, the dominance of *logos* or intellect since the time of Descartes opened society to the economic moment of kairological consciousness where humans learned to differentiate, distinguish, measure, and experiment. On a global scale the human person became more educated, more reflective, less willing to submit to traditional authority, especially with evidence that traditional authority, both secular and sacred, was often corrupt.

McGrath notes that in its initial stages atheism perceived itself to be freedom, an exhilarating freedom from the oppression of corrupted authority – especially religious authority. Modern atheists believed their position released the human mind and will to develop itself and its potential towards creating a better world. God was explained away by the philosophy of Feuerbach, the sociology of Marx and the psychology of Freud.⁹⁶ McGrath asserts that arguments in favour of atheism commenced from an atheistic premise to arrive at an atheistic conclusion. In fairness McGrath notes also the same could be said of arguments supporting theism – believe in order that you may understand. Nothing so advanced the cause of atheism as abandonment of *experience* of God (*mythos*) in favour of *proofs* of God (*logos*).

With the benefit of hindsight, this was not a particularly wise strategy. The English experience suggested that nobody really doubted the existence of God until theologians tried to prove it.⁹⁷

The removal of God allowed humans to orchestrate their own reality as opposed to discovering and participating in it. From the observation post of the bright ‘future’ atheism promised, we are now at a loss to explain acts of horrendous brutality and immorality that have come, and continue to come, out of the great liberating religion of atheism. Nazism and Stalinism are two examples of the un-reality, or in the language of mental illness, the delusion, illusion and hallucination that can develop when human intellect orchestrates its own reality. Nations caught up in such madness followed leadership that promised Utopia and delivered hell on earth.

⁹⁵Alister McGrath, *The Twilight of Atheism* (New York: Doubleday, 2004).

⁹⁶McGrath, *Twilight of Atheism*, 51-78.

⁹⁷McGrath, *Twilight of Atheism*, 31.

Countries which did not fall to such brutal totalitarian regimes fell none the less to ideologies of reality defined by human intellect. The great experiment of the human as god developed in these countries as empires of the mind rather than the political landscape.⁹⁸ Here the intelligentsia have gained the position of ‘authority’, a position they largely still hold. What is not different is the sense of hell on earth. “Matthew Arnold speaks of being caught ‘Between two worlds, one dead, / The other powerless to be born, / With nowhere to lay my head’.”⁹⁹ Emma Pierce speaks of being caught between “the death of a life and a life of death”.¹⁰⁰ If atheism is going to bring Utopia it has not yet accomplished its goal.

Atheism, according to McGrath is on the wane. Arguments for or against God are one as absurd as the other. He notes that God is not now, nor was he/she ever a reality that could be established with any degree of certainty by intellect. It is difficult to disagree with McGrath’s assertion that what is currently sweeping atheism aside (along with disenchantment in the Enlightenment project and the myth of progress) in the modern flow of youth back toward spirituality, is a new movement known as Pentecostalism.¹⁰¹ Pentecostal churches and charismatic movements within established churches are springing up all over the world. This modern spiritual trend emphasises personal experience of God as the only ‘argument’ capable of establishing the reality of God. In the reference frames of this dissertation one might say it is a return to the un-knowing or constitutive faith of *mythos* noted in chapter three as the initial experience that begins the healing journey out of insanity. While this may be a solution to the absurdity of intellectually arguing for or against the reality of God, it carries its own inherent danger. Raising *logos* to the height of arbiter of reality gave birth to one form of insanity. Raising *mythos* to the same height can only give birth to a different form, but insanity is insanity, whatever its form. Only the restoration of the native partnership between *mythos* and *logos* can lead us forward into the catholic moment of kairological consciousness. We can no more exist in exclusive relationship with God than we can exist in isolation from one another.

⁹⁸ “‘The empires of the future will be empires of the mind.’ In speaking these words to a wartime audience at Harvard University in 1943, Winston Churchill attempted to express a transition he discerned within Western culture, with immense implications for the postwar era.” McGrath, *The Twilight of Atheism*, XI.

⁹⁹ McGrath, *Twilight of Atheism*, 142.

¹⁰⁰ Pierce, *Ordinary Insanity*, 32.

¹⁰¹ McGrath, *Twilight of Atheism*, 192-197.

Voice of the Witness on the Need for Authority

In the previous chapter under the subheading ‘Learning to Dialogue with the Divine’ a process of communication in harmony with *mythos* was explicated. The habit of listening for the echo of the transcendent becomes so entrenched it passes beyond deliberate consciousness to become the very context of one’s consciousness. Profound and penetrating spiritual experience is questionable if it cannot be integrated into ordinary, everyday life where its fruit is evidence of its validity. Here it remains the guide and reference point for the explorations and analysis of *logos*. Attention at the level of *logos* comes not simply from hearing the echoes in dialogical dialogue with other human persons, it comes from conscious, deliberate engagement of *logos* in formal and informal education.

It is natural that a re-examination of the religious tradition with which one is most familiar is the point of departure on this quest of *logos* for Reality. Throwing aside all the ‘old’ in favour of something entirely ‘new’ speaks more to a personal, private, egotistical religion than a communal one, and genuine spirituality is communal. Perceptions of what was one’s religious tradition or a well established religious tradition if one has not previously had a tradition, are re-examined along with the doctrines and dogmas of that and other religious traditions. But now the mind is alert to self-deception, to the ability of ego concerns to hijack truth. As spiritual as religious issues may be, they need to ‘make sense’ on the concrete landscape. They need to be applicable at the level of ordinary, daily living. They need to be a practised theology – theology that is applied in daily living. Ordinary daily living is the place of anchorage, the context in which truth reveals itself to be truth.

No mind better appreciates the need for anchorage in the concrete world than the mind that has known insanity. An authoritative, audible voice on the human landscape speaking for the primordial caller is necessary, not just for communal harmony. An authoritative voice is vital for human mental health. Traditional authority was noted in the previous chapter as a necessity with the vital task of protecting the communal repository of revelation from the distortions of individual egos. Without a reference source other than ego it is too easy for ego-concern to invent or orchestrate reality. The insight: that reality is a discovery in which one chooses – or not – to participate, comes early in the search for truth. It is not an insight easily surrendered by one who already knows the consequences of such surrender.

Whether the voice of authority speaks from a platform of infallibility or whether infallibility is an umbrella protecting the unity of all those who shelter in its shade is a question best left to those better qualified to answer. What the voice of the witness can and

must testify to is the devastating ability of ego to rationalise and dress its concerns in counterfeit garments of ‘authority’, including divine authority.¹⁰²

There is no evidence better than ordinary daily life as a human person to validate the experience of moral dilemma. Whenever there is the need to stop and consider any decision that is, by the very need to deliberate over it, a moral decision, the greatest danger is always that of self-deception. The experience of insanity brings the profound gift of patience as the healing journey unfolds. Patience is safeguard, but no guarantee. If what appears to be a new insight comes from truth, it will not go away. Truth is immutable. If ‘insight’ is an ego construction it will so dissipate over time that within a few days it is lost to memory. Patience is necessary to the discernment process. There is nothing scientific here, nothing that can be researched and validated. There is only common sense and the ordinary practice of living.

Self Deception as Ground of Moral Dilemma¹⁰³

To use Raimon Panikkar’s reference frames of kairological consciousness, the corruption of morality occurs when the human person is severed from the mythical dimension of morality, the ecumenic moment, where morality’s character is fidelity to relationship.¹⁰⁴ The moment faith and the relationship one had faith-in is betrayed, and the human person seeks his/her own individual reasons for the good, the right, the true, “morals are plunged into crisis, and the day they find their reasons, morals cease to be moral. Morality becomes logic or dialectic; or science. Converted into *logos* morals cease to be *ethos*”.¹⁰⁵

In the economic moment of kairological consciousness if *logos* dominates, morality becomes vulnerable to whatever ‘context’ human intellect wishes to construct for it – and rationalised morality is born. Morality needs to be rationalised before it can be usurped by ego. At best:

¹⁰²This paragraph distilled. Pierce, *Mental Illness, Fact & Fiction*, 87-92.

¹⁰³This is not to say that moral dilemma is the ground of self-deception. The ‘grounds’ are not interchangeable. Self-honesty can create moral dilemma as well as can self-deception, but moral dilemma cannot create either self-honesty nor self-deception.

¹⁰⁴While Panikkar does not use the exact description of morals being equivalent to relationship, it is I believe implicit in his description of the ‘primitive’ who follows his myth without question. Panikkar, *Myth, Faith and Hermeneutics*, 45-46.

¹⁰⁵Panikkar, *Myth, Faith and Hermeneutics*, 45.

We obey a syllogism. We are good by virtue of a logical conclusion. We accept the rules of this game of life because we have examined and judged their rationale. From here on the good is correct knowledge, and evil merely an error. This can be verified from the individual, as well as the sociological, perspective: Morals retreat as ‘knowledge’ advances.¹⁰⁶

At worst connection to the heart is broken, or more precisely repressed, and one is divided between decisions of the head and fidelity of the heart. Yet “in the moral life head and heart work together.”¹⁰⁷ In the absence of such collaboration the ‘self’ is divided and the potential for insanity raises its head.

Judgement via intellectual analysis has become so entrenched that in western culture today humans presume to judge the morality of God. Ego demands answers to perfectly reasonable questions – in ego terms. “More and more Man takes his daily existence in hand and for this he needs to know more and more and to believe less and less.”¹⁰⁸ Human ego no longer trusts. It wants to establish and control its own destiny. It is not interested in divine guidance and divine will. Relationship with the divine has disappeared off a landscape circumscribed by human intellect. The echoes of our relational nature are now heard only when we cry out for affirmation of a morality we call ‘rights’ and for which we lobby politically – after we have convinced ourselves that what ego wants is ‘right’.

Rationalisation works against us even when we genuinely seek the moral. “We appeal to ‘reasons of the head,’ or our rational arguments, to confirm and demonstrate in a way that can be convincing to another what we already know by heart.”¹⁰⁹ The ability to stand firmly, quietly, with or without human affirmation on the moral ground of fidelity to the primordial loving relationship rarely occurs, and when it does, it seldom attracts attention.

The end result of the head-heart division is substantial confusion on the external landscape between ‘moral’ and ‘lawful’, and deep, irreconcilable division on the internal landscape between mind and heart.

¹⁰⁶Panikkar, *Myth, Faith and Hermeneutics*, 45.

¹⁰⁷Gula, *Reason Informed by Faith*, 14.

¹⁰⁸Panikkar, *Myth, Faith and Hermeneutics*, 215.

¹⁰⁹Gula, *Reason Informed by Faith*, 14.

The problem created by isolated intellect cannot be resolved by isolated intellect. It is the isolation of intellect that is itself the problem. Neither can the problem be resolved by isolated *mythos*. This is the wisdom mental illness has the potential to gift to the human family. The human person cannot hope to reclaim a truly moral life until morals have been remythicized. That is, returned to their origin in faith. This is not an easy task. Neither can it be a conscious, deliberate, programmed path.

To remythicized morals does not mean consciously, artificially demythicizing them. Morals, insofar as they survive, remythicize themselves, like a serpent sheds its skin. They are not based on reason or on myth, but flow from faith.¹¹⁰

While faith from its origin in *mythos* develops and indeed diversifies into belief systems as it encounters *logos*, morality from its origin in faith develops and diversifies into codes of conduct, personal and/or social and/or religious, some of which appear to be contradictory to others, and this within a single culture.¹¹¹ The same passion displayed for various belief systems is displayed for various codes of conduct. How can morals be remythicized in the face of so much logical analyses and dispute?

We cannot now pretend that we do not have knowledge, that the question ‘why’ has not been asked. Now that knowledge has appeared blind obedience amounts to fanaticism and slavery. The argument of natural-law ethicists against divine-command ethicists is all too substantial. Blind obedience to any authority is indeed ‘humanistically inadequate’. The prevailing authority can become fanatical, dictatorial, and the position of those under such authority untenable. The paradigm of relationship becomes one of power-play. Even if we turn from human leadership, whether it be political, psychological, or religious, and attempt to hear the voice of truth in the world of spirit, who can say whether it is God or Satan who speaks to us? If we must decide for ourselves, then we are our own final court of appeal. Further, the standard of good, or true, or right, we strive toward is now circumscribed by our own intellect. There is no possibility of a more-than, a beyond, truly creative possibility. There is only human inventiveness.¹¹²

¹¹⁰Panikkar, *Myth, Faith and Hermeneutics*, 38.

¹¹¹Diversity of opinion about issues such as the death penalty, abortion and euthanasia are some that spring to mind as presenting a polarised moral perspective within a single culture, to the point where some are legal in some states of the U.S.A., while being illegal in other states.

¹¹²This paragraph was distilled from Panikkar, *Myth, Faith and Hermeneutics*, 49-55.

Can anything give back to the human family the faith which alone can remythicize morals? How can morals, now revealed and analysed by *logos*, return to their origin in the embryonic faith of *mythos*? Any rational explanation amounts to moral justification, and justification dissipates faith, demythicizing morals in the process. Yet how can we have faith that is not blind obedience, nor fanatical adherence, nor logical conclusion, nor rational conviction? Our culture would seem to be caught in a vicious circle.

Divine-Command and Natural Law Ethics Meet the Catholic Moment of Kairological Consciousness

The term Edward Vacek uses to describe his effort to bond divine-command and natural law ethics is ‘mutual love’. “Mutual love is an affective affirmation that unites and differentiates its members.” He further describes mutual love as a partnership, noting that we are “co-creators” and “partners of the Absolute”.¹¹³ His explication might be called an equal relationship. While he does not overlook the insurmountable difference between Creator and created, does he overlook the problem of divided head and heart in the individual?

According to Vacek the divine-command position is transformed as “our love relationship ‘becomes the ground of all our choices which, in turn, unite us ever more profoundly with God’.” In the unity of a mutual love “our proper response is not to obey ... but to love ... in return.” At the same time the natural-law position is respected when our “properly purified desires are co-determinative of what is good for us. God generally wants us to decide about ourselves and for ourselves”.¹¹⁴ Divine condescension respects our freedom.

Perhaps it is the experience of insanity with its pronounced awareness of internal division that lends a more weighted view to relationship than the position Vacek describes. The experience of a very personal, intimate love leaves little room for considerations of equality. Past experience leads one to avoid the risk of any division. Vacek’s claim is that “we must not ignore our own will and simply try to pursue God’s will, and we must not ignore God’s will and simply pursue our own will.”¹¹⁵ A more fitting description comes from Bernard of Clairvaux who is quoted by Vacek.

¹¹³Vacek, “Divine-Command, Natural-Law and Mutual-Love Ethics”, 644.

¹¹⁴Vacek, “Divine-Command, Natural-Law and Mutual-Love Ethics”, 646-647.

¹¹⁵Vacek, “Divine-Command, Natural-Law and Mutual-Love Ethics”, 647.

What was begun by grace alone is completed by grace and free choice together, in such a way that they contribute to each new achievement not singly but jointly; not by turns, but simultaneously. Each does the whole work, according to its peculiar contribution.¹¹⁶

This description leaves no room for division between head and heart.

It would be absurd to say that there is absolutely no distinction between God's will and our will, however enveloping might be the experience of intimate love. But speaking generally of life as it is lived, there is a seamless quality. There is no deliberate, conscious thought of 'God's will' and 'my will'. Love brings a seamless unity that can be experienced, but is difficult to articulate. Perhaps Vacek's position is similar to that of Bernard of Clairvaux and it is simply that Bernard's words: 'each ... according to its peculiar contribution' better resound with the personal experience than Vacek's words.

However that may be, the experience itself leaves no room for a logical equality. The interior moral dilemma is resolved for the very reason that there is no division between mind and heart. *Metanoia*, transformation, redemption, however we wish to call it, of the catholic moment of kairological consciousness has closed the division. There is no sense of self-negation that is inferred by the word 'obedience'. Love desires first and foremost what the beloved wants. It is not that one's own desires cease to exist, or to be recognised at times as being different. It is simply that the desires of the beloved are primary. This applies to Old Testament stories that appear on the surface to contradict human understanding of 'moral'. While the following may not be the interpretation made by biblical scholars, it is none the less an insight valid for practical, daily living; insight valid for practical theology. When love is the dominant motive the unifying power of love reveals itself.

God said to Abraham 'Take Isaac up on the mountain and sacrifice him.' Now that had never made sense to me. I used to think [prior to experiencing myself as lover] 'You're a bit tough, God!' After all ... he would have known what Abraham was going to do. But now I understand the very point: God knew what Abraham was going to do. What God did was to give Abraham a tremendous gift by letting Abraham know that he loved, and that he loved his God that much. Abraham must have come down from that mountain ten feet tall and I felt like that. That I could give, that I could love and not want anything in return. I'd never realised I

¹¹⁶Vacek quoting Bernard of Clairvaux, "Divine-Command, Natural-Law and Mutual-Love Ethics", 648.

could love like that. If nobody ever loves me again, as long as I live, I could live on that knowledge.¹¹⁷

Abraham could have been in no doubt that it was Yahweh demanding the life of the son he so loved. It could not be Abraham's ego deceiving him simply because Abraham so loved his son that he would rather sacrifice his own life than his son's life. The story is a classic example of morality as fidelity. The reward for such fidelity might be interpreted as insight into the morality of *mythos* that 'knows' God does not demand human sacrifice. Surrounded by cultures that believed infant sacrifice was demanded, perhaps it was simply God's way of leading Abraham out of and away from any such belief, confirming for Abraham in *logos* what he 'knew' at the level of *mythos*.

In the gift of knowing how much he, Abraham, loved his God, Abraham must surely have encountered the incomprehensible gift of God's love for him. At a time when so many believe that 'God' is commanding human sacrifice in 'holy war', it is worth reflecting on this ancient story with its profound wisdom. How much self-deception lives in the 'belief' that it is God who commands that human life be sacrificed? It would be easier to believe that ego-concern has not usurped divine authority if the modern 'divine command' for human sacrifice required that the life of a loved one, a son or daughter be sacrificed, rather than the life of a hated enemy!

Is the incomprehensible love of God for humanity not part of the primary, unfathomable mystery of God? Was not God's heart the first to break when his son died to redeem humanity? How very, very much God must love humanity if we consider the death of Jesus in the light of Abraham and Isaac. But this raises another question. Did God send his Son to tell us about his love? Or did send he him to be murdered? And if God did send his Son to tell us about his love, knowing that we would murder him, well, there is the unfathomable mystery ... that God so loved the world

Obedience to the primordial caller is accredited as fidelity when response to the needs of 'other' is generated by love.

The capacity for love, that is, the ability to appreciate and respond to love in all its forms, is the beginning of moral consciousness. When empathy is born, care is born, and with it morality. Morality explores the implications

¹¹⁷ Caroline Jones, interview Emma Pierce, *The Search for Meaning* (Melbourne: Dove, 1989), 160.

of the discovery and appreciation that someone other than one's self is real and valuable.¹¹⁸

Acknowledged also is the power of love to motivate the *lover* to make enormous sacrifices, and to continue to make them for a lifetime. The love of parent for child is one example.

The same power of love motivates the lover to commit horrendous acts if that is what the beloved demands. The lover utterly surrendered to the beloved will defy reason in fidelity beyond all comprehension. It is this simple fact that establishes the imperative that one must be faithful to the 'right' relationship. Divine-command ethics recognises this and seeks to protect humans from committing themselves utterly to any other than the primordial relationship.

There is any number of relationships called loving when loving is precisely what they are not. They are exploitative. What makes love truly loving is morality. To be moral and to be loving imply one another. This is the point made above by Gula. What makes morality truly moral is neither head nor heart alone, but the combination. Head without heart is a morality of logic ever open to debate. Heart without head is ultimately self-indulgent abdication of responsibility. Sadly many humans find the loving commitment they give to other humans somewhat foreign when applied to the Source of Love. It is almost as though intimate, personal, passionate love for God classifies the lover as a little insane. That such a relationship with God is the very essence of sanity is not yet suspected.

It is the very desire for personal, intimate union with the divine that demands irrefutably safe anchorage. Natural law ethicists pay attention to the anchorage. All the faculties humans have for discerning the good, the right, the true need to be brought into play. But if these faculties focus on 'natural' in the absence of the Divine, we arrive back at the position held by the adherents of Romanticism that commenced in the late eighteenth century. Head and heart, *mythos* and *logos*, cannot part company if the moral is to be preserved as truly moral.

In the reference frames of this dissertation one might say the Romantics, including Rousseau, Goethe and Schiller, and poets like Shelley, Keats, and Byron, attempted to re-mythicise a world view they considered had been denuded of its beauty and wonder by the overly intellectualised view of the Enlightenment's rationalism.¹¹⁹ However both rationalism

¹¹⁸Gula, *Reason Informed by Faith*, 14.

¹¹⁹Tarnas, "Romanticism and Its Fate" in *Passion of the Western Mind*, 366-375.

and romanticism were in revolt, with some justification according to McGrath, against tradition and authority, both sacred and secular.¹²⁰ Both apparently considered that church and state conspired together, supporting one another in subordinating the human person in order to uphold their own authority. Be that as it may, the significant point for this dissertation is evolving human consciousness. Rationalism and romanticism need not be in conflict.

Both sacred and secular authority perhaps did not appreciate that they had, to some extent, become deaf to the voice for which they were intended to speak – the voice of the primordial caller. They too were the product of the culture that had negated *mythos* and raised *logos* to prominence. Certainly they did not appear to appreciate that *logos* had risen to govern those over whom they had been given authority. Their function had altered, but only that it might remain the same. For example, it might be just and loving for a mother to stand over her three-year-old and say ‘eat your peas’. It is decidedly neither just nor loving to stand over a thirty-three-year-old and say ‘eat your peas’. Authority that once operated validly by *directing* failed to recognise that human consciousness had evolved. Leadership needed to operate in the new consciousness by *guiding*. The voice of authority was necessary, not so much to mould the *content* of thought as to guide the *process* of thought; not so much to *tell* its flock what to do as to *guide* its flock through wise decision making processes.¹²¹ Education is decidedly more a leading forth what is already there (*mythos*) than implanting what is perceived should be there (*logos*). The human family is not waiting for redemption. It has been redeemed. Yahweh’s promise has been fulfilled.

I shall implant my Law, writing it on their hearts. Then I shall be their God and they will be my people. There will be no further need for everyone to teach neighbour or brother, saying “Learn to Know Yahweh!” No, they will all know me, from the least to the greatest. (Jeremiah 31: 33-34).

Traditional authority can foster and nurture mental health by teaching us how to listen for the voice of the primordial caller even as it speaks for that voice from its wealth of wisdom.

¹²⁰McGrath, *The Twilight of Atheism*, 48-125.

¹²¹This is a point well made. Bernard Lonergan *Theology and Method* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1971).

The Witness – Reflections on Authority

Listening for the voice of authentic authority makes one aware of the very real danger of ‘wolves in sheep’s clothing’. Out of mental illness, or more precisely out of the healing encounter with the divine, comes the profound gift of discernment able to hear the voice of the God of love, aware of reality as relationship woven from the fabric of truth. On this trinitarian landscape loving relationship is the vehicle which best conveys truth and keeps the wolves at bay. The most dangerous wolf is one’s own pride. An irrefutable authority does humanity a great service by providing ego with a sounding board to test its perceptions for self-deception. An authority gifted with divine revelation, constantly open to creative possibility in the *pneuma* of dialogical dialogue in relationship-with all its members, is the authority best able to speak for the primordial caller in a relational reality woven by love from the fabric of truth.

Irony seems to have played a large part in my life, or perhaps it is more paradox than irony. Whatever it is, the papal infallibility which had so infuriated me, fuelling my explosive rebellion, now became a vitally necessary guiding light.¹²²

A guiding light must be visible on the human landscape. It must attend to reality that is invisible as well as reality that is visible. It speaks for truth. It must speak truth as guidance for those who would hear it; shine its light as a beacon for those who seek it. As the visible, audible representative (re-presentation) of truth it must respect freedom. It must lead as servant rather than reign as master.

Discerning the human voice of authentic authority does not of itself heal inner division. Indeed it can increase that division if authority lays claim to fidelity *for itself* from those it guides. The human voice of authority is invested with an awesome responsibility. If it protects relationship woven by love from the fabric of truth, it protects reality. Perhaps that is all it should be expected to do.

The Healing of Inner Division

That one is loved by others does not of itself lift one out of the abyss of loneliness and despair. How could it? If the love of God for humanity cannot heal the human condition how can the love of human for human heal it? That one is loved is of merit to the lover, not

¹²²Pierce, *Mental Illness, Fact & Fiction*, 59-60.

the beloved. The beloved, when aware of being loved, may feel an impossible weight of responsibility, even crippling humility. Such weight can and often does drive the beloved to run from the lover. Professionals who seek to reassure the mentally ill that they are loved by family and friends often add weight the one they are reassuring is trying to discard. How many who attempt suicide claim that those who love them would be better off without them?

Knowing that one is loved demands a response. It is the response that heals or destroys. The only reasonable response in a relational fabric of reality is love. To love is to seek what is good, right, true for the beloved, however apparently unloving that may sometimes appear. The mother who did not reprimand the wayward child would not be loving. What heals is not the love of the lover. Rather it is loving *response* to the lover that heals. But loving response is synonymous with humility that crushes ego, humility that makes one vulnerable – and western culture is averse to whatever crushes and humbles ego. The discovery of one's ability to love, to carry the weight of responsibility, to live in peace with humility, to open to infinite possibility, even the possibility of rejection and pain: it is all of this and more that brings healing. That one *can* love is a discovery made in the ordinary art of living, in gentle steps taken *into* relationship-with others.¹²³

Dialogical dialogue with its trinitarian paradigm of *mythos*, *logos* and *pneuma* has already been described. Such dialogue is readily found in self and mutual help groups where sharing of the very failings and inadequacies in a context of challenge to become all that one can be brings forth a sense of caring that is as real as it is spontaneous. All pretensions to superiority are invalid. The witness of the original is no less valid than the knowledge of the expert. This is not to say that there is no superiority of *knowledge*. But caring is not about knowledge. It is about good faith. It is about relationship-with.

As one confesses to an equally original source of understanding one's failings, faults, inadequacies, and finds, not judgement, or excuse, or justification, or explanation, but rather compassion and challenge to overcome same, something deep within responds with a new, yet somehow old feeling. It is the feeling of hope. Added to this is the priceless gift of trust from the other who similarly confesses their failings, faults and inadequacies. How is it possible to not respond in kind? Authentic relationships emerge as reciprocal gifting on a horizon of infinitely creative possibility. Caring for others is unavoidable. Slowly it blossoms into love. Morality as such does not rise as a conscious consideration. It remains a

¹²³Both Alcoholics Anonymous and GROW have as an integral part of their programme a 'step' (the Twelfth Step) that requires members to reach out and become concerned for others.

context: the human context of *mythos*, the hinterland of relationships as they grow and develop.

Out of such reciprocity a new perception is born, slowly taking shape, until it becomes full grown realisation. The realisation is simply that every human person is gifted from all eternity – that is the only way to articulate this realisation – with a life tailored to measure. To reject that gift is not only to orchestrate a self that is un-reality, but to court a life that is at best uncomfortable, at worst unbearable.

From the reciprocity of dialogical dialogue there emerges a clearer picture of who one is. Challenge is not challenge to make the exhausting effort to be better than one is (an implicit attitude encountered in professional counselling) but rather the more peaceful endeavour to allow oneself to be and to become all that one can be, all that one potentially is. Imperative sharing reveals self-as-potential. “By inches I negotiated the hazards of becoming. In time I would come to understand that I was learning the very ordinary art of being. The contrived, controlled me was dissolving into a natural, comfortable reality”.¹²⁴ The healing of mental illness requires “a vision of a *metanoia* instead of an ideological paranoia in the *nous* of contemporary culture.”¹²⁵ The revelation necessary to see such a vision, to experience this *metanoia* of redemption cannot come from human intellect. It is divine gift.

In dealing with the problem of mental illness psychology’s focus is on self-love, as though self loving self epitomised sanity. Theology’s self-love recognises that such love is genuine only when it expresses itself as the desire for self perfection. Loving other means wanting what is best, what is good and right and true for other, to the point of self-sacrifice. Loving self means wanting what is best, what is good and right and true for self, to the point of self-sacrifice – self control. When psychological self-love or ‘feeling good about yourself’ is the primary focus, personal happiness becomes the primary goal. Ironically it is a recipe for misery. Bernard Haring has clearly identified the difficulty with a morality that is individual, be its focus self-perfection or self-love.

Instead of having as its foundations the dialogue between God and man, this system is on the level of the monologue – man to himself and within himself – scheme of morality. Or it is at best, when measured by the standard of the essence of true religion, imperfect dialogue. Dialogue

¹²⁴Pierce, *Mental Illness, Fact & Fiction*, 116.

¹²⁵Panikkar, *Myth, Faith and Hermeneutics*, 34.

between man and God, word and response, is not basic and essential in this system, but accessory and secondary, something super-added to the monologic morality centering in man.¹²⁶

The human person is revealed, not as an individual, a monologue, but as response to a call, a dialogue. The inadequacy of a psychological morality is here revealed. If there is no reference source external to the individual ego, there is only ego-purpose rationalising why its needs and wants must be granted. Faith and morality are inseparable, and faith in self, which is what psychology recognises as faith – self-belief – is an absurdity which has nothing against which the validity of the faith can be measured.¹²⁷

Even Kohlberg's universal laws and principles have no validity to support their claim to universality but social consensus. However social consensus has something of the relational structure of reality to support its claims. But as Gilligan points out, impartial laws and principles do not and cannot embrace a context-relative morality. Strictly speaking Gilligan's context-relative morality is less morality than it is an ethic of care. Ethics "considers only the natural morality of the human acts of man as man and of his acquired virtues."¹²⁸ The context-relative morality she promotes is dependent upon the willingness of one or more of the involved parties to compromise. Compromise is not the same as sacrifice. Compromise is not woven from mystical tolerance but from political or philosophical tolerance.¹²⁹ It is not inconceivable that one or more parties might feel they are being pressured into 'selling out' moral convictions in the interests of 'caring' or resolving a problem. Her own examples demonstrate this.¹³⁰ Mental illness emerges when one has sold out one's moral convictions so often and/or so completely that confusion about who one is reaches irrational proportion.

¹²⁶ Bernard Haring, *The Law of Christ* Vol 1, (Cork: The Mercier Press, 1963), 42.

¹²⁷"Perhaps there is more than one self? A self behind the self which controls the first self? And maybe one behind that? Perhaps it is like a hall of mirrors, a never-ending series of nonidentifiable selves, reflecting each other, observing each other and attempting to control each other? The mind boggles, of course. Because it's absolutely crazy." Gerald May, *Simply Sane: The Spirituality of Mental Health* (New York: Crossroad, 1982), 15.

¹²⁸*New Catholic Encyclopedia* s.v. "Moral Theology: Morality".

¹²⁹Mystical, political and philosophical tolerance were explicated in the previous chapter.

¹³⁰Carol Gilligan, *In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women's Development* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982), 25-63 & 70-105.

However there is hope. Ego as authority is slowly becoming less acceptable in western culture because more and more people are asking: “Must we conclude that provided you know what you are doing, you are free to do anything?” and answering: “I think not.”¹³¹ That much wrong-doing is not merely illegal but also immoral is also becoming apparent. Moral concern is gaining ground in spite of the fact that it draws anxiety and guilt in its wake. The division between moral and legal is clarifying itself as a distinction between ‘sick’ and ‘bad’.¹³²

This chapter has said several times that mental illness emerges when excessive moral concern, coupled with moral confusion, reaches a level of intensity beyond control. It is then that internal irrationality is externalised. Even if professional counselling and/or analysis were to recognise this it would remain incapable of healing the illness. Fidelity to the primordial relationship, or if you will the ‘right’ relationship, is not a choice made on psychological grounds.

The first task is to clarify the important distinction between moral conscience and the superego, a psychological notion of conscience. After establishing this distinction, we will be able to appreciate the meaning of personal moral conscience in our theological tradition.¹³³

Psychology can assist in detecting and negating ego-concern and self-deception. Psychology can assist in healing the inner division that results in mental illness. However it cannot claim sole authority in this domain. The need for psychological – theological dialogue is pronounced in the arena of moral confusion. Moral concern is then clarified as that which distinguishes the insanity of evil from the soul-agony that is currently called mental illness.

Conclusion

This chapter has explored and revealed the confusion between ‘sick’ and ‘bad’ when morality is governed by intellectual criteria. It has examined guilt as a psychological and theological phenomenon. It has explored divine-command, natural-law and mutual-love

¹³¹Panikkar, *Myth, Faith and Hermeneutics*, 54.

¹³²C.B. Keogh, “Two Stigmas or One Human Problem” *Readings for Recovery*, (Australia: GROW International, 1964-1995), 14-17.

¹³³Gula, *Reason Informed by Faith*, 123.

ethics as they apply to a relational reality. The need for an authoritative voice on the human landscape has echoed throughout this exploration of morality.

The chapter commenced with the assertion that the moral is best ‘known’ at the mythical level where it is integral with the un-knowing of faith, and has ended with recognition of the moral as loving relationship, first with the primordial caller, and then with the rest of reality. The intervening discussion has revolved around the prevailing voice that claims authority to determine what is moral.

The conversation has noted that at different times and/or in different circumstances the right to speak as moral authority has been claimed by human ego, biblical tradition, natural law, the church, the state, and various leaders from domains both sacred and secular, old and new. What stood forth is that moral authority at personal level is what a past age called the voice of conscience. Moral authority at communal level is more readily heard as guide than dictator.

The ability to hear the voice of the primordial caller is a spiritual gift. It needs spiritual guidance to bring forth the truth of who one *is* and who one *ought* to become in response to the voice of the primordial caller. If one listens to false ‘spirit’ the results are illusion, delusion and/or hallucination, whether these un-realities manifest themselves in the individual mind or on the human landscape. While psychology is well equipped to assist in discerning false ‘spirit’ that lurks in the individual mind, theology is well equipped to assist in discerning false ‘spirit’ that usurps divine authority on the human landscape. Together they can reveal, enhance and protect morality that truly binds reality in loving relationship.

Morality as fidelity to relationship with the primordial caller, morality in its own mythical garb, remains ever at the level of *mythos*. The one who lives morality that is fidelity to relationship with God says in effect: ‘I cannot evaluate what is good but I trust the symbol of good because I trust the myth that is good. I trust love.’ Love may well be so profoundly the ground of human *being* that it is even deeper within the human person than *mythos*.

This leaves a final question. If the moral life is life lived in obedience to the voice of the primordial caller, whether that obedience is blind or insightful, where does that leave freedom? Is human freedom an illusion? If human happiness is dependent upon ‘right’ response to the primordial caller how can we say that we are truly free, especially if we would prefer to make a different response?

Chapter Seven

Freedom As Transformation

Naming the Issue

The issue in this chapter is freedom: specifically what will be here called essential freedom. Given the plethora of definitions and beliefs regarding the meaning of freedom that come from philosophical, theological and psychological sources, it is necessary to name very precisely what is meant by ‘essential freedom’.¹

If the human person is response to the primordial caller, and freedom is a reality and not an illusion, then freedom is preserved or discarded in and by the response made to the primordial caller. Essential freedom, as a working premise in this dissertation is loving response made in truth to the primordial caller. It might be better understood by Christians as “the freedom for which Christ has set us free” (Gal. 5:1). In a relational reality woven by love from the fabric of truth, essential freedom is participation in the divine life. It is the actualised transformation of *being* experienced as potential in the epiphany of faith and described in chapter three of this dissertation:

The dominant sense to emerge from this experience [faith] is freedom. The primordial call to *be* is heard. Responding “here I am” to that call is freedom. It is freedom to *be* and to become; freedom to seek the Reality discovered at the centre of self; freedom to be ‘self’ discovered at the centre of Reality. As response to the primordial caller it might be described simply as the freedom to *be*.²

From the initial healing experience of faith, the freedom to *be* is a growing realisation – the transformation of self – as ‘self’ responds “here I am” to the invitation to divine union; as self ‘does’ practical theology on a daily basis, thereby coming-into-being the ‘self’ created to *be* by the primordial caller. Actualising the freedom to *be* might be called the actual transformative praxis that is the goal of a practical theology of mental health.

A correct understanding of the relation between freedom and being can shed much light on the problem. The relation of created freedom to God is then seen as an aspect of the relation of participated being to Absolute Being. God is this very relationship

¹There are several headings for different interpretations of freedom commencing s.v. “freedom, negative” through to “free will problem”. *The Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy*, ed. Robert Audi (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

²This dissertation, Chapter three, 92.

at its maximum intensity. Human freedom participates in divine freedom.³

Distinct from essential freedom is effective freedom. Effective freedom in this dissertation is the right/ability to make choices, often referred to in modern times as ‘human rights’. How effective freedom is played out on the human landscape is not the primary concern of this dissertation, apart from demonstrating the distortions that occur when the choices of effective freedom do not emanate from, or impact adversely on, essential freedom. The subject matter of effective freedom is best left to those whose expertise lies in areas that include human rights, social justice, political and religious freedom.

It is essential freedom and the preservation of it that is the primary concern of this dissertation, for it is the discovery of essential freedom as distinct from effective freedom that assists the sufferer of mental illness to regain mental health. That is to say it is the realisation of the *difference or distinction* between essential and effective freedom that assists the mentally ill person to regain mental health. Maintaining mental health is the ongoing process of discerning essential freedom to ensure its perseverance.

Setting the Parameters

Explicating the nature and operation of essential freedom, the freedom to *be*, as vital to mental health, is the task of this chapter. This is done by

- examining the concept of freedom in western culture from its origins in both Greek culture and the Judeo-Christian tradition, noting and exploring the resultant dichotomy of freedom that is buried in the western psyche;
- exploring the confusion between effective (political) and essential freedom in the Judeo-Christian tradition;
- unfolding the paradigm of essential freedom as it is exemplified by Jesus of Nazareth in the scriptural accounts of his resistance to temptation, temptation to surrender his essential freedom;
- exploring freedom as detachment in a theological context;
- reflecting on the issue of freedom in the field of psychology, noting the absence in this field of essential freedom with its inherent morality and power to transform
- extending an invitation to psychology to acknowledge and reinforce essential freedom as vital to mental health

³*New Catholic Encyclopedia*, Vol 6 s.v. “Freedom”

- identifying the role of practical theology, with all its ethical implications, in accomplishing transformative praxis leading to mental health – for the whole human family.

The freedom to *be* is gifted to the human person, and while this gift cannot be removed by any other than the person whose gift it is, in a relational being it can be obscured and/or distorted by self and/or ‘other’. That is to say the very *being* of one may be undermined by self or an-other. It is in this context that this chapter explicates freedom.

The voice of the witness does not commence the critical conversation as it has done in previous chapters. The loss of essential freedom, while it begins the journey into insanity, is not something of which one becomes aware until it is too late. Awareness comes in the effort to regain what has been lost, which is not identified as essential freedom until well into the healing journey. The witness therefore does not speak until well on into this chapter, at which point the theology of Johannes Baptist Metz offers reference frames that give coherence to reflections from the witness.⁴

Theological reference frames are necessary to an understanding of essential freedom because this divine gift has not even a silhouette in sentient knowing. Its reality is in the ontological *being* already described in chapter five: “The comprehension of being does not presuppose a merely theoretical attitude but the whole of human comportment. The whole human being is ontology.”⁵ Essential freedom is an ontological category of human *being*. When essential freedom is tarnished human comportment or if you will, human dignity is depleted.

Perceptions of freedom are explored as they emerge from the hinterland of western culture. It is noted that western culture emerged from both Greek philosophy and the Judeo-Christian religious tradition. This brings into play a dichotomy of freedom that is the focus of the exploration. What becomes apparent is that in western culture two beliefs regarding human freedom and, as a corollary, what it means to be a human person, stand in diametric opposition. That is, that the human person is fated or pre-determined to a given character and destiny, and that the human person is free to choose his/her own character and destiny. The conversation reveals socially sanctioned irrationalities and psychological blindness embedded in this contradiction.

⁴Johannes Baptist Metz, *Poverty of Spirit* (New York: Paulist Press, 1968).

⁵Levinas, *Basic Philosophical Writings*, 3.

There is demonstrable evidence that the freedom to *be*, essential freedom, is inevitably and often unwittingly distorted and/or negated in interaction between human beings when one effectively assumes sapiential superiority over the other. The use of the word ‘sapiential’ excludes power-plays to the extent that these are imposed on political, ethnic, religious or cultural grounds. Such power-plays are primarily an attack upon effective freedom which is not the concern of this dissertation. Neither is the concern the natural occurrence of sapiential superiority between parent and child, teacher and student, and other such relationships. These relationships can be growthful or debilitating, dependent upon the wisdom of the ‘superior’. The deterioration of essential freedom in this dissertation is of concern primarily as that deterioration occurs in the field of mental health, where it is assured largely by the mental and emotional instability of the mentally ill person.

The exploration of this particular weakening of essential freedom commences where that freedom was first undermined, the Freudian Oedipus Complex, out of which Freud’s theories of the Unconscious were developed.⁶ This entails an exploration of Greek philosophy and its mythology as it applies to freedom. The theology of John Zizioulas is helpful here, given his understanding of Greek culture and his perception of reality as relational.⁷ The Christian position on freedom is explored using the three temptations of Jesus. It is his resistance to these temptations that forms the paradigm of freedom indispensable to mental health.

Vision of a new psychology, one that acknowledges essential freedom, is offered. Psychology is invited to leave behind its constricting scientific methodology and enter into partnership with theology. This would then allow psychology to appreciate the infinite openness necessary to understanding human life-formation, a formation better anchored in pastoral care than the human sciences.

The role of practical theology in human life-formation is summarised as it has been explicated throughout this dissertation. What becomes apparent is the inevitable transformation of the human condition from one of enslavement to one of freedom.

Raimon Panikkar’s theological anthropology, engaged throughout this dissertation, will again be engaged along with his communication categories of *mythos*, *logos* and

⁶Of this, his last work, Freud says that he sought to summarise his theory of the Oedipus Complex as it had commenced, continued and expanded over the years, remaining to the end the core of his analytical theories. Sigmund Freud, “Preface”, *The Ego and the Id*.

⁷John Zizioulas, *Being as Communion* (New York: St Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 1985).

pneuma. It is hoped that by now familiarity with Panikkar's words, along with their glossary of meaning, have begun to resonate with understanding of the experience of mental illness and the experience of mental health.

A Dichotomy of Freedom

The western psyche was open to the Freudian theories of the unconscious due at least in part to its hinterland, Greek philosophy, which was unable to grant freedom due to its philosophy of ontological monism.⁸

From the Presocratics to the Neoplatonists this principle [ontological monism] is invariably maintained in Greek thought. ... The creation of the world takes place on the basis of this principle of necessary unity, and it is for this reason that the creator does not simply choose to but *must* make the world spherical, since the spherical shape is that of unity and thus perfection.⁹

However western culture is not simply a continuation of Greek culture. Western culture is a little more complex in as much as it is now predominantly Christian, or at least has been greatly influenced by Christianity, a religious culture that allows God and human beings the freedom the Greeks could not grant, even to their supreme deity, Zeus.¹⁰

In a relational being it is the very denial of freedom, essential freedom, the freedom to *be*, that acts as a self-fulfilling prophesy in the field of mental health. From diagnosis, through treatment, to prognosis, the denial of the possibility of healing reinforces what can only be called prophesy, given that there is no scientific evidence to support either diagnosis or the 'incurable' prognosis. Analogically speaking the Oracle of Delphi has been replaced by the Oracle of Psychology, denying to all, not just the mentally ill, the freedom for which Christ has set us free (Gal. 5:1). This goes to the very heart of perceptions of the *nature* of mental illness – not its cause. It goes also to the heart of the nature of human *being*. It negates if it does not actually deny the Judeo-Christian belief that the human person is a creature uniquely graced and gifted with freedom, made in the image and likeness of God. This warrants closer scrutiny.

⁸Tarnas, *Passion of the Western Mind*, 16-31. (While the Greeks were free to be or to not be virtuous, that choice impacted only on their personal state of happiness in life, and perhaps their standing in the community. It had no bearing on their ultimate destiny).

⁹ Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, in footnote 4, 29.

¹⁰Tarnas, *Passion of the Western Mind*, 17.

Necessity – From Greek Philosophy to Modern Psychology

Ancient Greek philosophy posited an ontological monism, perceived to be a necessity for cosmic harmony. While they intuited freedom at the level of *mythos*, their ontological monism denied them the ability to embrace freedom at the level of *logos*.

Whatever [in Greek philosophy] threatens cosmic harmony and is not explained by “reason” (*logos*), which draws all things together and leads them to this harmony and unity, is rejected and condemned. This also holds true for man.¹¹

Perhaps nowhere does the un-knowing of *mythos* speak its truth so stridently as in ancient Greek philosophy that intuited freedom while yet forced by the not inconsiderable power of its logic to deny it. At the level of *logos*, Greek philosophy was a well developed, strictly logical philosophy. At the level of *mythos*, it was rich in myth, yet indigent in the un-knowing wisdom dormant in its myths, denied validity by a dominant *logos*.

Freedom, including human freedom, fell at the altar of a necessary cosmic harmony – ontological monism – constructed by the logic that developed Greek philosophy.

Ontological monism characterizes Greek philosophy from its inception. Not even God can escape from this ontological unity and stand freely before the world, “face to face” in dialogue with it. He too is bound by ontological necessity to the world and the world to him.¹²

The Greek intuition of freedom can be seen in their many tragedies where the great Greek heroes fight valiantly against invincible forces for the prize they can never attain – freedom.

The place of man in this unified world of harmony and reason is the theme of ancient Greek tragedy. ... The theatre, and tragedy in particular, is the setting in which the conflicts between human freedom and the rational necessity of a unified and harmonious world, as they were understood by the ancient Greeks, are worked out in dramatic form.¹³

¹¹Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 31.

¹²Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 29-30.

¹³Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 31-32.

Sophocles' play "Oedipus Rex" was one Greek tragedy among many where the hero strives and fails to overcome the inevitability of fate.¹⁴

In this story the biological parents of Oedipus consult the famous Oracle at Delphi. She tells them that their son will grow up to slay his father and marry his mother. In an effort to avoid this fate the child is abandoned to die in the wilderness. However he is found, saved, and ultimately becomes the son of the king and queen of Thebes. As a young man Oedipus consults the same Oracle who tells him what she told his biological parents. Unaware that the king and queen of Thebes are not his biological parents, Oedipus runs away from home in his effort to avoid fate. In his travels he meets a stranger in a tavern and in a fight slays the stranger – his biological father, Laius. He then meets Jocasta, unbeknown to him his biological mother, and marries her. Ultimately the truth of the relationships is revealed, with dire consequences for all.

Myths can be told properly only when they are heard with the *docta ignorantia* that accepts the story of the myth just as it is told.¹⁵ Naiveté in listening offers the possibility of hearing the wisdom embedded in the myth. A listener who listens to "Oedipus Rex" with an innocence that excludes analysis is tempted to say at the end: "Why didn't they all ignore the Oracle and simply get on with living instead of allowing her to dictate who they were in such a way as to fulfil her prophesy." Such innocent listening might well have revealed essential freedom buried deep within the Greek *mythos*, a freedom the Christian belief system could comfortably have retrieved at the level of *logos*.¹⁶

Freud used this particular story to explicate the nucleus of his analytical theories, the Oedipus Complex.¹⁷ He heard the myth not just with analytical ears, but from the context of his own atheistic belief system. Transplanted from its own home soil, so to speak, the story took on new meaning. Essential freedom was severely undermined by

¹⁴Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripides, Aristophanes, trans. G.M. Cookson et al., *Great Books of the Western World* Vol 4. (Chicago: Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1990).

¹⁵Panikkar, *Myth, Faith and Hermeneutics*, 54-55.

¹⁶Reflection from a Christian context on the inscription over the temple at Delphi might have been revealing. The inscription read simply "Know Thyself".

¹⁷Freud considered his most important work was *The Interpretation of Dreams* out of which he developed his theories, including the Oedipus Complex; available http://www.age-of-the-sage.org/psychology/freuds_works.html#Sigmund_Freud Internet: Accessed 20 November, 2005.

theories of unconscious drives and instincts, fuelled by the theoretical Oedipus Complex. Freud's interpretations went largely unchallenged.

An indepth understanding of Freudian analysis is not necessary to the purpose of this dissertation. Rather his analysis needs to be grasped succinctly at its core where it negates human freedom. Underpinning the Oedipus Complex is the assumption, implicit though it may be, that the Unconscious of Oedipus in some sense recognised his biological parents.¹⁸ From there the Freudian theories were, for modern western culture, able to determine human behaviour, whereas impersonal fate determined the destiny of the Greeks. In either scenario freedom can only be an illusion. A cause-effect paradigm of reality supports both ancient Greek and the modern west's perceptions of freedom, reinforcing disbelief in essential freedom. The power of relationship to influence 'other' in a relational paradigm of reality is a more recent insight. Even in the term 'peer group pressure' there is more credence given to cause-effect than to relationship.

For western culture psychoanalysis has become the heuristic tool able to disclose the unknown that lurks in the Id, the deepest level of the Unconscious. The presumption is that once the unknown is made known, the Ego, the Conscious, can take control and the person can better steer his/her life towards a chosen goal. The ultimate and universal goal, according to Freud, is pleasure. In his opening statement of *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* Freud writes:

In the psycho-analytical theory of the mind, we take it for granted that the course of mental processes is automatically regulated by the pleasure principle: that is to say, we believe that any given process originates in an unpleasant state of tension and thereupon determines for itself such a path that its ultimate issue coincides with a relaxation of this tension, i.e., with avoidance of "pain" or with production of pleasure.¹⁹

The ultimate purpose of psychoanalysis is to assist the analysand to be better informed in order to determine a more effective path to the relaxation of tension, thereby avoiding pain and producing pleasure. This is a reasonable goal for the life that reaches its absolute end with the death of the body. It was a goal congruent with Freud's belief system.

¹⁸While Freud did not articulate this 'unconscious recognition' it can be retrieved from the convoluted theory of "life instincts" combined with the theoretical value of psycho-analysis. Unconscious recognition is implicit in Freud's centre piece of psycho-analysis – the Oedipus Complex.

¹⁹Sigmund Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (U.S.A.: W. W. Norton & Company 1990).

The fact that Freud did not believe in any god, and did not accept as reality the spiritual dimension that includes life after life, did not negate the ‘grains of wheat’ in his theories of what it means to be a human being. Many who did not share his atheistic belief system could not deny the theory of an unconscious dimension: deep, abiding drives and instincts that can indeed control a human being, bringing about attitudes and behaviours that are detrimental to human life and human happiness.²⁰ Those who suffer any form of addiction, and what mental health professionals call ‘compulsive obsessive disorder’, would all too readily agree. The simple fact that human beings are creatures of habit has been overlooked. We currently approach habitual behavioural problems as a disorder emanating from unconscious drives and instincts, where a past age recognised what it called slavery to sinful habits. In the naming of the problem, essential freedom was recognised. That insight was lost with the dominance of *logos* that undermined the spiritual world and gave birth to modern psychology.²¹ *Logos* ever seeks a logical explanation, and without *mythos*, believes all can be explained. Sinful habits destroy the one who practises them, and that is not logical. From this it is logical that ‘sick’ and ‘bad’ merge to be retrieved by psycho-logical explanation (psycho-analysis). Bad habits must be generated by unconscious drives or instincts for no one *in her/his right mind* would choose behaviours that are so self-destructive.

What is now all too readily accepted is that unconscious drives and instincts, with no identified origin, control human behaviour. These must be brought to the surface where some degree of control may be gained. The fundamental purpose of psychoanalysis is to retrieve the originating ‘cause’ which is presumed to be some event that occurred in the life of the analysand.²² The logic behind this is that humans do not choose to *be*: human *being* is determined by the experience(s) of life. The originating cause that Christian theology calls ‘the fall’ is unknown to psychology. Christian theology suggests that whatever the bad behaviour, and whenever it first came into practice, it was initially and probably for quite some time a choice. Compulsion to bad habits, once called enslavement to sin, has its healing in regaining the essential freedom

²⁰Gerald May and Viktor Frankl are two among many mental health professionals who could not be accused of atheism. The concept of *mythos* as the un-knowing of Reality beyond the comprehension of *logos* has not been officially incorporated into the field of psychology, if only because that field continues to rely upon scientific methodology in gathering its data.

²¹This movement was explored in chapter two.

²²Frances Moran and Tony Kelly, *Searching for the Soul*.

that was lost in habitual practise of the bad habit. It has less to do with unconscious drives and instincts than it does with long forgotten self-control.

The healing journey suggests that dealing with life ‘as it is’, rather than analysing why it might be ‘as it is’ (not unlike the naïve listening that hears the wisdom of myth) is what is necessary for healing.

Why do I think I am a vampire? ... Never mind why. Just fix it. ...
Give me something to do, to say, or think, to feel, anything that will at
least start me on the right track.²³

Dealing with life ‘as it is’ means accepting that one is enslaved to a bad habit, and healing means breaking the bad habit. The particular origin of the habit in this endeavour is irrelevant.²⁴

With the acceptance of unconscious drives and instincts essential freedom is called into question: something other than ‘me’, and something unknown to ‘me’ is master over me.²⁵ On another level what Christians mean by redemption is called into question. Redemption for the Christian is not something God imposes upon us. Rather it requires faith and co-operation, the *willingness* to be redeemed. If we do not believe we are, or at least can become, fully responsible for ourselves, how can we fully, freely make the choice to accept redemption? Collaboration between psychology and theology would reveal this fact, a fact that carries within it a significant contradiction between psychological and theological perceptions of what it means to be a human person. Psychological theories of the unconscious have influenced the anthropology of some theologians.²⁶ At the same time, there are mental health professionals who strongly

²³Pierce, *Ordinary Inanity*, 51.

²⁴Many who know why they drink find in that knowledge, not freedom to relinquish the habit but ‘reason’ to continue in it. Breaking bad habits is a matter of choice – of willing in the present moment – not of remembering. What of those who cannot/will never remember? Is healing denied them?

²⁵“Rahner acknowledges that we are able to deduce that being-as-such is free to give itself, only after the fact, only after we have experienced the unpredictable act of mystery’s self-bestowal.” Peter, *Gadamerian Reading of Karl Rahner*, 303.

²⁶Doran, following the Jungian need for consciousness to a ‘superlative degree’, maintains psychic conversion is as important as conversion of heart and mind. Doran, R.M. *Theological Foundations*. Vol. 1. 2 vols. (Marquette: Marquette University Press, 1995).

uphold the concept of essential freedom.²⁷ Collaborative exploration of the two disciplines would surely assist in clearing the grey areas.

In the development of psychoanalytical theory the voice of ordinary, everyday experience, pastoral voices, if they were raised, were either muted or ignored. Opinions regarding essential freedom, by whatever name such freedom is called, centre on the origin, power and destination of unconscious drives and instincts. The ‘unconscious’ component remains even yet, not only unchallenged, but accepted and supported.²⁸ The concept of ‘know thyself’, a necessity to those who would know God, is not a genuine possibility.

Hence, our human dignity demands that we act according to a knowing and free choice that is personally motivated and prompted from within, not under blind internal impulse nor by mere external pressure.²⁹

The philosophy of ontological monism, now converted into determinism, lingers on in the western psyche though it stands in contradiction to the Christian belief in essential freedom. Questions seeking to address the dichotomy include: are these drives and instincts pre-programmed into the human being by genetic heredity? Are they pre-programmed by phylogeny in the form of individual or universal unconscious?³⁰ Are they forgotten/repressed memories in the life of the individual?

The question Christian spirituality seems afraid to ask is: are these unconscious drives and instincts a psychological distortion of the un-knowing so often described by the mystics? The fear seems to be a reluctance to allow any correlation between psychosis and mysticism. Openness to this possibility might assist psychology to understand that spirituality embraces a sense, not so much of being driven, as of being drawn by a desire constitutive of the human person. This desire is a natural, deeply

²⁷Victor Frankl and Gerald May are two who immediately spring to mind.

²⁸Peter Carruthers, “Why the Question of Animal Consciousness Might Not Matter Very Much” *Philosophical Philosophy* 15:1 (2005) 83-102; Robert Guigliano “Separation, Loss, and Longing in the Infancy and Early Childhood of St. Therese of the Child Jesus and the Holy Face: Attachment in Psychological and Spiritual Development” in *Studies in Spirituality* 14 (2004) 225-253; Steven Reiss, “Human Individuality and the Gap Between Science and Religion” in *Zygon Journal of Religion and Science* 40:1 (2005) 131-142.

²⁹Pope Paul VI “*Gaudium et Spes*” [Joy and Hope] Encyclical Letter (7th December 1965). *Papal Encyclicals* [Internet]. Rome: The Vatican, 7. Available from <http://www.papalencyclicals.net/all.htm> accessed 20 April 2006.

³⁰The Jungian Collective Unconscious.

embedded instinct to seek and to know the Real; to respond to the primordial caller. Courageously open dialogue between psychology and theology could explore possible correlations between the experience known to theology as the 'dark night of the soul' and the phenomenon known to psychology as 'psychosis'.

Irrespective of any resolution to these differences, there is a question that, psychologically speaking, precedes them. Whatever the origin of embedded human instincts, is pleasure their ultimate and inherent destination?

One of the first to break away from the Freudian school of psychological thought and replace it with another theory of universal proportion was Alfred Adler.³¹ Adler substituted power or the need/desire for control as the primary instinct. There is, according to Adler and his followers, at least as much if not more weight of experience to acknowledge power as the primary driving force as there is for pleasure. Freedom in the Adlerian system is freedom from coercion. While Freud's theories are better known, Adler was not without his followers. Lydia Sicher, Alexander Mueller, Sophia de Vries, Anthony Bruck, Erwin Wexberg, Alexander Neuer, Sophie Lazarsfeld, Ida Loewy and Ferdinand Birnbaum are among those called classical Adlerians.³²

Freedom from coercion is not the only attraction of power. Michel Foucault defined human personhood essentially in terms of power.³³ His power permits economic, social and political influences, but is generated by knowledge. Foucault's theories are more philosophical than psychological. He developed his theory of power as not merely repressive, but creative. He acknowledges that while power is always dangerous, it can be a source of positive value.³⁴ His position becomes significant further on when temptation is explored.

³¹Alfred Adler, *The Neurotic Constitution* (New York: Routledge, 1999); *Understanding Human Nature* (U.S.A.: Kessinger Publishing, 2003).

³²Home Page of Adler Institute available from <http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/hstein/homepage.htm> Internet; accessed 4 April 2006.

³³Foucault's earliest works were focused on psychology and developed within the frameworks of Marxism and existential phenomenology. However he moved beyond this focus and is more relevant to philosophy than to psychology. Michel Foucault, *The Foucault Reader* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1984).

³⁴Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, reprint ed. (U.K.: Vintage, 1995).

What might be called the ultimate absurdity in psychological perceptions of the human person arrived with John Watson and was completed by B. J. Skinner.³⁵ This school of psychological thought calls itself Behaviourist. Skinner is probably the best known adherent of the behaviourist school with his terrifying fictional work *Walden Two*. However in *Beyond Freedom and Dignity* Skinner put forth his ideas in plain language.³⁶ The claims he made in this book were noted in chapter five: the human being has no indwelling personality, no will, no intention, no self-determinism or personal responsibility. Modern concepts of freedom and dignity have to fall away so human beings can be intelligently controlled to behave as they should.

While most would have difficulty deciding which human beings should do the controlling and which should be controlled, Hitler, Stalin, Saddam Hussein and others of like mind would undoubtedly be able to answer the question with little difficulty. If applied to mentally ill people the answer seems to be a foregone conclusion. The mental health professional controls and the mentally ill are those who must be controlled. This is not to liken mental health professionals to men like Hitler and Stalin. This is simply to note the negation of freedom when control of one human person is given to, or taken by, another human person, especially when mind/mood altering drugs are engaged for the purpose.

While there is no open assertion, and certainly no scientific evidence that human happiness is in any sense governed by heredity, there is an implicit acceptance that such is the case.³⁷ The blame for much human misery is laid, at least theoretically, at the feet of environmental and/or genetic heredity.³⁸ For example, psychiatric medication is

³⁵ John Watson (1878-1958) proposed that the focus on consciousness as a manifestation of intelligence be abandoned in favour of behavioural manifestations of intelligence. (1912) B. F. Skinner later hardened strictures to exclude inner physiological processes and inward experiences as items of legitimate psychological concern.

³⁶ B.J. Skinner, *Beyond Freedom and Dignity*.

³⁷ This short article is well titled regarding its subject matter. P. Gunby, "Epidemiology Indicates a Disorder that Assaults Much of Patients' 'Humanness' in Prime of Life" in *JAMA* 264(1990)2487.

³⁸ This reference discusses the variety of candidate chromosomes which have been announced, disproved and discarded with frustrating frequency. The position of the researchers appears to be that manic-depression (bi-polar disorder) may be caused by an interaction among many genes. V. Morell, "Manic-Depression Findings Spark Polarized Debate" in *Science* 272(1996)31-32. In this reference researchers explore the same subject as the previous reference, but they seek to determine whether a single major gene, a small number of genes, or multifactorial polygenic inheritance is responsible for depression. P. Mitchell, A Mackinnon and B Waters, "The Genetics of Bipolar Disorder" in *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Psychiatry*, 27(1993)560-580.

administered to stabilise chemical distribution, as with bi-polar disorder. This is intended to remove the depths of depression as much as the heights of euphoria, bringing a calm that allows the person to be more at peace, if not happy. However what is overlooked is the fact that there is no such thing as stabilised chemical distribution in the human person, whether mentally ill or mentally healthy. Every man and woman with a medical degree is aware of this fact. Stabilised chemical distribution in any human person does not occur until death! Neither is there a formula for normal chemical distribution. The distribution of chemicals is a constantly changing response to stimuli at every moment of life. Here we might penetrate the rationale of this treatment by asking: 'Do I laugh because I am happy, or am I happy because I laugh?' Drugs that can make me laugh do not, as a corollary, make me happy.

Any form of determinism that controls human *being*, whether that *being* is happy or unhappy, necessarily negates all claims to essential freedom, the freedom to *be*. One wonders, if God intended human beings for himself, would he not ensure that any determinism would *compel* each human being toward rather than away from himself? Unless of course he wanted love to lead humanity toward himself, in which case freedom is a necessity. He might then have made the *desire* to seek him constitutive, but not determinative or compulsive. Of course this assertion assumes that there is a God.

The Promise of Freedom

Ancient Judaism was unique in history in as much as it was the only religious culture that embraced a relational deity. Yahweh was personally, intimately, even passionately involved in the history of the Jewish people. The Israelites were his 'chosen people' and immediately the freedom of God, as opposed to the Greek ontological unity of God, is revealed.

Relationship was the context of divine-human interaction in the Jewish *mythos*. In the context of relationship the Israelites entered into a covenant with Yahweh. The covenant, in the language of this chapter, was a promise of freedom made by Yahweh to his people. Free himself, Yahweh promised eternal freedom to the people he called his own. He would send a Messiah to free them, to redeem them in such a way that they would be forever free. For their part his people would live by a set of rules, the Decalogue, that would maintain fidelity to Yahweh as their one and only God. The very fact that the Israelites needed a redeemer immediately suggests that they needed to be freed from something or someone – but what or who?

From a Christian perspective, in time the long awaited Messiah came. He was the God-man Jesus of Nazareth. The promised freedom was delivered. The promised freedom was unimaginable. In Christian understanding it is participation in the divine life; the freedom to *be* – under all circumstances – including, or perhaps especially under the yoke of cruelty and injustice. Yet that same freedom to *be* exists outside the Christian tradition. It exists in intuitive or deliberate response to the primordial caller. Victor Frankl makes this point in the preface to his book, *The Doctor and the Soul*. Not even the Nazi yoke of injustice could destroy the essential freedom of the Jews they oppressed and murdered. Those who chose to remain ‘faithful unto death’ were able to do so, in spite of the violence and oppression that stripped them of all effective freedom.³⁹

One might say that prior to redemption in the Christian understanding, the Greek intuition of freedom, ever thwarted by determinism (fate), was not an inaccurate description of the human condition. Freedom could only mean freedom from the yoke of oppression. The freedom to *be* would have been extremely difficult to grasp prior to the incarnation of the Word of God into human flesh. Even the Israelites did not, perhaps could not, anticipate the gift of essential freedom until it was gifted and explained to them. They, no less than the rest of the human race, did not appreciate the need they had to be free of their own ego-concerns, a freedom vital to *being* in a relational structure of reality. Freedom emanating from restoration of relationship with God, redemption, could not easily be imagined in a world that had not experienced such freedom. Not surprisingly they expected the freedom to be delivered by the Messiah would be visible on the human landscape.

The Messiah of popular expectation was a purely worldly figure: a great king, a national hero and liberator who would free them [the Israelites] from the yoke of the Gentiles and give them dominion over the peoples of the earth.⁴⁰

The lack of understanding of essential freedom as loving response in truth to the primordial caller lives on in the western psyche in modern times. Christians have yet to fathom the depth of its meaning in the ‘good news’ brought by Jesus of Nazareth.

³⁹Frankl, “Preface”, *The Doctor and the Soul*.

⁴⁰Gerald Vann & P.K. Meagher, *The Temptations of Christ* (London: Fontana Books, 1957), 27.

Reception of the good news is thwarted again and again by rationalisations that begin with an intellectualised morality and end all too often with mental illness.

Voice of the Witness

It is ironic that mental illness more often than not begins with an exhilarating sense of freedom: the right to do whatever one chooses to do, be whoever one chooses to be.⁴¹

As long as I obeyed authority, (however reluctantly) my sanity remained at least apparently intact. The crisis did not begin until I found the courage to question the authority whose voice had so long dictated my reality for me.⁴²

Making decisions seemed so easy! Decision was about what 'I' wanted. It was that simple ... and that destructive. You don't even notice that fairly soon you are making decisions to gain attention, to impress others, to be accepted by a particular circle of friends or colleagues. You certainly don't realise that there is no 'I' without 'thou'. The 'I' utterly independent to make decisions is an illusion. You don't realise that you are a relational being in a relational reality. What you do come to realise is that there is subtle, but powerful pressure from every quarter, especially from loved ones.

[There is] undue pressure from family and friends to 'be' this, or not 'be' that, or 'do' this, or not 'do' that, because that is what they think is best for us, that is who they think we should be/become.⁴³

Inch by inch loved ones fashion our becoming. Added to this are the social pressures demanding that we respond/react in given ways to specific events in our lives.

How many times did I laugh at a 'blue' joke I didn't think was funny, or join the 'gossip' clique talking detrimentally about other acquaintances? It was just harmless fun. It wasn't evil. It wasn't a big deal. Sure I felt uncomfortable about many things I said and did, but they were not earth shattering. I wasn't doing anyone any harm. I was just trying to 'fit in'. It never occurred to me to question with what it was I was trying to 'fit in'. Inch by inch I slowly became what

⁴¹See previous chapter.

⁴²Pierce, *Mental Illness, Fact & Fiction*, 49.

⁴³Pierce, *Mental Illness, Fact & Fiction*, 88.

everyone else thought I ought to be – and whoever I was got lost in the shuffle.⁴⁴

Perhaps it would not have mattered if the question ‘who am I?’ had not arisen. Perhaps it would not have mattered if small, uncomfortable feelings of what can only be called guilt had been dispersed. Instead they gathered, ever increasing to become a tidal wave that ultimately drowned me in guilt and moral confusion. But the questions did arise, and with the onslaught of mental illness they were answered by an insidious, well disguised violation of freedom. They were answered by ‘compassion’ for my inherent inability to cope with life. This counterfeit compassion is a violation of essential freedom. It is disguised by its very sincerity, a sincerity fuelled by the belief that some human beings are inferior to others.

No one could believe, least of all myself, that such small ‘flaws’ in moral deportment could lead to something as bizarre, as horrendous as mental illness. Even fewer comprehend that ‘compassion’ for the apparent inability to cope with life is, itself, the influence that renders many incapable of coping with life.

The greatest violation of all is the restriction of freedom which comes disguised as compassion. We feel ‘compassion’ for poor little weak people who cannot help being poor little weak people. ... Sometimes I wonder if the promoters of such counterfeit compassion are not themselves in greater need of compassion. Do they need the ‘poor little weak people’ to help them feel superior and in control?⁴⁵

If counterfeit compassion was no more than an emotional outreach it might not be so destructive of freedom. A highly sophisticated age of science is able, unfortunately, to impose its influence in a measure that is compelling. Drugs for a ‘disease’ that has no known organic cause are called ‘medication’.

Medication which alters the individual’s natural processes of thought; medication which disturbs and alters personality and character; medication which places individual consciousness in a chemical jail – a jail so cowardly it has not the courage to stand forth and wear its true colours. No, it comes disguised as ‘healing’ and ‘compassion’.⁴⁶

⁴⁴Pierce, “Slipping Through the Cracks”, (unpublished) talk given at Banks House (psychiatric wing of Bankstown hospital) under the auspice of ARAFMI, 1994.

⁴⁵Pierce, *Mental Illness, Fact & Fiction*, 90.

⁴⁶Pierce, *Mental Illness, Fact & Fiction*, 90.

Medical treatment in mental illness addresses nothing but the *being* of the mentally ill person. The most direct effect is the disintegration of essential freedom. It is this direct effect more than any other influence that undermines the potential for healing. Without the restoration of essential freedom there can be no healing. Restoration of essential freedom is utterly dependent upon authentic self-control, the ability to resist temptation. From collaboration between psychology and theology this truth would surely emerge.

The Paradigm of Essential Freedom

The resistance to temptation by Jesus of Nazareth, the paradigm of essential freedom, is here explicated through the eyes of one who has suffered and recovered from mental illness. While this is in no sense a biblical exegesis, it is not contradicted by experts in this field who appear to leave room for such witnessing. “It is somewhat plausible that Jesus himself used these apocalyptic thought patterns of his day to tell his disciples about the testings of his faith engendered by the conflicts he encountered as he preached the kingdom.”⁴⁷ *The New Jerome Biblical Commentary* further notes that “since temptation is essentially a personal, inner experience they [the disciples] did not know exactly what had gone on in Jesus’ consciousness”.⁴⁸ It seems reasonable that sharing personal, inner experience of temptation may shed light on the universal meaning of Jesus’ temptations.

In the opening chapter of *The Temptations of Christ* the authors make a valid point. The temptations of Jesus are little used by spiritual writers as material for meditation. Their point is well made. While there is an amount of biblical exegesis on this subject, there is little material written for spiritual meditation. Yet the story is full of “significant detail, demanding an almost word by word study; moreover in its symbolism we can see represented the whole life and ministry of Jesus.”⁴⁹ In the life and ministry of Jesus there is symbolically represented the whole life and ministry of the ordinary person who seeks, however intuitively, to be response to the primordial caller. The correlation between biblical exegesis and *ordinary, daily life* would reveal, not only the

⁴⁷Eds. R.E. Brown, J.A. Fitzmyer and R.E. Murphy, *The New Jerome Biblical Commentary* (New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1990), 688.

⁴⁸Brown, Fitzmyer & Murphy, *Jerome Biblical Commentary*, 638.

⁴⁹Vann & Meagher, *The Temptations of Christ*, 15.

universal, but also the spiritual significance of the temptations of Jesus. *The New Jerome Biblical Commentary* notes that:

The temptation of Jesus has universal significance: (a) Jesus stands for Israel because he is the beginning of the new people of God, the founder of a new humanity; (b) the basic temptation is not to love God with a unified heart, at the risk of life, at the cost of wealth, Jesus is here shown to be the perfect lover of God.⁵⁰

For the perfect lover there is no moral confusion, no undermining of fidelity to the beloved.

That excessive moral concern and confusion lie at the heart of mental illness was the assertion made in the previous chapter. These impact on the desire of those who seek to live a ‘good’ life. For the believer, the ‘good life’ is participation in the divine life. “To be with God means contending with ‘Satan’ who, in the Old Testament, is not so much an anti-God but the adversary of humanity, the recorder and accuser of every misdeed.”⁵¹ The temptations of Jesus are examined in this light, as they bring clarity to moral concern and confusion, and therefore underpin an understanding of mental health.

The good news of the New Testament speaks of the great gift Jesus of Nazareth brought to the whole human family. Through him God was offering salvation to the whole human race. Through him each person could participate in the divine life. Each person was, through the God-human union, enabled to *be* one-with the Eternal Living God. The temptation of Jesus, or more precisely his resistance to temptation, is a paradigmatic example of participation in the divine life. “The Spirit, given Jesus at his baptism does not lead him into temptation, but is the sustaining power with him during temptation”.⁵² This story is narrated in the gospels of Matthew (4. 1-11), Mark (1. 12-13) and Luke (4. 1-15).

Mark’s account of the temptations is brief and without detail, but according to Michael Casey it carries insight not recorded in the other two gospels. Casey commences his chapter on the temptations of Jesus with the few words of Mark’s account. “Immediately the Spirit drove [Jesus] out into the wilderness. And he was in the wilderness for forty days being tempted by Satan, and he was with the wild beasts

⁵⁰ *Jerome Biblical Commentary*, 638.

⁵¹ Michael Casey, *Fully Human, Fully Divine: An Interactive Christology*, 44.

⁵² *Jerome Biblical Commentary*, 688.

and the angels were serving him. (Mk. 1: 12-13).”⁵³ Casey believes Mark’s temptation narrative should be read in its own right and not confused with the details given by the other two evangelists. His comments on why he believes this would have most of society’s mentally ill agreeing with him.

According to Casey, Mark’s account of Jesus’ baptism and temptations are located outside the geographical scheme he (Mark) has used to order his gospel. Immediately after his baptism the Spirit “violently drives God’s Son out into the desert – the same verb is used for the expulsion of demons.”⁵⁴ The temptations in Mark’s gospel are not conveyed as a choice Jesus made to practice prayer and fasting.

Jesus has no choice in the matter. To be picked up by the hair, like Habakkuk (Dan. 14: 36), and dumped in a hostile environment means separation from the sphere of reasonable expectations, and being totally at the behest of whatever chaotic forces inhabit that place.⁵⁵

It sounds a lot like the ‘dark night’ that is experienced in mental illness. Casey goes on to ponder: out in the wilderness where wild beasts like the lion were prowling, Jesus must have experienced fear and anxiety for his safety. At the same time the angels were serving him. The two relationships coexist: natural and healthy fear for physical safety and trust that God’s loving protection is ever present. Casey summarises the situation as “an enigmatic summary of the human condition.”⁵⁶ Jesus holds in perfect tension these contrary realities. The mystics follow his example. The mentally ill lose their way in the wilderness of fear and anxiety, attacked by a variety of ‘wild beasts’, unaware or untrusting of the service the angels offer.

Matthew and Luke in their narratives give greater and similar detail, but differ from one another in one point. Luke inverts the order of the second and third temptations as recorded in Matthew. Most authorities read Matthew as following a chronological order, while Luke is following a logical order.⁵⁷ Luke’s logical order will be engaged here for it better serves the purpose of this dissertation.

⁵³Casey, *Fully Human, Fully Divine*, 43.

⁵⁴Casey, *Fully Human, Fully Divine*, 44.

⁵⁵Casey, *Fully Human, Fully Divine*, 44.

⁵⁶Casey, *Fully Human, Fully Divine*, 47.

⁵⁷Vann & Meagher, *The Temptations of Christ*, 16.

The first questions raised with regard to the temptations in the desert are raised in relationship to the humanity of Jesus. These are raised not only at the commencement of his ministry, but also at its conclusion, in his suffering and death on the cross. Was he really tempted? Was he fully human? Did he suffer as all human beings suffer?⁵⁸ Meditation upon the temptations, and the comfort of such meditation to the one who has been stripped bare of all self reliance, as are the mentally ill, is unparalleled by any other scriptural passage.⁵⁹

Temptation is seen too readily as a clear choice between good and evil. The very human experience of temptation suggests that this is not the case. More often than not any evil in temptation is subtly woven into thoughts and desires that are of themselves quite lawful.⁶⁰

We know from our own experience that the overt content of temptation is often irrelevant, just as eating the fruit in Eden was a harmless enough activity. The malign meaning of the forbidden act is to be found in its capacity to rupture the relationship of dependence on God.⁶¹

In the reference frames of this dissertation the malign meaning is the rupture of loving relationship with the primordial caller; the refusal to respond in truth; the refusal to *be*.

Reflection upon the temptations of Jesus and comparison with one's own experience of temptation make it clear that in the *first instance* temptation is a 'reasonable' alternative (*logos*) to an inner un-knowing (*mythos*) of how to go about achieving what might be called the ministry of one's life, of coming-into-being true to one's potential.

Jesus was assaulted by the three temptations that are the root cause of all temptation if we see temptation as a test between 'my way' to fulfil my ministry or

⁵⁸"During his ministry Jesus will continue to encounter the powers of evil who know who he is, and will vanquish them". "When Jesus is on the cross in Jerusalem, he will again encounter temptations ... and will conquer them and evil by his faith". *Jerome Biblical Commentary*, 689 & 688.

⁵⁹While studying for my Bachelor of Theology at CTU Hunters Hill I completed a unit "STA430 – Theology of the Human Person". During that semester I meditated long and hard before writing an assignment on the temptations of Jesus. The paper was called "Freedom of the Human Person".

⁶⁰Vann & Meagher, *The Temptations of Christ*, 22.

⁶¹Casey, *Fully Human*, 45.

coming-into-being, and God's way for me to achieve the same end. A distinction needs to be made here between what we shall call primary temptation and secondary temptation. It is the movement from primary to secondary temptation that signals *the difference between* essential and effective freedom. Understanding the assault of temptation in this context is vital to mental health.⁶²

Primary temptation is what Jesus experienced. It is the most difficult and the root of all temptation. It is an assault upon essential freedom. In primary temptation the objective or goal is not questioned, rather options regarding the 'way' to the goal are opened. Secondary temptation presents different goals or objectives. For example: Will I have another drink or not? Will I have an abortion or not? Secondary temptation is an attack upon effective freedom. It creates the moral dilemma often articulated in debates about whether or not the means justifies the end, or the end justifies the means. Secondary temptation needs the doorway – the very narrow doorway – of essential freedom to be at least partially closed before rationalisations can begin the work of dividing and fragmenting personhood.⁶³ Fragmented personhood, or what was, in the previous chapter, called 'the divided soul' is necessary to secondary temptation. Essential freedom maintains the wholeness of self, of being, that guards against the self-division that gives secondary temptation its potential for success. The resultant moral dilemma as the cause of insanity was explicated in the previous chapter.⁶⁴

Given that essential freedom is the concern of this dissertation, only primary temptation will be explored. It is his resistance that makes the temptations of Jesus so paradigmatic: they were in no way tinged by the self division that allows secondary temptation. Satan is very clever. He knew he needed some level of success in closing the door to essential freedom before any assault on effective freedom could be launched with any hope of success. That is, he needed to first succeed in enticing Jesus to *different ways* of carrying out his ministry, altering his *being* by inches, before he could

⁶²Insole makes a distinction between what he calls negative freedom – "to do whatever one wants" , and positive freedom "to achieve proper self-realization/fulfilment". His arguments sit well within the concept of primary and secondary temptation as they relate to essential and effective freedom. Christopher Insole, "The Worship of Freedom: Negative and Positive Notions of Liberty in Philosophy of Religion and Political Philosophy" in *Heythrop Journal* XLV (2004) 209-226.

⁶³Try your hardest to enter by the narrow door, because, I tell you, many will try to enter and will not succeed. (Lk. 13. 24).

⁶⁴The point made in the previous chapter must be remembered. Moral dilemma does not of itself signal self-division. It can be the situational dilemma of a healthy conscience. Self-division results from moral dilemma that is a relatively constant state of being.

launch an attack that would divert him from his ministry. Primary temptation presents options on how one might go about doing the right thing. The temptation resides in choosing the right action/thing for the wrong reason, or the wrong action/thing for the right reason. This of course impacts on the way in which one goes about achieving the goal.

Evidently the early Church Fathers saw something similar in the temptations of Jesus. St Irenaeus saw in the temptations a summing up of all things in Christ. St Gregory the Great furthered that perception noting that Satan tempted Jesus with the same three temptations with which he had tempted Adam and Eve; namely pleasure, ambition and vainglory.⁶⁵ The “same interpretation is to be found in St Ambrose and St Augustine among the Latin Fathers and in St John Chrysostom among the Greeks.”⁶⁶

In a more modern language the temptations are to pleasure, power, and pride. Freud promotes *pleasure*. Adler promotes *power* in the refusal to obey or surrender. Foucault promotes *power* as an intellectual property able to deliver good governance. The Behaviourists promote *pride* as vainglory.⁶⁷ In all of these we are tempted to believe that attributes such as physical beauty, prowess, intelligence, talent, personality, all originate in, and belong to, the individual self, and the achievement(s) of ‘self’ are cause for pride in self. Incongruently, if ‘self’ fails to achieve, the very vice of vainglory – pride – demands that we abdicate responsibility. Failure is the fault of fate ... environmental and/or genetic heredity. In modern psychology pride in one’s self and one’s achievements is perceived to be the virtue of self-esteem. The notion of ‘sin’ went out when God was removed as the arbiter of morality.

Satan tempted Jesus with pleasure when he suggested he turn stones into bread. He tempted him to power when he showed him the kingdoms of the world, promising him power over them all – a promise the Prince of this world could deliver! Foucault’s

⁶⁵Vann & Meagher, *The Temptations of Christ*, 26.

⁶⁶Vann & Meagher, *The Temptations of Christ*, 26.

⁶⁷Vainglory is a word so out of date it is difficult to find in a credible dictionary or encyclopedia. A succinct definition would say simply it is pride. However it carries nuances that do not necessarily come with the meaning given to ‘pride’. Its meaning can be distilled from the Church Fathers mentioned here as reference sources. Psychologically speaking, vainglory is ego-centricity: self-aggrandisement, paradoxically vacant of responsibility. That is, when things go wrong ego-concern is able to abdicate responsibility and blame ‘other’ (including God). Where pride is ego ‘puffed up’, taking credit for achievement, vainglory maintains pride when ego fails to achieve. Vainglory is both pride in achievement and abdication of responsibility in failure.

power as a creative force is very apparent here. He tempted him to vainglory when he invited him to test God by throwing himself off the mountain.

Satan's suggestions (temptations) implied that Jesus should win over the world to God (an extremely clever liar is Satan!) by becoming the visible hero the Israelites expected. Such a 'way' would mean a glorious career, a successful mission in a manner congenial to his human nature, and without the prospect of horrendous suffering and death at the end of it all.⁶⁸ Psychologically speaking the humanity of Jesus experienced the inner struggle with this alternative, more humanly palatable, 'reasonable' view. He probably intuited, as do we all, that by rejecting Satan's way and remaining faithful to God's way he would have to walk a much more difficult road. But why? Why is God's way, at least on the surface of it, always the tough way? Why does God not make his way look attractive, inviting, *tempting*, irresistible?

Jesus chose of course, to be himself – “the Way, the Truth and the Life” (Jn. 14:6), rather than to become Satan's puppet. He knew where and how he 'fitted in'. But how did he know? What made him aware that he was choosing to be true to himself? If he is the example, the role model, the paradigm, then surely he knew in a way that we can all know. The picture Satan painted was perfectly logical. Jesus knew pleasure was not of itself sinful. He knew, or surely believed, that given the power he would rule the kingdoms of the earth with wisdom at least the equal of Solomon. As to throwing himself off the mountain, was that not an invitation to trust the God he sought to serve? What alerted Jesus to the lie embedded in choices that looked perfectly reasonable?

From a close scrutiny of Jesus' responses to Satan, the native partnership between *mythos* and *logos* can be retrieved. Jesus was not only intelligent, he was also wise. He not only acknowledged what his intellect knew, he trusted the un-knowing at the deepest depth of himself. His sense of morality remained intact, unquestioned, unanalysed; it was, and never ceased to be, loving response in truth to the primordial caller. At no time did ego-concern fall to vainglory by competing for fidelity that belonged to the primordial caller, not even at the end in Gethsemane when healthy, and natural ego-concern raised its head to ask the question of ultimate choice. The mission of his life was response to primordial caller. He might ask a question, but he never faltered in his fidelity, or in his openness to receive an unpalatable answer. He was indeed 'faithful unto death.'

⁶⁸Distilled; Vann & Meagher, *The Temptations of Christ*, 27.

In his responses to the temptations Jesus reveals his wisdom, including a perception of reality beyond mere appearance, beyond cause-effect. His response to the first temptation to pleasure is straightforward. “Human beings live not on bread alone.” (Lk. 4. 4). He seems to know that meeting one’s bodily needs – even to the point of gluttony – could not satisfy human hunger. Satan’s temptation to power is very clever. Bringing order to the chaotic human landscape presents an attractive picture to one whose priority is peace and justice. Jesus demonstrates a wiser priority. True peace and justice come from only one source. “You must do homage to the Lord your God, him alone you must serve.” (Lk. 4. 8). Perhaps irritated by Jesus’ unshakeable faith, Satan invites him to test that faith in an adventurous act. In the reference frames of this dissertation Jesus’ ontological link to the Absolute was undisturbed. He knows that human faith cannot commit itself to anything less than the Absolute. He is also aware that participation in the divine life includes, rather than exempts personal responsibility. “Do not put the Lord your God to the test”. (Lk. 4.12). He seems to understand that his mission is to serve God, not to test and make sure God is serving him. He is not interested in his own glory – a vain glory.

It would seem that the very human Jesus of Nazareth perceived himself to be part of a reality greater than, but not separate from himself: a radically relational reality, a reality that originated in, and flowed from, the primordial relationship. To give in to Satan’s temptations would commence the severance of that relationship, denying his own being, negating the potential of his being to come-into-being. He was and is indeed the paradigm of essential freedom, the *Logos* ever one-with the primordial *Mythos*.⁶⁹

The un-knowing in Jesus that ‘knew’, was not beyond his human nature, not beyond our human nature. One might say his divinity was made manifest in his perfect humanity. His choice was a real one, a deliberate, definite, very human response to temptation. He could have followed the ‘reasonable way’. He could have given priority to himself, to his individuality, and then attended to the needs of others with whatever time and energy was left over. He would not be ignoring the needs of ‘other’, just rearranging priorities.

On the human landscape today such rationalisations have a familiar ring to them! But Jesus evidently knew what we have yet to learn: that a subtle ‘rearrangement’ of priorities has colossal impact, a point made in chapter four and worth repeating here: “If

⁶⁹Divine guidance as personal experience was explored in chapter four “Relationship”.

you've got your priorities in order you're never going to go mad.”⁷⁰ However reasonable Satan's temptations appear on the surface, they are a lie. Not only does surrender to temptation undermine essential freedom, it also does violence to reality. But it is *surrender* to temptation, not temptation itself that does this violence.

St Thomas Aquinas, asked whether the will of Christ was in complete conformity with the will of God, left room for a response of 'no'.⁷¹ St Thomas makes plain that the human tendency to recoil from suffering, to seek a way that is painless and visibly profitable is not of itself an evil. In the old language it is not sinful. It is to deliberately seek to suffer that is evil. It is at best pride, at worst masochism. If Freud was correct and some content of mental illness contains the refusal to give up the penalty of suffering (noted in the previous chapter), then healing mental illness is less about uncovering demonic drives and instincts than it is about accepting forgiveness.⁷²

The fully human Jesus of Nazareth was not afflicted by *demonic* drives and urges, unconscious or otherwise – that is to say, drives and urges *beyond his capacity* to resist. Neither is any other human person – unless the incarnation of the Word of God into human flesh was and is a puppet show! The potential for evil in temptation lies in the underlying motivation. Are we motivated to do it 'my way' or God's way? Both ways involve similar action, similar goals. Satan has lost none of his cleverness. His lies are still very well dressed. But 'my way' leads to self aggrandisement. God's way brings humility and gratitude for the gift of participation in *being* and becoming. While primary temptation carries the potential to do evil, it also carries the potential for great good. Experiencing temptation does not mean that one is evil. Temptation can and often is visited upon us to strengthen us in our resolve to come-into-being God's way.⁷³ For the mentally ill, and I suspect for the rest of the human family, it is comforting and affirming to realise that experiencing temptation means simply that God is interested in

⁷⁰Jones, *The Search for Meaning*, 198.

⁷¹ST., 3. 18, 5. The body of the article closes with 'Now it was the will of God that Christ should undergo pain, suffering, and death, not that these of themselves were willed by God, but for the sake of man's salvation. Hence it is plain that in His will of sensuality and in His rational will considered as nature, Christ could will what God did not; but in His will as reason He always willed the same as God, which appears from what He says (Matthew 26:39): "Not as I will, but as Thou wilt." For He willed in His reason that the Divine will should be fulfilled although He said that He willed something else by another will.'

⁷²Freud, *The Ego and the Id*, 71.

⁷³Vann & Meagher, *The Temptations of Christ*, 44-52.

strengthening our fidelity. Resisting temptation can be described as moral exercise analogous to physical exercise.

Freedom and Professional Mental Health Care

Psychology has accurately identified the pleasure principle and the power drive as core issues in human mental health. The problem resides not in the validity of these as fundamental issues, but in the interpretation psychology has given them. Professional treatment at its best seeks to exchange harmful pleasures for beneficial pleasures and futile power-play or control for effective power-play or control. One choice replaces another. Is this ability to make choices truly freedom?

Psychologically speaking the very aim of pleasure and power is to produce success of one sort or another on the human landscape. It is such success that is the criterion by which 'beneficial' and 'effective' are appraised. What of freedom? Freedom, it would appear, does not enter the equation. Perhaps Christian mental health professionals could be encouraged to reflect upon how successful Jesus looked, hung upon a cross at the conclusion of his very young life. In spite of his shameful death, signalling an unsuccessful life, he died true to himself: he died with his essential freedom utterly intact. He died mentally healthy!

The primary need for the human being (at least those under professional mental health care) is deemed to be self-worth, self-esteem, self-confidence that give one a sense of self-value, self-satisfaction.⁷⁴ Achievement is posited as a corollary of self-esteem. The freedom to *be*, essential freedom, does not appear on the psychological horizon. Much of the inability of the mentally ill to perform the ordinary tasks of life is presumed to be the result, not of lack of essential freedom, but of low self-esteem.⁷⁵ The need/desire to actualise potential known only in the un-knowing, beyond the confines of ego, is not a consideration. The very concept of being true to oneself is measured by the glow of satisfaction experienced in the elusive 'self-esteem'.

Psychology has shown much insight, and from that dealt extensively, however inaccurately, with the human instincts for pleasure and power. Yet there were three temptations, not two. While there is no suggestion here that psychology's insights are

⁷⁴May exposes self-focus as an insanity, acknowledging his position is professionally unusual. Gerald May, *Simply Sane: The Spirituality of Mental Health* (New York: Crossroad, 1982), 11-20.

⁷⁵Maslow's "Hierarchy of Needs" was constructed on this presumption.

grounded in scripture, the suggestion is that authentic insight into the human condition, whatever its source, should paint a similar picture, so to speak.

The word ‘vainglory’ has faded from use, its meaning rendered obscure if not obsolete. However it is a revealing word, more appropriate than ‘pride’ in the world of mental health care. As used in the New Testament, and by biblical exegetes, it applies not only to pride in self-achievement, but more significantly to a masochistic pride in failure and suffering that makes “a mockery [of] real martyrdom”.⁷⁶ Vainglory allows failure to become ‘victim’.

The absence in psychology of ‘vainglory’ by that, or any other name, leaves one wondering if psychology has not missed something. Is there a psychology of the temptation to vainglory, or is there only abdication of responsibility – on logical grounds? Given the place of self-esteem as a psychological virtue it is reasonable to ask: is vainglory the very goal of psychological counselling, the trojan horse of pride defeating the integrity of spiritual poverty, the fruit of which is essential freedom? Are we encouraged, psychologically speaking, to bathe ourselves in vainglory? What might a spirituality uncorrupted by psychological ‘roots’ have to teach psychology about the humility of accepting achievement as divine gift? Would some understanding of the humility integral to spiritual poverty assist psychology to bring essential freedom into focus as necessary to the ‘successful’ life, irrespective of appearances? These issues are now briefly explored.

Freedom as Detachment

The ‘successful’ life is often filled with the psychological distresses of fear and anxiety – fear of *losing* whatever has brought pleasure and power, the secular benchmarks of the successful life. The successful life by these benchmarks is not necessarily the free life, the redeemed life. It can be as much a life filled with fear and anxiety as the life fearful and anxious because it lacks the hallmarks of success.

The person who does only what he wants is not free, but unfree; he is abandoned and enslaved to his own caprice. ... Even the person who is free from all pressures, both internal and external, who can freely control his existence is far from free in the view of the New Testament. He is not unfree because he does not have sufficient power over himself, but

⁷⁶“Again Jesus is addressed as the representative of the people and invited to test God’s providential care by unnecessarily risking his life, a mockery to real martyrdom and the future passion”. *Jerome Biblical Commentary*, 638.

because he wants such power in the first place, because he thinks he can and must take control over himself and his reality.⁷⁷

Freedom requires an acceptance of the human condition that embraces the possibility of loss. “The Christian is a person who accepts without reservation the whole of concrete human life, with all its adventures, its absurdities and its incomprehensibilities.”⁷⁸

Something of what Carl Jung depicted as “the unenviable loneliness of the modern man” can be seen here.⁷⁹ What Jung perceived to be ‘unenviable loneliness’ is in reality a very enviable, healthy detachment available to the one who has nothing to gain or lose because he/she has her/his own personhood, essential freedom.

‘Low self-esteem’ as the one-answer-fits-all occasions of fear and anxiety makes little sense in practical living. At some depth it raises a valid question. If a human being rich in worldly success lacks self-esteem, as is evidenced by the suicide death of many ‘successful’ lives, what are we calling self-esteem? What is the quality, the substance of self-worth apparently absent in such a life?⁸⁰ Johannes Baptist Metz, whose theology we will meet shortly, perceives self-esteem or love of self to be loving acceptance of the truth of our Being.⁸¹ So does Karl Rahner.

The really ultimate thing is that they [Christians] accept themselves just as they are, and do this without making anything an idol, without leaving anything out, and without closing themselves to the totality of what in the ultimate depths of reality is inescapably imposed upon human beings as their task.⁸²

What, if anything, does this have to say to psychology?

A phenomenon of successful professional treatment seldom acknowledged is the persistence of ultimate failure. The suicide death of so many thought to be cured of their mental illness, at least to the extent that they have developed control sufficient to make

⁷⁷Walter Kasper, *An Introduction to Christian Faith* (New York: Paulist Press, 1980), 127.

⁷⁸Karl Rahner, *Foundations of Christian Faith: An Introduction to the Idea of Christianity* (New York: Seabury Press, 1978), 402.

⁷⁹Jung, *Modern Man in Search of a Soul*, 228.

⁸⁰Caroline Jones, interview “Rene Rivkin” *The Search for Meaning Collection* (Australia: Dove Publications for ABC Books, 1995), 27-48.

⁸¹Metz, *Poverty of Spirit*, 4.

⁸²Rahner, *Foundations of Christian Faith*, 402.

them functional, productive members of society is an often repeated by-product of professional mental health care.⁸³

In April 1971 several mental health professionals in the U.S.A. became founding members of a mental health initiative that sought to replace the medical model of treatment with a more relational model ... with remarkable success compared to the medical model.⁸⁴ The project was called “Soteria”, and its history is recorded by two of the founding members in a book, *Soteria : Through Madness to Deliverance*. The authors note: “The history of Soteria’s graduates [those treated successfully] was often a tragicomedy (or a comic tragedy). Too many successful residents met death early.”⁸⁵ Throughout the book there are references to the suicide deaths of ‘successful graduates’ that both confounded and saddened those involved in the Soteria project.⁸⁶

Little research has been done into this phenomenon. Such research would surely uncover what most sufferers of mental illness know.⁸⁷ For those who have asked, through the very experience of their mental illness, and found no adequate answer to the deeper, existential questions of life, there is a continuing sense of futility that no amount of pleasure, power or vainglory can allay. There is nothing worth dying for, so there is nothing worth living for.⁸⁸

Even a cursory examination of human history reveals loving commitment as the single motivator not only for living but also for dying.

Man’s dignity is his free will, which is the gift by which he is superior to the animals and even rules them (Genesis 1:26). Man’s knowledge is that by which he recognizes that he possesses this dignity, but that it does not originate in himself. His virtue is that by which he seeks

⁸³I have called this apparent healing ‘Functional Sanity’; Pierce, *Mental Illness, Fact and Fiction*, 73-104.

⁸⁴This was not the first experiment replacing the medical model. It is merely one that is very well recorded.

⁸⁵L. R. Mosher & Joyce Hendrix, *Soteria: Through Madness to Deliverance* (U.S.A.: Xlibris, 2004), 102.

⁸⁶The Soteria project was closed after 12 years of operation. Its closure was due to lack of funding.

⁸⁷Explores this issue reaching similar conclusions. May, “Death and Resurrection” in *Simply Sane*, 1-10.

⁸⁸Psychology has yet to discover what theology already knows: a significant benchmark of the ‘successful’ life is fidelity to someone/something so strong it is considered worth dying for. In this sense Jesus of Nazareth is the epitome of the successful life!

eagerly for his Creator, and when he finds him, holds to him with all his might.⁸⁹

When the human person believes and trusts in, or commits to, another person or cause, she/he will live and die for that which is so loved. Paradoxically it is from the nature of such love that the detachment necessary to essential freedom flows. An all consuming love of 'other' removes ego-concern. 'Self' drops out of focus and loving commitment gives life its zest, its meaning, its motivation. The one who lives and dies for love has found the destination of freedom, the place where freedom terminates itself. "This is where freedom becomes really free. It lets itself fall into absolute anonymity."⁹⁰

Such all consuming love can be focused on an erroneous 'other'. It is the prospect of losing the 'beloved' that tests the validity of the relationship to which one is committed, and the essential freedom inherent in the commitment. Only fidelity and commitment to the primordial relationship remains eternal. More than that, only in the primordial relationship can one bear the pain of losing other loving relationships, whether by betrayal, rejection, or death. Horrendous acts are sometimes committed by those who have lost a loved one, disclosing the predominantly ego-serving nature of their love. Ego cannot surrender itself absolutely without distorting itself to any 'other' than the primordial 'Other' – its own origin.

Without love nothing called 'success' is worthy of the name. This fundamental insight is learned on the journey out of mental illness. In simple language, why bother climbing the highest mountain? What is the purpose of worldly success? With so much effort required to do battle with so many powerful, negative forces and so little reward, what's the point? Death awaits us all, and if that is all there is ... life is worthless. The best success available on the human landscape is not sufficient to make life worth the living.⁹¹

Modern science in the wealthy, affluent west has brought treatments for mental illness unavailable to poorer countries – with questionable results. In 1979 the World Health Organisation (WHO) undertook an investigation into the effectiveness of neuroleptic (anti-psychotic) drugs. A second investigation was undertaken in 1990

⁸⁹St Bernard of Clairvaux, *On Loving God*, trans. G.R. Evans (New York: Paulist Press, 1987), 176.

⁹⁰Walter Kasper, *An Introduction to the Christian Faith*, 128.

⁹¹Gerald May makes this same point. May, *Simply Sane*, 7-9.

because researchers refused to believe the results of the first.⁹² However, disbelieving researchers came up with the same results as the first investigation. The WHO investigation found that “schizophrenia” outcomes in poor countries like India, Nigeria, and Colombia were much better than in rich countries like the United States. Those diagnosed as “schizophrenic” in poor countries had either recovered or were doing fairly well five years after their diagnosis, while only 25% of such patients in rich countries enjoyed the same level of success. The report concluded that “living in a rich country like the United States is a ‘strong predictor’ that a person diagnosed with ‘schizophrenia’ will never fully recover.”⁹³

Peter Breggin was one among the emphatic in denouncing the use of neuroleptic drug therapy for mental illness.

Their [neuroleptic drugs] main impact is to blunt and subdue the individual. They also paralyze the body, rendering the individual less able to react or to move. They thus produce a chemical lobotomy and a chemical straitjacket. Rather than treating a disease, the neuroleptics create a disease.⁹⁴

As recently as February 2006 at the “World Day of the Sick” Monsignor Cappelletti in his address entitled “Where to From Here?” noted:

On a more positive note, the record is also likely to show that, almost ironically, many of our regional neighbours, Papua New Guinea, Fiji, will reap enormous benefits from **not** being in a position to have psychiatric units as the mainstay of their mental health systems.⁹⁵

One wonders why the wealthy west continues with a treatment that not only does not heal, but actually does much harm.⁹⁶ If mental health is the freedom to *be*, then much

⁹²Home Page of World Health Organisation available from http://www.who.int/mental_health/prevention/suicide/suicideprevent/en/ Internet; accessed 4 April 2006

⁹³Preface by Robert Whitaker; Mosher & Hendrix, *Soteria*: xiv.

⁹⁴ Mosher & Hendrix quoting Breggin, *Soteria*., 21-22.

⁹⁵Available from Catholic Communications Adelaide, 39 Wakefield St. Adelaide SA 5000, (emphasis original).

⁹⁶Mosher & Hendrix, *Soteria*., 261.

professional treatment unwittingly prohibits the very possibility of healing. The question must be asked: Is psychology neurotically attached to its own ideologies about mental illness and mental health?

Reflections: Voice of the Witness through Johannes Baptist Metz

A sense of the freedom to *be*, here called essential freedom, is an intuitive un-knowing that supports and affirms the potential for recovery on the healing journey. It is an un-knowing that does not easily penetrate to *logos*. When it does, it presents a confronting question that demands a conscious, deliberate response. It is almost as though one has emerged from a black abyss, back to where it all began. Armed with so much understanding by the dark night experience, the originating question, “who am I?” once buried in *mythos*, now presents itself clearly in *logos* where it has become: “who am I coming-into-being?”

Life had become a most exhilarating experience. I felt as though I was metaphorically standing on the top of a mountain, able to see the world in every direction. All I had to do was take my talents and go out in the world and conquer it, and I could do that. I knew, I was sure, I could do that. In spite of all I’d learned, of all I had become, the intoxication of power rendered me drunk for quite a few weeks.⁹⁷

The attractions of this world are powerful, reinforced by their immediacy. Encounter with the divine that had initiated and guided my journey out of insanity did not exempt me from temptation. In hindsight I can say that God’s respect for the freedom he gifts knows no bounds. I was still response to the primordial caller, but I was free to be that ... or not. To be loving response in truth is not possible for one who is not free. My journey out of insanity had brought me, first essential freedom, and then, awareness of it. Now that I was truly, knowingly free to choose to be or to not be loving response in truth, the question was being asked all over again. I believed also that God “would not reduce me, would not take my power away from me, would not in any way punish me if I chose other than him.”⁹⁸

I didn’t want to do anything bad; I had no desire to commit any sins. I simply wanted to take my life and do all sorts of exciting things with it. It wasn’t that I wanted other than what might be God’s will. It was just that I

⁹⁷Pierce, *Mental Illness, Fact & Fiction*, 129.

⁹⁸Pierce, *Mental Illness, Fact & Fiction*, 131.

wanted to do the choosing, the driving, the goal setting. Surely, I tried to tell myself, this was exactly what doing God's will meant.⁹⁹

At no other time in my life, even during mental illness, can I remember pondering a significant decision with a conscious 'block' placed on divine will. I knew intuitively that this was one choice God wanted me to make for myself – out of the essential freedom he had gifted to me – the freedom that enabled me to choose what I truly wanted to choose. “I could keep who I was, doing whatever I wanted to do, or I could give it all as a gift to the Power which had first given it to me.”¹⁰⁰ At another level it is the choice for or against spiritual poverty. Johannes Baptist Metz writes as though he has experienced this very deliberate, conscious choice.

Metz notes that of all the creatures on earth the human person alone has been gifted with freedom. “Other animals survive in mute innocence and cramped necessity.”¹⁰¹ Their being is what it is from start to finish. Being is not a foregone conclusion for the human; it is a mandate and a mission. We do not possess our being unchallenged. We are challenged and questioned from the depths of our being, from the depths of boundless spirit; we are challenged to come into being. We are something that *can be*, a being who must win selfhood, engaging essential freedom to decide who we are, what it is to be. We can choose to *not be*.¹⁰² The choice to *not be* is insanity – in all its forms.

When the shackles of self-absorption that stretch as far back as memory can recall are broken, and the freedom to *be* is experienced, the journey is not over. It has only begun. What is left is the illusion, the silhouette of ego-concern that remains in destructive habits yet to be broken in ongoing temptation. Ego-concern does not relinquish centre stage. It is displaced paradoxically by essential freedom.

Metz agrees that we *become* who we *are* through the exercise of our freedom, and that this is the very law of our *being*. He demonstrates this with an exploration of the temptations of Jesus in the light of ‘poverty of spirit’, the poverty necessary to receive and maintain what is here called essential freedom, the freedom for which Christ set us free, the freedom to fulfil the mandate and the mission that is our becoming.

⁹⁹ Pierce, *Mental Illness, Fact & Fiction*, 130.

¹⁰⁰ Pierce, *Mental Illness, Fact & Fiction*, 129.

¹⁰¹ Metz, *Poverty of Spirit*, 3.

¹⁰² Extrapolated; Metz, *Poverty of Spirit*, 3.

If the experience of mental illness is examined in the light of the temptations of Jesus at the beginning of his earthly ministry, it becomes, not only understandable, but very ordinary.¹⁰³ Already noted in the previous chapter is rebellion as the precursor to mental illness. The alternative to rebellion is acceptance of the identity granted me by ‘authority’, whoever that authority is perceived to be. The difficulty is that what appears to be rebellion may only be exchange of inauthentic for authentic authority. When the authority one has chosen to obey, either by environmental heredity (as in parents or teachers) or deliberate choice (as in friends or cause) proves, or is believed to be, false, a rebellious attitude marks the struggle to break free. The aggression embedded in a rebellious attitude comes not only from a desire to serve ego-concern, but from the confusion that has yet to find authority it believes to be trustworthy. This attitude, visible in political rebellion, is present, if less visible, in personal rebellion.

With recognition of the ultimate authentic authority, aggression dissolves. Indeed an attitude of mystical tolerance emerges and continues to grow.¹⁰⁴ It is not aggression or even self-assertiveness that marks the successful life, but rather humility: the poverty of spirit necessary to embrace who ‘I’ am and to accept the mandate and mission to come-into-being the ‘me’ that ‘I’ am by divine designation.¹⁰⁵ “I have called you by your name, you are mine.” (Isa. 43:1). It is an immediate call to relationship-with, to participation in the divine life – the experience/realisation that commences the healing journey.

Metz, along with the early church Fathers (St Irenaeus, St Gregory the Great, St Ambrose, St Augustine and St John Chrysostom mentioned earlier) claims that the temptations of Jesus present a biblical way of narrating the spiritual process of humanity taking up the invitation to be one-with the divine.¹⁰⁶ Metz explicates the three temptations as three assaults on the poverty of Jesus. He asserts that Satan wants Jesus to be strong in the way that human beings are strong. What Satan really fears is the powerlessness of God in the humanity and humility of Jesus. “Satan fears the trojan horse of an open human heart that will remain true to its native poverty.”¹⁰⁷ He tempts very cleverly, appealing to the

¹⁰³It was appreciation of the ordinariness of mental illness that led me to call my autobiographical book recording my recovery from this illness *Ordinary Insanity*.

¹⁰⁴Mystical tolerance was explicated in chapter five where it was identified as fundamental to a relational reality.

¹⁰⁵Extrapolated; Metz, *Poverty of Spirit*, 3.

¹⁰⁶Metz, *Poverty of Spirit*, 6.

¹⁰⁷Metz, *Poverty of Spirit*, 10.

spiritual strength of human beings. He paints human spirit as synonymous with divine will. We might paraphrase Satan's temptations thus: 'God does not want you to go hungry. You can feed yourself, even by extraordinary means. Pleasure is a good thing. It is not sinful, and it is yours for the taking. God did not make you powerless. You can take control of yourself and your life. You are free to choose your own destiny. You do not need to fear the dark abyss. Be fearless, courageous. Run the gauntlet. And if you do happen to fall into the abyss, God's angels will protect you from harm.' Satan makes a virtue of self reliance. With this he is able to hide the truth that we are not self reliant.¹⁰⁸

If mental illness had nothing else to teach, other than the wisdom that we are not self-reliant, it would be worth all the pain for that one vital lesson. Those who have recovered from mental illness know they have no strength of their own, but they know where to go to get the strength they need to cope with all the circumstances of life, from the most ordinary to the most extraordinary.¹⁰⁹

Real strength and real freedom know that we are utterly reliant on God, unable to be satisfied by anything less than the divine.

Hunger becomes a human hunger only when it can never be fully allayed; desire becomes a human desire only when it can remain unfulfilled. And nearness to the abyss becomes a human experience only when one can no longer call upon helping hands for protection.¹¹⁰

Satan continually invites humanity to meet its own needs, hiding from us the truth that "God is the guardian of our humanity, who lets us be what we are."¹¹¹ Rather than choosing our own destiny, choosing our own identity, we are invited to trust all this and more to the loving providence of God.

We are all beggars. We are all members of a species that is not sufficient unto itself. We are all creatures plagued by unending doubts and restless, unsatisfied hearts. Of all creatures, we are the poorest and the most

¹⁰⁸Extrapolated; Metz, *Poverty of Spirit* 11-12.

¹⁰⁹In recent years, coping with the death of one of my sons brought home to me resoundingly the origin of 'my' strength. Pierce, *An Everlasting Love*.

¹¹⁰Metz, *Poverty of Spirit*, 12.

¹¹¹Metz, *Poverty of Spirit*, 20.

incomplete. Our needs are always beyond our capacities, and we only find ourselves when we lose ourselves.¹¹²

Jesus is the epitome of the poverty of spirit necessary to receive being (to come-into-being) from the God who created being. “Was he not so thoroughly poor that he had to go begging for his very personality from the transcendent utterance of the Abba?”¹¹³ With the poverty of spirit of which Metz speaks self-focus is lost and its corollary, anxiety, is dispersed.

What is utterly astounding in the initial experience of self as invitation to divine life is the ‘un-knowing’ that the love of God is a personal, intimate love that embraces one – not as just another part of creation – but as a unique, unrepeatable person. What develops for the person who experiences such love is reciprocity of love in kind. That is, love for God is not impersonal awe or appreciation. It is not a sense of loyalty, or even a sense of dependence. What develops is a love for God, the Lover, that is personal, intimate, passionate.¹¹⁴

As I blubbered and laughed and cried my way through that night, my mind kept flashing back through the myriad of times in my life when I had seen loving relationships disintegrate into power struggles. My own marriage had done that. ... And now here I was, wanting nothing more than to be possessed, ruled, used, commanded ... whatever He wanted, that’s what I wanted.¹¹⁵

The loving commitment that belongs to God is treachery if invested in any other relationship. Essential freedom is eternally at risk if its natural termination – Love – is invested in any other than its origin and intended destination: the primordial caller.

Humans cannot know God as unique and unrepeatable in the way God can know humans. It is one’s love for God that is unique and unrepeatable; the *love itself*. And this is the gift of the Lover! The love with which the human person loves God is given by God to each unique and unrepeatable human person in the hope – the divine hope! – that each unique and unrepeatable person will return that love. This is the very ordinary, mundane

¹¹²Metz, *Poverty of Spirit*, 25.

¹¹³Metz, *Poverty of Spirit*, 25.

¹¹⁴Extrapolated. Panikkar, *Myth, Faith & Hermeneutics*, 280-285.

¹¹⁵Pierce, *Mental Illness, Fact & Fiction*, 134-135.

routine of the blossoming spiritual life. Loving relationship-with God cannot help but love all that is 'part' of God, as is the rest of reality.

While the words 'ordinary' and 'mundane' can be used of the perception of reality here called spiritual, they cannot apply to personal, intimate relationship-with God. Here even the word 'awesome' is inadequate. All words are inadequate. Utterly consumed by love for the beloved, concepts such as obedience, surrender, submission, lose all meaning. Freedom terminates itself happily, lovingly, in love.

Such a passionate loving longs to see the Lover. Is that a death wish? Freud believed that humans have a death instinct or death wish, perhaps because utter emptiness of self is anathema to psychology.¹¹⁶ It is often perceived to be one of the causes, if not the main cause, of suicide.¹¹⁷ Psychology, which cannot comprehend the utter emptiness of 'self' necessary to love, tries to fill what it perceives to be a life-threatening emptiness with self-love, exacerbating the problem. Put another way, 'self' can only be filled with 'self' if it is empty of God, leaving freedom caught in a hopeless self-contradiction.

This contradiction is inevitably self-destructive because, with absolute mystery as its condition and goal, transcendental freedom is the capacity for finality. As such, freedom necessarily affirms something absolutely; it necessarily gives itself over to 'something'.¹¹⁸

Freedom terminates itself in love. "There can be no liberation for the Man who knows the bond of love."¹¹⁹ It is the very desire to see the face of the beloved that holds being/life a treasure to be surrendered if necessary – but never thrown away, especially by the 'self' whose life it is. There is an eternal vacuum between a morbid death-wish and the desire to see the face of the beloved.

¹¹⁶Freud, "Chapter Six", *Beyond The Pleasure Principle*.

¹¹⁷The World Health Organisation estimates that about one million people kill themselves every year. That figure is expected to rise by 50% by 2020! Strategies for 'treating' this epidemic range from a variety of ways to 'fill the emptiness' to theories of genetic pre-disposition to suicide ... as though *being* had a genetic predisposition to *not-being*! World Health Organisation available from http://www.who.int/mental_health/prevention/suicide/suicideprevent/en/ Internet; accessed April, 2006.

¹¹⁸Peters, *A Gadamerian Reading of Karl Rahner*, 312.

¹¹⁹Panikkar explores freedom and love in reference frames that belong to another culture – Hinduism – and arrives at the same conclusion – freedom terminates in the Absolute – in Love. Panikkar, *Myth, Faith & Hermeneutics*, 278-288.

A New Psychology

Psychology at its very best can offer only functional sanity. That is not enough to meet, not the highest needs of the human person, but the most basic, inherent need. Effective freedom, the ability to make choices, makes its appearance in self-control. While this is necessary to mental health it is not essential freedom. It is not the freedom to *be*. The freedom to simply *be*, and to be simply is not currently a consideration on the horizon of professional mental health care. In fact a contradiction operates. An emphatic criterion of ‘healing’ is control, self-control if possible, but if not then at least control by ‘other’, either drugs or professional carer. In clinical language it is called managing the illness. In the language of relational reality it is human life controlled by human mind/will; a very limited and limiting enterprise. This is not relationship but a violation of it – a distortion of reality.

For as long as psychology’s understanding of human life-formation is confined to and governed by scientific methodology it can offer no healing measure to the mentally ill.

The truthful eye of the Enlightenment is that of the detached observer, who dispassionately regards what is before his eyes. It is the scientific eye that looks down a microscope. That is a useful way of looking at the world. We would be immensely the poorer if it had not developed in the seventeenth century. But if we try to look at each other only through microscopes, like animals to be dissected, then we will not see each other’s goodness, which is the deepest truth of our being.¹²⁰

Constrained by scientific methodology, all psychology can do is what it does; substitute more effective measures of control where the measures in place are ineffective. Perhaps it is time for psychology to surrender its claim – and apparent desire – to align itself with the more concrete sciences. Perhaps it is time for psychology to join forces with those involved in human life-formation from a more spiritual perspective.

It is no accident that schools of psychological thought have grown up around the recognition of universal and fundamentally healthy survival instincts (pleasure and power) that can, and all too often do, make erroneous and detrimental choices. That these have been misinterpreted as *unconscious* demonic drives serves only to rob the human person of the freedom to *resist* temptation. For all its flaws and misinterpretations psychology is so convincing because it has certainly grasped the driving force, not of *being*, but of universal

¹²⁰Timothy Radcliffe, *What is the Point of Being a Christian?* (New York: Burns & Oates, 2005), 123.

ego-concerns that tempt us to *be not*. There are pearls of wisdom to be gathered from psychology, not in understanding unconscious drives, but in resisting temptation.

What might be learned if psychology applied its analyses to the third temptation, to why worldly success, with all the accolades it can attract, is experienced so often as ultimately futile? Surely psychology knows already that embracing the temptation to vainglory for the fragmented, dysfunctional life becomes little more than the absurd boasting of ability to bear with one's lot in life, to be the victim, coping with 'inhuman' pain and suffering at the hands of an impersonal fate. Is this not what underpins western culture's romantic image of the 'victim'? Is this not at its most insidious, merely well disguised, bizarre pride? In a more spiritual context is it not the claim that the failure of one's life is God's fault?!

Oh God, don't look at me like that. Life is not a precious gift at all. You played a dirty trick on me. You gave me a mind, a mind with the power to think reflectively. Why did you do that to me? Why did you bother? You knew you were going to let me go crazy. You knew I wouldn't be able to use my mind.¹²¹

This bizarre vainglory is all too often encouraged by professional mental health carers, if not explicitly, then certainly implicitly. The implicit encouragement is embedded in the 'incurable' prognosis. 'Through no fault of my own I am not free to *be* because, not only was I never free to *be*, but I never can be free to *be*. All my freedom is illusion.'¹²²

Psychological analysis on the third temptation might reveal why some people grow more compassionate through suffering while others are fragmented and destroyed by it.¹²³ What is it that brings peace of mind and even strength to some, while others are tormented to psychotic distraction by circumstances and events not, on the surface, dissimilar? Why do so many successful people commit suicide, prior to which many have displayed no obvious mental illness? Why does vainglory swallow up the dubious benefits of pleasure and power, leaving only futility? In other words, what does the human person need for mental health and happiness? Perhaps that need is best met by *resisting all three temptations* rather than by finding more socially acceptable ways of implementing the options they offer.

¹²¹Pierce, *Ordinary Insanity*, 33.

¹²²Pierce, *Ordinary Insanity*, 58-61 (paraphrased).

¹²³Frankl, *The Doctor and the Soul*, xix.

If it could be said there is an invincible defence against mental illness, that defence is the ability to resist temptation. Psychology has much to offer in assisting humans to discern the difference between valid and invalid ego-concerns toward resisting temptation. Theology has much to offer in assisting humans to hear and maintain fidelity to the voice of the primordial caller. Human mental health needs both. Together they ensure and enhance essential freedom – another name for mental health.

Transformative Praxis – the Goal of Practical Theology

The task of practical theology throughout this dissertation has been to attend to the voice of experience; to interpret that experience towards understanding, as distinct from knowing, what it means to be a human person. The final goal of practical theology is towards transformative praxis, not just in the field of mental health, but in the transformation of the human condition from one of enslavement to one of redemption. If the loss of essential freedom commences the journey into insanity, then recovery of that freedom is the healing of insanity. That journey has been traced in this dissertation as a practical theology of transformation from enslavement to essential freedom as described hereunder.

The intuition of essential freedom commenced in the faith experience that initiated the healing journey. Recognising that spirituality permeates all of reality, including what is ordinarily called ‘secular’ meant tracing the silhouette of essential freedom across a landscape that has been redeemed, if unaware of its redemption. What emerged might be called the substance of that silhouette – reality that is love, woven from the fabric of truth, commencing with the primordial caller and reaching ever outward to embrace the whole of creation. Morality is thereby interpreted as fidelity to the primordial caller; a guardian against distortions of reality that can arise when ego-concerns are raised by intellect. Love does not engage in intellectual debates. Love is simply faithful to the beloved ... to the point of happily terminating its freedom in its origin – Love.

Suggestions for transformative praxis implied throughout this dissertation are here made explicit. Self and mutual help groups, which use the process of communication we have called ‘dialogical dialogue’, with emphasis on imparative sharing rather than comparative ‘counselling’, have demonstrated their power to heal the human condition. This model of ‘treatment’ for mental illness, especially assisted by those with the wisdom of authentic compassion that challenges rather than excuses, as already described, has proven itself invaluable to ‘downstream’ intervention. That is, for healing mental illness.

However western culture needs more than ‘downstream’ intervention. Not only the concept, but the reality of essential freedom is so obscured that there is now need for ‘upstream’ intervention. That is for preventing mental illness before it develops. This would require a concerted effort, led perhaps by educational bodies, to retrieve the reality of *mythos*, the ‘un-knowing’ that knows essential freedom embedded in faith; to acknowledge the *mythos-logos* partnership, enabling the translation of essential freedom to the spatio-temporal dimension. This will require a new and radical re-interpretation of reality, an interpretation similar to the relational reality described in chapter five.

If the art of interpretation is a creative art, then the creativity of the interpreter is naturally called forth.¹²⁴ In the creativity of *pneuma* (chapter two) interpretation and transformative praxis are less about creating a reality that is not-yet than it is about the creative enterprise of actualising reality that is as-yet unseen. It might be called making visible the kingdom of God “On Earth as It Is in Heaven.”¹²⁵ A practical theology of mental health has the potential to transform the human landscape.

Conclusion

This chapter has examined the concept of freedom and its dichotomy in the western psyche. It has distinguished between essential and effective freedom, focussed on the former with particular reference to Jesus Christ and the temptations, developed the notion of essential freedom theologically in reference to Johannes Metz, and provided a way in which psychology and theology together are able to enhance our knowledge and appreciation of freedom and mental health.

What has emerged from this understanding of essential freedom, as it applies to mental health, is that growth in the areas of faith and spirituality lead to an appreciation and apprehension of relationship and morality as fundamental to mental health and happiness. Together faith, spirituality, relationship and morality lead the human person to redemption, to transformation, to the freedom to *be*. This is essential freedom. This is mental health.

¹²⁴Veling, *Practical Theology*, 27.

¹²⁵This is the subtitle to Veling’s book: *A Practical Theology of Mental Health “On Earth as It Is In Heaven”*.

Epilogue

Either there is God, or there is not God. Either there is a spiritual dimension to the human person, or there is not. The contradictions between theology and psychology all revolve around the reality – or not – of divine involvement and care in human life formation. We cannot afford to skirt the issue any longer, but must face the fact of divine reality as squarely as John Courtney Murray has done in his book named ironically, *The Problem of God*. He concludes the “Introduction” to this book with these words.

If God is not, no one is permitted to say or even think that he is, for this would be a monstrous deception of oneself and of others. ... On the other hand, if God is, again one thing is not permitted. It is not permitted that any man should be ignorant of him, for this ignorance, too, would be the destruction of man. On both counts, therefore, no man may say that the problem of God is not his problem.¹

The reality and relevance of God in each and every life is the fundamental issue this dissertation has addressed in the issue of mental health care. Though dealing with a different issue altogether, the questions Murray asks at the conclusion of his book are profoundly relevant.

Is the presence of God constitutive of man’s historical existence or destructive of it? ... What is it that alienates man from himself – the confession of God’s presence in history and in man’s consciousness or the suppression of him from history and the repression of him from consciousness? How is it that a man or a people comes to desist, to “stand down” from human and civilized rank, to fall away into absurdity and non-existence – through knowledge of God or through ignorance of him?²

The banning of God from the arena of mental health care and human life-formation appears to have done more to increase mental illness than to heal it. The inclusion of God is long overdue. The very fact that there are contradictions between two disciplines so vital to human mental health and happiness speaks to inconsistency, if not irrationality, embedded in our culture. Perhaps more incongruous than the contradictions themselves is the fact that

¹Murray, *The Problem of God*, 4.

²Murray, *The Problem of God*, 120-121.

they have remained largely unnoticed, unchallenged for decades. In the meantime, the incidence of mental illness has grown to epidemic proportions.

Collaboration between psychology and theology in a context of pastoral care would bring insights currently ‘lying on the surface’ waiting, not so much to be discovered, as to be recognised. Why a context of pastoral care? Pastoral care operates out of a context this dissertation has called mystical tolerance, a context that allows every voice to be heard as an equally original source of understanding. It is true understanding, not just of mental illness, but of mental health, of what it means to be a mentally healthy human person, that is needed. Confrontation from ideological positions does not facilitate understanding, and genuine understanding is vital if we are to stop the epidemic of mental illness. More than that, genuine understanding is vital if we are to maintain what we call ‘human dignity’. Not only is our sanity falling into the abyss between psychological and theological contradictions, but our very humanity is falling into that abyss.

Psychology has valuable expertise in freeing the human person from slavery; the slavery of what theology once called sinful habits. Psychology has rolled up its sleeves, so to speak, and fully involved itself in the messiness of the human condition. It does not throw failure and inadequacy into the ‘too hard’ basket of prayer, as theology has tended to do. But psychology at its best can only take us out of the ‘land of Egypt’ into the wilderness, where our own exhausting, eternal vigilance is needed to maintain hard won freedom. It is not surprising that so many are tempted, and sadly all too often surrender, returning themselves to the land of slavery. It is this surrender that lends credibility to psychology’s ‘incurable’ prognosis. Theology, leading to an authentic spirituality, can assist us to hear the voice of the primordial caller who alone can lead us forward to the Promised Land where transformation – redemption – is reality, sanity. The reality that is redemption does indeed make the yoke easy, and the burden light. Making visible the reality that is the kingdom of God on earth requires the collaborative expertise of theology and psychology.

This dissertation ends, in a sense, where it started, with the assertion that mental illness is merely one result of the refusal of society to allow the Spirit of God to blow where it will through the human condition. One can only wonder at how many other unrealities will disappear if we succeed in resolving this one: human mental health.

A Practical Theology of Mental Health: a critical conversation between psychology, theology, pastoral care and the voice of the witness

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APPENDICES

Appendix A Survey Results & Questionnaire
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Q. No.	Question	Yes %	No %	n/a %	Some times %	Further Info.
Q3	Do you believe your illness is Physical	8.5		1.06		12.7 “Physical & Psychological”
3	Psychological	62.7				
3	Something Else	12.7				
Q4	Is God relevant in your life?	82.9	13.8	1.06		2.1 “not sure”
Q5	If God is relevant is he willing to help you?	78.7	5.3	15.9		
Q6	Do you feel your illness is some form of punishment	19.1	78.7	1.06		1.06 “don’t know”
Q7	Do you sometimes feel there is something worthwhile to be discovered by your illness?	67.02	25.5	5.3		1.06 “yes and no” 1.06 “don’t know”
QA	Do you think it is important to love yourself?	90.4	3.19			6.38 “not sure”
QB	Do you think it is important to love others?	98.9	1.06			
QC	Do you think it is important to love God?	74.4	5.3	6.38		13.8 “not sure”
QD	Which is true for you I sometimes which I could just stop thinking	39.3		4.2		
D	I often wish I could just stop thinking	18				
D	I never wish I could just stop thinking	38.2				
QE	Do you find it difficult to be still/often feel restless?	52.1	45.7	2.1		
QF	Do you believe it takes expert knowledge to understand human beings?	32.9	64.8	2.1		
QG	Which is true for you I sometimes which I could let my mind go and wander	38.2				

G	I often wish I could let my mind go and wander	17				
G	I never wish I could let my mind go and wander	36.1				
QH	Which is more accurate for you My mental illness began as a weird experience of something mysterious	15.9		2.1		
H	My mental illness began as something terrifying	28.7				
H	My mental illness began as something that seemed normal but kept getting worse	50				
H	My mental illness began as something beautiful which then turned ugly	3.1				
QI	Which is true for you I believe I am different from other people	51		4.2		3.1 “Not sure”
I	I believe I am the same as other people	41.4				
QJ	Which is true for you I believe my doctor understand my problem	45.7		2.1		
J	I do not believe my doctor understands my problem	21.2				
J	I believe others (friends) understand my problem	26.5				
J	I do not believe anyone understands my problem	4.2				
QK	Which is true for you I believe my illness is more emotional than mental	45.7		3.1		1.06 “Emotional and mental”
K	I believe my illness is more physical than mental	9.5				
K	I believe my illness is mental	36.1				
K	I believe my illness is a mysterious affliction no one understands	4.2				

QL	Which is true for you I believe getting well will mean getting my life back the way it was.	6.3		2.01		
L	I believe getting well will mean discovering a new way of life	75.5				
L	I believe getting well will mean learning to cope with the life I have now	89.6				
L	I do not believe it is possible to get well					No one ticked "I do not believe it is possible to get well"

The attached questionnaire was sent out to sufferers of mental illness through GROW Australia. There were ninety-four respondents from a possible 1,000 (approx.).

The average age of respondents was: 47.6 - the youngest was 30 years, the oldest was 70 years. Two chose to not give their age.

The average age at the time of diagnosis was: 30.2 years – the youngest was aged 10 years, the oldest was aged 61 years.

The average years under professional mental health care was: 13.17 years
Five reported that they were not professionally diagnosed.

The diagnoses by category were as follows:

Anxiety Disorder, Nervous Disorder, **Chronic Depression**, Several, **Schizophrenia**, Obsessive Compulsive Disorder, **Bi-Polar Disorder**, Bipolar Affective, **Neurosis**, Major Depression and Agitation, **Depression**, Paranoid Schizophrenia, **Postnatal Psychosis**, Depression and Breakdown, **Depression – Epileptic**, Manic Depression, **Manic Depression Anxiety Disorder**, Major Depression, **Undecided**, Not known, **Catatonic and Chronic Paranoid Schizophrenia**, Chronic Depression and Anxiety, **Bi-Polar/Depressive Illness**, Anxiety Panic Attack, **Mood Disorder/Depression**, Chronic Depression, **Nervous Panic Attacks**, Stress, **Undiagnosed depression**, Schizophrenia and Depression, **Professional Uncertainty**, Schizoaffective Bi-Polar, **Severe depression**, Multiple Personality Disorder, **Panic Disorder/Major Depression**, Affective Bi-Polar Disorder.

I have placed every alternate "diagnosis" in bold to make it easier to distinguish between one diagnosis and the next for those not familiar with the terminology.

There is no error or lay persons interpretation in a diagnosis of "Several". Some doctors make such a 'diagnosis' to avoid the lengthy wording it would take to list 3-4 mental illnesses.

It should be noted that there is a perceived difference between "chronic depression" and "major depression" ... although "major depression" may also be "chronic".

Stress (undue) is now considered a mental illness.

Bi-polar disorder is mentioned in a variety of ways, reflecting the ever more analytical process involved in 'diagnosing' mental illnesses, (sub categories). The same applies to schizophrenia which now (at last count) has six sub-categories, though only the schizoaffective is usually mentioned in its categorized form, as this involves an amount of bi-polar disorder.

Undiagnosed depression is not a lay term. It is used professionally when the consulting physician has not been able to determine whether the depression is major, chronic, nervous, panic etc.

Questionnaire

1. What is your diagnosed mental illness? _____
2. How many years have you been under professional care? _____
3. Do you believe your illness is physical ☐ psychological ☐ something else ☐
(please tick appropriate box)
4. Is God relevant in your life? Yes ☐ No ☐
5. If God is relevant, is he willing to help you? Yes ☐ No ☐
6. Do you feel your illness is some form of punishment? Yes ☐ No ☐
7. At the deepest depths of your despair (when you experience it), do you sometimes feel there is something there you 'need' to know something worthwhile to be discovered?
Yes ☐ No ☐

Please answer the following questions in naked honesty. That is, do not answer as you think you should. Do not as others think you should. Do not answer as you think is 'right'. Answer honestly, from the deepest depths of yourself. In no way will this questionnaire ever be identified with you, so no one except you will know how you answered. Please tick the appropriate box, and tick more than one if this applies.

- a. Do you think it is important to love yourself? Yes ☐ No ☐ Not sure ☐
- b. Do you think it is important to love others? Yes ☐ No ☐ Not sure ☐
- c. Do you think it is important to love God? Yes ☐ No ☐ Not sure ☐
- d. Which is true for you:
I *sometimes* wish I could just stop thinking ☐
I *often* wish I could just stop thinking ☐
I *never* wish I could just stop thinking ☐
- e. Do you find it difficult to be still, that is, do you often feel restless? Yes ☐ No ☐
- f. Do you believe it takes expert knowledge to understand human beings? Yes ☐ No ☐
- g. Which is true for you: **Please tick the appropriate box, and tick more than one if this applies.**
I *sometimes* wish I could let my mind go and wander wherever it wants to go ☐
I *often* wish I could let my mind go and wander wherever it wants ☐
I *never* wish I could let my mind go and wander wherever it wants ☐

- h. Which is more accurate of you: **Please tick the appropriate box, and tick more than one if this applies.**
My mental illness began as a weird experience of something mysterious ☐
My mental illness began as a terrifying experience ☐
My mental illness began as something that seemed normal, but just kept getting worse ☐
My mental illness began as something beautiful which then turned ugly ☐
- i. Which is true for you:
I believe I am different from other people ☐
I believe I am the same as other people ☐
- j. Which is true for you: **Please tick the appropriate box, and tick more than one if this applies.**
I believe my doctor understands my problem ☐
I do not believe my doctor understands my problem ☐
I believe there are others (like friends), who understand my problem ☐
I do not believe anyone understands my problem ☐
- k. Which is true for you:
I believe my illness is more emotional than mental ☐
I believe my illness is more physical than mental ☐
I believe my illness is mental ☐
I believe my illness is not mental, physical or emotional. It is a mysterious affliction no one yet understands. ☐
- l. Which is true for you: **Please tick the appropriate box, and tick more than one if this applies.**
I believe getting well will mean getting my life back the way it was ☐
I believe getting well will mean discovering a new way of life ☐
I believe getting well will mean learning to cope with the life I have now ☐
I do not believe it is possible to get well. ☐

The following information is for statistical purposes only and will not in any way identify you.

How old are you now? _____

How old were you when you experienced your first 'episode' of mental illness? _____

How old were you when you were professionally diagnosed with a mental illness? _____



July 2004

REVIEW OF THE MENTAL HEALTH ACT 1990

Discussion Paper 2: The Mental Health Act 1990

These provisions, which reflect a similar term used in the Model Mental Health Legislation¹⁷, are generally used to detain highly distressed and often suicidal individuals at high risk to themselves or others.

One concern that is raised by some clinicians is that increasingly broad interpretations are being given to this term to use the Mental Health Act as a tool to control difficult or dangerous individuals who, for various reasons, cannot be dealt with by other agencies. One example often given is persons who are at chronic risk due to a personality disorder. Against this concern, operational experience is that the provision provides a useful tool to address individuals in high risk states, who may otherwise do serious harm to themselves or others.

COMMENTS SOUGHT

9. DOES THE PROVISION FOR SHORT TERM DETENTION OF "MENTALLY DISORDERED PERSONS" REMAIN APPROPRIATE?
10. IS THE DEFINITION OF MENTALLY DISORDERED PERSON APPROPRIATE?
IF NOT, WHY? SHOULD IT BE REVISED? IF SO, HOW?

3.4 Words and conduct that do not indicate mental illness or disorder

Section 11 of the Act sets out a list of behaviours and conduct which will not indicate a person is a mentally ill or mentally disordered person. This list includes such conduct as expressing a particular political opinion or belief, a religious opinion, a particular philosophy or sexual preference, or that a person has taken alcohol or any other drug. The provision makes it clear that this conduct *of itself* cannot be used to treat a person as a mentally ill or mentally disordered person. The original rationale was based partly on a concern that otherwise some of these actions could in fact be used to inappropriately infringe a person's liberty and treat him or her as a mentally disordered person, the concern being the Act could otherwise be used as a means of "controlling" persons who may have views or exhibit behaviours which are socially unacceptable. It was also developed in response to the ongoing litigation around the definition of mental illness prior to 1990. As that litigation raised doubts as to the legal parameters of the definition, section 11 was designed as a clear statutory statement of what should not, on its own, be considered mental illness.

Suggestions have been made that section 11 should be deleted as some of the concerns, including the prospect of ongoing litigation, are no longer relevant. It has been argued that 14 years experience with the Act shows that the "mentally ill person" definition has of itself proved sufficiently robust. At the same time however, it might also be considered that the content of section 11 in the Act over this time frame may well have had an effect on how the definition is viewed and interpreted, suggesting that it should in fact be retained. Comments are therefore sought on this issue.

COMMENTS SOUGHT

11. DOES SECTION 11 REMAIN RELEVANT? SHOULD IT BE CHANGED OR REVISED?
IF SO, WHY? IF SO, HOW?

BACK FROM THE BRINK

AN OVERVIEW

For the first time comes a powerful compilation book of Australian stories of people who have suffered from clinical depression and recovered.

Compiled by Sydney's Graeme Cowan, *Back From The Brink*, details discussions with well-known and everyday Australians about their personal journey of enduring and overcoming depression.

Graeme asks the tough and poignant questions of each interviewee, offering insights into their often dark and tumultuous experience.

Written in a question and answer format, the book offers a raw and immediate format that strikes straight to the heart. The stories show just how real and prevalent depression is in Australian through these honest, first-hand accounts, but also offers inspiration and hope for sufferers and friends and family of sufferers that there can truly be a day where loved ones come 'back from the brink'. Readers will be amazed, challenged, inspired and, at times, infuriated by these stories.

Aside from personal stories, *Back from the Brink* contains the results of a 3000 person survey.

Back From The Brink truly is an uplifting book about reaching up and out of the black fog of depression.

Appendix C



Please note: this is not the actual cover or subtitle.

THE CONTRIBUTORS

BRINGING TOGETHER COURAGEOUS AUSTRALIANS

Margaret Olley

At 84 years of age, Margaret Olley is an icon of the art world. She grew up in Queensland as a shy child and as an adult depended on alcohol to face social situations, resulting in a full-blown addiction. Despite extraordinary international success she considered suicide in 2001.

Les Murray

Is regarded as Australia's leading poet. He lost his mother at seven due to a miscarriage, which sent his father into deep depression. He himself began suffering from horrendous panic attacks in the mid 50s, where he thought he was dying.

Kathy McMahon

Kathy grew up in country Victoria and suffered horrendous childhood sexual and psychological abuse from a family "friend". She attempted suicide at 13 but was never given an opportunity to explain why. It was not until later in life that her "secret" was revealed.

John Konrads

Former Olympic swimming gold medalist, John once held every world record for the 200m to 1500m. However, at one point he suffered panic attacks and "dark" thoughts, struggled with alcohol and was eventually diagnosed BiPolar II. He is today a director of the Black Dog Institute.

Geoff Gallop

Rhodes Scholar and former Premier of West Australia, Geoff Gallop surprised the nation when, in the seemingly peak of his career, exited politics because of depression.

Petria Thomas

Petria Thomas thrilled Australia with three gold medals at the Athens Olympics. But despite her "in control" demeanour, she struggled with low self-esteem, depression and suicidal thoughts, coupled with at times, career-threatening injuries.

Leanne Pethick

After struggling with depression herself and losing a friend to suicide, Leanne founded DepressionNet, a website dedicated to providing comprehensive and up-to-date information on depression. It is dubbed the site for "people like us".

Brian Egan

Farmer and Army Veteran from outback Queensland, Brian was forced to walk off his farm in 2001 with nothing because of drought and a catatonic depression, which resulted in him being mute.

Karin de Vos

Karin left school early and was never settled or content, always feeling like she was living for other people. She finally had a breakdown and parted with her husband.

James Fremantle

Lifestyle television reporter James Fremantle had a "happy" family upbringing in country Victoria, but at university, suffered his first breakdown. During a portion of his career he hid his anxiety and night frights. He is now working on Looking Up, a two-hour special exploring ways to overcome depression.

Kerry Phelan

Kerry grew up on a sheep and wheat farm in Western Australia before being conscripted to Vietnam in 1965. He spent 342 days abroad and later suffered post traumatic stress disorder.

Lisa Miller

When Geelong's Lisa Miller had twins, she suffered chronic post-natal depression, crying constantly, hating seeing happy mums and felt like a constant failure. She had no support and could not find mums who understood how she felt. She now runs the Geelong Post Natal Support Group.

Sonia Attard

After a difficult childhood and marriage, Sonia Attard had a severe breakdown and suffered constant and paralysing panic attacks. Her 12-year-old son took her to GROW, a 12-step health support program and she is now an ambassador for the GROW program.

Human Research Ethics Committee

PROGRESS / FINAL / EXTENSION REPORT FORM

The *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Research Involving Humans* (1999) requires Human Research Ethics Committees to monitor compliance with the conditions, both standard and special, under which research protocols have been approved.

The AVCC and NHMRC jointly require Universities to retain research data for five (5) years from the date of publication. If publication is not intended, data should be retained for five (5) years from the conclusion of the project. For Australian Catholic University requirements in relation to the security and disposal of data, see *Guidelines for Applicants to the Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC)*, Part B, Section 8.

The HREC must report annually on these matters to the Australian Health Ethics Committee.

There is also a requirement that annual progress reports and a final report be provided on all projects. Such reports may be audited by the NHMRC at any time.

1. This form is available upon request via email or on the Internet at: <http://www.acu.edu.au/research>
2. All questions must be answered. If a question does not apply, indicate N/A.
3. Within thirty [30] days of receipt of this notice, please return the completed Progress / Final / Extension Report form to your nearest Research Services Officer:

VICTORIA
Research Services
Australian Catholic
University
Melbourne Campus
Locked Bag 4115
FITZROY VIC 3065
Tel: 03 9953 3158
Fax: 03 9953 3315

QUEENSLAND
Research Services
Australian Catholic
University
Brisbane Campus
PO Box 456
VIRGINIA QLD 4014
Tel: 07 3623 7294
Fax: 07 3623 7328

NEW SOUTH WALES/ACT
Research Services
Australian Catholic
University
Sydney Campus
Locked Bag 2002
STRATHFIELD NSW 2135
Tel: 02 9701 4093
Fax: 02 9701 4350

Section 1: *[To be completed by the local Research Services Officer]*

- 1.1** HREC Register No: **Q200405 8**
- 1.2** Approval End Date: **31 December 2005**
- 1.3** Name of Principal Investigator / Supervisor: **Dr Gerard Hall**
Name of Student Researcher(s): **Ms Pauline Pierce**
- 1.4** School: **Theology**
- 1.5** Project Title: **"Voice of the Witness" towards a theology of mental health**

Signature of Research Services Officer: **Kylie Pashley**

Date **1 December 2005**

Section 2: *[To be completed by the Principal Investigator or by the Supervisor and Student Researcher.]*

2.1 **Status of Research Project:**

- ☐ Ethics approval for this project was granted for more than one year, and contact with participants or access to their records is continuing. I request **renewal** of the approval. The proposed Expiry Date for contact with participants is: [REDACTED].
- ☐ Ethics approval for this project was granted for one year or less, and contact with participants or access to their records is still required. I request an **extension** of the Expiry Date to: [REDACTED].
- ☐ Contact with participants ceased on the [REDACTED] but the project is still ongoing. The proposed Expiry Date of the project is the [REDACTED].
- ☒ Project was completed on the **17/10/2005** and this is the final report.
- ☐ Project was commenced but was **abandoned** on [REDACTED].
[Give brief reasons why the project was abandoned.]
[REDACTED]
- ☐ Project was **never commenced** because:
[REDACTED]

2.2 **Project Title** *(if different from the title in Section 1.5 above)*
As Above

2.3 **Project Report**

2.3.1 In relation to the research protocol as approved by the HREC, have any of the following variations occurred?

	YES	NO
• New Investigators or Researchers?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
• Anticipated duration of the project?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
• Research design, procedures, project particulars, Information Letter to Participants, Consent Forms, instruments (e.g., surveys, questionnaires)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
• Participant care and feedback?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
• Security and storage of data?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

2.3.2 If you have answered "Yes", to any of points in question 2.3.1, please attach a copy of the relevant changes, together with a brief account of the reasons for such changes.

2.4 **Participant Withdrawal**

	YES	NO
2.4.1 Did any of the participants withdraw their participation and/or consent at any stage?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

2.4.2 If "YES", how many withdrew? [REDACTED]
[If known, briefly list the reasons for their withdrawal and attach a copy of any relevant correspondence.]
[REDACTED]

2.5 **Incidents**

	YES	NO
2.5.1 Did any incidents with participants arise during or after the conduct of the research?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

If "YES", please describe the incident, the manner in which it was dealt with, and the final result.
[REDACTED]

2.5.2	Did any of the participants complain or express concerns about the project?	YES <input type="checkbox"/>	NO <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	If "YES", please indicate the nature of the complaint/s or concern/s and attach copies of any relevant documentation. <div style="background-color: #cccccc; height: 15px; width: 100%;"></div>		
2.5.3	Did any of the participants complain or express concerns about the way they had been treated?	YES <input type="checkbox"/>	NO <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	If "YES", please indicate the nature of the complaint(s) or concern(s) and attach copies of any relevant documentation. <div style="background-color: #cccccc; height: 15px; width: 100%;"></div>		
2.5.4	Have the incidents / complaints / concerns described above been reported to the HREC?	YES <input type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>
	Please indicate what other action has been taken in response to these incidents / complaints / concerns. <div style="background-color: #cccccc; height: 15px; width: 100%;"></div>		
2.6	<u>Publication of Research Results</u>		
2.6.1	Are you intending at this stage to disseminate the results of your research in any way (e.g., seminar or conference presentation, publication in a journal, dissemination to other researchers in the area of research interest)?	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>
2.6.2	If "YES", please give details. <i>It will be used as quantitative 'back-up' for qualitative information written in my PhD. "A Theology of Mental Health"</i>		
2.7	<u>Retention and Security of Data</u> [For requirements in relation to the security and disposal of data, see <i>Guidelines for Applicants to the Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC)</i> , Part B, Section 8.]		
2.7.1	How are the data being retained (e.g., in locked cabinets)? <i>Held by Rev Dr. Gerard Hall in locked cabinets</i>		
2.7.2	Where are the data being retained? <i>In the office of Rev. Dr. Gerard Hall at Banyo Campus of ACU</i>		
2.8	<u>Further Comments</u> <i>If there are any other ethical issues relating to your research, please comment on them here</i> <i>N/A</i>		
2.9	<u>Information Letter to Participants, Consent Form</u> [In keeping with quality audit procedures, the HREC may audit projects and the storage of data at any time.] If your project has been designated by the HREC as <i>"more than minimal risk"</i> , you are required to attach herewith:		
	<input type="checkbox"/>	One copy of the <i>Information Letter</i> which was sent to participants, and	
	<input type="checkbox"/>	One copy of the <i>Consent Form</i> which was sent to the participants to complete and return to you.	
	Are these attached to this Report Form?		YES <input type="checkbox"/>
	If "NO", please explain:		NO <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

The Information Letter was sent to the National Executive Officer of GROW. GROW had agreed to distribute the required questionnaire with attendant information, take responsibility for assisting participants, where necessary, to fill out said questionnaire, and return them to Research Supervisor - Dr Gerard Hall. No consent form was required as the filling out of the questionnaire was deemed to be sufficient consent. Participants were anxious that their identity remain at all times anonymous. Unaware that the Information Letter would need to be attached to a report such as this one, it has been removed from my computer files (albeit accidentally). However the letter was sent out verbatim as it was presented to the HREC committee at the commencement of the project..

2.10 Certification

I certify that the information provided by me in this Progress / Final Report is an accurate account of the conduct of the above research project for which I am responsible. The research activities have been conducted in accordance with the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Research Involving Humans and the Joint NHMRC / AVCC Statement and Guidelines on Research Practice

Full Name (block letters)

Signature

Date

REV. DR. GERARD HALL

Principal Investigator or Supervisor

PAULINE EMMA PIERCE

Student Researcher

12TH December 2005

TO BE COMPLETED BY CHAIR / DEPUTY CHAIR OF HREC

- ☐ Project extension is approved to ____ / ____ / ____.
- ☐ Renewal approved to ____ / ____ / ____.
- ☐ Data collection appears to have been conducted in accordance with the approved protocols. A Final Report is due at completion of the Project
- ☐ Project appears to have been conducted in accordance with the approved protocols and this is the Final Report.
- ☐ Project abandoned/never commenced (please circle)
- ☐ The following concerns/comments should be referred to the Principal Investigator or Supervisor:

Signed: _____

Date ____ / ____ / ____.

PRIVACY STATEMENT:

Australian Catholic University is committed to ensuring the privacy of all information it collects. Personal information supplied to the University will only be used for administrative and educational purposes of the institution. Personal information collected by the University will only be disclosed to third parties with the written consent of the person concerned, unless otherwise prescribed by law. For further information, please see the University's Statement on Privacy http://www.acu.edu.au/privacy_policy.cfm.

A.C.N. 008 485 827
A.B.N. 12 008 485 827
Registered Charity



NATIONAL OFFICE
209a Edgeware Road
Enmore, NSW, 2042
Telephone: (02) 9516 3733
Fax: (02) 9516 1503
Website: www.growint.org.au

WORLD COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH MOVEMENT

Founded 1957 in Australia

7th April, 2004

Ms Emma Pierce,
C/- BBI
PO Box 125
WAHROONGA NSW

Dear Emma,

I write with regard to your request to ask GROW members to complete a questionnaire, data from which would be used towards your Doctoral Thesis "A Theology of Mental Health".

The matter was discussed at a recent meeting of the National Executive of GROW and approval given for you to go ahead. The questionnaire will need to be distributed by GROW throughout Australia, though expenses involved in distribution would need to be met by you. We also request that the results of the questionnaire be given to GROW as soon as available.

Please contact me to discuss this in further detail -- I appear to have lost your telephone number and email address.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, which appears to read 'Mary Anne Lucas'.

Mary Anne Lucas,
NATIONAL EXECUTIVE OFFICER