

Ladies and Gentlemen.

Thank you for the opportunity to talk with you tonight about psychoanalysis.

As I understand, the intention, the purpose, of this lecture series, is to help in increasing understanding about what is psychoanalysis, its theory and its practice. Tonight's interlocking subjects, that of the self and, so called, object relations, offer a good opportunity for doing this because they are both key conceptualisations with respect to understanding issues about human existence and experience, and, by extension, issues about psychoanalysis.

As I am sure you will know, psychoanalysis, its theory and practice, were developed by Freud to understand and treat the neurotic problems with which his patients confronted him. Inevitably, and perhaps by necessity, psychoanalytic theory has become complex, with issues of self and object relations being at the core of this. However, even though they are core concepts, it does not mean they have escaped this complexity. Nor should they. There seems to be a tendency when approaching the complexities and mysteries of human existence, to seek for a formula, a defining statement which will say it all. Even analysts can at times be drawn in to this, trumpeting their theory as the theory that says it all and all the others are wrong or inadequate. However, I would also suggest that the main reason why there are so many analytic theories is because different people are studying the complexities of existence, and what can go wrong, from different angles and telling us what they see from their angle. Psychoanalytic theories should therefore generally be seen as complementary. Accordingly, even though I will refer to a few theoretical perspectives tonight, these will be intended to inform and, hopefully, interest you. I will certainly not be putting forward the last word, from an analytic perspective, about such complex conceptualizations as self and object relations. In analysis it must be understood that the theories are, by necessity, a long way from the last word. I don't say this by way of apology, this in fact can be seen as a strength – the ideas are open and alive. Also it must be remembered that philosophy has been addressing these issues for some 3,000 years but psycho-analysis has for only a hundred and even then the major tool we have, our thinking apparatus, is more closely aligned to our alimentary system than what we would wish for in a wish list with respect to a thinking apparatus.

I say this by way of introduction because I will tell you about theories about the conceptualisations - the self and object relations, - without approaching definitive statements. Also, in this, you will have your own theories, your own view point, based upon your own experience and reading, and nothing I will say will be intended to propose that your theories are wrong. After all, you live 24 hours a day, awake and asleep, with and within, and through, a self, and, as you cannot live in an emotional vacuum, you live within relations with others, objects in the jargon. And if you live all the time within a self and object relations it is inevitable that you will develop your own picture of these conceptualisations.

However, as important as will be your own views, theories, about self and object relations, the problem with theories developed by intuitive perceptions almost exclusively, is that they can become locked within themselves. The challenge with such concepts is to be able to find a position both within and outside intuitive perception to study the subject. With respect to the self, this has proved an illusive and challenging quest for philosophers for thousands of years. Socrates (Hudson 2006 p 57), for example, wrote of the paradox of the self. His position, simply put, was that to define yourself as a separate and distinct individual you had to have a group existence – he called it “society” – from which you could declare yourself distant and distinct. However once your group existence becomes the key to your self definition, you really can't be the separate and distinct individual you believe yourself to be because every other member of the group will hold this same belief, it therefore becomes the mark of your group existence. We all believe we are unique and distinct and in doing so unavoidably declare ourselves members of the group of all others who believe the same. Socrates did believe you could declare your separateness, that was by dying. Part of membership of the group, what makes you like everybody else, is that you are alive and one

day you will be dead like all the dead people. But your death, the circumstances and time, will be unique to you. It will be your death. Only one person will die at that very moment, you. This could perhaps be seen as one reason why we have such outrage about murder, especially mass murder, because we would seem to have a wish that each person, meaning us by identification, will have at least one thing that defines their individuality, - the nature and time of their death within the natural order of things for themselves. Take this away, even in suicide and the person has been ultimately and overall deprived of their important stamp of uniqueness.

However to return to the topic of the self, what Socrates emphasizes is the difficulty of differentiating out a unique sense of self with out becoming trapped in a group process and perspective. However our commonsense does tell us that we do have a sense of an individual self. Take away the issues of Socrates' logic and having to die to be yourself, which is not much fun, the question arises as to how a person, you or me, can believe so strongly that they have a sense of an individual self.

The question arises therefore how can you say you have a sense of self? From what position are you speaking when you say this? Do you look in to a metaphorical or perhaps literal mirror and say that's me. The mirror allows the distance between yourself and the image of yourself such that you can refer to yourself from within yourself without seeming to be speaking nonsense. However if you were to use such a mirror then you would have to be trusting that the mirror did not distort. However as we know literal mirrors do distort for example left for right and vice-versa and therefore your trust may be misplaced. Also if the mirror did hold up an image of you, you would also have to trust your abilities to accurately perceive the image. Of course, as the philosopher Merleau-Ponty (1962) has discussed at length, such perception is impossible. There is no way we can accurately perceive ourselves because such perceptions are under the influence of many, mostly not recognised, factors – fear, hope, expectation, etc.

I am not just outlining the difficulties to create an air of impossibility in terms of knowing yourself. If we move on to analytic thought, psychoanalysts would approach these difficulties with a bag full of questions. For example if you distorted the perception of the image being held up of you, why would you do this? But perhaps, more importantly, the analyst would want to understand how could and would you do this without you even knowing your mechanism, or the reason for doing it, or perhaps even that you are doing it. Such questions focus upon the interface between human existence, and the experience there of, and the human psyche. This is the province of the psychoanalyst. Perhaps I can exemplify this by putting forward some ideas stimulated by and borrowing from the psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan. Lacan early in his psychoanalytic writings discussed the role of the mirror – the literal mirror – in the development of the sense of self (Fink, 1999 p85-86). Analysts, beginning with Freud's early work, hold to certain hypotheses – that have been sustained because of their usefulness. Perhaps the most important from a practical objective is that the human psyche is a dynamic entity, it is in a state of flux, and hopefully development. Through learning from experience it can change. And, in the context of what I am addressing, the sense of self, this can also change. The driving force for change is the learning from experience. Of course we all know that many or most people don't in fact demonstrate much capacity to learn from experience, and change and develop accordingly. Repetition seems to be far more common than learning from experience.

So a central issue for analysts is to understand why people don't learn from experience and therefore change, and grow emotionally. As analysis was first and foremost a treatment method, the question arises what can be done about this. Analytic theory has it that people become fixated at certain points in their development. The challenge of being a human being, of human existence, right from the start can be too difficult, experience can be impossible to digest and learn from and the best we can do is put things on hold, which means fall upon or behind our defences. But once we do that we have no choice but to keep on going back to those issues of experience that have proved too difficult, and our character, and our lives, become dominated by repetition. Rather than learning from

experience we turn experience in to more of the same. And we do this with great skill and determination. In one jargon it's called neurosis, in another personality disorder.

Another analytic notion is that if we come to understand what are these fixations, the how, what, where and why, then we can, with help, rework them and eventually resolve them and the delayed developmental issues can be achieved. Analysts don't have to grope about in a world of vague speculation as to what are the issues that have become blocked in a patient's development, these soon become manifest in the patients transference fantasies and beliefs towards the analyst, lived out both in and outside of the analytic situation, and also the analyst's counter-transference feelings and fantasies will also give clues. To aid and guide in this work analysts have developed theories about stages of development, the challenges inherent in these stages and how and why things can go wrong. These theories are built mainly out of what arises from the patient's communications but also there will be the contribution of developmental psychologists, social theory, observation of children and infants, and intuitions, as well as the analyst's own introspective activities.

If, in light of these analytic perspectives, we return to Lacan's conceptualisation of the role of the mirror in the development of the self, in essence we, like he, will be looking for an understanding of what can go wrong in the development in the sense of self. However I must emphasise not all of what I will propose correlates directly with Lacan's views.

Mainly through infant observation, many analysts hold that there is a crucial issue in terms of development of the self and the psyche that occurs early in life. Following birth there would seem to be a period of a number of months in which a mother and her infant appear to have a special and unique relationship, one analyst called this an interpenetrating mix up of experience. The British psycho-analyst and paediatrician Winnicott called this stage primary maternal preoccupation, a time when the mother is so highly attuned to her infant's experiences she feels them as her own¹. However, obviously, this period has to come to an end. The difficulty in this is the paradox that it can only come to an end when the infant has developed sufficiently that it can begin to address issue of its own experience without it being over whelmed. But, at the same time this can not occur until the mother allows a space in their shared experience for such development of awareness to occur. Winnicott (1968) envisages that this process of separation, the withdrawal of the mother's preoccupation, is inevitably traumatic but the dosing of it is what determines how traumatic it will be. To a certain level such traumatic experience will stimulate development to meet the challenge - beyond this the child will fall into a state of psychological or psychosomatic defensiveness leading to false self structures and the foundations of current or future psychological or psychosomatic illness, and also, I believe we can add these days, eating disorders. The mother's empathic attunement would seem to be a/or the crucial factor in this.

In Lacan's terms the infant will be confronted by a specific challenge. His or her bodily and emotional experience, which had to a large extent been the province of its mother's ministrations, will have become a central part of its ongoing experience. How does it address this? In essence this becomes an ongoing, life time, challenge, in other words we are in essence fundamentally alien to our own experience at emotional and bodily levels. Lacan proposed further that a curious phenomenon occurs. At some stage in the child's early development the mother will introduce it to a mirror. But she won't do this in a simply informative way, she will do this with enthusiasm – "look at the handsome boy in the mirror", or "aren't you a handsome boy". Lacan's idea is that this experience will in fact confirm the child's sense of self-alienation. The space between the essential sense of self and the image being enthused over in the mirror will be experienced as coincident with the sense of alienation already present. The emotions and bodily experiences will be seen to belong to the exciting and adored self in the mirror. In other words the introduction of the image is a moment when our alienation in our sense of self is confirmed and fixed. In a myriad of ways

¹ Winnicott (1968), wrote "At first the environment is the mother who (in health) is identified with her baby to a remarkable degree, that is, for a few weeks before the baby's birth and for some weeks or months afterwards, till she begins to separate off according to the baby's growing need to have her as a separate thing" (my emphasis) Ref: "Thinking about children" 1999 p260

we spend our lives vainly attempting to bridge the gap between our core sense of self and the self that would seem to be the source of our emotions and bodily experiences. And what's more this other self would also seem to be the one that's worthy of love and attention, this other is the one the mother loves and enthuses over, the other, our core self, is one from which she is withdrawing. I won't go further into the rich area of ideas about difficulties of the self that unfold from these notions, some of which would seem self evident especially with respect to depression and more importantly existential despair. However I will note with Lacan that this other self, the mirror self, constitutes what entered analytic theory, and then general language, as the ego. The space between the self and the ego is significant but I won't address it at this point, rather I will take stock of what is being outlined.

Essentially I have begun by trying to point out and define some of the issues for the concept of self and at this point I am proposing a major problem in that the self may be defined in terms of alienation. The self in this, may be defined as much by what it's not as what it is.

This is becoming a bit convoluted so let me tell you a story. In fact not so much a story but a myth to seek to site the self. As most people seem to know, Freud curiously and interestingly turned towards mythology, or at least Sophocles' take on the Oedipus myth, when confronted by an extremely difficult issue with respect to human development and existence². My understanding is that Freud envisaged that at a certain stage in the child's psychosexual development it came to a cross roads, a confluence of three paths, the social, the interpersonal, and the intrapsychic. Freud seemingly realised that this complex situation, had been addressed by myth and the subsequent drama. His borrowing from the myth was seemingly directed towards an emphasis on the universality of this complex, - the Oedipus complex was a normal, albeit inevitable, developmental challenge facing all of us, past present and future. How we negotiated it was the key (Freud SEXXII p192-194).

I believe another reason why Freud turned towards myth is because myths, like dreams, contain wisdom about human experience and existence created out of the accumulated experience of many over time. Myths endure because of what they have to say about human experience and how they say it. I would like to tell you of another myth – the myth of Cadmus, one of Oedipus's ancestors (Hope Moncrieff 1995 p215-219). The king of Tyre had three sons and one daughter. His daughter Europa was spied and desired by Zeus down by the beach one day. Zeus turned himself in to a white bull and presented himself to Europa who was taken by this beautiful creature. She eventually was induced to hop on his back for a ride at which stage Zeus swam out to sea and kept going. Europa afraid of drowning hung on and Zeus swam all the way to the then unknown island of Crete where he kept her and mated with her. She was consoled by being informed that a quarter of the world would be named after her and that her sons Minos and Rhadamanthus would become the judges of the dead. The fact that the Minotaur would be her grandchild was probably not so much good news.

Anyway back in Tyre the king was pretty upset about losing his only daughter and sent his three sons Cadmus, Phoenix, and Cilix of to find her with the ultimatum not to return until they had. Of course this was an impossible mission and all three sons were effectively banished and each established his own kingdom where he eventually settled. Phoenix established Phoenicia and the Phoenicians, and Cilix Cilicia. Cadmus found himself in Greece and was directed by the oracle to the plains of Boeotia which were unoccupied by men. The reason for this lack of occupation became apparent to Cadmus when his men were devoured by a three-headed dragon. Cadmus who understandably had had enough of life by this stage charged the dragon and threw his sword which pierced the neck of one of the heads and pinned it to an oak tree. The dragon could not free this head and this head quickly died, and as it did, so did the other 2 and the dragon.

² Bion ("Cognitions" – entry undated) writes re Freud "This... is precisely what Freud did; he recognized, as a scientist, that he was confronted by a problem to the solution of which he would have to apply the Oedipus myth. The result was the discovery, not of the Oedipus complex, but of psycho-analysis" (p228)

Now we would think that this would have been a good event, however the god Ares interestingly saw this as a blow by man against the gods and cursed Cadmus and his offspring to eventually be destroyed by their children. This is of course the essence of the Oedipus myth. The curse of Thebes, the city established by Cadmus, comes to an end only when all of Oedipus' children in fact die in pretty gruesome and dramatic circumstances. It was that Oedipus' destructiveness in fact went both forward and back in terms of its effect on preceding and following generations that eventually brought the curse to an end.

As I said a little while ago myths are like dreams, containing a wisdom about existence but also concealing it. This is their magic. Like dreams, also, they are open to interpretation but not direct translation. They are a mystery to be understood and to be learnt from not a problem to be solved. Accordingly the part of the Cadmus myth that draws my attention in terms of understanding is with regard to just what did Cadmus do wrong by slaying the dragon to bring such a curse upon himself and his offspring?

Let me propose what I believe one part of the myth tells us about human existence. I believe the dragon represents a key essence between men and the gods; I would translate this as between men and wisdom. Further that the dragon represents the key to wisdom. The three heads represent the three aspects of human existence, variously called, but generally seen as mind, body, and soul. The term soul of course has become problematic, not that the others haven't, but more so. The reason for this is because the soul has become the province of religious belief and beyond. However in other languages, for example German and the word "Seele" the notion holds firm as a legitimate third for mind and body without religious overtones. I believe a far better term for the third would be "myself", in terms of "I", the place of my subjective experience.

If we go back to the dragon, once one of the three heads is pinned to the tree it not only dies but causes the death of the other two. To me this would seem to be metaphorical for or analogous to the problems which beset so much of the biological, psychological, and the social sciences. The taking of one of the three conceptualisations into a position of dominance or even absoluteness over the others epitomises this issue. This perhaps has always been the case but it would seem to be particularly relevant at the moment with the current rapid development of the biological sciences especially with respect to brain imagery and brain function such that in psychiatry, at least, the neurosciences have become excessively dominant.

My point.

I believe that the myth can be interpreted to inform us that the three heads of human existence and experience, mind body and self are separate but interdependent entities. The self is simultaneously separate from the mind and body but at the same time part of them and vice-versa. Of course the question arises as to what does this mean?

I believe that these issues have been poorly addressed both in philosophy and also in psychoanalysis. But one philosopher, Sir Karl Popper, (Popper & Eccles 1977) has addressed them at some length. Popper divided the world of experience in to what he called worlds "1, 2 and 3". I will quote him to give a clear picture of what he is saying. He writes, "first, there is the physical world – the universe of physical entities...; this I will call "world one". Second there is the world of mental states, including states of consciousness and psychological dispositions...this I will call "world two". But there is a third such world, the world of the contents of thought, and, indeed, of the products of the human mind; this I will call "world three"" (Popper et al 1977 p38).

Following Popper therefore, it would seem he is proposing that his 'world one' involves the physical – brain and body included - , "world two" the mental as covered by psychology, and "world three" the contents of thought and the products of the human mind as Popper puts it. If we are correlating self with "world three" – and we would appear to have no other choice – then self would lie within the sphere of the creative products of the human mind. The question for us is what does this mean?

If we follow Popper's notions, the self therefore becomes a construct, a product of the mind. It would be seen to be separate and distinct from the mind but directly correlated with it just the same. In this context it would be important, following Popper, to see mind in a

cognitive sense. Our sense of self is determined by our cognitive functions, in other words our thoughts, our perceptions, our memories, our affects etc. all contribute to our sense of self. This would all seem OK to a point. However psycho-analysts, beginning with Freud, have brought a distinct problem to such a scheme. Where do you site wish for example, or, more poignantly, unconscious desire. As you can anticipate this interface between philosophy and psycho-analysis is problematic.

Popper, in fact, did take up this complicating issue – the seeming autonomous activity of the self and its effect upon the other agencies. For example Popper writes, “I suggest that a brain is owned by the self rather than the other way round” (Popper et al 1977 p120). He goes on to explain, “The self is almost always active. The activity of selves is, I suggest the only human activity we know. The active psychophysical self is the active programmer of the brain..., he is the executer whose instrument is the brain” (Popper et al 1977 p120).

Again I will resist the provocation in Popper’s rich ideas but instead will try to bring this discussion of the self to an unsatisfactory end. The self, the sense of I, lies separate from mind (in the cognitive sense) and brain, but determines our experience of both and it is in turn determined, in obviously difficult to comprehend ways, by both. It stands separate from the ego which Freud described as an apparatus, a functioning part of mind, however as referred to via Lacan, there seems a curious drawing between self and ego as if our egos were the representatives of our self in some senses but not our true sense of self.

Apart from the vague concepts I am identifying, the self has formally entered in to analytic thought through so called “self psychology”. However I would like to suggest that the self referred to in self psychology does not correspond to the self that we are trying to define or as we truly intuitively experience. The self of self psychology refers to the narcissistic core of existence and as such it is certainly worthy of study but the terminology can be distracting, a common problem in psychoanalysis.

However let me move on to the second half of my topic the terrible term “object relations”. It always strikes me as curious that psychoanalysis with its focus on human existence and experience and what can – and does – go wrong, should be burdened by a sterile term like object relations. Even physics has its relativity, uncertainty principle even cute terms like quarks and quasars etc. Psychoanalysis has “object relations”. So what does it mean? Fortunately, so I don’t bore you to death, it is a more interesting concept that it at first appears.

It is actually a term that has build on itself as analytic theories have evolved and changed and hence allows a glimpse of the changing and developing ideas of psychoanalysis. Let me give you a sketch therefore of this conceptual evolution.

In Freud’s early theories, especially in his “Interpretation of Dreams”, (SEIV &V 1900) published in the last years of the 19th century, he put forward a theory he called the unpleasure principle, which was later changed to the pleasure principle. This change complicated things unnecessarily although one can see to where Freud was heading³.

The notion of the unpleasure principle was that the psychic apparatus – the mind the self and perhaps the brain – are sensitive to the build up of tension. And as one can see in young infants – and some adults – this build up of tension can be quite disastrous. The mental capacities acquired and achieved to that point become lost – with of course the risk of being irretrievable – and early and more primitive modes of functioning become manifest. This may result for example in the discharge of the tension by physical means – screaming, kicking the arms and legs - or in an adult - assault, rape or self-harm. The mental experience underlying this build up of tension is unpleasure. Freud proposed two ways we could avoid the regressive move. One way, the obvious way, is that we can turn towards a person who could do something about the tension for us. For example feed us, have sex with us etc. Obviously, we will develop techniques, or further develop those which are inherent or constitutional, that will enhance our chances of acquiring this response from the

³ Freud’s most involved discussion of these issues was in “Formulations on the Two Principles of Mind Functioning” (1911) SEXII p213-225 and the following discussion follows outlined in this paper.

other. However, as must be learnt by infants as the primary maternal preoccupation begins to wane, it is not always that easy to find the other who will relieve the growing tension before we fall over the edge in to regression. Importantly Freud proposed that there is something else we can do. We can conjure up in our imaginations the fantasy of the other we require. This fantasy may be a static fantasy or an active one. By static I mean that it all happens inside of your head like in a dream or a day dream, active means you enact something around the fantasy for example, play, fantasy enactment with another person, or masturbation. This enactment reinforces and is reinforced by the fantasy. The key issue is that a mental scenario is created that convinces that the relief of the tension is being achieved, which curiously, temporarily it is.

Although this may seem straight forward at first glance if you think about it further the complexity begins to unfold. For example, how does it work? If we have a biological need, for example for a feed, how can we convince ourselves that sucking our thumb is doing the job it obviously can't but in our fantasy world we believe it can. This takes us back to the complex interweaving of mind, body and self as they have been referred to.

Obviously our turning to fantasy only gives temporary relief but again we could ask why? Although it might seem an obvious issue, why doesn't the phantasy work for longer, if we can live successfully with the phantasy for a while why not for longer, forever even? How does the bodily need re-establish its self to dominance to cancel out the effect of the fantasy the mind-self has created? These are important questions in terms of understanding the complex relationship between mind, body and self but I won't address them here because they are not directly relevant to our topic.

The point is that, from a Freudian perspective, the rising in tension because of biological and, we could add, psychological needs, threatens the functioning of the psyche. This is countered by turning towards another in reality and/or fantasy who is seen to have the capacity to relieve the cause of the rising tension. This other is called the object as opposed to the subject who is experiencing the rise in tension - the relationship between the subject and its object is the essence of the object relations being referred to.

If we follow Freud a little further, he could be seen to be proposing that the whole of the social network of our existence is an involved development of our original pleasure-unpleasure orientation towards the world. This would seem to be a reasonable observation to a point and would seem to be saying something about object relations from the Freudian perspective. Let me discuss this for a while but not as an apologist for Freud, he doesn't need one.

As is quite well known, Freud began his clinical work believing that the neuroses that his patients suffered were due to sexual abuse that they had experienced during childhood. However he came to realise through his own self-analysis and the inconsistencies and other factors, that the patients' (and his own) neuroses were based more in fantasy rather than in, or solely in, real life events for example emotional or sexual trauma. This allowed him to realise the power of fantasy in the psychic life of the individual – whether we are healthy or unwell from a psychic perspective may pivot around the issue of our use of fantasy – and this further allowed him to develop a psyche based treatment modality, that is if problems arise in fantasy they can be resolved in fantasy – in analysis through the transference. However Freud, as he outlined in particular in the 1925 paper "Inhibitions Symptoms and Anxiety" (SEXX) later came to once again appreciate the role of the other in reality as well as in fantasy. For example Freud came to see that it was the role of the other, the real mother, giving or withholding love and approval that were so crucial to psychic well being because the presence of this real other allowed the movement into fantasy. However if one reads Freud, which I suggest is a worthwhile exercise, then one gains the picture of a man trying to come to grips with the confusing and at times contradictory interface between real experience in the real world between real objects, and that of the inner psychic experience of this with its turn towards fantasy and wish and, accordingly, a fantasy object.

From an object relations perspective therefore Freud presents a challenging ambiguity. At one level, the object of the object relation is simply the object of need fulfilment and the relation with it, whether it is in fantasy or reality. This object is considered

purely as a means to an end – for relief of unpleasure. In this it doesn't really matter if it is a real object or a fantasy object, or even whom that object is, in an identity sense. Their only relevance is their ability to relieve the tension. There would be no difference between loving intimate intercourse, masturbation, or even as Ferenczi called it, "masturbio in vaginum". Freud obviously did not adhere to this formula but his ideas can be read this way. As I said just a few minutes ago he seemed to adhere to the idea that the real object, their love in particular, but also their disapproval – formed a crucial aspect of one's psychic equilibrium. In other words, for Freud object relations were variously considered as I've attempted to outline.

Following Freud, the Kleinians held or hold object relations at the core of their theories. They see that object relations and psychic functioning are essentially interchangeable concepts, it is only the nature of object relations which varies. As, I trust, you will know, the Kleinians understood psychic functioning as having two different manifestations they call "positions"⁴. By a position they had in mind the particular constellation of object relations, defences, anxieties, and fantasies. The two positions they refer to are called the paranoid-schizoid and the depressive. The essential difference between the two positions is that in the paranoid-schizoid position the relationship to the object is manifested by the use of the significant defences of splitting, projecting, and projective identification and also introjection and identification. Relationship to the object will reflect the effect of these defences. In essence there will be for the subject two objects, or the object will be split in to two at least. The relationship with one object will be one of idealism, desire, and need and will be under the influence of introjection and consequent identification. The other object will be hated, dreaded, and feared and will be related to or dealt with by projection and projective identification. I trust these terms are familiar to you if not I will explain them later. In practice what all this means is that the real object in the subject's life will be dealt with by this list of defences and their consequences, but as defences essentially only work internally then this means the relationship between the subject and the object will occur as an internal experience. What this means therefore in practice is that the object relations will operate and occur almost exclusively in the child or adult's fantasy world. Therefore as outlined in the paranoid-schizoid position the one object – presumably the mother when the child is young but also the father as he to whom the mother relates beyond the child – will become two there will be two mothers in the child's fantasy world and they will be related to differently as described and correspondingly there will also be two fathers.

The difference between this and the depressive position is that the splitting becomes significantly less and the other defences to a large extent lose their impact as well. The reason for this change is that because the real mother generally loves the child much more than she hates him or her, the relationship to the real object influencing the internal object relations will be dominated by one of introjection, building up a sense of living in a world where love predominates with an object that loves and protects. The ego in this environment grows to the point where it can now begin to split and project less. The further consequence of this is that the child can now begin to relate to the whole object rather than a split object, that is rather than having two mothers it now has one mother who has the combined characteristics of the two split objects. However this leads to the eventual realisation that the mother who is loved, trusted and desired is also the same mother who is feared, dreaded and hated, the mother who gratifies is also the one who frustrates. This, is a challenging moment in the object relations of the child – it now hates the mother it loves and needs. Its relations are ambivalent and the perceived danger, as seen by the Kleinians at least, is that the hate for the loved object will destroy it or at least turn it bad – and it will be the child's fault. Hence life is lived in fear that the hate will manifest and destruction and loss of the loved object will occur and a sense of responsibility for this, in anticipation, will be felt with a depressive affect.

⁴ The ideas re Klein follow those outlined by Segal (1964) "Introduction to the Work of Melanie Klein"

The Kleinians believe that these two modes of object relations – the paranoid-schizoid based upon splitting and the depressive based upon ambivalence – are with us all of our lives. The best we can manage is to deal with the depressive anxiety either by sublimation – becoming a caring profession worker for example – or by symbolisation for example living it out in dream or creative activity, and try not to drift back to the paranoid/schizoid.

To summarise, the Kleinians see that object relations begin from the beginning of one's existence, so, from the Kleinian perspective, it is difficult to conceptualise any other experience of self except that within the dynamics of object relations. However unambiguously the Kleinians envisage object relations as occurring internally, part of one's fantasy world being influenced by what transpires in external reality. But the experience will be an internal experience, a fantastic facsimile of sorts of the outside world. From their perspective object relations has two fundamental shapes and forms determined by the defences used and why. The two positions determined by the dynamics remain relevant through out life – in other words our object relations, according to the Kleinians, follow one or other pattern from moment to moment which leads to an overall picture of the person's character.

The issue about the Kleinian perspective, as emphasised, is that this represents an internal picture. Although relationships with the real object are relevant, the internal dynamics, defence and anxiety, are really the determining factor with respect to nature and quality of object relations. From this perspective although qualities of the real object and the real object relations are relevant the truly determining factor as just said is, or are, the internal dynamics of the individual.

Hardly surprisingly many analysts do not support the Kleinian perspective. They feel that object relations should refer to the real object relationships with the real object of the individual's existence. In other words rather than focus upon the internal experience of the relations towards the external objects, which in essence means a focus upon the world of fantasy, many analysts emphasise the real relations with the real objects. This position to a large extent has become synonymous with what is called the object relations school with Winnicott and Fairbairn as its prime advocates.

Winnicott was a paediatrician who saw thousands of mothers with their young infants⁵. He concluded from his observations that at the beginning of extra-uterine life a child's sense of self is determined by the presence of the mother - he famously said there is no such thing as a mother or a baby just a mother and a baby. Essentially this does not constitute an object relationship because there is no emotional space between the two protagonists for such relationships to occur. In essence there is no object just two subjects combined.

Winnicott describes how the mother begins to emerge from this state by empathically-attuned frustrations of her child. This, in Winnicott's terms, confers upon the child the realisation through tolerable frustration and disappointment that the mother exists separately. He describes how in his view, the child, in a fit of rage destroys in its own mind the mother, only to find she has in fact survived in reality this rageful attack. This frustration, attack, destruction and survival in reality, establishes for the child the existence of the mother as a real object in the child's life in the real world. One that can frustrate, deprive and infuriate but also one that can be loved and desired and who can gratify needs. In Winnicott's terms, therefore, the object is firmly established in external reality and it is with this object in external reality that one relates. That is, in contrast to the Kleinian view, object relations for Winnicott are primarily in external rather than internal reality. Although sounding a moot point, this perspective not only determines for a therapist what one does in practice and why, it will also effect how one sees that pathology develops in individual. In the Kleinian view, emotional problems arise internally because of conflict, in the Winnicottian

⁵ The discussion re Winnicott follows his ideas as outlined mainly in "Through Paediatrics to Psycho-analysis" (1958), and "Playing and Reality" (1971)

view problems arise because of emotional deprivation and empathic failure, with respect to emotional provisions.

This differentiation in perspective is particularly pertinent to the ideas of the last analysts I will mention – Fairbairn⁶. Fairbairn expressed the view that Freud had made a significant, crucial, theoretical error in his perspective that the object was the means to an end. In other words Freud believed that the object was pursued to find gratification, to guard against or reduce the threatening effects of ego tension increase. Fairbairn put forward the view that we seek out and pursue the other from birth because that is what we do. Our basic orientation, in Fairbairn's perspective, is to relate to another. Our drives are only the driving force that we use to find our way to reach to the other which is our primary goal. Unlike Freud, for whom libido, for example, is both the driving force to sexual gratification and the instinctual drive to reproduce the species, for Fairbairn it is one among a number of drives that gives us the energetic bases for pursuing the other because that's what we do. We are social beings from birth and our desire to mate with the other is a fundamental drive towards bridging the gap to the other.

In Fairbairn's terms therefore the fundamental drive for humans is to relate to the object. This is not an internal object primarily but a real object in reality. He describes how we may establish an internal representation of the real object, to comfort ourselves in times of absence, but he describes further how we in the process of our lives need to be able to move our desires from an inner repetition of the original object relation to relating to the real external objects of adult lives. This of course can be a perilous and challenging journey. Fairbairn sees further that when, why and how we may come to grief in this journey will determine the nature of the pathology we manifest for example whether we end up with obsessional, narcissistic, or paranoid tendencies and characteristics.

Because of time I will not go in to any details about how the various perspectives on the self and object relations pan out in terms of the orientation of the various analytical schools towards treatment approaches. However very briefly I will mention with regard to object relations that if one sees that the prime focus of object relations is the internal fantasy world as opposed to relations to the real objects in reality then of course one's treatment approach will be different and this in a sense explains the significant difference between how for example a Kleinian or a Winnicottian would approach a patient. I won't say anything further about that now perhaps I can address it later if you wish.

It is difficult to know how to finish off this lecture which has been more descriptive than definitive. Any summarising or over viewing statement will be inadequate accordingly. However I believe there is a guiding principle for such situations which states – “when in doubt turn to the poets”. And who better than Leunig. I believe a wonderful summary of the issues of self and object relations is simply put in his poem “Gratitude and Grief”⁷. The poem goes like this

In the cradle of his mother's arms a baby lies
Warm and sheltered from the time when they will come apart
Gazing from the hidden world in to his mother's eyes
From where the holy secrets tumble down in to his heart.

Then with his heart so full of hope he travels in the wild
But is set upon and cruelly beaten to the ground
And wakes upon the ruins of his innocence defiled
And there his sacred revelations in the mud are found

Tears of blood and anger flowing from his wounded eye
From his violated mouth the song of disbelief
In his shattered memory a shattered lullaby

⁶ The discussion of Fairbairn's ideas follows those outlined in “A Revised Psychopathology of the Psychoses and Psychoneuroses” IJP 1941, republished in his collected papers (reference book absent)

⁷ Michael Leunig (2003) *Poems 1972-2002*, “Gratitude and Grief” (p58-59)

But from his broken heart flow gratitude and grief”

Perhaps I will finish there, thank you.

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