

PASTORAL PSYCHOLOGY

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Formation and training for the Christian Ministry in the modern and post modern world is increasingly complex in its demands with regard to interaction with that world. This is none more true than in the field of Psychology, particularly in some of its more medically related aspects. Indeed, in some parts of Europe it is now not possible for a Christian Minister to offer pastoral ‘counsel’ about any matter that touches on human emotions and decision making (even the purely Spiritual) without possessing a qualification in Psychology or Counselling. This latter is often very expensive to come by, not least because of the training hours involved under the direction of another practising counsellor or therapist. Further; The Christian Ministry is not about psychology and its practice, it is about the timeless counsels of the One True Living God as revealed and given through Jesus Christ in the Christian Faith. With this in mind, it is this Spiritual dimension to which a minister has to first attend and is formed in as part of his or her training.

However, some grounding in Psychology does not go amiss, and is even regarded by many Churches these days as being as essential as a grounding in Sociology was seen to be in the early 1970s. This course does not qualify a minister to be a counsellor or therapist. But, it gives the greatest possible scope for the Minister to know the landmarks of psychology, its nature, and its practice so that he or she can usefully and meaningfully enter that area of work with a sure footed tread, and work with other professionals in those fields. With this in mind this course is in fifteen units. The material has been highly selected, and I have tried to distil into it what is useful for the Christian Pastor. Persevere. Foundation building is essential at the beginning. But the finished product will equip the Minister with a confidence that he or she can go about their Christian Pastoral practice with an integrity in the modern and post modern context. The Philippine Independent Catholic Church, incidentally, is committed to the ‘pure Christian Spiritual’ formation of her clergy. Psychological insight and training, for her, are a parameter, but nonetheless an important one.

This course, like some of our other courses, originated in the University of Oxford (currently number 3 in the World University League) as a part of a Master of Theology study scheme. Various people have contributed. But I should like to pay particular tribute to **Dr C.M. Parker** of Westminster College, University of Oxford, and now of Oxford Brookes University. Here was something good so I have only very lightly edited **Dr Parker’s** work, in places adding titles, An awareness of psychology perspectives will be an advantage as ministry background.

Bishop Lucea in his capacity as training officer was always encouraging us to not only get the work under way, but to go for the best. That is the endeavour with this course. With this in mind we have tried also to incorporate as much of the reading material as possible with each unit. That way the Ordinand need not go chasing after expensive and inaccessible books. We are aware, however, that there are some things in this course which are very ‘Western’. Where these need adapting to Philippino culture we will do so when advised by Bishops who begin to use the material. The Lord bless you as you study.

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The aim of this course is fourfold. (1) To introduce students to aspects of psychology that are relevant to Ministry. (2) To compare the approaches to understanding a person found in religion and Psychology respectively. (3) To consider the Spiritual and psychological dimensions of Christian Faith. (4) To investigate theories of the psychology of Religion and know something of it as a developing field of research within Psychology.

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COURSE BIBLIOGRAPHY

The following texts have been selected from the wealth of literature available as being particularly useful.

Jacobs	M.	<i>Still small voice: An Introduction to Pastoral Counselling</i> , London: SPCK	1992
Meadow & Kahoe	M.J. R.	<i>Psychology of Religion</i> New York: Harper and Row	1984
Fonagy & Higgitt	P. A.	<i>Personality Theory and Clinical Practice</i> London: Methuen	1984
Fowler	J.W.	<i>Stages of Faith</i> San Francisco: Harper and Row	1981
Herbert	M.	<i>Psychology for Social Workers</i> British Psychological Society	1986
Wulff	D.M.	<i>Psychology of Religion</i> New York: Jon Wiley and Sons	1991
Spilka McIntosh	B. D.M.	<i>The Psychology of Religion: Theoretical Approaches</i> . Colorado: Westview Press	1997

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UNIT 1: INTRODUCTION TO PSYCHOLOGY

A. INTRODUCTION

1A. Bibliography, Aims, and Questions arising from Units 1 & 2

1. The aim of this unit

The aim of this unit is to give an overview of Psychology as a discipline of study. In particular attention will be focused on the Research Method by which Psychological insight is derived, and the different approaches to Psychology. Important concepts to bear in mind are these: Psychology, Evidence, Empirical, Cognitive, Behaviour, and Statistically significant.

2. Questions to consider whilst studying this unit

Here are some questions to bear in mind whilst studying this unit and unit 2. (1) What is the main difference between the study of Sociology and the study of Psychology? How does 'Social Psychology' fit? (2) What sources of evidence do Psychologists use, and how can their relative value be assessed? (3) How can controversies between conflicting viewpoints be resolved? (4) When one quotes from a piece of research, what would be the main points to add into your own work? (5) What are the special problems associated with the study of the Psychology of Religion and Faith? (6) What is a good working definition of 'Psychology' and 'Religion'?

3. Bibliography

Essential reading is the following:

Wulff	D.	<i>Psychology of Religion</i>	1991
		New York, John Wiley and Sons.	
		C.f.: Chapters 1,2,3,4,5.	

Other texts that cover the ground in greater depth are the following.

Bee	H.	<i>The Developing Child</i>	1985
		New York: Harper and Row.	
Beit-Hallahmi B.		<i>The Psychology of Religious Behaviour, Belief,</i>	1997
& Argyle M.		<i>and experience</i>	
		London: Routledge, Chapter 3.	
Hewstone	M.	<i>Introduction to Social Psychology</i>	1988
Et.al.		Oxford: Basil Blackwell Ltd.	
Moshman	D.	<i>Developmental Psychology</i>	1987
Glover	J.	<i>A topical approach</i>	
& Bruning	R.	Boston: Little Brown & Co.Ltd.	
Neuman	W.L.	<i>Social Research Methods (2nd. Edition)</i>	1994
		Boston: Allyn and Bacon	
Schulz	R.	<i>Adult development and Ageing</i>	1993
& Ewen	R.	New York: Macmillan	

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2A. What is Psychology?

1. The meaning of 'Psychology'

'Psychology' can be defined as, 'The scientific study of mental processes and behaviour.' This should be enough to commend it to the Christian Pastor as a worthwhile field for study. However, 'Scientific,' 'Mental Processes' and 'Behaviour' are confusing and emotive terms. Can more be said? 'Psyche' from which 'Psychology' in part is derived, is the Greek word for 'mind, self, soul,' in contrast to 'Soma' which denotes the physical body. So, Psychology can be said to be *the study of the individual person and his or her mental functioning*. Now, if mental processes are the topic for study, then we could be thinking of how people perceive and know about the world, and what they consciously think about themselves. We could be finding out about their decisions, and their reasons for behaving, their responses to other people's behaviour, and any other aspect of their conscious thinking process. These areas, incidentally, are usually studied by *Cognitive Psychologists*. However, *Behaviourist Psychologists* look dimly on this approach. They think it improper to study anything except observable behaviour and usually classify this in terms of *stimuli, responses, and reinforcements*. They would define psychology as the *scientific study of behaviour*. Behaviour is external to the brain, and its regularities of behaviour can be studied without speculating on the function of mental processes which cannot be observed or measured.

2. The scientific basis of Psychology

If a discipline of study is to be *scientific*, it should be as objective as possible in the way that it undertakes observations, designs experiments, and draws conclusions. This is all very well as a goal and ideal, but often in research absolute certainty does not exist, and conclusions have to be drawn on the basis of relativities and probabilities. Since their inception, the human sciences of Psychology and Sociology have been under attack. People behave in unpredictable ways, and it is difficult to make accurate observations of states of mind and thinking cannot be observed as it occurs. When one asks people why they did something, they often cannot say, or they dissemble and keep their private thoughts to themselves. Further: We rely on language to communicate thoughts. But sometimes a sample of language can have different layers of meaning, and it can mean completely different things to different people. Trying to pinpoint someone's thought process is often like trying to pick up water from a lake with a fork. It is difficult to isolate your target from the rest of the mass of water, and the only instrument for the job is unsuitable. Hence, Scientific study can impose limits of method and hence also focus on psychologists.

3. An example of Cognitive and Behaviourist approaches

Now, Cognitive and Behavioural Psychology can differ considerably in their analyses of the same piece of behaviour. Take the case of a gambler who gambles as a habit at the cost of his job, and eventually his home and family.

The Behaviourist Approach. A Behaviourist assumes that the person found gambling sufficiently rewarding perhaps in terms of prizes won or excitement gained, or the power of potential wealth in spite of the costs. The behaviourist assumes that all behaviour is maintained by its consequences. The gambling would have been learned under a schedule of intermittent reinforcement which is resistant to extinction, even though the actual rewards are few.

The Cognitive Psychologist. The Cognitive Psychologist would accept that there may be rewards for gambling behaviour. However, his or her attention would be focused elsewhere. The Cognitive psychologist would investigate mental and personality factors that could explain why the infrequent reward obtained from gambling outweighed the rewards of

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security and family relationship. Addiction, compulsive and self destructive behaviour, personality differences related to risk taking and other factors would all be looked into.

4. Cognitive and Behaviourist Research

(a) Behaviourist Research

Behaviourist research has the advantage of simplicity and enables workers to design clear experiments that systematically investigate variables against measured behaviour. This research can produce definite predictions about outcomes in relation to known factors about the situation and the person involved and often results in the creation of effective treatment regimes that manipulate the triggers and rewards for the targeted behaviour, enabling it to be extinguished.

(b) Cognitive Research

Cognitive research has the advantage of seeing the causes of human behaviour as complex interactions between internal and external factors, and fits better with the common sense view that we think and make our own decisions about what we do, but the attempt to investigate thought processes results in much less certainty of interpretation. Explanations of behaviour may vary from one individual to another, and depend on balance of probabilities so that it becomes much more difficult to predict outcomes and to develop theories about behaviour. Cognitive psychology is more open to the charge of being unscientific than behaviourism. On the other hand, it claims to deal more realistically with human behaviour.

5. Social Psychology

Social Psychology works through a series of levels of investigation from the human structures of society in which a person is involved working inwards and right down to the operation of the cells that compose the human brain itself.

(a) Social Psychology and human interaction

Social Psychology focuses on the way that an individual's behaviour can be observed to differ according to the group or groups within which he or she is currently functioning. Such a study may focus on family, institutions, friendship groups, task groups, criminal groups and so on. Some of the concepts involved might be violence, aggression, conflict, moral choices and behaviours, interpersonal communication, attitude formation, and change. However, this does not mean that Social Psychology is Sociology. Sociology tends to study groups and institutions directly, observing numbers of people behaving in certain ways and different functions served by different groups. Social Psychology, by contrast, focuses on the individual as a social being who functions within a social context that influences choice and behaviour.

(b) The Family: A Sociological and Social Psychological perspective

A Sociologist would be interested in the way that family composition might have changed over the Twentieth Century: the increase in family break up and divorce, comparative levels of income, changes in parental role and child rearing practices, social class effects on family behaviour and so on. The Social Psychologist, by contrast, might focus on attachment and bonding between parents and children, normal and pathological family relationships, or the effect of divorce on individual development. Both groups of theorists therefore are studying the same material and observing the same behaviour, but they come at it from different perspectives, and hence offer different explanations on a different level.

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(c) Individual Psychology

This is the next layer inwards for the Social Psychologist. It takes the person as the unit of study and tries to observe similarities and differences in the way that people behave, learn, think, solve problems, remember, use language, and perform any other behaviour which can be observed and perhaps even measured. Individual Psychology can be both behaviourist or cognitive. Behaviourists would confine their theories to only explaining observable performance. Cognitive psychologists would rather look for explanations in terms of mental constructs like personality traits, intelligence, feelings and emotions, motivations etc.

(d) Cognitive functioning

A third level of Social Psychology, but practised only by Cognitive Psychologists, is therefore in terms of models of Cognitive functioning. They try to explain *how* people learn language, organise memory, develop self concepts, tackle decision making, differ in their emotional responses, operate creatively, and so on. Models are developed which try to explain the results observed in individual research such as the way that children acquire language through developing a succession of sentence rules that gradually approximate towards adult language rules. The models can then be tested and refined through further observation and experimentation but in the last resort, they are still only models of mental functioning which have a reasonable predictive power in showing how most people will behave in similar circumstances. They can of course never actually show how the brain works.

(e) Physiological Psychology

Physiological Psychology investigates how the brain works. The aim is to map its structure and observe how its structures inter-relate and function. This branch of Psychology suffers from all the limitations experienced by Biologists. One can dissect a dead brain and have some idea of its structures. But this in itself does not explain how a living brain operates. If you study differences in function after an operation on the brain to remove a blood clot or tumour or subsequent to injury or brain damage or after a stroke, - you can never be sure whether what you are seeing is an adaptation to the trauma or evidence of how the brain normally operates. But there are beginning to be interesting results from brain scans showing blood supply to parts of the brain varying while it performs different tasks, and from the recording of brain waves with external electrodes, and hence we have a good knowledge of the specific function of many parts of the brain taken from clinical work. Piece by piece the picture of brain function is coming together, and progress is being made in the treatment of malfunction. Currently it is not brain structure, but cells, groups of cells, and their performance within the brain which is occupying research attention. In the last twenty years, much more has come to be understood about neuro-transmitters, the chemicals that operate the communications between cells. This has enabled clinicians to administer those chemicals when they fail and hence treat serious degenerative diseases like Parkinson's Disease, and it is to be hoped in the near future, Alzheimer's Disease.

(f) Cellular Study

This concentrates on the brain and nerve cells themselves, and in particular the genetic information contained in the cell's nucleus. Biologists and Psychologists work on these areas as they are concerned with the instructions which create individual differences in the making of the proteins that compose the body and brain. These affect physical appearance, health and life span, ageing and death, brain structure and function, and presumably, therefore, personality, ability, and emotional response or temperament.

6. The study of Psychology in a University Department

Different University Psychology departments mount different course combinations within Psychology, often reflecting the research interests of their staff. But a fairly typical set of

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modules might be as follows: (1) Perception, attention and memory. (2) Thinking and Cognition. (3) Learning and behaviour. (4) Individual differences. (5) Clinical and abnormal psychology. (6) Social Psychology. (7) Developmental Psychology. (8) Physiological Psychology. (9) Motor function and skills. (10) Educational psychology. (11) Vocational Psychology. (12) Artificial intelligence and computers. (13) Animal behaviour. Underlying them all will be a further area: Research Methodology and Statistics.

B. PSYCHOLOGICAL RESEARCH

1B. Observing and Describing Behaviour

1. Research in Psychology: Its functions

There is more to doing Psychology than learning about theories. One needs too to examine how research is conducted in order that Psychological findings can meet the criterion of 'Scientific'. Research techniques in Psychology have three functions. (1) Observing and describing behaviour. (2) Comparing behaviour between individuals and groups. (3) Experimental investigation of hypotheses. We will look at each of these in turn.

2. Observing.

'Observing' means *watching people and counting and describing their responses*. This is the basic observation technique in psychology, but it is not as easy as it sounds. You have to specify what you watch according to the particular observation you undertake. You also have to be as objective as possible.

3. Time sampling

Observers start by taking in as much of a situation as possible and write down what is happening about every ten seconds or so. This is known as '*time sampling*'. Usually the focus at this stage is one individual, with other people noted as they act with him or her. These observations can either be undertaken in a *natural situation* where the behaviour normally occurs, or in a *controlled setting* which can be used to limit some of the factors that might change the result.

4. Behaviour of the observed person

Unfortunately almost any kind of observation is likely to change the behaviour of the person who is participating whether the observer is present in a room, behind a one way mirror, or making an audio or visual recording. This means that the results will have to be considered with care to see if they are *valid records of what really occurred*. If, of course, you are an actual part of the recorded scene, it is difficult to avoid being drawn in as a participant in the action, so compromising your objectivity. Hence, researchers try various ways of controlling the 'observer effect'. They may disguise the fact that people are being observed, or they may disguise what is the particular behaviour on which they are focused. This approach has of course made people very suspicious of psychologists, especially when an outright deception has been involved. Ethics committees strongly discourage such deception which ought only to be used if strongly justified with the subjects thoroughly debriefed after the event. Sometimes several people may be needed to rate the recordings or observations made to check the validity of the criterion used. Again, the research may be undertaken in a different setting to see whether the targeted behaviour changes according to the environment or when different people are watching. Researchers who use video recording technique claim that if

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you are present often enough the subjects under observation become used to the camera and so return to their normal behaviour. There is of course no way that they can be sure of that unless someone who normally participates in the scene also looks at the recording and confirms this. Research stopping at this point would be written up as a *descriptive report*. This report would use statistical checks for the distribution of data if the data is quantitative. If the focus has been on one person and situation, the report would probably be in the form of a *case history* which would consist mainly of qualitative information.

5. Hypothesising and further observation

Once an initial observation has been completed, the next stage is usually to form an *hypothesis*, and then check out its validity with *systematic observation* or *experiment*. This further observation may well be in the form of *event sampling* if you have decided on which behaviours are important and need to be further observed. A limited number of particular behaviours could be targeted and a record taken when any of a group of subjects carries out that action. Education theorists often research classroom dynamics in this way to investigate the amount and effects of teacher talk on children, styles of classroom management, or questioning techniques. It is also a good way to get base line measures before intervening to try to change behaviours e.g.: to increase the amount of praise etc..

6. Questionnaires and Interviews

(a) Some terminology

Observation can be carried out through *questionnaires* or *interviews*. These ask the people to tell the observer about themselves, their attitudes, actions, and motives. *Rating scales* have a similar function. These are filled in about the subject of the study by someone who knows him or her quite well. Rating scales can give a rough assessment of personality or maladjustment as they impinge on the rater. *Self report inventories* whether written or spoken, depend on the respondent answering truthfully. This they may do if they actually understand themselves, and if there is no particular advantage in faking. However, when job or prison release depends on the outcome it is understandable that many subjects would give a certain amount of dissimulation. Questionnaires often have *lie scales* which catch faking, but they are not infallible, especially in the hands of experienced respondents.

(b) Designing Questionnaires and Interviews

Questionnaires and Interview schedules are difficult to design well, and if you are new to their use, you should consult a standard text about them. Should one use open or closed questions? *Open Questions* are more likely to access what a respondent actually thinks or believes, but they are often very difficult to analyse and classify. This is because each individual will have given slightly different answers and it is often difficult therefore to find patterns from which conclusions can be drawn. *Closed Questions* are those in which the subject ticks boxes that represent the answer, or that rate statements on a 1-5 scale. Data from these is easy to analyse and can be used to make comparisons between people and subjected to statistical tests very easily. However, they are very limited in what they can find out. It is also easy to manipulate the results, by design or default, to achieve the required answers. When this happens the researcher's objectivity is compromised giving rise to the old saying, 'lies, damned lies and statistics.'

(c) Validity criteria

When reading research based on questionnaires and interviews you need to inquire carefully as to what the author can demonstrate about the validity and reliability of their measurements. A well-designed questionnaire will have its items tested for discriminability and it will have been tried out on a large number of people to establish its norms and standard deviations.

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Published tests of ability, personality, and attitudes may have their limitations, but they will certainly have been properly standardised and will be able to show how their validity and reliability were assessed. If one of these has been used, the scores for the current sample can be assessed against the norms established in standardisation.

2B. Comparing Behaviour

1. The Method

Observation research allows the researcher to describe behaviour with a greater or lesser degree of accuracy according to the limitations of the methodology used, but it will not enable him or her to explain why people behave as they do. This will require an extension of the research for *correlations* between measures.

2. A Case: Violent Behaviour on Television

Let us suppose that we wish to discover whether the constant observation of violent behaviour on television films and videos makes the young people who watch those more violent in their own behaviour.

- (1) We need to *decide what constitutes violent behaviour*. Does it include verbal aggression and threat? Will it only be considered a hostile act if it is carried out against another person or animal? Is cartoon violence to be given the same weight as realistic violence within dramas and real violence on news broadcasts?
- (2) When these definitions are decided, we need to arrange for a number of *raters* to count episodes of violence on a range of television programmes and come to a reasonable agreement.
- (3) Next, the behaviour of a number of children who had been known to watch these programmes or who had a particularly high diet of programmes that contains violence would need to be *rated*.
- (4) It would then be possible to *correlate* the two measurements e.g.: amount of watching violence, and amount of aggressive behaviours in given situations, and see if there is a relationship.
- (5) If a *significant correlation* exists, we can conclude that there is a relationship between watching violence on television and being violent. However, this research in itself will not determine *why* the children watch the programmes or otherwise behave violently. It might be that children who are violent for other reasons choose to watch more violence than other children. Further research would be needed to pin down *causality*.

3B. Experimental research

1. Introduction

Further research is usually of an *experimental* kind. Having made observations and comparisons that indicate that certain variables are significant in a particular situation, it is usual to form an *hypothesis* and so to *design an experiment* that will help to pin down why certain things happen. This experiment may be carried out by *intervening in a real life situation* or by *setting up a corresponding situation in a laboratory* where variables can be better controlled. There are certain important issues to be considered when designing and criticising experiments.

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2. The Hypothesis

(a) Procedure and Practice

Most *reports of experiments* of this kind that you will read will begin with a *general review of the area of research*. This in itself can often be valuable reading for a Minister. It will also then continue by *stating the hypothesis that the current researcher wants to test*. This is usually put in the form of a *research question* or questions. Now, the hypothesis *should normally be expressed as a negative*. Here is an example: 'There is no difference in the way that men and women treat males and female newborn babies.' Observations can then be carried out. If *differences are noted* then the *hypothesis is rejected* and the *conclusion* would be drawn that men and women behave differently in this respect.

(b) The principle of research by disproving hypotheses.

It is not scientifically respectable to do the research hypothesis the other way around. One should not design an experiment that proves the null hypothesis, i.e.: to start with the assumption that men and women treat babies differently according to gender and then set about proving that they do so. *An hypothesis cannot be said to be proved*. Rather: *A conclusion drawn from research is allowed to stand until it is disproved by further evidence*. Hence: researchers ought always to state their hypotheses in forms which can be disproved.

3. Testing hypotheses as a discerning reviewer and reader of experiment work

As your read Psychology research, here are some questions to bear in mind about an hypothesis.

(1) *Has the hypothesis been stated in a form which can be disproved should the relevant evidence arise?*

This is an important question. Other researchers ought to be able to design an experiment to test the hypothesis as it was originally stated. Some of the early work in psychology is constantly being seriously challenged because it can never be disproved. **Sigmund Freud**, for example, had a theory about unconscious motivation of behaviour which claimed that our behaviour may be produced because of unconscious conflicts, perhaps originating from childhood. The conscious brain, by definition, seldom becomes aware of these conflicts. This theory can in fact never be proved or disproved since the material so buried in the unconscious is inaccessible to observation or experimentation. Hence, Freud's theory can never be shown to be either correct or incorrect. For this reason Freud is often criticised for being a poor scientist.

(2) *Is the hypothesis relevant to psychological theory about human beings?*

You the Pastor Theologian reader will need to evaluate this question for each piece of psychological experimentation that you consider. Sometimes, because of the need for research to be properly controlled it may take place with its subjects (e.g.: rats or monkeys) in a laboratory, and both these factors appear *prima facie* to have little relevant to everyday life. *The researcher however should have justified hi or her method and shown the relationship to real (human) life*. Most problems are tackled within the compass of two types of research. (a) Real life observation in which an issue is identified and an hypothesis formed. (b) More controlled experimental testing of the resulting hypothesis. Theories about the way *reinforcement* controls behaviour which were worked out by **B.F.Skinner** in detailed research with *rats and pigeons* have turned out to be remarkably accurate when applied to human behaviour in real life such as behaviour therapy with phobic patients or assertive discipline programmes used in schools. Though value judgements have to be made about concentrating on external behaviours which may be the symptoms of serious maladjustment, while neglecting the causes and the morality of applying conditioning techniques which potentially remove human freedom there are few challenges to the effectiveness of the actual techniques.

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4. The Sample tested

In a psychology research report, a *description of the subjects* should come immediately after the introduction. You should put at least these three questions to the report's text to check the sample.

- (1) *Is the sample large enough?* The sample should be large enough to even out individual variations in performance which could otherwise distort results. Have any possible sources of variation been considered in the selection?
- (2) *How were the subjects selected?* The selection should have been made to control the factors which otherwise would have produced a difference in the results.
- (3) *Is there a control group? How was it selected?* Some research looks at differences in performance between two or more groups of subjects in which some groups are the subjects of the experiments, and others are the controls. For example: In the investigation of the effectiveness of drug treatments for mental illness or any other area of medicine, some of the subjects need to be given a placebo in a blind situation where neither the patient nor the doctor knows of the treatment that they are using. If this is not done some patients could recover because they are the focus of the attention of a doctor or because they believe in the effectiveness of the drug which later turns out in the event to have no healing action at all. Control groups should be like the experimental groups in every way except for the factor under consideration, otherwise improvements in the condition cannot be attributed to the drugs.
- (4) *A closing example: Bowlby* drew some wrong conclusions about the effects of separation from mother in early childhood because he did not use a control group from the normal population to compare with the experience of his maladjusted subjects. Had he done so, he would have discovered in line with later research that the experience of maternal separation defined in his own terms was common.

5. The Method

(a) Matters to probe

The method of the experiment or observation should be stated clearly and precisely enough for anyone who reads the report to be able to replicate the experiment exactly. If clearly stated, any reader should understand what the researcher did, and how it relates to his hypotheses and conclusions. Once you have worked out the method you may be able to criticise the order of doing things, the measures, or the apparatus used and consider the validity of this way of testing the hypothesis.

(b) An example: Vygotsky (1962) and Luria (1961)

Work on language and its relationship to thought in the early 1960s by Vygotsky and Luria and other Russian researchers of this period has been very influential in the Western world. However, the descriptions of their work as it appears in English are so poor that no one has been able to replicate it.

6. The Results and Statistical analysis

Any research involves only a sample of the population. So, there has to be some check on the *frequency of the findings*, for they might have occurred by chance alone. It is the function of *statistical analysis* to determine this, and current journals in psychology will not publish work unless it has been so scrutinised. **Piaget**, in his early work, did not use statistics. A researcher will claim that his results are statistically significant if the probability of obtaining them by chance is less than one in a thousand. This is usually stated in the form $p < 0.001$. Sometimes lower significance levels are accepted as indicative if not conclusive: i.e.: $p < 0.01$, i.e.: one in a hundred or even five in a hundred $p < 0.05$. But it is the most conservative criterion of one

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in a thousand that is the most telling. Researchers should also say what test of significance they have used and quote the figures resulting from the calculations so that, in theory, the readers can check the accuracy of their findings. The word '*significant*' should be used with caution. It does *not* mean 'important'. Rather, in psychology, it is a term of empirical research that indicates that the results to which it refers are unlikely to have been obtained by chance.

7. The Conclusions

Conclusions should be clearly stated at the end of the research report from which they are derived. Clergy studying psychological experiment reports should keep three questions in mind when quizzing these.

- (1) *Do the conclusions follow logically from the research reported?* Or, put another way: Has the researcher drawn the right conclusions?
- (2) *Has the hypothesis been disproved?* If not, does it stand for the time in being?
- (3) *Can the conclusions be generalised to other situations?* Or: Do they only really apply to the sample being tested: e.g.: white 'middle class' students.

4B. Experiment Design Theory

All fields of psychological research use the same set of experimental designs. We will survey them briefly. It is not easy to design a perfect experiment, and technique is being refined all the time.

1. Experimental

The aim here would be to see if any *intervention* would help, e.g.: training in organising memory that would help some old people counteract some of the effects of ageing. An experiment in this case would be set up so that a sample of subjects would be given a pre-test for current performance in remembering and then divided randomly or by matched selection into experimental and control groups. The experimental group would receive the training programme and the controls nothing, or a neutral activity. A post test of memory function would help to show to what extent, if any, training had helped the memory.

2. Quasi experimental designs

Quasi experimental designs are used when it would be impractical or unethical to vary the independent variable for research because of potential harm to the subject. **Schulz and Ewen (1993)** gives a way of investigating the effect of loud noise on hearing. Obviously it would be wrong to subject individuals to stressful loud noise. But there are individual variations in the amount of exposure to noise because of places of work or residence, choice of entertainment, and so on. So: A sample of people working in an engineering factory could be compared with a sample of gardeners or farmers; or pop fans with those of classical music. If those who are exposed to the least noise have significantly less hearing loss than those exposed to loud noise, it could be suggested that noisy environments increase hearing loss. However, because the subjects were not randomly assigned to their groups it is not possible to eliminate alternative explanations for the hearing loss within this experimental design.

3. Cross Sectional and Longitudinal design

(a) Cross Sectional design

Cross sectional designs are not good for studying development. If groups of subjects of different ages are measured on any tests, it would almost certainly appear that there are

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significant differences in scores. The tendency with cross sectional design is to conclude that these differences in performance show that people pass through stages of development as they grow older. *Group performances* cannot say anything about the process of development within an individual, so stages of development are an inference which can only be substantiated by longitudinal studies. But remember therefore: If cross sectional designs are used across wide age spans there will be a confusion between *age effects* and *cohort effects*. Differences in scores cannot be attributed with certainty to ageing when there are forty or fifty years between the groups. Why? The older cohort (people born at approximately the same time) will have grown up in a very different world and experienced different child rearing practices and education. These could in themselves well account for different personalities, attitudes, and behaviours. We cannot conclude e.g.: that people become more conservative as they age even if they do not score higher on this dimension than their younger cohort counterparts. The older people might have grown up in a more authoritative and conservative age and might have been just as conservative when they were young and stayed that way as they grew older.

(b) Longitudinal Design

Now: *Longitudinal research* escapes the confusion between age effects to some degree but really only studies the development of the individuals or cohort under focus and the results cannot be generalised to a cohort starting twenty or thirty years later which may have a completely different pattern of development.

C. INTRODUCTION TO THE PSYCHOLOGY OF RELIGION

1C. D. WULFF: 'Psychology and Religion' (1991)

1. Introduction

Religious thinking and practice are human behaviours which can be observed in their performance or investigated through questionnaires and interviews. Hence they constitute a legitimate area of psychological study. They have been a focus for psychological research at least since the time of **William James** and **G. Stanley Hall** in the late Nineteenth Century.

2. Approaches to the Psychology of Religion

Wulff points out that there is as much confusion and controversy within this aspect of the subject as there is in any other part of psychology. In short, there are a number of different approaches being taken by researchers today. Here, we will just briefly survey these approaches. (1) Some researchers think that Psychology of Religion should focus on people's thinking, beliefs, and attitudes as they respond to the mysteries and crises of everyday life and the nature of the response that they make to experience they perceive to originate from a Divine source outside of human experience. (2) Others want to investigate the stories and myths that have developed and the language in which they and the ritual expression of religion are couched. (3) A third group is concerned with the regularities of religious behaviour and attitudes which can be accessed empirically to see how they relate to other aspects of human behaviour like cognitive development, personality, or social class. (4) A fourth group want to use the field of psychology to find out about how to help people who are in trouble in their personal or social lives, but they wish to offer this help in the context of a religious belief rather than the secular approach of clinical psychology. Such researchers often look at the critical points of the relationship between Psychology and Religion to see where they conflict or agree.

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3. The definition of 'Religion'

One of the reasons for this diversity of approach is *failure to agree on what constitutes a working definition of 'Religion'*. Wulff traces the history of the use of this term and notes that it incorporates two widely different concepts. (1) The first covers the *tradition of religious behaviour* which may be expressed through the rituals, precepts, and *sacred texts of any historical religion*. (2) The second refers to the *personal piety and faith of the individual* who confesses a religion which represents his/her way of responding to self, others, and the universe, especially as they are perceived to reflect or respond to the transcendent. Psychology of Religion tries to *describe and explain* both of these phenomena.

4. Suspicions surrounding the Psychology of Religion

(a) Freud and the early psychologists

Freud and many of the early psychologists were hostile to Religion and Faith and tried to *explain away* the behaviours that they observed *in terms that they considered more scientific*. For a while this caught the conviction of the public at large. Nowadays they are suspected of trying to explain away Spiritual experiences by simply giving them other interpretations on their own terms. Too right.

(b) Schliermacher and C19 Theologians exploring the Mind

Some Theologians, especially those in the immediate post Enlightenment era, wanted to explore the realms of the Mind. Their ideas were based on the thinking of *philosophers* and they were more interested in studying Faith than Tradition. Schliermacher was influential in this respect in the Early Nineteenth Century, because he pulled the definition of Religion away from the philosophical emphasis on knowledge and morals towards attitudes and feelings. He defined religion as a feeling of absolute dependence arising naturally out of an individual's sense of Self.

(c) Controversial perspectives of Theologians and Psychologists

'Psychology of Religion' is a contested discipline. Many psychologists consider that *Religion is not a proper topic for scientific investigation* because its focus is on an inaccessible, transcendent Being, and people's Spirituality about Him makes it difficult to generate testable hypotheses. Many Theologians are hostile to 'Psychology of Religion' for the same reason. They consider scientific methods unsuitable to the study of Spiritual experience.

(d) MEADOW & KAHOE (1984): 'Psychology of Religion'

In their Preface to this book, Meadow and Kahoe tackle this question head on. They claim to be writing about 'Religion' from the point of view of psychologists. This means, for them, that they look at Religion and try to explain it as scientists who are working within the way that psychology assess and explains things. They suggest, however, that they are not seeking to reduce Religion to less than it really is because they think that a psychological explanation could not describe all that there really is to Religion. When, for example, Religion goes beyond psychological explanation and starts seeking to answer questions of values and questions about truth and reality, that is not the subject matter for Psychology. It is rather the domain of Theology and Philosophy. However, as Christians themselves they *contextualise* their practice of Psychology of Religion. They see no conflict between a psychological explanation or interpretation, and a Theological one. Arguments like these, of course, mean that all too often 'Psychology of religion' is studied in a University Theological Department rather than a Psychology Department.

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2C. Glossary of Terms

Before proceeding further with this exciting study, there are four sets of terminology we must understand, so that we can launch straight into the work on Religious Experience and Behaviour in Unit 2.

1. ‘Psycho Analysis, Depth Psychology, Freudian Theory’

‘Psycho analysis, depth psychology,’ and, ‘Freudian Theory,’ all refer to a specific approach to describing personality and clinical treatment that originated with **Sigmund Freud**. Freud taught that there are both *conscious and unconscious* aspects in the Human Mind and Personality. His Clinical methods attempt to *bring the unconscious* aspects to the surface. Followers of Freud stick very closely to his clinical method. However, his theory has been developed a great deal since his day. Later writers in Freud’s using Freud’s approach are often known as ‘Neo-Freudian psychoanalysts’ or ‘Post-Freudian psychoanalysts’ and even ‘Post-Modern Psychoanalysts’. Incidentally, **Carl Jung** also wrote extensively about the unconscious aspects of mind and personality. He too can therefore be called a ‘Depth Psychologist’. However, his method of treatment is very different to that of Freud, and so his work is not included in the term ‘Psycho analysis’ which is usually reserved for the Freudian approach.

2. Behavioural Psychology, Behaviourists, Conditioning & Learning Theory

The terms ‘Behavioural Psychology,’ ‘Behaviourists,’ ‘Conditioning Theory,’ and ‘Learning Theory,’ all refer to one of the major ‘schools’ of Psychological thought that was started by the Russian Psychologist **Pavlov**. Pavlov moved mid career to the USA where his approach to Psychology predominated for many years and is particularly associated with the work of **Watson** and **B.F.Skinner**. his ‘school’ emphasised keeping psychology properly scientific with controlled experiments and precise measurements. Because of this they claim that *psychologists should only study behaviour because that is all that they can observe and measure*. They should not, by contrast, be speculating about what is happening inside the brain to produce that behaviour. Most of the Behaviourist experiments are related to some form of *conditioning* where you can observe the stimulus to the behaviour, the *response* made by the organism, and its *consequence*. From these simple ‘building blocks,’ Behaviourists make precise statements about what produces and maintains certain behaviour. Once identified, of course, these factors can then be eliminated by appropriate treatment. Behaviourist observations have been used to explain a great deal of our social behaviour and led to ways of changing human behaviour called, ‘Behaviour Therapy,’ ‘Behaviour control technique,’ or ‘Desensitisation’.

3. Cognitive Psychology

Cognitive Psychology is the rival ‘school’ to Behaviourism and it originated with **William James**. It retained its popularity in England when Behaviourism swept through the states in the Inter-War and Post World-War II years. Following James’ lead, **Bartlett**’s work on *thinking and remembering* stressed the importance of trying to discover what happens inside the human head. Other pioneers such as **Broadbent** then investigated a further field of study: *How human beings structure their perception of the world*. This in turn led others to consider further questions related to *Human memory, Human personalities, what motivates human behaviour, how humans learn, and how humans acquire and use language*. **Piaget** became an outstanding name in the psychology of human learning and development. It was he who was responsible for the Cognitive Psychology’s main principle. It is this. *Human beings are not passively manipulated by external stimuli but constantly active in making meaning out of their*

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experiences, structuring them as they do so through learned and unlearned patterns of thinking. Here is much for the Christian Priest to ponder here.

4. Self concept theories

(a) Infinite Regress

In Personality Theory, as with all branches of Psychology, there are rival schools of thought about the *object* and the *method* of study. For example: Some personality theory denies the existence of a 'self' or 'me' who is the receiver and interpreter of all the experiences that 'I' have. The reason for this is their concern with the philosophical problem of *infinite regress* that this creates: Is there a little person inside my head constantly receiving and uniting all my experiences? Where could this 'she secretary' be located in all the workings of my brain?

(b) Accepting the universal experience: 'Know thyself'

On the other hand, many psychologists claim that we must accept the universal human experience of directly knowing 'myself' and having my own experiences even this creates difficulty for definition and empirical research. They maintain that it makes better sense for human thinking and behaviour to take for granted that self-consciousness is evidence for the existence of a 'self' which integrates all our experience. But, they are aware nevertheless that they are dealing with a hypothetical construct: a collection of memories and experiences that are centred around a sense of personal continuity over time; a self concept whose existence will never be scientifically demonstrated. If we accept the first premise, then **Maslow, Carl Rogers, and Allport** will have a great deal to say to us about how the self-concept develops, what can warp it, and how it affects our behaviour. But first, Religious Experience in Unit 2.

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UNIT 2: PSYCHOLOGY, RELIGION, RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE

A. INTRODUCTION

1A. Aims, Questions, and Concepts

1. The Aim of this unit

In this unit the relationship between *Psychology and Religion* will be tackled in depth. The unit will then proceed to examine some *Psychological explanations of Religious Experience*, making reference to some recent Twentieth Century Systematic Theologians as it does so.

2. Questions to bear in mind when studying this unit

There are *two questions* that you should particularly bear in mind as you listen to the lecture for this unit. (1) *Does a Psychological explanation destroy the reality of a Religious Experience?* (2) *Is there a Psychological explanation for Religious experience?*

3. Concepts related to the study of this unit

The following are the *key concepts* that will be reviewed. *Write down* your own definitions of each of these by the end of this unit. Religion, Belief, Faith, Sin, Guilt, Love, Freewill, Conversion, Salvation, Religious Experience.

2A. Bibliography

1. Essential Reading

From the seven titles picked as core reading for this course, you should read the following extracts.

Meadow	J.	&	Psychology of Religion	1984
Kahoe	R.D.		<i>New York: Harper and Row.</i> (Chapters 13-18).	
Wulff	D.		Psychology of Religion	1991
			<i>New York: John Wiley & Sons.</i> (Chapters 1-3).	
Spilka	B.	&	The Psychology of Religion: Theoretical Approaches.	
McIntosh	D.M.	(Eds.)	Colorado: Westview Press.	Part 6. 1997

2. Other Important Reading in connection with this unit

Beit-Hallahmi B.	&	The Psychology of Religious Behaviour, Belief and	
Argyle M.		Experience.	
		<i>London, Routledge, Chapters 1-5.</i>	
Hardy	D.	The Spiritual Nature of Man.	1979
		<i>Oxford: Clarendon Press.</i>	
Hay	D.	Exploring Inner Space.	1982.
		<i>Penguin.</i>	
Hay	D.	The Biology of God.: What is the current	1994
		status of Hardy's hypothesis?	
		<i>Journal for the Psychology of Religion: 4.</i>	

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- | | | | | |
|----------|----|---|---|------|
| Maxwell | M. | & | Seeing the invisible. | 1990 |
| Tschudin | V. | | <i>Religious Experience Research Centre,
Westminster College, Oxford.</i> | |
| Robinson | E. | | Living the Question: Studies of Childhood Religious Experience. | 1981 |
| | | | <i>Religious Experience Unit, Manchester College.</i> | |

3. Two important historic texts

- | | | | |
|------------|----|--|------|
| James | W. | The Varieties of Religious Experience. | 1902 |
| | | Riverside Press. | |
| Allport G. | | The individual and his Religion. | 1950 |
| | | <i>London: Macmillan.</i> | |

4. Three other useful books that cover some of the topics

- | | | | |
|--------|------|---|-------|
| Benner | | Psychotherapy and the Spiritual quest. | 1989 |
| | | <i>London: Hodder and Stoughton.</i> | |
| Brown | L. | The Psychology of Religion: | 1988 |
| | | An Introduction | |
| | | <i>London: SPCK. (Chapters 7,8,10).</i> | |
| Coate | M.A. | Sin, Guilt, and Forgiveness: The hidden | 1994. |
| | | Dimensions of the Pastoral process. | |
| | | <i>London: SPCK,</i> | |

B. THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN RELIGION AND PSYCHOLOGY

1B. JOHN MCDARGH: 'The Theological uses of Psychology'

1. Introduction

John McDargh explored this subject in an article he wrote for 'Horizons' in 1985: 'Theological uses of Psychology: Retrospective and Prospective', *Horizons* 12 (2) /247-264. In it he tries to capture the contrasts of attitude that exist towards psychology, and in particular towards what are perceived as some of its pronouncements on the Christian Faith.

2. Psychology and Roman Catholic Doctrine

(a) The Aquinian basis of the Roman Church

McDargh considers the responses of Roman Catholic and Protestant Churches separately, and he begins with the Roman Catholic Church in the 1930s, which, as now, was dominated by the writings of **Thomas Aquinas**.

(b) Psycho-Analysis and Thomist doctrine.

As Psycho-analysis became well known it was felt to threaten the Thomist doctrine that *Humankind has the capacity for the infinite and transcendent and was created to freely respond to God's Grace*. Theologians of this ilk feared that Psychology would undermine the Christian Theology of Human Freedom and diminish the Christian (and popular) concept of what it means to be human. Psycho-analysis seemed in particular to *challenge Moral Theology since it proposed that there were areas of personality that were inaccessible to consciousness*. Hence, Humankind could be driven by unconscious motives.

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(c) The contribution of Karl Rahner

However, **Karl Rahner** the Vatican II Theologian has largely answered this problem. He has examined the Canon of Scripture and showed that *the concept of unconscious motivation had been foreshadowed by Paul*. Paul, according to Rahner, pointed out that we often fail to do the good that we intend and instead do the evil that we are trying to avoid. The doctrine of Original Sin also closely resembles Freud's idea of the Id.

(d) Cognitive Psychology

Cognitive Psychology, which gained again in importance in the 1950s, stressed the need for the *study of the processes of development* from infancy to maturity and the *need to seek for meaning at all levels of thinking*. This approach provided many potential links with the Thomian concept of Humankind being driven to know God and find complete fulfilment in loving Him.

3. Psychology and Protestant Theology

(a) The 'Protestant Spectrum'

McDargh constructs a spectrum of Protestant Theologians.

Liberal	-----	Evangelical
Theology		Integration Theology
	<i>Wieman Neibuhr Bultmann Tillich Brunner Barth.</i>	

The Theologians at the *liberal* end of the line are *more likely to use psychology within their Theology*. They believe in the *Immanence* of God in the world, although they still emphasise the distinction between Divinity and Humanity. The Theologians at the right of the line, the *Evangelicals* represented by **Karl Barth** are much more inclined to emphasise the distinction between God and Humankind by emphasising God's Transcendence. Beyond Barth to the right of the diagram are a group of Evangelical Theologians who are trying to *integrate* psychology with their Theology. Beyond Wieman to the left are liberal Theologians (about whom we shall read in a moment when we turn to Tracey's study).

(b) The Liberal end

The Liberals are concerned to take seriously the challenge presented by modern scientific discoveries, including Psychology, as they question the meaning, truth, and value of the Christian Faith. They make the assumption that since both disciplines are seeking the truth about Man's nature, the scientific discoveries of psychology will re-express the truths that formed part of the ancient Wisdom of Theology about Humankind. **Horton** (1943) was confident that such integration could be achieved, but this confidence has not been maintained. Hence, the groups tends to select those parts of Psychology that best fit its Theology: i.e.: they prefer the self concept theories of **Maslow, Rogers, and Allport**.

(c) The Evangelical end

The Evangelical end as a whole denies that psychology can shed light on Christian thinking. It fears that Psychology is tending to usurp the role of Faith. As Theology goes, all Evangelicals think that all Truth belongs to God. Hence, Psychology should not be contrary to the revealed truth of God. However, these same people do not choose to enrich their Faith with 'the truth of Psychology'. If psychology is seen to have a role at all, it is as a tool for the counsellor, evangelist, or teacher who can makes use of its findings in their work. Evangelicals on the whole find Behavioural Psychology and Cognitive Psychology more informative than Psycho-Analysis.

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(d) Tillich as a Median Protestant: *‘The shaking of the Foundations’ (1962)

McDargh sees **Paul Tillich** as more or less in the middle of the Protestant spectrum. He is a typical representative of the Protestant position. Tillich found Psycho-analysis the most valuable school of Psychological thought *because it rediscovers some of the earlier perceptions of the nature of humankind*. Where there is conflict between Theology and Psychology, Tillich takes the *revealed Religion to have the true insight*. This is because Tillich thinks that Psychology only has a partial description of Human Development with an emphasis on why things go wrong. *It cannot offer the saving Grace of the Christian Faith to rescue a person from their plight*. Tillich uses the Freudian concept of the punitive super-ego as a parallel for ‘bad moral conscience’. Tillich also agrees that Humankind needs to worship a being greater than himself or herself, but he cannot accept Freud’s suggestion that *Humankind creates God in his/her own image* for this *would deny the transcendence of God*. Tillich’s thought on this subject is distilled into his book, *‘The Shaking of the Foundations,’ London: SCM, 1949, Penguin 1962.

2B. DAVID TRACY: ‘The Analogical Imagination,’ 1981

1. TRACY’S THESIS: The revised correlational model

Tillich used what has come to be known as ‘the method of correlation’. This is discussed by Paul Avis in his book, ‘The Methods of Modern Theology,’ Marshall, Morgan, Scott, 1986 /180-185. **Tracy** in his book ‘The Analogical Imagination’ London: SCM, 1981 took up this idea and developed a ‘Revised Correlational model.’ In which he stresses the *mutual interaction and criticism* between Theology and Psychology more than Tillich. Although his method changed over time, Tillich always tried to *retain Theology as the dominant partner* which could provide answers to questions posed elsewhere. Indeed, in some instances Tillich thought that Theology ought to frame the question. Tracy, by contrast, has suggested that *Theology and Psychology should both be accepted as having truths to tell about Humankind and the world*. Each should challenge and question the other to find a mutually acceptable answer. One interesting example in this respect is the way that Tracy handles the interaction of Feminism and Theology (Tracy 1981 /88).

2. The division of Theology: Three essential sub-disciplines

To present his case, **Tracy** argues that Theology should be divided into three sub-disciplines each of which have different audiences or ‘publics’.

Fundamental Theology. Fundamental Theology is to be concerned with the Dialogue between scientists and Theologians appealing to the educated public and trying to make relationships between Humanistic faith and the Christian Faith. The end result would be a Philosophical or Natural Theology which attempts to show the reasonableness and truth of the Christian Faith, but to do so on grounds that do not pre-suppose Theistic belief.

Systematic Theology. Systematic Theology is addressed to Church member and tries to draw links between Religious Revelation and the contemporary world. It presupposes the truth of its subject and tries to present it in current terms. It takes the interpretation of the present offered by other disciplines – including Psychology – very seriously. The Systematic Theologian must interpret both the tradition and the present situation in a mutually critical correlation.

Practical Theology. Practical Theology is concerned with people’s social, political, and Pastoral needs and with trying to find points where they intersect. *This is the most pressing growth point for Theology in the future*. It is a response to the Marxist critique and attempts to force Theology to show that its Faith can transform the world.

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3. Tracy's approach in summary

Theories presented by psychologists have been absorbed into our culture and language and given us fresh ways of perceiving ourselves. Tracy insists that *Psychology should neither subvert nor dominate Theology*. Rather, there should be interaction and mutual criticism. Psychological findings may help to interpret some Religious processes, e.g.: about the development of belief or the social factors operating in the Church community. But they should not attempt to create norms since *Psychology is a purely descriptive science* which has *no basis for being normative*.

3B. Analysis: A worked example & comments from Macquarrie and others

1. Practical Theology

It is Practical Theology that is most likely to find links with Psychology. Both disciplines are concerned with *transforming human life*. However, *Theology has the authority to speak about ethics* and so cannot be dominated by Psychology. For, *Psychology has no focus on human values*.

2. The current Homosexual discussion

(a) The function of Psychology

A good example of the conflicts that can arise about this lies in the current concern with practising homosexuals serving in the Ministry of The Church. The discipline of Psychology studies homosexual behaviour, for example, measuring its incidence in the general population, seeking for causal factors in individual heredity or environment, and counselling the individual to cope with the social or psychological consequences of his or her orientation or behaviour. Psychology would have no grounds for making judgements about whether homosexual behaviour was right or wrong. It might have evidence to show how common it was or is; whether the individual could be held responsible for causing his or her sexual orientation, whether he or she could ever be expected to change it, and whether the behaviour could be said to be natural or not in the sense that it had some kind of evolutionary history.

(b) The role of Theology

Theology has the authority to judge whether homosexual behaviour is morally right on the grounds of the statements of a Divinely revealed Religion. But this cannot always produce a moral certainty. McDargh and Tracy have illustrated that there are different approaches to Theological truth within religion. One side of the current discussion is arguing that on the basis of Biblical Revelation homosexual behaviour is quite wrong. The other party is arguing that since God is the Creator, he must have created a homosexual person's nature and that he or she should hence be true to their God given personality. Tracy's correlational model therefore acknowledges that Psychology and Theology have different contributions to make to our understanding of human nature and that we might forge nearer the truth if we accept a correlational interaction.

3. The Church and Systematic Theology: Macquarrie and McDargh

(a) John Macquarrie: A directional word for the Church

Macquarrie points out that the work of Systematic Theology is to try and present traditional Christian Theology in ways that are valid to interact with Twentieth Century thought. In his book 'Thinking about God,' New York: Harper and Row 1985, Macquarrie directs his argument at the needs of the Church members who increasingly have to make links between their knowledge of the world and Theological language and Revelation. He argues that *The*

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Church will isolate herself and be destroyed if she ignores the scientific discoveries that describe the real world. Macquarrie also notes that it shows impiety to ignore or deny truths about Divine Creation.

(b) McDargh

McDargh also thinks that the Church will bleed to death if it does not sort out its beliefs about Humankind, the world, and Salvation. He quotes (c.f.: McDargh /259) a set of graffiti seen in a subway. 'One writer observed, 'Christ is the answer.' The other had responded, 'Yes, but what was the question?' McDargh argues that Soteriology (i.e.: The Theology of Salvation) is an attempt to find the questions to which Christ was the answer. If we as Church offer Christ as the answer to a question that no one is actually asking, the value of traditional belief will be lost. McDargh reviews the work of two Theologians who are re-interpreting the Salvation offered by Christ. It is to these that we now turn.

4B. McDargh on Jurgen Moltmann and Sebastian Moore

1. Jurgen Moltmann: 'The Crucified God,' 1974

Jurgen Moltmann wrote in 1974 what is now his well known book, 'The Crucified God'. However, its view of Psychology is very limited in that he uses Freud's attack on Religion and not the more recent liberal re-interpretations of Freud's theories that would be better suited to his thinking. Moltmann tries to find the points of contact between the tension that exists in Theology vis-à-vis law and freedom and the tension in Psychology between pathology and therapy.

- (1) Now, Freud represented Religion in his work as our way of releasing anxiety about the destruction of self in death, and about our fears of taking personal responsibility for our decisions. Psycho-analysis therefore shows the aspects of human nature from which we need liberation or salvation. But, says Moltmann, Christianity offers the process of Liberation and Redemption.
- (2) Psychology alone would be very limiting because it does not see the Human being as Redeemable. Rather, Psychology explains away the dreams and hopes of youth and adulthood as immature infantile wish fulfilment. Moltmann, on the other hand, claims that infantile wishes mature into adult hopes where they can operate creatively and dynamically to renew human life.
- (3) Similarly, Psychoanalysis dismisses fantasy and imaginations as distortions of reality and an escape from it. Moltmann, on the other hand, claims that it can grow into the symbolism of transforming religious experience such as prayers described as 'day dreaming in the field of force of God's Passion'.
- (4) Freud draws attention to the infant's need to bond with his or her carer and diminishes such dependence in adult life to unfulfilled infantile longing for a parent figure. Moltmann argues that dependence is transformed into saving Religion to become a force for Renewal and Growth.
- (5) McDargh points out, therefore, that the Neo-Freudians have made just such a development in Freud's theory, and this has been taken up by Theologians such as **William Messner** in his 'Psycho-analysis and the Religious experience,' Yale University Press, (1984).

2. Sebastian Moore

McDargh finishes his article by summarising the work of Sebastian Moore, 'The fire and the rose are One,' Seabury, 1983 and 'The inner loneliness,' Seabury, 1983. Moore also takes ideas from psycho-analytic theory that *focus on our absorption with ourselves* (narcissism)

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which is shown in our need for *self esteem* i.e.: to know ourselves loved and valued; and to give love to significant others. For Moore, the question about life, the universe and everything is, ‘Do you love me?’ He criticises Freud’s perception of this as an infantile question that adults have failed to outgrow. He argues instead that this is a lifelong question that forms the centre of our relationships with others in a real world and with our inner selves. We compose our answers through the story with which we make meaning out of our life and the symbols by which we live. So, the religious experience of encountering God through prayer, sacrament and community can be given a psychological explanation as the mature expression of dependence on the need for love. But this does not reduce its significance or explain away the experience as Freud tried to do.

5B. A closing analysis: Parker and Marshall

1. D. Parker

If Theology is forever moving on to take account of psychological explanations of the origin of religious experience, then there is no correlation in Tracy’s terms. But, the movement is not one way. Modern psycho-analysis has moved away from its exclusive focus on the individual to recognise that many of the factors that shape human personality actually arise from social and political pressures that can twist individual development. McDargh quotes **Alice Miller’s** work which shows the long term effects on personality of physical and psychological abuse of children . But it is the social and political factors that perpetuate child rearing patterns that produce abuse. Individual treatment has had to expand to cover family therapy and the importance of changing social backgrounds, parenting etc., and so open psycho-analysis up to the influence of other trains of thought – including Theology.

3. Brian Marshall (Oxford Brookes University)

Brian Marshall has made some important points about Theology and its practice.

- (1) Theologians still largely try to practice Theology as if other disciplines were not important. Historical, linguistic and philosophical skills have been much more integrated into Theology for understandable reasons. The current growth point is the slowly emerging recognition of the importance of political and sociological theory for Theology. There is also some evidence of increasing attention to Psychology/Psychotherapy, but more often in books about Spirituality or Pastoral Counselling than more mainstream Theology – say a book about being human.
- (2) This reluctance to ‘flesh out’ (the overtones to the Incarnation are deliberate) could be regarded as a modern version of the ancient Docetic heresy – i.e.: the view that Christ was only seemingly Human. One could argue that attempts to speak of Humanity without the insights of Psychology are similarly less than wholly serious about the particular human contents of people’s lives.
- (3) We should press the Theological criticism that ignorance of other disciplines does not understand the implications of a Christian understanding of Creation: that God and His Truth are to be found throughout.

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C. WILLIAM JAMES, BATSON & VENTIS: RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE

1C. JAMES: Religion: A personal element & concerned with personal Destiny

1. W. JAMES: The founding father of Cognitive Psychology on Religion

(a) Introduction

Many Cognitive Psychology textbooks on a variety of subjects will begin by quoting William James. It is a measure of his creativity that he has managed to capture the essential feature of many aspects of human thinking, even though at the time that he wrote he lacked the tools of psychological research which are now available. An amazing number of modern psychologists still conclude their work by agreeing with his theories.

(b) James on 'Religion.'

'Religion, therefore, as I now ask you arbitrarily to take it, shall mean for us the feelings, acts and experiences of individual men in their solitude, so far as they apprehend themselves to stand in relation to whatever they consider divine.' (/31).

'The divine shall mean for us only such a primal reality as the individual feels impelled to respond to solemnly and gravely, and neither by a curse nor a jest.' (/38).

'Were one asked to characterise the life of religion in the broadest and most general terms possible, one might say that it consists of the belief that there is an unseen order, and that our supreme good lies in harmoniously adjusting ourselves thereto.' (/53).

2. JAMES' THESIS: Religion as personal experience of a greater reality

From these quotations it can be concluded that Religion for James was a *personal and private experience of a reality greater than self which commands a response of worship and acceptance*. In his final lecture James tries to explain his definition. Remember, James was a pioneering Cognitive Psychologist, and so he insists that human beings control their behaviour either by their thoughts or by their feelings. Now, in Religion there are many varieties of thought stemming from different world faiths and denominations, so *doctrine cannot from James' viewpoint be considered the essence of Religion*. For **James**, thought is one step removed from reality, images rather than the real object and of necessity the stories generated by Religion can only be ways of representing the Divine. They cannot be the real thing. The ideas and stories represented in these stories are like a loop line diverting away from the main railway track. They may reach the destination eventually, but they are not the direct route.

3. JAMES' THESIS: Authenticity in the dynamism of the believer

James continues developing his thesis. *Religion has to be about our personal destiny, and the only contact with absolute reality that we can accept with certainty is our personal Religious experience*. James said that *the authenticity of Religious experience is demonstrated by the dynamism and zest that it gives to the believer*. This is demonstrated particularly in the way that that believer finds meaning for his existence, and the transformation that it gives to common everyday living. James considers that his denial of the conventional statements of religious thinking is supported by the fact that people have not been able to put their religious feelings into words. Or: When they have tried to describe them, the words become creeds to which they are passionately loyal, but which have lost their religious meaning.

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4. James' review of the creeds of the world religions

James reviews the creeds of the world religions (insofar as they have them). In so doing he seeks a common nucleus that might be an expression of true thinking. James found a principle that he considers universal that people feel.

- (1) People feel a sense of unease that something is wrong.
- (2) The solution lies in being saved from that wrong-ness by contact with a higher power. Being saved from the evil part of self may involve a surrender of self to union with the sense of a greater being. James uses the analogy of a bar of iron that is responsive to magnetism. Every time a magnet comes near, a response is produced - but the iron could not give a description of the power that moves every atom within it. Similarly, James thinks that a human person can be responsive to ideas like goodness, beauty, strength, justice, God... which can hold them in thrall like a magnet moves the iron. They can attach a sentiment of reality to the object of their belief that permeates their lives and plays a central role in them even though the object cannot be present to their human senses. James hence suggests that it may be characteristic of human consciousness to have a sense of reality beyond that given by the sense, an experience that he labels 'Ontological imagination'. He suggests that this sense of reality can be so powerful that it creates experiences that are strong as hallucinations and totally convincing to those who have them, evoking a response of joy, self surrender, sadness or solemnity.

5. James as a commentating cognitive psychologist, not a reductionist

Now, at this point it may appear that **James** is trying to diminish religious experience by giving explanations for it that lie within the human psyche. This is the threat that some Theologians fear from psychology, that it will undermine the notion of God's transcendence *by finding God in Man*. But, **James** himself does not consider that he has posed such a threat. In his first lecture, he takes care to emphasise that though he intended to examine all religious and other experiences as objectively as possible, if he did conclude that **Saint Paul** was an epileptic, or **Saint Teresa** an hysteric etc., he would *only be giving the origin or mechanism of their experience*. It would have no effect on the Spiritual significance of these experiences. All mental states, for James, arise from physiological changes in the brain. However, we do not deny the reality of being happy or falling in love simply because we can trace the physiological changes that produce the feeling. No, *the quality of a Spiritual state is recognised through its fruit in people's lives*. For James there should be a co-incidence of inner joy and outer goodness. The two should go together. Inner happiness alone, for example, can be a state produced temporarily by drink or drugs, but **James** believes that a truly Spiritual happiness would necessarily have an outcome in behaviour. After all, we give the same respect to the products of creative genius in art or literature. The products are judged in their own right and not degraded just because we happen to think that the artist or writer may be physically disabled or sick in mind.

6. Evaluate Revelation for what it is: Don't judge by the people's state of mind

James argues further that *it is our own fault that people tend to discredit Spiritual statements by their origins*. In the past (as often today), authority in Spiritual things is given Theologically by its originating agent. A supernatural revelation through a vision or voice, a sacred book of revealed truth, the utterances of papal authority, or some sort of Spiritual indwelling or its opposite demonisation. Psychology may now claim to sometimes give other explanations for these supernatural experiences- but that does not diminish their truth as Spiritual statements. Like the products of creative genius, they should be evaluated in their own right and not simply judged by the mental state of their originators.

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7. JAMES: THESIS: Temperament and Spirituality

James' conclusions are in some ways surprisingly modern. James points out that *creative people often have abnormal personalities*. This seems to give them their inspiration, energy, and fanaticism to get things done. The common finding is that creative people are manic-depressives. They suffer from greater mood swings than 'normal' people and as we shall see in later units, there is beginning to be a considerable body of research linking 'abnormal' mental states with creativity as well as with destructiveness and death. Evaluations of these mental states is made on their products and consequences. *James wants the same attitude towards Spiritual experiences whether they produce good or bad results*. 'If there were such a thing as inspiration from a higher realm, it might well be that the neurotic temperament would furnish the chief conditions of the requisite receptivity.' (James /25).

8. JAMES' THESIS: The once and twice born individuals

(a) The 'once born or healthy minded'

James *actually favours a neurotic temperament*. Why? He writes of two types of individual. The 'once born' or 'healthy minded' who seem to be born optimistic, find happiness in most things, and refuse to think ill of anything or anybody. They are unusual these days. However, they have a 'natural innocence' that frees them from the burden of guilt, and thought they may be found in protestant Churches, James thinks that they have a natural home in the Roman Catholic Church. On the surface this would appear to make for a life of personal happiness. James, however, does not see it like this. These 'healthy minded' are not quite so. 'The capacity for even a transient sadness or a momentary humility seems cut off from them as by a congenital anaesthesia.' (James /83).

(b) The 'twice born'

The alternative to being 'healthy minded' is to have a sick soul, and then to subsequently belong to the 'twice born'. These people take the sinful and gloomy side of life more seriously, recognise the pain and suffering that is so widespread in the world and take to heart the problem of evil, their own and the world's. He considers that the twice born are in closer contact with the realities of life. They have to go through a period of melancholy, depression, anguish and despair before they experience redemption, but then the happiness is richer and more real than anything experienced by the 'once born'. 'These are people who seem to have started their life with a bottle or two of champagne inscribed to their credit; whilst others seem to have been born closer to the pain threshold, which the slightest irritant sends them fatally over.' (James /135). James favours the 'twice born' considering that though their experience is more painful, it also covers a greater range and leads them to a deeper understanding of the truth. The 'once born' may be superficially happy but should disaster occur, he or she does not have the resources to cope. James concludes his lecture with the observation that a complete religion such as Buddhism or Christianity must have pessimistic elements and some means of deliverance which produces rebirth.

2C. C.D. Batson and W.L. Ventis: Further definition of Religious Experience

1. The extremes of religious behaviour and variety of its experience

(a) The variety of Religion and extremes of its fruit

C.D. Batson and W.L Ventis in their book 'The Religious Experience: A social Psychological perspective,' New York: OUP, 1982, present a more recent attempt to define Religious Experience which is closely related to James' approach, but supported by empirical research. Batson and Ventis were puzzled by the extremes of good and evil behaviour that have been produced in the name of Religion. They looked, for example, at the inspired

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leadership of Gandhi and Martin Luther King, and then also noted the mass suicide of the 913 members of the People's temple in Jonestown, Guyana. So, the authors begin by offering their readers the opportunity to decide which of the following samples are religious.

(b) Instances of 'religious'?

- (1) A middle aged woman visits a Roman Catholic Church in her lunch hour to light a candle and pray for her son who is abroad serving as a soldier.
- (2) A Jewish boy reads from the Torah at his Bar-Mitzvah and has an experience that creates a deep impression on him making him realise the significance of his membership of the chosen nation.
- (3) A prostitute who attends a revival meeting repents of her sin and goes forward to accept Jesus as her personal Lord and Saviour.
- (4) An Islamic businessman kneels and faces Mecca three times a day to pray. He tries to live his life according to the teachings of the Koran.
- (5) A young woman is put off by the hypocrisy of institutional religion and rejects the answers. She concludes that there is no God and no life after death but finds her meaning in life caring for others and living each day to the full.
- (6) A prosperous businessman and his wife attend Church every Sunday because it is socially acceptable and good for business. Neither take the Spiritual side of the service seriously.
- (7) A young man retreats to an isolated part of the countryside to hike and spend his time thinking out what is important in his life.

2. The three characteristics of religious experience

Batson and Ventis emphasise that there are many definitions of religious experience. But, they contend, there are three characteristics that in particular should always be stressed when defining religious experience.

- (1) The *uniqueness* of religion that stems from the way that it touches the central core of the human personality and changes the individual's perception of the world, self concept, and experience of ultimate reality and meaning.
- (2) *Complexity*. Religion involves every aspect of the personality including emotions, beliefs, attitudes, values, behaviour, and social relationships. But, at the same time, it unifies these aspects giving them a sense of integrity and transforming dynamism.
- (3) The final characteristic of Religious experience is its *diversity* as expressed in the multitude of faiths and religions across the world, and these are so different that it is difficult to find a unifying core that could be called a definition of religion. Some faiths, for example, are not centred on God (e.g.: Buddhism) and many people claim religious experience, yet keep themselves apart from all organised religion. This is a dilemma for which Psychology was not designed to cope.

3. The individuality of the Religious experience

(a) William James

James' way out of the dilemma was to stress the solitude of religious experience uniquely felt by the individual. His way of testing whether it was a religious experience was by looking for the beneficial consequences both in the individual and those he or she contacted in life.

(b) Batson and Ventis

Batson and Ventis similarly stress the individual nature of religious experience and define it as the person's way of finding answers to existential questions such as 'What is the meaning and purpose of life?' 'How shall I relate to others?' 'How do I deal with the fact that I am going to die?' 'What should I do about my shortcomings?' Though these are the common questions, each individual will have his own set of existential questions and may deal with

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them by following a personal religion or accepting a particular philosophy of life. Some people may deny the reality of the questions and push them out of consciousness. Others may be content to live in the uncomfortable situation of believing that there are no answers.

(c) Analysis of the above examples

According to this definition, in the examples given above, everyone except the business couple is confronting existential questions. Hence, the business couple are the only ones who are not religious. Unlike William James, Batson and Ventis *do not think it is essential to believe in a transcendent reality to be religious*. For them the *transcendent aspect of religion is functional*. It enables a person to transcend everyday matters in order to deal with existential concerns. By selecting this definition of Religion they raise a number of challenging questions about why people become religious, what actually happens during a religious experience, whether or not the religion enslaves or frees the believer, and in particular why it has the historically shown the capacity to be both creative and destructive. As social psychologists they attempt to answer these questions in the rest of their book.

4. Religious experience and other creative reality transforming experience

(a) The analogy stated

After a chapter in which they consider possible social factors that might be thought to make a person religious, the authors conclude that religious experience cannot be explained in those terms, and, like James, they move on to a direct study of the religious experience itself. Their first premise is that religious experience resembles other reality transforming experiences described by people who have not given a religious dimension to their reports. In particular, it resembles descriptions of creative process which has this same degree of complexity as religious experience. As this analogy is both interesting and challenging, I propose to develop it here in some detail.

(b) Perception

Batson and Ventis begin by describing the psychologist's current approach to understanding perception as an activity that we carry out. We structure our perception partly from information coming into our sense and equally from our existing knowledge of the world which creates expectations which we can use to make meaning out of what we are seeing and hearing. In a later unit on language a return will be made to the matter of how a human person imposes meaning on the world from inside of their head. Meanwhile: a digression. Here are some examples of the way the human brain makes the structures that we see.

(c) An experiment: Receiving information

All learning starts with *perception* which is the first stage of receiving information. Perception is not a passive process of accepting stimulation from the outside world. Perception is a kind of transaction with the environment in which we try to make sense of what is happening by imposing some sort of structure on events. We use our past experience to enable us to do this and often we contribute as much form inside our heads to a perception as we receive from outside. I am going to use one of the classic perceptual tricks to illustrate what I mean. What do you see in the following figure?

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Most people say that there are two triangles –a white one superimposed on a black outline of a triangle. In fact what your eyes are seeing is a set of angles and incomplete circles arranged in a precise manner. It is your brain which is constructing the triangles from your previous experience of the main features of triangles, and the expectation is created in this instance by the lines and black blobs. The image that your brain constructs is so convincing that you actually feel that you are seeing the triangles on the paper. Actually, they only exist in your brain.

(d) A second experiment

What does this picture show?

When you first looked at it you probably only saw one image, either the face of a bald man wearing glasses or a rat sitting with its tail curled around its body. If you only saw one of these images, look again and see if you can find them both. When you have seen them both, you will find that your perception of the pictures alternates rapidly between the two images but you can never see both at once. In this case your brain is receiving ambiguous information and cannot make a stable construction of the image.

(e) Human Cognitive structures

Individuals vary in the complexity of their cognitive structures. Some people like to keep the organisation simple and perceive other people and events in relation to only a few dimensions. They tend to see problems in terms of black and white and people according to stereotypes. Others go in for a more complex organisation with lots of qualifications and no

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simple answers. They seem to take in more factors in any particular situation and have to make a more complex organisation as a result.

(f) Creativity as change of existing cognitive structure

When a problem cannot be solved with our existing knowledge and cognitive structures, these have to be recreated so the authors define creativity in terms of changes in existing cognitive structure towards greater complexity. If we find a problem too threatening, we may defend ourselves by going into reverse, i.e.: opting for a simpler and more certain structure. Creative changes often happen suddenly in a flash of insight. Most of us were taught about Archimedes at school. Living under the reign of the tyrant Hiero 287- 212 B.C., his life depended on finding a way for assessing whether a gold crown presented to the ruler was actually solid gold. He realised that he could work from the weight of the crown if he also had the volume. But he had no idea how to measure the volume until one day in the bath...

5. The four stages of creativity according to modern cognitive psychology

This insightful, creative process has been well studied and seems to go through several successive stages.

(a) Preparation

During the preparation stage the problem solver is thinking about the problem, trying to reason things out and trying out any strategies that he already knows. Batson and Ventis put forward that this kind of systematic, logical thinking is happening in the left hemisphere of the brain which is specialised for thinking in language and seems to be the main seat of conscious thought under voluntary control.

(b) Incubation

During this stage the thinker gives up deliberately thinking about the problem and may go away and do something else or go to sleep. The authors suggest that during this phase the problem solving process transfers to the right hemisphere of the brain which is specialised for dealing with visual spatial information and seems to operate in an unconscious and involuntary way. Frequently the thinking that occurs here is a type of restructuring of perceptions and the solution seems to jump into consciousness like a flash.

(c) Illumination

This 'flash' is known as an 'illumination'. It completely changes thinking. Hence, this third stage is called 'illumination'. It refers to the sudden insightful experience of knowing exactly what the answer is with total certainty. Many creative thinkers have experienced the answer as a sort of vision.

(d) Verification

This is the hard working phase of creativity when the answer gained by insight has to be logically worked out, explained, and applied. The left hemisphere takes over again because this kind of working out is usually done in language and the kind of linear, systematic thinking that is its function.

(e) Concluding analysis

These four stages of creativity are a common finding in research on this topic. However, the linking of the stages with the two hemispheres and with conscious and unconscious belong to Batson and Ventis alone.

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6. The four stages mechanism used to confront existential problems

Batson and Ventis now move their argument one step further. They argue that it is the same stages of thinking that are involved when human beings confront existential problems: being bereaved, escaping from death in an accident, or a moment of great joy and happiness. We may spend some time thinking things through in language and finding that ideas and solutions rattle around in our heads without a clear answer emerging. We may become exhausted, desperate, confused and anxious and finally surrender the attempt to find the answer. This does not mean that we have stopped thinking. It means that the problem has transferred from conscious, verbal thinking processes to unconscious imagery thinking processes as in the incubation phase of creative thinking. Following incubation there may be an illumination which gives the creative answer to the question and rebuilds the self to a new level of integration. The illumination may feel as if it comes from outside the self because we have been unaware of any thinking at the incubation stage. It has the effect of changing our vision of the world. The new vision may or may not be religious. Its main characteristic is that we feel convinced that the existential question has been answered with a certainty that releases us from the previous desperate anxiety and changes the way we live and perceive the world.

3C. Analysis and integration of the insights in this unit

1. Analysis and development of Batstone and Ventis' theory

- (1) If this theory is correct, then it is not surprising that people say that they cannot describe their experiences in words since the restructuring was in the currency of the right hemisphere, images and feelings. The final phase of verification, however, will bring a return to working that new illumination out in language to reach the answer to the existential question that precipitated the crisis.
- (2) Batson and Ventis have constructed a theory to explain how people come to have religious experiences that recreate their lives and move them on from one stage of religious understanding to another. In Unit 3 we will be looking at Fowler's theory and will begin to realise how closely these relate.
- (3) Batson and Ventis aren't quite through. They now tackle the worrying problem about the *effect* of religious experience in the light of this theory. Why is it sometimes not creative but destructive both to the individual and the people with whom he or she come in contact? Instead of having their personalities re-integrated at a higher level through having to confront existential questions, some people might use religion to escape from reality into fantasy; or impose limitations and restrictions upon themselves and other; or invent dogmas and rules that impair rather than promote development; destroy rather than recreate. The limitation comes when the person thinks of the revelation as the ultimate truth that answers all questions. Initially this would give someone a new meaning for living but if it is set apart as sacred and unchangeable, then it will destroy the opportunity for future development.
- (4) Now: If you ever have time to read Batson and Ventis' book alongside that of William James, you will see how closely this description of religious experience as a recreative force resembles James' description of conversion for the twice born. In the Evangelical tradition of his day it was common to play on the congregation's existential anxiety and guilt to precipitate the moment of self surrender that would bring illumination. James details several such dramatic experiences showing how people experienced visions and feelings of joy and peace. He explains these experiences as arising in the unconscious which besides containing repressed material and a great many half memories, has a creative dynamic aspect which is implicated in creativity, problem solving, and mystical experiences. *James thinks that the unconscious is the route that connects us with the Other.* When people experience awful emotions and the sense of being controlled they

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think they are produced by something higher than self. In one sense they are because believers are experiencing aspects of the unconscious that are higher than conscious self because they have integrating powers. This part of the unconscious creates ideals which sometimes appear inexpressible but which have measurable outcomes in behaviour. *So Communion with the other self or the infinite world are both ways of describing a recreative experience which is deeply fulfilling and which changes the individual's perception of the world and subsequently affects his or her behaviour.*

2. A concluding comment from James

'... There is actually and literally more life in our total soul than we are at any time aware of...' (James /511).

'The essential part of Religion is "... - the fact that the unconscious person is continuous with a wider self through which saving experiences come.' (James /515).

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This book discusses some of the factors that either inhibit religious development or encourage it. We shall use this book in a later unit.

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UNIT 3: FAITH DEVELOPMENT THEORIES

A. INTRODUCTION

1A. Aims, Questions, and Bibliography

1. Aims of Unit 3: Faith Development Theories

This unit begins by investigating the various psychological theories that Fowler has integrated into his theory about the development of Faith. It continues with the provision of a short questionnaire that can be used to interview people as to 'where their faith is at' in terms of Fowler's theory. It then reviews Fowler's stages of development of Faith and offers a critique of his work.

2. Questions to ponder and keep in mind

(1) What is meant by 'development'? (2) How does religious development relate to other aspects of development? (3) What are the characteristics of each stage of the development of Faith? (4) How do these seven aspects fit into the stage analysis? (5) What makes a person move from one stage to another? (6) Is a stage theory the best way to explain differences between people vis-à-vis their Christian Faith?

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B. DIMENSIONS OF DEVELOPMENT

1B. A definition of 'development'

1. 'Development' in everyday parlance

Before investigating **Fowler's** theory of 'development of faith' it is necessary to ask what is really meant by the word 'development'? What does it mean in everyday speech? What do psychologists mean by it? What did Fowler mean by it? 'Development' as a word is very difficult to define. The problem is that the word has no synonyms. Also, within its field of meaning it has many concepts: 'industrial development,' 'developing photographs,' 'developing countries,' 'the development of a musical theme,' 'child development,' and many more. The derivation of 'development' in the English language is not much help either: It seems to have come from the same French word as has 'envelope' i.e.: 'veloper' meaning to 'wrap up'. But in English it also seems to have the opposite use: 'to unwrap or reveal'.

2. Defining 'child development'

If the definition is confined to the concept of 'child development' it seems to mean the changes that take place in a person as he or she grows older. There is an underlying assumption that these will be progressive changes towards an equally ill defined 'maturity'. The particular changes will depend on the area of the human person that is developing. *Physical development* will involve growing bigger and stronger with better co-ordination and greater ability to carry out physical skills. *Cognitive development* presumably means both acquiring more knowledge and more efficient strategies for learning about understanding the world. In reaching even these tentative definitions we have encountered a major difficulty in dealing with the concept of development. Assumptions have had to be made which are philosophically difficult and, at present in our study, scientifically unjustifiable. This will cause problems for defining the 'development of personality,' or of emotions, or faith. Hence, the problem will be tackled one step at a time.

3. Is all development progressive?

The first question is to define more closely some of the characteristics of development. First: *Is development progressive?* In Psychology this assumption is difficult to make. Psychology deals with human beings who grow to adulthood and then pass through an ageing process until they reach their point of death. *Development takes place over the whole period.* However, some physical developments are clearly detrimental as the process of ageing weakens the body and changes its structure and balance. Is this downward development true of other areas such as cognitive and emotional development? And so a second question: *Does physical development affect emotional development or vice-versa?* Or to put parallel questions: *Are cognitive development and faith development inter-dependent? Do we have to reach a certain age before we can understand certain religious concepts or do we need a certain level of intelligence and ability to have faith? Is there any relationship between the temperament we inherit, or the personality we inherit through upbringing and Religious Faith?*

4. The nature of the task tackled in this unit

These questions demonstrate the nature of the exercise that we are doing in this unit. The idea is to try to describe models of development that fit the observations that have been made of changes that occur in human beings over a period of time. The stress is on the fact that they are *models*, they are *attempts to capture a reality that is so fluid that we will inevitably distort*

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it as it is captured into a hard coating of words. As Ordinands and Theologians you will be fairly used to this experience. As Theologians or aspiring Theologians you have no doubt struggled in the same way to express a definition of God or other religious concepts.

2B. Norms of Development

1. The concept of Developmental Norms

‘Development’ then is a *change that takes place over time as a person grows older*. It is usually a *progressive* change, although ageing may result in *regressive* change. But, if we are to judge what progress is being made, then our model will contain some concepts of norms of development. Normal physical development is quite easy to specify since we can *measure* a great many people and work out the *mean* or *modal* score for boys and girls, men and women at particular ages. In this way I can know that the *average height* for a one year old boy is two feet five inches, and the *range* is 2.4-2.7 inches.

2. Norms of Development in Psychology

‘Normal development’ in any other area of development within psychology is more problematic. Psychologists try to establish ‘norms’ by measuring all sorts of behaviour and trying to decide what most people do at their particular age and hence stage. So if 45% of four year olds suck their thumbs, then this could be counted as normal behaviour. But if only 1% of thirteen year olds suck their thumbs, this would be counted as abnormal behaviour for a thirteen year old. Similarly it is common for two year olds to have temper tantrums but not for thirteen year olds. It would be counted as abnormal behaviour at that age. Can you see the difficulties with this approach to defining ‘normality’? In the United Kingdom, for example, if we take only numbers into consideration, then we are rapidly approaching the point when it is normal to be brought up by only one of your parents having been separated from the other by divorce. It is certainly not normal to belong to a religious institution like a Church or a synagogue although research currently indicates that it is normal to believe in some form of supernatural or Diving Being and to claim to have had some experience of this ‘Other’ being. Further: *Just because behaviour is the ‘norm’ it does not mean that it is necessarily right*. Psychology usually is not in a position to make the sort of value judgements that Theology can and must. Remember therefore that a ‘norm’ is not necessarily a ‘right behaviour’.

3. Defining ‘Mature faith’

How does one set norms for the development of faith and emotion? These two are being kept together in our consideration, because the models of development that we are studying in this unit tend to draw on the same concepts for both. Lying behind the models is an idealised concept of ‘maturity’. This seems to be an understanding that there is an optimal or ‘best’ way of dealing with life’s experiences at various ages, and that the persons who cope best are the ‘most mature’. But these judgements about what is ‘best’ are loaded with the values of the culture in which we live. They are also based on the observations of how children and adults have behaved at different ages. If older children do not hit other children when they are frustrated, then we say that it is more mature to settle your differences by talking than by fighting, and it is certainly better for society that we should learn to do so.

4. Fowler’s model in this light

Fowler’s model of the development of Faith shows this mixture of subjective personal values relating to what we see as ‘mature faith’ and observations of cognitive development that

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shows how children's thinking changes as they grow older with the built in assumption that the thinking of the older children is more mature.

C. PIAGET'S WORK

1C. Introduction to Piaget's stages of Human development

1. Piaget's theory of cognitive development and its derivation

Piaget explored children's thinking by talking to them and asking them to perform certain tasks that gave him insight into their thinking. He also studied his own children when they were babies, and drew conclusions about their ideas and how they were forming them. The resulting theory about cognitive development has held a dominant position for many years. Although it has been challenged in a number of ways, it is still true to say that Piaget's *observations* about how children think and how this thinking differs from the thinking of adults have been frequently replicated. However, certain aspects of the *explanation* that he made for his findings have been challenged. Piaget's influence is so widespread that you will encounter the theory in the units of this course that you study on development of faith and development of morals. A review of Piaget will also help you to get your bearings when engaging with Fowler's work.

2. Piaget: Two fundamental contributions to our understanding

Piaget claims *that there is an important qualitative difference in the way children handle information at different times in their cognitive development*. This led him naturally to describe *development as a series of stages*, rather like a staircase – where each level rests on the previous step. His second important point that he taught us was that *human beings are not passive receivers of information*, easily manipulated by whoever teaches them. Rather, human beings are continually active in trying to make the best possible sense out of our experiences, and we do this in the light of our current level of knowledge and strategies for handling information. Each stage of thinking, therefore, re-integrates the knowledge and strategies learned in the previous stage. We have already seen how this theory of active processing relates to the way we structure our perceptions of the world. Piaget emphasises that the active processing continues in our thinking and remembering.

3. Children's learning: Errors are not mistakes

Piaget was able to study children's thinking because of his understanding that *their errors were not mistakes as such but logical conclusions given their current state of knowledge*. So, if we look at them carefully, we can decide what they are thinking and how they reached that conclusion. In his research, Piaget found that *children's thinking changed in a systematic way as they grew older*. This led him to produce his stage theory of development. He felt that *everyone would go through the same sequence of development* but not necessarily at the same ages. So the ages that are given in the following description are only very approximate.

2C. Piaget's stages of development

1. The Sensori Motor stage

A child is born with a limited number of innate 'motor schemata' (Piaget's words for 'learning strategies'). These include *sucking* and *grasping* and the child uses these to make sense of the world. As he or she grows older, that child *adds new schemata* to the repertoire

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like waving things around and banging them against a cot. So, when he or she is given a new object, he or she may test it out with his or her mouth and see if it is suckable, and bang it against the side of the cot to see if it is bangable i.e.: whether it makes a satisfactory noise or is disappointingly silent. The child continues to learn through this medium of what he or she can do with objects and his or her perception of the consequences for about two years. This is why it is called the *sensori-motor stage* because how the child learns and what the child learns are both coded in terms of actions and the sensory perception of them. Through this active exploration lessons are learnt about the permanence of objects, their properties of form, colour, and texture, and most of all, what the child can do with them. Young children imitate actions that they see around them and *later in this stage we see them imitating actions quite a long time after they have observed them and in the absence of a model*. This means that they *must have developed some way of representing actions internally*. This means that they have *started to develop one form of symbolic thought*. This kind of symbolic thinking is also clearly seen in their imaginative play when they start using objects and toys to represent real life things and act out some kind of pretend play scene.

2. Pre-Operational stages

(a) Introduction

This period is divided into two substages, but to understand them we need a definition of 'operations'. '*Operations*' are *logical ways of thinking about the real world*. An example of an operation would be to understand that you can reverse a process that you just carried out in a mathematical problem and obtain the same answer:

$$2 + 2 = 4 \quad \text{or} \quad 4 - 2 = 2.$$

The same kind of thinking can be done with two equal balls of plasticine. If one is changed into a sausage shape, it will weight the same and contain the same amount of plasticine even though it looks different. Children may say that there is more plasticine in the ball because it is fatter, or in the sausage because it is longer. In the pre-operational stage of development they draw the wrong conclusions about what happens in the world, so Piaget thought of them as thinking illogically. *In actual fact the mistakes that they make are perfectly logical given what they know and see, but they are illogical in relation to adult thought.*

(b) Pre-Conceptual: Ages two to five years

The child's approach to the world as this stage is often ego-centric because he or she finds it difficult to think of the world from a different point of view. This leads to a 'magical interpretation' of events with respect to self. He or she might say, 'It is dark because I go to sleep,' or 'The moon is following me,' or 'The chair is naughty,' when the child knocks against it and hurts his or her leg. In response to the question, 'Why are you eating that,' the child might reply, 'because it is an apple.' This is the period in which *children are learning language very rapidly* and so they are inclined to *over generalise words* and hence cause older people amusement with their mistakes. Interestingly enough, they may over generalise and under generalise the same word. For example, they may think that 'alive' manes being able to move by itself, so that rivers are alive but plants are not. One eight year old was asked, 'What are mammals?' He replied, 'They are lady animals, they have babies.'

(c) Intuitive

In the second pre-operational stage a child forms concepts that are mainly governed by the perceptual features of the situation and is therefore easily deceived in a way similar to adults being deceived by the use of clever packaging in shops. Many errors that children make at this stage are *conservation errors*. The classic one involves lemonade in two identical tumblers. The first child judges that there is the same amount in each and when the contents of one are poured into a taller, thinner glass he or she thinks that there is more to drink in the taller glass because the liquid comes higher up the glass.

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There are two reasons for making errors of judgement on these tasks. The child is deceived by what he or she sees and *cannot take account of two factors at the same time* – the liquid comes up higher in the glass, but the glass is thinner.

Here is another test involving dividing a cake into sections. It fools most people. Which piece would you rather have?

Piaget believes that intuitive thinking can be seen in all the child's concepts; that it is characteristic of the child's approach to the world in general. Incidentally, Intuitive moral thinking is characterised by *the belief that rules are imposed externally by parents or by some other authority; and by the fact that actions are judged by their consequences and not their intentions*. Hence, it is naughtier in this thinking to break a tray of cups when being helpful and laying the table than to break one when stealing jam from the cupboard.

3. Concrete operations

(a) Concrete judgements and internalising actions

A child might move onto this stage at about the age of seven years. *He or she learns to make concrete judgements so long as he or she has an object to manipulate*. So, through these actions the child can convert the illogical judgements he or she made a few years earlier. The child will now know that if you pour liquid from one container to another, you can also pour it back again, and it will be the same amount. The child's main way of learning now is by *internalising actions performed on objects* so that he or she learns the meaning of the number of symbols by counting objects repeatedly in different groupings and matching sets one-to-one to see which group has 'more' or 'less'.

(b) Encountering knowledge through experience

The main point to emphasise about this stage is that Piaget has said that a child needs to encounter knowledge through experience, preferably through doing something with concrete materials. If that is not possible, then by starting from a concept that is within his or her experience and then moving outward to new concepts. However, *Piaget's theory should not be taken to mean that we should not teach things that are outside a child's immediate experience*. If we take that line, such a child would never grow away from his or her ego-centric view of the world. It means that we have to find points of contact with things that he or she can experience, and give help with pictures, films and television which can present fuller images of the world than children can form in words.

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4. Formal Operations

(a) Education by books etc.

It is difficult to put an age on the development of formal operations. *Some people and some cultures never reach this stage.* It is *closely associated with education and book learning.* Piaget suggested that children move into formal operations at 11-12 years, and a few possibly do, but most recent research suggests that the age should be moved nearer to 15 years old.

(b) Thinking by words and symbols

In this final stage of intellectual development, the adolescent *moves to mainly thinking in words or symbols.* Less support is now needed from the concrete situation, although obviously, as throughout life, practical experience is still a valuable aid to learning. The trial and error approach which characterised the earlier stages is replaced by *systematic thinking* in which theories can be formulated and tested. When young people move into this style of thinking there is *often a return to the dominant ego-centricity of the earlier phases.* ‘I think therefore I am right’ seems to be a dominant attitude as they first experience the power of thinking. But with increasing maturity they can soon take account of the several viewpoints and realise the often complexity and uncertainty of ‘the truth’. It could either be said that they learn to be *realistic* or that they *lose their idealism.* *Moral thinking* develops in the formal stage as the adolescent *moves from belief in externally imposed discipline to internalised principles and standards based on autonomous moral judgement.* He or she begins to *understand and make judgements about actions in relation to motives as well as consequences.*

3C. Analysis

1. Alternative theories: Fowler’s dialogue

There is an alternative description of Piaget’s theory in Fowler’s ‘Stages of Faith’ part II. Here Fowler has invented a dialogue between Piaget and the two other key figures in his argument: **Erikson** and **Kohlberg**. Kohlberg’s work on moral development is an extension of Piaget’s and similarly presented in stages. **Erikson** is a personality theorist in the Freudian tradition, and so his theory is used to give a wider perspective on the development of faith to incorporate personality and emotions rather than just intellectual development.

2. Piaget and Erikson: A working assumption

Piaget and Erikson share one assumption on the nature of development. It is this. *Development is often caused when events in the environment challenge the individual to a higher level of understanding than he has currently reached.* I would like to look below at Piaget’s version of this because it also relates to the idea that we have encountered in Batson and Ventis. It is this. *Religious or Christian faith often begins after an existentialist challenge causes the individual to find a new level of explanation* when his or her old one has proved inadequate. This is sometimes described, when it leads to an encounter with the Lord Jesus as Saviour for the first time as a ‘conversion experience.’

3. Piaget: Adaptation a coping mechanism in the face of new experiences

(a) Adaptation

Piaget suggests that *the individual copes with new experiences by adaptation.* Piaget considers this *the basic process of learning.* It is a way of learning that is in fact in born and that we start to use as soon as we start to learn. Through *adaptation we build up a set of schema* – ways of understanding and organising the meaning of the world.

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(b) Assimilation

The human person has two responses to his or her experience. If an experience is *similar* to schemata or structure that we already have, then we *assimilate* it, that is, we incorporate it into our existing set of schemata. So, if a child already has a schema for pet cats this enables him or her to recognise cats when he or she sees them, and to know that he or she can stroke or tickle them and get a positive response. When a new cat moves into the neighbourhood the child will know what to expect and how to behave and will just have to assimilate the distinctive features of the new cat to his or her schemata.

(c) Accommodation

However, if the experience conflicts with the child's schemata then the child will have to change the schemata to adapt to the new experience. This process is called *accommodation*. So, to continue the illustration. If the newly arrived cat is in the habit of biting and scratching a person's hand when it is stroked, then the child will have to add some more information to her schemata about cats. In particular not to stroke this new ginger cat from down the road, and in general, that not all cats like being stroked.

(d) The world, accommodation, and assimilation

These twin processes of assimilation and accommodation together produce adaptation and can be used to explain learning. One way of distinguishing them is to think of what is altered in the process. Assimilation is the structuring we do to the incoming information *about* the world, whilst accommodation is the restructuring of our thinking that we have to do as a consequence of the arrival of new information. Put simply, *assimilation is what we do to the world, and accommodation is what the world does to us*.

(e) A longitudinal perspective

Younger people have fewer schemata and frequently encounter challenging new experiences, so we have to do a great deal of accommodating. As we grow older we have a vast, interconnecting range of schemata, and it becomes easier to find some way of assimilating new experiences and harder to change the whole structure to make an accommodation. New discoveries and new ways of learning are quickly mastered by the young but meet with resistance from older people because of the enormous change in their world of thinking that older people have to make. *Conversion experience can in some respects be described as accommodation*, because new Christians under the Lord's guidance and conviction have to make radical changes in the way that they organise their meaning of the world.

4. Models of Development of Faith and learning the Faith

(a) PIAGET: Discontinuity

This paper began with an attempt to define development and proceeded to focus on Piaget's particular model as a foundation for understanding Fowler's work on the development of Faith. Both of them use a stage model, in which each stage, thought dependent on previous stages, is qualitatively different from the previous stage so that its thinking can be characterised in a distinctive profile for each stage. The transitions between the stages also emphasise the *discontinuity*.

(b) PIAGET: Disequilibrium

In Piaget's model, development takes place because the child encounters new experiences that throw out the balance achieved in the current stage. Being thrown into *disequilibrium* the child has to restructure his or her schemata to incorporate the contradictory experience. Similarly, accommodation changes a child's whole way of thinking and brings him or her into organising the world that belongs to a new stage of development. Fowler similarly has a stepwise progression in Faith where the new stage re-integrates a person at a new level. In

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both theories it is thought necessary that the individual will progress through the stages in sequence but that not everyone reaches the final stage.

(c) MEADOW AND KAHOE: Smoother growth through relationship

There are other models of development that challenge this analogy. The Meadow and Kahoe model of progression along the dimensions of Faith envisages a much smoother growth in which the changes may be imperceptible. A growth model of this kind is very common in developmental theory where the imagery is often from the plant world. Here there is the idea that there is no discontinuity between the seed and the mature plant, just a steady progression as the instructions encoded in the seed are realised by using the resources of the environment. The appearance may change, but the central core of being is the same. This is a useful model for personal and emotional development where the outward personality and behaviour of the adult may be very different from the child and yet the individual knows his own continuity as a person.

(d) FREUD: The Polymorphous pervert

There is a third model of human development that relates also to the development of Faith that will be encountered in coming units of this course. It sees the human infant as a collection of selfish, uncontrolled, sometimes evil impulses (in Freud's terms a 'polymorphous pervert'). Development is a civilising process in which impulses are brought under control and the individual made acceptable to other people. The *development of emotions* is sometimes picture in this way as we are taught not to express primitive desires, rage, and terror of childhood but to keep our emotions under control. *This image is also common in some sections of Theology where original sin holds sway until the human person is rescued by Christ's Salvation.*

D. FOWLER'S STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT

1D. FOWLER'S THESIS: The stages of development stated

1. Infancy Undifferentiated

This stage is a pre-Faith stage. However, Fowler emphasises the importance of the primary bond with a parent figure. Attachment begins at birth but becomes most obvious at about the age of eight months old. At this point a child normally has a clear recognition of his or her caretaker and knows when he or she is being left, but also has difficulty in holding on to an image of the caretaker until that caretaker returns. For the next year and a half there is a critical period in the growth of this primary bond. If the bond is not made or it is broken by the protracted loss of a parent, the baby may fail to learn the love and trust of others. The consequence is that he or she will develop a damaged self concept which could lead to destructive relationships with other people. A child who comes successfully through this period will be confident and autonomous. One who does not will be dependant, anxious, and hostile, and show signs of 'learned helplessness'.

2. Stage 1: Intuitive projective Faith

The beginning of the development of language and cognition, including organised memory, will mean that the child can start to construct his or her own explanations about things or events in that child's world, and answer some of his or her own puzzles and questions. The answers may have a magical or illogical tone and the child will be closely reliant on the evidence of their own eyes – which can be misleading. The child may also have difficulty in sorting fantasy from reality and be strongly influenced by stories he or she has heard in his or

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her imagination. This is the period when children first start to play imaginatively using an object to stand for any other object as a game is constructed and language is used to create scenes as a setting for the game. Children's dreams, incidentally, are very real at this stage and can lead to nightmares. The meaning of language is not fully understood and on one side they can take things very literally because they only understand one meaning for a set of words. On the other side they can imitate stories and repeat rituals without understanding the meaning at all but giving the impression that they do understand and are confident in themselves that they understand everything. Fowler gives a quotation from a nine year old (normally at a later stage) which illustrates this thinking. 'I think that God is watching us now, I think he has lots of eyes because if He only had two eyes he wouldn't be able to see all over the world at once, would He?'

3. Stage 2: Mythic Literal Faith

In this stage the child takes on the *religious ideas of the community to which he or she belongs*. The child becomes more capable of thinking logically and clearly takes in the stories of his or her Faith with greater understanding. The child still understands the stories literally and will probably have an anthropomorphic view of God. But because the child is better able now to think and criticise, he or she may begin to see some of the conflicts within the stories, and this could lead to rejecting them. However, he or she recognises the need to be good and in his or her moral development is often strict and over controlling, expecting the good to be reliably rewarded and the bad severely punished.

4. Stage 3: Synthetic Conventional Faith

(a) A personal relationship with God

The young person at this stage of development has begun to understand that religion is a *personal relationship with God* and has made new contacts outside the immediate family and church, and is therefore likely to be synthesising his or her own personal beliefs. This stage often occurs at the same time as he or she is developing a self knowledge and has a growing understanding of his or her own self concepts. He or she is likely to be profoundly affected by significant other people in his or her life. His or her beliefs are strong and he or she is often deeply committed to a consistent set of values. However, he or she is also still heavily reliant on some authority, perhaps The Bible or a particular minister. Description of Faith in God at this stage will include personal terms like, 'feeling guided,' 'supported,' 'being known and loved.' This development is likely to take place at the same time as the formal stage of thinking.

(b) A current note

Many people reach an equilibrium at this stage and are never challenged to reflect critically on their beliefs or face up to their contradictions. The Churches that they belong to often have charismatic leaders who confirm their security within this stage.

5. Stage 4: Individuate-Reflective Faith

(a) Description

This is the stage of young adulthood (late 20s and 30s) and it is characterised by *a move into autonomy*. The person is ready to make commitments, but with a fuller understanding of their implications. He or she may cease to be influenced by his or her group membership and become less conforming to authority. The young adult is now becoming more of an individual, making his or her own decisions and moving towards self actualisation. He or she de-mythologises symbols and sees them as representing truths which could be expressed in other ways. He or she still sees Religion as a question of personal relationship with God. *The*

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two essential features of the emergence of Stage 4, then, are the critical distancing from one's previous assumptive value system, and the emergence of the executive ego.'

(b) A current note

Fowler suggests that some people only ever make half the change. They may move *away from home and challenge their original beliefs and value systems, but retain their reliance on external authorities*. Others may develop a strong executive ego but fail to distance themselves from their value systems and do not critically examine what they have taken over from others.

6. Stage 5: Conjunctive Faith

(a) Description

After Stage 4 which is a sort of reality stage where truths are challenged and have to be defensible, stage five may produce a return to the power of religious experience and imagery and the symbols that represent them. There is a realisation that there is no certain truth, only a set of paradoxes and contradictions. The person is less ready to suppress images and beliefs that contradict logical testing and is more inclined to seek for truth in the deeper aspects of self. The person is now able to make commitments to groups and meanings while recognising that the truth they hold may be relative and partial because there is bound to be a distortion in human understanding of the Divine reality. The negative side of this coin would be an inability to make a commitment to anything because it all appears relative and this could result in a cynical withdrawal. Symbols are now seen as having their own meaning deeper than representations of truth, having a direct line to meaning beyond thought.

(b) Analysis

Fowler claims to have had great difficulty in characterising this stage because of its ambiguity, and he uses an image from science where light can be described in terms of waves or particles each being a partial representation of its characteristics. His alternative image is to try and look at a field of flowers simultaneously through a microscope and a wide angled lens. Each image stresses that there are at least two levels of truth and in religious terms this means beginning to understand that *Faith and religious expression belong to both the conscious realm of thought and the unconscious realm of emotion*. An individual would need a strong self concept and a great deal of confidence to reach equilibrium at this stage because it has an inherent tendency to fracture into components.

7. Stage 6: Universalising Faith

(a) Description

At this stage of Faith the person has come to terms with inherent contradictions of the previous stage which threatened the integrity of self. It requires a *commitment to the unifying absolutes like Love and Justice*. Individuals no longer feel the need to preserve the self but *to live for love and compassion in a way that others find startling and impressive but probably unachievable*. This stage is rarely reached, and Fowler considers that it might involve Sainthood and could even lead to a martyrdom because the person is often seen as a threat to existing social and religious structure which give other people their significance. Such people who do reach this level are often more honoured dead than alive. 'The rare persons who may be described by this stage have a special grace that makes them seem more lucid, more simple, and yet somehow, more fully human than the rest of us.' (Fowler /201).

(b) Analysis

Fowler acknowledges that his picture of the stage six person is strongly influenced by Richard Niebuhr's picture of radical Monotheism. His named examples of people who might be

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considered at Stage 6 are : Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Mother Teresa, and Dietrich Bonhoeffer.

2D. The seven aspects to a Faith stage

1. Introduction: The seven operational aspects

Fowler's Faith stage theory is visualised in terms of *seven operational aspects* which have *different forms of integration at each of the stages*. He suggests that there are increasing amounts of interconnection at the various levels, and greater complexity. He produces a diagram to illustrate this in a paper by **Dykstra and Parks** 'Faith development and Fowler' (1986) /32. This paper also has a reformulation of Fowler.

2. Aspect A: The form of logic

This aspect is directly related to the cognitive stages of development proposed by **Piaget** which we have reviewed earlier in this unit. If the appropriate Faith stage is to emerge, Fowler considers it necessary for the person to be fully operational at the correlated Piagetian stage. Now, these Piagetian cognitive levels are also seen by **Kohlberg** and **Selman** to be necessary but not sufficient conditions for the emergence of the correlated levels of Moral Judgement and Perspective Taking. **Fowler** qualifies this claim with respect to faith stages. He suggests that *cognitive development does not always have to play the lead in Faith development transitions* because of the operation of the logic of conviction. His concept of the logic of conviction is that it is an inclusive category of knowing which *involves* the logic of rational certainty on which Piaget's theory is based. It allows for the role played by other forms of knowing in faith such as '*ecstatic*' and '*imaginative*'. Both of these, incidentally, are possibly right hemisphere forms of thinking. Fowler's incorporation of other spheres of knowing within the logic of conviction means that there may be other causes for transition between Faith stages than movement between cognitive stages. Fowler has also extended Piaget's model of Formal Operations by developing sub-stages so that there can be continuing cognitive development for adults within the formal stage.

3. Aspect B: Role Taking

This aspect is taken from the research of **Selman** on social perspective taking which shows how children begin to take on viewpoints of others in development. *Fowler uses Selman's theory up to Stage 3*. He then extends it for Stage 4 and above to look at the construction of perspectives of one's own chosen groups and then the groups, classes and traditions of others.

4. Aspect C: Form of Moral Judgement

This aspect is taken from **Kohlberg's** stages of development in moral judgement which is described in some detail in Unit 9. Fowler believes that there are significant parallels between moral judgement stages and faith stages.

5. Aspect D: Bounds of Social Awareness

This aspect is parallel to role taking but focuses on the way a person construes his reference groups and their relationship to the ground of his own identity and definition of Moral Responsibility. Social awareness may develop in *inclusiveness* and *accuracy*. It relates to a range of groups which affect the maintenance of a person's sense of identity and meaningful understanding of the world.

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6. Aspect E: Locus of authority

This relates to issues of how and by what authority significant meanings are validated or legitimated. This aspect is part of the domain of the logic of conviction where self worth is constructed. The logic of rational certainty would not have the power to explain the way someone trusts and is loyal to his or her sources of authorisation. This can involve judgement, risk taking and commitment.

7. Aspect F: Form of world coherence

Each stage has its own particular way of composing and holding together a comprehensive sense of unified meanings. As the stages develop two logics, of rational certainty and of conviction, are progressively reconciled and integrated.

8. Aspect G: Symbolic Functioning

Fowler considers that there is more work to be done on this aspect which takes account of both right and left brain functioning and unites thinking and imagination in Faith. In this aspect there is scope for linking the insights of psychoanalytic and Jungian theories about unconscious functioning into Faith development. The aspect is strongly involved in the logic of conviction and has a powerful transforming influence on the functioning of the whole person.

E. MORGAN & CHIPPINDALE: A CRITIQUE OF FOWLER'S THEORY

1E. Fowler's Thesis' basis in Piaget's work

1. HEYWOOD: Piaget is Western in substance, context and orientation

(a) Introduction

In the last decade a number of books have appeared which have made substantial criticisms of Piaget's theories. Since Fowler's theory rests heavily on the assumption that Piaget's theory is empirically sound, it has become necessary to take a more critical look at both to see whether the challenge has undermined important aspects of both of their work. **David Heywood** has made the most serious criticisms in his paper: 'Piaget and Faith: A True Marriage of Minds?' published in the *British Journal of Religious Education* 8 (2) /72-78. Read it for yourself after you have mastered the basic points of Piaget's and Fowler's theories.

(b) Piaget questioned and only valid in the West

Probably the most challenging point is that Fowler *has taken over Piaget's assumptions* that the various ways of thinking he has described for the various stages are part of the structure of the real world and the human mind that perceives and understands that world. This would mean that irrespective of the culture in which a child was socialised, the child's thinking would develop through the same stages for two reasons. (1) In the first place the logical structures are part of the nature of truth in the real world. (2) In the second place children's minds are so structured to learn about the world that their understanding will progress in stages towards that logic in a sequence that will always be the same. This is because it results from an interaction between a learner innately predisposed to organise knowledge about the world in certain ways, and a world whose logical structure will impinge upon that learning process. The child's active way of learning and the nature of the world are such that a sequence of stages of development and thinking are inevitable and universal. **Heywood**

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contends that **Piaget** has never proved this and researchers like **Brunner**, for example, have shows the development of formal thinking depends on a child having a Western style education. *Many non-Western people function efficiently in adult life with advanced forms of sensori-motor and concretely operational thinking.*

2. Methodological procedure: Fowler: No use of longitudinal research methods

Fowler makes the same assumption as Piaget that structures of thinking are part of the human brain, so his aim is to describe or recognise such structures in the development of Faith. He does not set up a theory about the process of Faith development through the stages or attempt to test that process in interviews. Each individual is assigned to a developmental stage at the time of the interview and because people of different ages are at different stages which can be arranged in a hierarchy, it is assumed that each individual passes through the preceding stages to reach the present point, and may subsequently move on to another, presumed higher, stage. This accusation can be made against any stage theory if it is based on cross-research (measurement of individuals once only, each representing particular age groups). The only scientific way to test such a theory is to do *longitudinal research* (i.e.: keep measuring the same individuals over a long period of time to see if they change through the predicted pattern of development).

3. HEYWOOD's analysis: A comment

Heywood believes that there is no empirical evidence for the existence of the mental structures which determine children's ways of learning at different stages. This may be true of Piaget's research, but as you will discover when you learn about language development, there is very clear empirical longitudinal evidence for the fact that children's brains are organised so that they will acquire the rules for understanding and speaking language, and many theorists believe they can learn language because they already have similar rules for organising the meaning of the word in non-verbal ways, or as Piaget would put it, through sensory-motor schemata. The study of language development has provided considerable support for the existence of mental structures and for the interweaving of language and thought at the later stages of development. However, Heywood is probably right that we should go back and take a careful look at Piaget's and Fowler's assumptions that the stages resulting from those structures are sequential and hierarchical.

4. A challenge from Child development theorists: Donaldson and COX

(a) A Further critique of Piaget

Another challenge to Piaget comes from the many child development theorists who are redesigning his classical experiments and finding that if you change some of the features of the experiments, the language, the materials used, or the situation, you can secure a logical performance from a child who is supposed to be in a pre-logical stage. **Margaret Donaldson's** book, 'Children's Minds' (Fontana, 1978) presents the best collection of this kind of research. She also challenges Piaget's argument about children being egocentric in their perceptions, and this part of Piaget's theory is well reviewed in **Maureen Cox's** more recent book, 'The child's point of view,' (Harvester Press, 1986). This research has certainly shown that children's thinking is very situation dependent and if you use Piaget's approach, you will get the same answers as he did. However, if you change the situation, children will be more logical and less ego-centric in their thinking. This seems to mean that *stages of thinking do not unfold as the child's brain develops* and encounters different challenges in the environment. Rather, different ways of thinking depend on the experiences the child encounters and he/she may be more advanced in some areas of thought than others so that we

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could not say that he or she is firmly within a particular stage and only able to understand the world from that particular point of view.

(b) Application to Fowler's thesis

In relation to Fowler's theory this would probably mean that people's religious faith depended more heavily on their religious experiences than on their stage of development. There is bound to be a sequence of development just because older people are more experienced than younger ones. But we may have to lay less emphasis on the maturation of mental structures than Fowler originally intended.

5. HEYWOOD: Fowler critiques Piaget

Probably the most serious challenge from Heywood concerns Fowler's extension of Piaget's purely cognitive theory into the realms of faith development through the construction of the self in relation to what is known. Heywood argues that this is not a development of Piaget's theory, *but a contradiction of one of its main points*. Piaget likes to make a distinction between concrete empirically verifiable facts known through mathematics and logic, and subjectively formed meanings and values. Objective scientific knowledge is only possible when you are de-centred, i.e.: not personally involved. Rational certainty develops because of the maturation of the operational structures that make knowledge possible. The 'logic of convictions' to which Fowler tries to extend Piaget's theory is only an accretion of personal value judgements, and the problem of relating these to the real world is the work of philosophers. They may find many solutions to that problem; many kinds of *wisdom* but to Piaget there can only be one scientifically established logical *truth*.

2E. Fowler's second basis in Kohlberg

1. HEYWOOD: Kohlberg + Fowler = A critique of Piaget

Fowler was introduced to the stage development approach by Kohlberg who had himself extended its application to involve an evaluative element within the hierarchy of its stages. The end point of development is seen as a target towards which one aims rather than the outcome of a normal process of interaction between the mind and its experience of the environment. Fowler has taken on this aspect of Kohlberg's theory, but assumes that he can still use Piaget's stage theory as the empirical basis for this approach. Heywood argues that the development Kohlberg and Fowler have made contradicts Piaget so they can no longer depend on him to legitimate their theory. He writes, 'The conclusion of this paper, on the other hand, is that Piaget's theory is not empirically verified and not capable of being extended into other areas, in particular, not into the domain of faith.' (Heywood /77).

2. Carol GILLIGAN: Women and justice: Kohlberg's moral development stages

(a) A critique of Fowler

A further aspect of Fowler's work has been criticised because of his reliance upon Kohlberg. Carol Gilligan in her book, 'In a different voice' (Harvard University Press, 1982) questioned Kohlberg's emphasis on justice as a measure of moral development. She was concerned that women were rarely placed in Kohlberg's moral development stage 4, where the development is on doing one's duty, respecting authority, and of working to maintain the social order for its own sake. Rather, they are placed mainly in stage 3 where moral decisions are based on a desire to conform to the expectations of the community, and on doing good to gain approval and please other people. It appeared from this that women were less developed in their moral thinking than men. Gilligan observed, however, that the research by Freud, Kohlberg, and others, was mainly done on male subjects. This led them to assume that the meanings men

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identify and impose on moral dilemmas offer the best solutions, and women should fit into that pattern. She found that women approached the moral dilemma which Kohlberg used in his enquiry in a different way from men. They did not perceive it as a contest of rights, but rather as problems of relationships that centre on questions of responsibility. She concludes that for women the highest moral stage focuses on relationships, and, 'dissipates the tension between selfishness and responsibility through a new understanding of the interconnectedness between other and self' (Gilligan, 1982, /74).

(b) A response from Fowler

In a book published in 1984, Fowler comments that, 'further research that explicitly investigates sexual differences in moral development is badly needed.' He adds that, 'moral maturity for men and women means balancing responsibility and care with a keen sense of right and justice, along with learning to deal with the inevitable tensions and ambiguities that this will involve.' ('Becoming an adult, becoming Christian,' Harper and Row, 1984 /45-46).

3. The stages of faith

(a) Stage 7

Concerning the Stage of Faith themselves, one critical question relates to Stage 6, which some believe should be seen simply as an extension of Stage 5. Kohlberg, in his work, suggested a somewhat imprecise 'stage 7', usually enclosed in inverted commas to show it is more a metaphor than an actual stage, and necessary because he felt some kind of religious reason was required to support his sixth stage, with its belief in principles. It could be argued that wherever a measurable end stage is placed it is Theologically and psychologically necessary to have something beyond, since total union with God is not part of experience in this life, and humanity strives onward towards the ideal of goodness and perfection. Since it is very rare to find a stage 6 person, it seems best to reserve it as a metaphor, like Kohlberg's 'stage 7'. Fowler himself says as much: '... the image of human completeness... offered by faith development theory is not ... a stage to be realised. Rather, it is a way of being and moving, a way of being on pilgrimage... towards the limitless love that comes from genuine identification with the Source and Centre of our being.' (Fowler, 1984, /74).

(b) Differentiation between stages 3 and 4

Another issue relating to the stages is whether there is an almost separate stage between stages 3 and 4, with its own definable characteristics, which make it more than just transitional. '... ambivalence, wariness, exploration, and tentativeness are the warp and woof of the tapestry of faith woven in the young adult era.' (Sharon Parks, 'The Critical Years – The young adult's search for faith to live by,' Harper and Row, 1986). It could be argued, however, that Park's hypothesis is culturally biased in relation to the Western industrialised nations, since her research is based on young adults in USA colleges.

F. FAITH DEVELOPMENT THEORY AND THE COMMUNITY OF FAITH

1F. Fowler's stages as Church congregation descriptors

1. A potential community descriptor: Fowler's model

Although Fowler's work is concerned primarily with the individual, it is also relevant in defining 'ethos' or the 'world view' of a particular congregation, so that, for example, one can refer to a 'Stage 3 Church'. This has not yet been integrated into the overall theory, but it is a developing concept, and is one way among many of analysing a local Church. Fowler talks of the 'modal developmental level' of a Church, which is the 'average expectable level

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of development for adults in a given community ... which operates as a kind of magnet', so that children and young people are nurtured, 'to grow up to the model level but not beyond it' (Fowler, 1981 /24). He also affirms that people from outside the community are attracted to it, because of its particular modal developmental level. According to Chippindale there is some evidence that this is in fact what happens, e.g.: stage 3 individuals feel most at home in stage 3 Churches. Actually, Fowler thinks that most middle-class American Churches are best described as Stage 3 or perhaps just beyond it. John Hull and Michael Jacobs judge that religious institutions work best if they contain a majority of people who are stage 3 individuals.

2. Characteristics of the Stage 3 Church

A Stage 3 Church is described by the metaphor of an ideal extended family, with a supportive set of inter-personal relationships. Many of the congregation are people who are committed and have an ability to serve the needs of one another, bringing gifts of care and concern for each person of the community, but with a limited ability to consider the structures and systems of the wider world. This is particularly so in relating their faith to social, economic, and political questions. A questioning or critical approach to religious experience or symbols may be threatening or uninteresting to that congregation.

3. A Stage 4 Church

A Stage 4 Church has the descriptive metaphor of a kind of unspoken, pragmatic individualism, where the worship and life need to recognise the responsibility which the individual has taken for his or her own life and beliefs, and yet also provides a space where they can relax and be in fellowship with like minded people. There will be a certain measure of intellectual stimulation and challenge. In this community of faith the person welcomes being involved in enquiring into matters of faith, and has a preference for a reasoned and reasoning faith.

4. A Stage 5 Church

The Stage 5 Church is composed of people who realise the mystery we name God can only be partially represented by our best symbols and parables. Here people are learning to trust the Christian tradition in a new way and a new depth. There may hence be an appreciation of the faith of others which may bring new insights in turn to their own faith. (For a full description of these stages, c.f.: Fowler, 'Faith development and pastoral care,' Philadelphia, Fortress, 1997, /87-94). In this book Fowler links the Stage 5 Church with what is being called the 'public Church,' defined as being 'deeply Christian,' whose life and commitment is centred around God's unique Revelation of Himself in Christ, and which carried out its mission in the context of a pluralist society. It affirms the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the wisdom of the Christian faith to others in a way that builds up relationships and co-operation for the common good. The close fellowship of the congregational life is balanced by a care for the wider world and the public life of its society, seeking to help and encourage its members to discern their Christian vocation in the worlds of industry, commerce, and government. It exists in the strength of a conviction of the sovereignty of God, and so is able to engage in dialogue with others with a confident openness.

5. Questions related to 'modal development levels' of Churches

Various questions arise in relation to 'modal developmental level'. For example, does the 'magnet' which draws people within a Church up to a certain stage and attracts people from outside, effectively stop individuals moving on? If so, does it do this because that modal level

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is thought by that community to be the highest level, and therefore anything else is 'falling away,' or is it because there might be a loss of community support and friendship? There is an implicit 'co-erciveness' in a Church of whatever developmental level, but particularly stage 3, in that they, understandably, want to retain the fidelity and contribution to their members. **John Hull** comments that the authority of the Stage 3 institution is challenged by people who have moved to Stage 4 (John Hull, 'What prevents a Christian from learning?' London, SCM, 1985, /189).

6. Importance of faith stages as Church community descriptors

The extension of the stages of faith to the communities of faith is important in that the valid and recognisable existence of stage 4 and 5 Churches can be appreciated. Those who are maturing in faith and find their spiritual development restricted in a stage 3 Church can be confident that they will be able to find a Church that is more appropriate to their present faith outlook. A further question is related to how a Church community as a whole may develop from stage to stage. It has been suggested that this can only be done by drawing on resources that come from outside of the community, or if some individuals of a higher stage of faith remain in the local church and lead others forward.

2F. Other analytical issues

1. Descriptive or Prescriptive?

There is an inescapable tension as to whether a stage of faith is *descriptive* or *prescriptive*. Is it acceptable for an individual to stay in one stage of faith all their life, or should they be encouraged ('sponsored' in the language of the faith development theorists, to move onwards? Fowler rightly warns that the 'stage of faith' theory should not be used to devalue anyone, or to define any stage as necessary to salvation. Rather, 'other things being equal, persons should be supported and encouraged to engage issues of their lives... in such ways that development will be the likely result' (Fowler 1987 /80-81). In the words of John Hull, 'One becomes a pilgrim on the way... (Christ0 is the true and living way and He is always before us, disrupting our present equilibrium, and calling us through the pain and transition into the maturity which is our Christian calling' (Hull 1985 /195).

2. SCHNEIDER'S critique of Fowler's interview technique

(a) Schneider's critique

Schneider (c.f.: Dykstra and Parks 1996 /221) points out that although Fowler adopts a psychodynamic emphasis from his reading of Erikson, he does not accept the full implications of that theory in his analytical system. As Schneider show in detail, one consequence of this is that Fowler takes people's words too seriously as encoding their true meanings. However, he neglects to analyse the behaviour, tone of voice, facial expressions and other responses that occur between the subject and the interviewer. These betray unconscious emotional and behavioural patterns which may play just as important a role in determining faith as words.

(b) The interview with Mary

Schneider's analysis of the interview with Mary, the only protocol published in entirety, shows that Fowler placed Mary in Stage 3 for most of the seven aspects. A psychodynamic analysis would demonstrate that she functions more often at Stages one and two. Her emotional responses and behaviour indicate that she is a very dependent person who is easily swayed by the significant others in her life. Hence she has so far failed to separate herself from her mother's perception of her and so develop a strong ego from which she could reflect on herself or objectively assess her relations with other people. In the same book (Dykstra

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and Parks), Fowler accepts the points made by Schneider and recognises that he originally misplaced Mary's faith development at Stage 3. Fowler accepts what Schneider says, and agrees that it has made a significant impact on his own understanding of Mary's case. He also agrees that he may have shown some resistance to making pathological interpretations of people's behaviours. But he believes that it is possible for the faith development theory to work with clinical perspectives and claims that the balance has been changed by incorporating the ideas of Robert Kegan in his 'Evolving self' (1982).

(c) SCHNEIDER: Fowler's use of Erikson is faulty

The argument in Schneider's paper that Fowler does not acknowledge is the suggestion that the failure to take account of pathology (or the problem of sin) comes from a critical alteration of Erikson's stages of life development theory when it is incorporated into Faith development theory. Fowler describes each of his stages in terms of achievements which results in idealisation and the theory being perceived as both value laden and hierarchical in spite of its denials. Erikson's theory is different because it is a maturation theory. A person must go through each stage and will, as a consequence, face a series of developmental tasks which he or she may handle successfully or poorly. Whether or not he or she masters the challenge successfully, he or she will grow into the next stage and have to tackle its challenges, often handicapped by the failures of a previous stage.

(d) Analysis

Fowler may have initially produced matching faith challenges to be tackled at each development stage but dropped these from his theory when he opted for a structural basis. However, his new approach does not allow for the possibility of warped development which is, of course, a central feature of psycho-analytical development theories. Schneider argues that this *therefore means that Fowler has an inadequate doctrine of evil and sin* and does not consider how pathological development, particularly at the proto-stage of primal faith, may undermine the later development of faith. Suffice it to say at this stage that Schneider's paper has important challenges both for faith development theories and the review of Freud's approach to religions in Chapter 8.

3. CONCLUSION

Fowler's faith development theory, despite the various criticisms, is proving to be an important analytical tool in seeking to understand the Spiritual development of individuals, and of how they relate to the local Church. It may well be *the* key to otherwise inexplicable attitudes and actions in people, and perhaps helps us to understand why there is antipathy between individuals or groups within the local Church. It may also provide the answer as to why some people find it necessary to stand back from the Church for a time or move to another Church. Of course, care must be taken not to think that this theory, amongst many others, provides all the answers, nor try to make snap judgements about a person's Stage of Faith. Incidentally, the Centre for Faith and Moral Development Research at Emory University, Atlanta, where James Fowler works, has produced 'A Manual for Faith Development Research' (1986, **R.M. Moseley, D. Jarvis, and J.W. Fowler**), which, they claim, is the only accurate way to make an assessment.

APPENDIX I

For those of you who would like to do you own interviewing of people so as to assess more readily the merits or otherwise of Fowler or Brown's work, here is the battery of questions suggested for use in such an interview schedule. Remember too that what holds in the West does not necessarily hold true in the Philippines, but may do.

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Interview Schedule

1. Data about family and upbringing

Names. Age. Brothers and sisters. Training and career.
 Were you brought up in any particular Religion/denomination.
 Did your father/mother have a particular Spiritual influence on you?
 Are there any other people or experiences which have particularly influenced you or changed your way of life?
 Are you aware of thinking about your Faith differently from when you were a child?

2. Present values and commitments

What would you describe as your main principles of belief ?
 How do you know these are right?
 Are you aware of God having a plan for your life and guiding you in the choices that you make? How do you know what He wants you to do?
 Do you seek advice from any of your family and friends?

3. Religious beliefs

Are there any beliefs that you think are central to your Faith that everyone ought to hold?
 Do you have any questions about religion that have not been answered?
 Do you have any particular image of God?
 What do you believe about sin and evil? About guilt and forgiveness?
 What do you believe about Jesus Christ and His life and death?
 Do you believe in life after death? What will happen to you when you die?
 Do you accept the authority of The Church or The Bible, and do you accept guidance from them in your decisions?
 Are there any Christian Doctrines that you cannot accept?
 What is your attitude to other Religions?
 How do you publicly practice your Faith?
 What is your regular Church attendance? What is the pattern of your Prayer life?
 Which other Christian groups do you meet with in the week?
 What do you think happens when you pray?
 Do you have any particular religious experiences that you recall from the past or experience regularly now?
 How would you describe your relationship with God?
 How do you see your life developing in the future?
 What are you hoping will happen to you and what do you want to achieve?

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UNIT 4: DIFFERENCES IN FAITH & PERSONALITY THEORY

A. INDIVIDUAL DIFFERENCES & RELIGIOUS BEHAVIOUR

1A. Allport's Thesis

1. Introduction

From the beginning of the Christian Church it has been clear that individuals have responded differently to the life and teaching of Jesus Christ, stressing different doctrines and different patterns of behaviour as appropriate to the Faith that they professed. The question that is being tackled in the first part of this unit is whether we can group these different responses together along a few major dimensions of attitude and behaviour. If so, are those differences in any way related to the patterns of personality that have been detected through research in the discipline of Psychology? A supplementary issue is whether the same patterns of behaviour occur in other major religions. Does the puritanism of the fanatical Muslim fundamentalist relate to the same kind of authoritarian personality as the Evangelical Christian, the Orthodox Jew, or the committed Mormon? And what is the direction of causality?

2. Allport's issues and his study

Gordon Allport in 1950 tried to unite his interest in describing individual differences in personality and understanding the nature of religious belief. He was aware that Religion was not regarded as a legitimate field of study for the psychologist, and that very little writing had been done by psychologists on the field in the fifty years since James had published his lectures. Meantime the effect of Freud's work and polemic had been to make many people believe that religion was a form of wish fulfilment, a search for a Being greater than self upon whom to express the dependence of childhood. Alternatively, since many religions contain sex symbols, other writers suggested that religious sentiments arose from the repression of the sex drive which could be redirected into mythical fantasies about the adoration of the figure of Christ. Since these writers incorporated into their argument the fact that many religions have explicit fertility rites, it seems that any piece of evidence could be used against religion through the Freudian theory. If it was not repression, then it was catharsis. Allport tackles these criticisms by showing that religion has just as many symbols for nutrition, security and repose and that not every form of excitement is sexual.

3. Subjective Religion

Allport, like James, does not accept that if you find connections between religion and other experiences, you have therefore undermined the truth of religion. He argues that subjective religion is composed of many aspects of the individual's life. 'It is a rich pudding, smooth and simple in its blend, but intricate in ingredients. Or, to dignify the metaphor, it is a white light in personality, which, thought luminous and simple, is in reality multi-coloured in composition.' (Pages 8-9). To make a spectroscopy analysis is not easy since the prisms of each personality are unique. In nearly all instances, however, we find that in the course of development the religion of the individual has been refracted by (1) bodily needs (2) temperament and mental capacity (3) psychogenic interests and values (4) pursuit of rational explanation (5) response to the surrounding culture. 'Man's life, bracketed between two oblivions, is haunted by fear – of enemies, of nature, of sickness, of poverty, ostracism, and most of all by death, for of all the creatures on earth, Man alone knows that he will die.'

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4. ALLPORT: The context of religious experience

Allport argues that subjective religion can grow from any physical desire, especially one that has been denied its natural satisfaction. But, we also have psychological needs for truth, beauty, and companionship which produce a kind of inner restlessness not experienced by animals. We tend to focus these needs on objects outside of ourselves and call anything that satisfies them, 'value'. As a child grows, that child moves out of ego-centricity into a realisation of the value of other people, hopefully having gained a sense of self worth or self esteem along the way. This kind of development may result in a belief that God is the supreme expression of personality and conserves and explains all other values of selfhood. All religions might therefore be an attempt to conserve value, but which particular value may depend on the individual's personality so the more egoistic might practice a religion of self interest, and those who value more abstract principles might affirm the worth of personality. Allport argues and observes that people tend to *have religious experiences in situations where their values are threatened and they have been made afraid, guilty, or sick, or insecure, or have been bereaved or deprived.*

5. Uniqueness, adolescence and religious experience

Until this point Allport has argued that religion is woven together by each individual out of his or her desires, values, and search for meaning, and is also limited by his or her temperament or ability. So, each person will have a unique religion as his or her temperament and experience are unique. Allport continues by sketching the general pattern of religious development from small children imitating social actions in a religious context: saying prayers, singing hymns etc. without understanding their meaning; through a stage when they become aware of the powerfulness of God and develop their own anthropomorphism because of the link they make with powerful adults. In adolescence they realise that religion is not a magic formula to counteract all evil, and start to understand religious concepts and beliefs. Allport found that as many as 2/3 of young people rebel at this stage either rejecting 'religion' entirely or changing their allegiance to another Church or religion. He also found that sixteen years was the peak age for 'dramatic conversions'. However, interestingly, he thought that this age was dropping because the influence of films and radios was increasing childrens' emotionality or it has made the media culture so universal that the conversion rate has reduced in the absence of remote rural areas and strictly brought up children.

6. Mature Religion

After adolescence, Allport thinks that people grow into a mature religion after a fairly irreligious phase in their 20s. The development is not essential and many people may remain in the ego-centrism of childhood and perfectly satisfied with a comforting religion of wish fulfilment. A person's outline of mature religion is based on his or her definition of a mature personality which will have grown beyond the satisfaction of biological desires and impulses to be able to reflect objectively and insightfully on the ultimate realities of life. The mature person can see him or her self as others see him or her and can laugh at himself or herself, and will have a unifying philosophy of life which may or may not be religious, but which will integrate his or her self concept.

7. The mature religious sentiment

(a) The religious sentiment

There is a great difference between a mature religious sentiment which supplies the integrating force in a person's life and the self-gratifying religion which is unreflective, based on wish fulfilment, spasmodic, segmented, fanatical, and so limited that it fails to unify the

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personality. By using the word 'sentiment', Allport introduces a distinctive concept into his description of personality; one which sets him apart from the Freudian school's stress on unconscious motivation. A sentiment is a stable unit of personality which combines motivation, intellect and emotion and it belongs in consciousness. Sentiments govern our behaviours, e.g.: in making a moral decision we use our intellects when we decide what is right and wrong and our motivation and emotion when we actually do what is right.

(b) Mature religious sentiment and the critical faculty

The Religious sentiment is rich and complex. It includes dependence on a Supreme Being and worship of Him, beliefs about the Church, and about God, Mankind, good, and evil. *The Immature religious sentiment, on the other hand, has an uncritical acceptance of the authority of The Church which runs alongside the same acceptance of parents, political issues, and social institutions. Psychologists find that this uncritical acceptance goes with hostility and anxiety, repressed conflicts, and deeply held racial prejudices.* This collection of behaviours was so commonly found together that Adorno and his co-workers evolved the concept of the Authoritarian Personality to describe it, and developed a series of attitude tests with scales measuring ethno-centrism, authoritarianism, conservatism, and fascism. Allport's description of this immature religious sentiment seems to have been influenced by this research which was current at the time that he was writing.

(c) The development of the mature religious sentiment

The mature religious sentiment grows from the period of teenage blind rejection of parental views to a critical appraisal of what is worst and best in established religion. The mature person will probably have moments of mysticism and experience of God and will have grown to tolerate other beliefs and opinions and oppose empty ritual and bigotry. The sentiment will have its own motivational power not derived from the physical drives like hunger or fear. Although it is possible to trace the origins of a mature religious sentiment in childhood, it will have outgrown its origins and have been totally transformed in maturity and have the power to transform the individual's perception, thought, and behaviour.

(d) The contrast of the immature religious sentiment

The immature sentiment, by contrast, does draw its driving force from the infantile, physical desires and with it, the magical thinking of wish fulfilment and need for personal security. The immature person cannot tolerate ambiguous situations and will be driven by a compulsive fanaticism that will put up a desperate resistance to any perceived attack or new information that conflicts with existing belief.

(e) The Revelation of God

Whilst both kinds of religious sentiment require a Divine central figure, only the immature individual would claim that he or she knows what God is like. '... the religion of maturity makes affirmation, 'God is,' but only the religions of immaturity will insist, 'God is precisely what I say He is.' (Allport 1950 /69).

8. The mature religious sentiment and other parameters

Allport considers whether a mature personality can also be integrated around another sentiment; perhaps humanism, science, or communism, and decides that anything sincerely believed in can integrate personality around a goal, prescribe appropriate behaviour, and supply the motivation for action. But that will not be the same thing as having a mature religious sentiment. He agrees with James that *to be called 'religious' a sentiment must be organised around a response to the Divine.*

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9. Intrinsic and Extrinsic Religion

(a) The terminology 'intrinsic' and 'extrinsic'

Allport later developed his division of the religious sentiment into mature and immature and created the concept of intrinsic and extrinsic religion which could be used in a questionnaire. This second distinction has been widely used in research into individual differences and religious faith and is often preferred because it does not use such value laden labels for the two types of behaviour.

(b) Extrinsic religion

Extrinsic religion is the concept that was developed from the immature religious sentiment idea. It relates to a religious faith that has grown out of a psychological need which might be fear, arising from a physical, social, psychological, or existential threat. Allport was working during the Second World War and included many veterans in his research. He came to label 'extrinsic religion' as 'foxhole religion'.

(c) Intrinsic religion

'Intrinsic religion' refers to the religion of conviction when the person tries to live by the principles of his faith which he has fully internalised. He gives himself up to the service of religious causes and ideals losing the ego-centricity of the existential approach.

2A. Brown's Model of Religiousness

1. BROWN: Allport's mature/immature distinction developed

Brown in 1964 used these two dimensions in his research, but he wanted to keep some of the aspects of the mature/immature distinction that Allport had dropped. He proposed an outer orientation to represent the immature person's clear dependence on religious authorities like the Church and such a person's need for clear, authoritarian directions in the field of correct beliefs and behaviours. He proposed an inner orientation for the mature sentiment's autonomy of judgement about matters of faith and morals. This gave him a two dimensional, bi-polar model in which he believed that the dimensions were orthogonal, that is, unrelated to each other so that an individual's position on one dimension would not predict his or her position on the other. This type of model is usually drawn at right angles and each person can occupy a unique space in the diagram.

2. BROWN: A model of Religiousness.

Brown's model of Religiousness 1964



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Institutionalised

Brown's assumption was that these dimensions described distinct ways of being religious and that a person whose orientation was in the self serving extrinsic quadrant was not likely to develop into the kind of person who conventionally accepted and obeyed the teachings of the Church or to the deeply religious sort of person who had internalised the teachings of the Church and hence become devout and moral in a personal way not needing to seek external control, or reward, or recognition. The finding that people's responses fall into identifiable groups is characteristic of the type of research that he did. He asked his subjects to fill in an inventory in which they completed sentences or scaled statements about beliefs and behaviour according to whether they agreed or disagreed with them. This was cross-sectional research, that is, it measured what a large group of people thought at one stage in their lives. It gave no indication of how they had reached that stage of thinking so that we do not know whether they had passed through any other stages en route. This sort of information about religious development can only be obtained by longitudinal studies which measure the same person's thinking at different times in his life. Fowler's stage development theory which we reviewed earlier on in this course is based on longitudinal research and his suggestion would be that the same person may show different ways of being religious at different stages of life.

3A. Kahoe and Meadow: A survey and critique of the issues

1. Introduction and context of their study

Kahoe and Meadow in 1981 reviewed a number of models for Religiousness. They consider that Brown's evidence for the individualised/institutionalised factor is less reliable than for the other factors but they have found a similar one in their own research and hence they believe that it is important to include it in their model. They also challenge Brown's belief that the four factors are independent and they produce a stage development model of the same type as Fowler's.

2. KAHOE & MEADOWS: The movement from extrinsic to observance religion

Kahoe and Meadow think that in the first place many people come to religious experience through facing a crisis or existential question. They may well turn at first to 'religion' because it gives relief from guilt or comfort in sorrow. At this stage their basic motivation is one of wanting to find relief – almost selfish. Indeed some forms of organised religion deliberately play on people's guilt in order to offer them the release of Salvation. This may be their only kind of religious experience and they remain at this stage or forget about religion altogether when the crisis has passed. Other people come within the influence of an organised religion and perhaps attend Church or synagogue regularly. They will begin to hear the doctrines of their religion and be expected to follow the observance of the rest of the congregation. Most Churches have ways of perpetuating themselves by teaching converts to observe their customs and remain loyal to the institution, and they reinforce the Church member by supplying a warm social environment. There will be a gradual religious movement by the person from extrinsic to observance religion because affiliation to any religious group should pull the person away from a purely self serving extrinsic religion.

3. KAHOE & MEADOWS: Two factors of 'Observance Religion'

There are two important factors in observance religion: belonging to a distinct social group, and conforming to a distinct set of beliefs. Personality factors may determine which of the two is dominant for any particular individual who is in the observance stage of religious development. The social aspect is probably the most primitive in that it is nearer the self

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serving character of the extrinsic religion while most Churches teach self sacrifice as a major part of their doctrine. This could result in a person internalising the teachings, and turning right away from ego-centrism to become an intrinsic believer. Kahoe and Meadow agree that this can sometimes happen, but many fail to take this step and remain stuck in an observance of religion. Differences in emphasis of particular Churches may account for differences in emphasis of growth. Some Churches will want to maintain an obedience orientation while others teach individuals to develop their private understanding of God and their own relationship with Him.

4. KAHOE & MEADOWS: Autonomous individual religion

Many people who develop the intrinsic orientation also maintain a strong observance orientation which is why they are often thought of as true believers who are loyal to a Church to practise its teaching. Again, many people are happy to stay in this stage of development but others move on again into the autonomous stage of individualised religion. They seem to move away from organised religion with its rituals and conventions. They also particularly dislike a rule governed morality which takes away the individual's responsibility for making his own decisions about behaviour. Some Churches encourage this kind of behaviour, but most cannot because it is inherently destructive to their community, so those few individuals who do move into autonomous religion do so despite institutional discouragement in most cases. In the diagram below, Kahoe and Meadow's model for the progression through religious thinking that they have outlined has been reproduced. They also set out a table in their paper showing how this model relates to some other models of development that we shall be studying. This table is reprinted on page 325 of their book together with some other details that I have not given you here. You may chase this up if you want to extend your reading in this interesting area.

5. Analysis: Brown vv. Kahoe and Meadow

The contrast between Brown's four dimensional model and Kahoe and Meadow's developmental model poses some interesting developmental questions about what causes individual differences. The implication in Brown's model is that different kinds of religious expression attract different kinds of personality, but the personality differences may be created either by environment or by hereditary factors. If Brown is right, we should expect to find people of all ages professing each type of religious sentiment, and little evidence that individuals progress from one stage to another. If Kahoe and Meadow are right (and Fowler), we should expect to get evidence of the changes in religious orientation as people get older in the direction of the model. It is possible that they could both be right and there is an underlying progression, but personality factors decide at what level individuals could stop progressing. It could also be that the assumptions of the developmental model are wrong *and it is not progress to be autonomous rather than a true believer*. To close this section, here is Kahoe and Meadow's model in diagram form.

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6. KAHOE AND MEADOWS Thesis of Religious Development: A diagram

Autonomy

Religion of Quest: Individualism.

Extrinsic

Defensive/self serving.

Social Affiliative.

Intrinsic.

Committed self giving.

True Believer.

Dogma

Observance

Institutional/Consensual.

B. PERSONALITY THEORY: AN INTRODUCTION

1B. Sources for study

1. The layout of the rest of this unit

We are now going to analyse three different theories of Personality, all of which have had in their way a significant impact on Psychology and society.

(C) Sigmund Freud's Theory of Personality.

(D) Eysenck's Theory of Personality.

(E) The Five Factor Model.

2. Reading material (Appendix)

You should read the following texts which are in the Reading Appendix for this course.

Fonagy P. & Higgitt A. Personality Theory and Clinical Practice 1984
London: Methuen. Chapters 2,3,6,7.

Herbert M. Psychology for Social Workers 1986
Macmillan: BPS Chapter 4.

Wulff D. Psychology of Religion. 1991
New York: John Wiley and Sons. Chapter 6.

Spilka B. & McIntosh D.M. The Psychology of Religion: Theoretical Approaches, Colorado: Westview Press, 1997
Chapters 5,9, 10.

3. Additional Reading

(1) Freudian Theory

Bowlby J. Child Care and the growth of Love 1953.
Harmondsworth: Penguin.

Bowlby J. Attachment and Loss. 1969
New York: Basic Books.

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Erikson	E.H.	Childhood and Society. <i>New York: Norton. 2nd Edition.</i>	1963
Kline	P.	Fact and Fantasy in Freudian Theory <i>London: Methuen.</i>	1981
Meadow	M.	Psychology of Religion	1984
Kahoe	R.D.	<i>New York: Harper and Row. Chapter 27/Index.</i>	
Rutter	M.	Maternal deprivation reassessed <i>Harmondsworth, Penguin.</i>	1972.
Hull	J.M.	What prevents adult Christians from learning? <i>London: SCM Press. Chapter 4.</i>	1985
Jacobs	M.	Still small voice. <i>London: SPCK.</i>	1982
Jacobs	M.	Towards the fullness of Christ. <i>London: Darton, Longman, Todd.</i>	1988
Wulff	D.	Psychology of Religion. <i>New York. John Wiley and Sons.</i>	1991

(2) Eysenck

Eysenck H. (Ed.)		A Model of Personality. <i>Springer.</i>	1981
Francis	L.J.	Are introverts more religious? <i>British Journal of Social Psychology 20 /101-104.</i>	1981
Gibson	H.B.	Hans Eysenck, the Man and his work. <i>Peter Owen.</i>	1981
Meadow	M.J.	Psychology of Religion.	1984
Kahoe	R.D.	<i>New York: Harper and Row. Chapters 19,20,21,22.</i>	

(3) The Five Factor Theory

Bayne	R.	The Big five versus the Myers-Briggs. <i>The Psychologist, Jane 1994, /14-16.</i>	1994
Costa	P.R. &	The NEO Personality Inventory Manual.	1985
McCrea	R.R.	<i>Odessa, Fl. Psychological Assessment Resource.</i>	
Hirsh	S.K.&	Introduction to Type in Organisations.	1990
Kummerow	J.W.	<i>Palo Alto, Consulting Psychologists' Press.</i>	
McCrea	R.R.&	Reinterpreting the Myers-Briggs Type	1989
Costa	P.T.	indicator from the perspective of the Five Factor Model of Personality. <i>Journal of Personality, 1989, 57 (1) /17-40.</i>	
McCrea	R.R.	An Introduction to the five factor Model	1992
John	O.P.	and its applications. <i>Journal of Personality, Volume 60 (2) /175-215.</i>	
Myers	I.B.	Manual: A Guide to the Development of the	
McCaulley	M.H.	Myers-Briggs Type Indicator. <i>Palo Alto, Consulting Psychologists Press.</i>	1985

(4) General

Beit-Hallahmi B		The Psychology of Religious Behaviour, Belief	1997
Argyle	M.	and Experience. <i>London: Routledge, Chapters 5 & 9.</i>	

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2B. Questions and Study

1. Aims

The aim of the rest of this unit's study is to contrast different kinds of personality theory to see how well they describe individuals and start to consider whether differences in religious behaviour and development can be related to personality differences.

2. Questions

Here are some questions to consider as you study. Your tutor may ask you to 'write one or more of them up' as an essay answer.

1. Do any theories considered in this unit challenge ideas and Theology about freedom of choice and freewill?
2. Is guilt a destructive or a creative human emotion?
3. Could a stable extrovert ever reach a stage of intrinsic religious development or a neurotic extrovert the autonomous stage?
4. What can be gained from assessing personality? Is it more effective to categorise people by types or consider their positions on a range of dimensions?

3. Further study orientation

- (a) Use the set readings (appendix) as a way into the theories under consideration in the rest of this unit. You will probably want to pursue one theory in greater depth by following it up with additional reading (above).
- (b) There are a number of relationships to be pursued with the earlier three units. If you have looked at William James' work, you might like to think about personality theories in relation to his views about conversion and once born and twice born individuals.
- (c) If you favour empirical work as an approach you might like to talk to some people about their religious attitudes and experiences, structuring your questions to them and conversation with them using the dimensions of religious thinking and behaviour in the paper 'Individual differences and Religious Behaviour' to decide whether they should be classified as intrinsic or Extrinsic, individualised or institutionalised. Your tutor should be allowed to see your findings.

C. FREUD'S THEORY OF PERSONALITY

1C. The Model

1. Introduction

In the rest of this unit we will be looking at several types of Personality Theory. We will think too about their relevance to religious development and behaviour. Earlier, we noted in **McDargh's** work and assessment and assimilation of Freud's theories. Why Freud? It is because Freud's work was fundamental to the early development of psychology. But it is also because Freud's work has been seen to present the biggest challenge to essential Christian Doctrine by some, whilst others have seen valuable points of contact between Freud's thinking and work and some aspects of religious thinking. The Freudian school of thought is based on the view that a human being's personality and intellect function on several layers between conscious and unconscious processing. (N.B.: **Freud's** model of Personality is laid

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out in **Fonagy** and **Higgitt** Chapter 22. A scheme is also included below that lays out Freud's personality theory in parallel with his work on the brain.)

2. The Id

Freud's theory is concerned with the dynamic interaction between the various levels of personality. The *power house of the personality is the Id*. It operates *totally unconsciously* and on the primitive principle of *seeking satisfaction for its drives*. Some of these drives have positive life giving consequences, whilst others have destructive results. The thinking that arises from the Id, called primary process thinking, is impulsive and chaotic, and apparently not subject to reasonable control. (N.B.: You might find it useful at this point to refer back to the work of **Batson** and **Ventis** which emphasised the different thinking carried out by the two hemispheres of the brain. Conscious, sequential, rational thinking dominates the left hemisphere, whilst the right is dominant in language and unconscious, and visual, emotional, and creative thinking. Freud did not have this physiological knowledge of the brain to inform him at the time that he was working, and it is possible that he has stumbled upon a valid distinction in the conscious and the unconscious activities of the brain.

3. The Super-Ego

The Super-Ego is the most problematic of Freud's three levels of Personality. Some aspects of its functionings are accepted. Most people do develop a sense of right and wrong and feel guilt if they violate that moral code. It is also true that some people seem to develop a sense of guilt which appears irrational and destructive if they fall short of perfect standards of behaviour. Finally, since Freud, it has been experimentally demonstrated that we have a powerful selection mechanism which can control our perceptions and memories to such an extent that we can keep out of our consciousness any incoming information or past experiences or memories which are associated with anxiety, conflict and guilt. If you look at the diagram at the end of this section, you will see for yourself parallels between aspects of the Super-Ego and the Conscientiousness factor in the Five Factor Theory. This C Factor also relates to some functions of the Ego.

4. Freud's Model of Personality

<i>Level of the Brain's Functioning.</i>	<i>Layers of Personality.</i>
Conscious.	Ego.
Activities of thinking currently in the centre of attention.	Conscious image of 'myself'. My feelings and reactions, and explanations for my behaviour and myself.
Pre-Conscious (or Subconscious).	Super-Ego.
Memories stored away which could be recalled when I need them.	Part Conscious and Part Unconscious. Hence two functions.
	(a) Judge or conscience that evaluates behaviour on the basis of internalised parental prohibitions.
	(b) Policeman or censor who decides what I may think or do.
Unconscious.	Id.
Two functions:	
(a) Aspects of the brain's activities of which I	The dynamic centre of the personality that

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rarely become aware but which maintain homeostasis: e.g.: blood sugar and oxygen levels, hearty rate, blood pressure, etc.	drives behaviour to satisfy its needs based on primitive appetites like fear, sex, hunger.
(b) Memories and experiences that are repressed by the Super-Ego inaccessible to consciousness because they have a negative emotional charge. E.g.: Guilt or fear.	(Uses some of the same nervous systems as the homeostatic mechanisms: E.g.: Autonomous nervous system.)

5. The function of the Super-Ego

Freud's observation of the function of the Super-Ego are generally confirmed, but he was probably wrong to allocate these functions to a single, integrated personality structure. Other theorists offer more fragmented explanations. He was almost certainly wrong in the story that he gave for the formation of the Super-Ego which he thought to occur in the phallic stage of development. Though, as always, with Freud there are fragments of insight within even this part of the theory, we need to keep an open mind whilst we select its most effective parts. Freud can by no means explain everything.

6. The Ego

The Ego is the conscious aspect of the personality which is regulated by reason and related to the real, knowable world, accessible through the senses. This part of the personality develops through learning as we build up our self concepts. (We will be examining self concept theories in the next unit). Because it is governed by a reality principle, one of its functions is to hold the balance between the unrealistic demands of the Id and the social requirements of living with other people in the real world. When the Super-Ego develops, the Ego has also to try to moderate its infantile demands in relation to the more mature understanding of morality and reality which is acquired through learning.

2C. S.FREUD: The workings of the Human Personality

1. The personality at war with itself

Freud's model presents a personality at war with itself. The Id is like a caged tiger threatening to break out and overwhelm the Ego. The fear that this might happen creates Neurotic Anxiety, especially where someone's Ego development is weak. The Oedipus complex is one form of Ego defence against the chaotic desires of the Id. But the other Ego defences do seem to have a greater power in explaining Human behaviour. There are times when we know that we are using these mechanisms consciously and deliberately. Other times we are employing them unconsciously and we are not aware of the source of our own motivation. We will now review these.

2. Repression

The mechanism that we use most often use is repression or denial. This occurs when we push out of consciousness all memory of experience which cause us emotional pain or guilt. We

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know that we sometimes do this deliberately and we are consciously aware that we are refusing to think of something. But Freud also thought that it sometimes happened unconsciously so that we totally wipe out experience and the knowledge that is being repressed. It is buried in the unconscious, totally inaccessible to treatment, but festering away like decaying vegetable matter in a swamp, liable to throw up bubbles of explosive gas in an uncontrollable and destructive way hence producing illness or unpleasant dreams. Creative people seem to be more in tune with this chaotic but dynamic aspect of their personalities, and they are able to use the primary processes to power their creative acts, although they run the risk of being overwhelmed by the destructive aspects of their personality.

3. Projection

Projection is by far the most damaging of defence mechanisms as far as human relationships are concerned. Here we use our own minds like film projectors and perceive our own anxiety and guilt in other people. If we are angry with another person we can feel that they are angry with us and perceive all their actions as hostile. In extreme forms this is called paranoia – everyone in the world is thought to be an enemy out to destroy us. All the unacceptable drives of the Id are capable of being projected onto others, so that people with conflicts about fear or sex may project their unwanted ideas or impulses on to others and treat them with the loathing they unconsciously feel for themselves. At the same time they employ a passive and distorted satisfaction of the unacceptable impulse. When this is used as a conscious mechanism it would be fair to call the behaviour hypocritical. In my own mind this is how I think of the sensational reporting of sex and violence in ‘popular’ newspapers where it is condemned but reported in quite unnecessary detail. More often the mechanism operates unconsciously so the individual is not aware of the source of his or her hostility, and hence could hardly be said to be hypocritical. In the past it was common to explain some racially prejudiced behaviour as the projection of personal conflicts about sex or aggression on to an identifiable, black, group who were sometimes naively thought to embody the blackness of evil.

4. Displacement

Not all defence mechanisms are harmful for other people. Displacement may be harmful but can produce good effects. ‘Displacement’ means that an unacceptable impulse of the Id has been channelled into a more acceptable outcome. This concept is common in animal studies. Many birds and mammals have patterns of displacement activity which control their potential for harmful aggression against their own species. We can also displace aggression. Positively it becomes integrated with ambition and determination to overcome obstacles in our path to success. Negatively we may displace aggression by smashing the china, kicking the dog, or beating up our married partner or children. The negative response can often be seen in children themselves who are themselves the victims of aggression from an adult against whom they cannot retaliate. Those that act out their frustration may well become vandals against property that represents authority or bullies of smaller children.

5. Sublimation

Sublimation is a form of displacement that deals positively with sexual and paternal/maternal feelings. If these drives have no natural outcome in a person’s life they may be sublimated into other forms of artistic or practical creativity, or different sorts of caring for other people. Parental feelings may have a less worthy outlet in obsession-caring for a pet.

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3C. Perspectives on Freud

1. Selectivity in this course

When you read about Freud you will see that I have been very selective about those parts that I find most useful in dealing with people, and that have a certain amount of support from empirical research. You will probably enjoy exploring the theory in greater depth. I want to show the effect that I think certain parts of the theory can have on our understanding of people.

2. Freud's pioneering psychological work and Twentieth Century thought

We cannot live in the late Twentieth Century as Christian ministers without taking some account of the work of Freud. Aspects of his theories have permeated widely into Western culture. Our drama and literature have in a very large measure changed so that we seldom have straight stories of heroes and villains in conflict. Authors now understand and present characters who have hidden explanations for their behaviour arising out of their past experience, the hero is hence not perfect, nor often the villain totally evil. Everyone has to cope with the strengths and drives from the Id and the story endings are not always (predictably) good.

3. Understanding and insight into childhood

Our understanding of childhood has also changed and been enriched. Freud drew our attention to the critical importance of the first five years of development which may have a determining effect on intellectual, emotional, and personality development. Other researchers in the Freudian tradition, like John Bowlby and Michael Rutter, have developed our understanding of the critical importance of the baby's first attachment to mother and father and the way these attachments form the foundation for all other loving relationships as the child grows up. Bowlby's first book was called, 'Childcare and the Growth of Love,' (Penguin, 1953), and although he has developed and refined his theory a great deal since then, it is still influential in research and the practice of social welfare.

4. Counselling techniques

Counselling techniques do not attempt to cover the in depth exploration of psycho-analysis but they still owe a great deal to Freud's theories about Ego defence. We have learned that human relationships are never straightforward. Each individual in a relationship brings his or her own history of past, unresolved relationships and experiences, unconscious conflicts, fear, anger, and guilt which may be unwittingly projected onto each new person and make growth within the relationship impossible. Counsellors know that whilst they may be dealing with one problem on the surface as it is presented by the sufferer, the real difficulty lies much deeper and may take time to uncover. Every General practitioner (i.e.: medical 'doctor') knows the 'by the way' syndrome – the patient waits until he or she has his or her hand on the door to go out before he or she finds the courage to talk about what is really troubling themselves.

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UNIT 5: PERSONALITY THEORY: FURTHER FACTORS

A. EYSENCK'S THEORY OF PERSONALITY

1A. Introduction

1. Eysenck and Freud

We will present Eysenck's theory of personality as a complete contrast to that of Freud. Why Eysenck? Eysenck's work contains elements that will be important in our pastoral understanding of emotional development. Eysenck is basically a behaviourist who only accepts theories that can be empirically based and his criticism of Freud is that *Freud's theory as formulated by Freud cannot be experimentally tested or disproved*. It is therefore not scientific.

2. The two groupings of Personality Theorists

(a) Personality cannot be measured

There are several ways of classifying theories of Personality, but one way is to form them into two groups. The first group of theorists believes that *the individual person is unique and ought not to be pigeonholed by measuring and comparing aspects of personality*. Members of this group, like **Carl Rogers**, see *the personality as a self concept* directly experienced and known to have continuity over the life span, even if some characteristics change. Rogers has evolved a systematic way of describing individuals, but will not measure personality as such.

(b) Personality is to be described by measuring behaviour

Eysenck's theory belongs to the second group. For these, the existence of an inner self making decisions and directing behaviour cannot be demonstrated. However, for them too, systematic measures of behaviour do show that people have individual patterns or characters which can be represented on models of personality. He assumes that each piece of behaviour can be grouped with other similar behaviours to form traits and sets of similar traits formed into broader dimensions of personality. Eysenck measures personality by asking interviewees to answer questions about their behaviour in particular circumstances. The questions have been extensively tested and many items will have been dropped in the course of constructing a test. Those that remain will be the ones that have been found to discriminate between behaviours of different types of people and which have been shown by factor analysis to correlate together to form the three major factors of the theory. These are Eysenck's dimensions of personality.

2A. Introversion-Extroversion

1. The Introvert

Introverts are thought to be stimulus avoiding, whilst extraverts are thought to be stimulus seeking. The difference occurs because of the way that their brains respond to stimulation. Introverts have very responsive central nervous system, i.e.: they have high cortical arousal. They find over-stimulation unpleasant and try to keep themselves at an even level of input. Parties, gambling, risk-taking etc. can be over stimulating and tend to be avoided, whilst conversations with a few good friends, reading etc, offer a preferred amount of stimulation. Introverts enjoy puzzles, solving problems, studying at school and work in general because they are often intrinsically motivated, and the challenge to master a subject or a skill is sufficiently stimulating to keep them working. They are able to keep themselves working

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when a task is hard because of the satisfaction that they will know when they have completed it. The only additional motivation that they need is the approval of their parents or teachers. They are sensitive in inter-personal relationships, being quickly aware what other people think of them. Introverts tend to do well in Secondary schools and colleges, and usually obtain the best marks in examinations.

2. The Extravert

Extraverts are generally the opposite of all these things. They have lower cortical arousal so their brains are less responsive to stimulation, and they are stimulus seeking in order to keep their arousal levels as high as possible. They find lack of stimulation unpleasant. They enjoy meeting many new people, but tend to make less close friendships. They need to turn their attention to new activities frequently, act on the spur of the moment without taking account of the consequences, take risks, etc.. In relation to school work, extraverts are more frequently extrinsically motivated and will work at the last minute when an assignment has to be handed in or an examination threatens. They are not very sensitive to social signals and the approval of others, and may need criticism to spur them into action in their study.

3A. Stability-Neuroticism

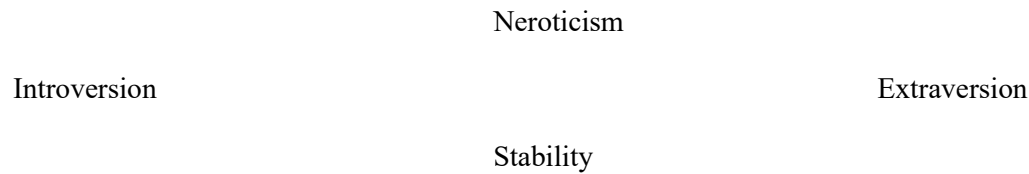
1. Anxiety

This dimension relates to the other arousal system of the brain; emotional arousal and the autonomic nervous system. A neurotic person is one whose emotional system responds quickly to threat and we would describe him or her as an anxious person. It might be expected that it would be better to be at the stable end of this dimension. But, some anxiety is necessary to produce any performance at all and to a certain degree, anxiety can enhance performance. There is a complex relationship between anxiety, performance, and task difficulty. Simple tasks can be performed at quite a high level of anxiety without too much handicap, but the more complex the task, the more likely it is that anxiety will prevent you from performing it well. High anxiety narrows the channel of attention and focuses it on the source of the anxiety. This means that there is not enough channel capacity left to carry out the complex task, and one is unable to select the important inputs needed to complete the task. Learning is a complex task that requires every bit of the brain's channel capacity – which is why anxious people cannot learn.

2. Polarity

Each of the two dimensions described so far is thought of as a line from one pole to the other, and every individual will have his or her own unique balance point somewhere along the line. Most people will appear in the middle of the two dimensions, being neither completely introverted, nor completely extraverted, and neither completely stable, nor completely neurotic. Only about 4% of the population will show the extremes of either dimension and there is no relationship between dimensions so you cannot predict from someone's score on one dimension where he or she will be on another. The scores for these two dimensions can be plotted on two axes and this will show that each person has a unique point on the graph. In the diagram below, x shows the position of a slightly anxious extravert, whilst o shows the position of a stable introvert.

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4A. Psychoticism

1. Context of Psychoticism

This dimension is different from the other two because most people would not be expected to score significantly on it at all. It is Eysenck's attempt to produce a measure for those people whose thought processes are disordered and maladjusted to society. Individuals who do score on this dimension may be highly creative, divergent thinkers who, though appearing a little eccentric to others, are pretty harmless on the whole. But there is a more damaging side to this dimension in that it is expected to detect anti-social individuals who are thoughtless, selfish, reckless, destructive, and cruel.

2. Medical application

Psychoticism is less thoroughly researched than the other two dimensions, and Eysenck has only added it to this model since 1975. In delineating this dimension, he was trying to measure the potential for eccentric or insane behaviour that might pre-dispose an individual to a psychotic breakdown. His theory is that there is a single psychotic dimension that may predispose for emotional breakdown (manic depressive psychosis) or thought disorder (schizophrenia). This is a controversial suggestion. Some doctors like to make a distinction between these two forms of mental illness because they use different forms of treatment for each. On the other hand, it is sometimes difficult to distinguish between the symptoms, e.g.: between an acute schizophrenic breakdown with wild behaviour and frenzied activity and the manic phase of manic depression when the patient can be equally frenzied and over active.

5A. Eysenck's three dimensions of Personality

1. Introduction

One characteristic of Eysenck's theory is the way that he bases the three dimensions of personality on physiological differences in the functioning of the brain, and as we will use this information later when we are dealing with the development of emotion, we will describe some of the relevant structures now.

2. Neuroticism

Neuroticism is based on the nervous system that encodes our emotional behaviour. This system has some active structures in the brain that trigger and co-ordinate emotional responses (the limbic system) and its own nervous system, the autonomic nervous system (ANS) that goes to all the internal organs of the body. The ANS has two branches that govern two opposing states of activity. The first is the parasympathetic branch which controls the body when it is in a peaceful state, maintaining the heart rate, respiration, and the chemical constitution and temperature of the blood at the critical levels that sustain life, i.e.: it maintains homeostasis.

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3. Anxiety-Stress

(a) The sympathetic system

The second branch of the ANS is the sympathetic system which is activated whenever we encounter physical or mental stress. Physical stress can include extremes of temperature, loud noise, or any other dangerous stimulus and mental stresses arising from conscious or unconscious anxiety, fear, anger, or any extreme of emotion. The evolutionary function of the stress system was to enable the organism to fight or escape from any threat to existence. It changes the activity of the internal organs so that the muscles and brain are supplied with more oxygen to enable them to produce maximum defence against the threat whether flight or fight is appropriate. We shall return to this model when we think about emotional development. Its relationship to Eysenck's dimension of Neuroticism is that he thinks we all vary in our susceptibility to the arousal of the sympathetic nervous system. Some people perceive the slightest novel stimulus as a threat and spend considerable amount of time in a state of sympathetic arousal. Others are much more stable and only aroused in extremes of perceived danger.

(b) Anxiety as a motivator

As we have already seen, the situation is complicated because at lower levels anxiety acts as a motivator to spur us into action. If we felt no anxiety we would not bother to do anything. Our anxiety arousal increases as tasks become more demanding until we reach a point where we pass the optimum level. If our anxiety increases beyond the optimum level, we panic and become paralysed so that we can no longer think at all. People who score high on Eysenck's dimension of neuroticism have more labile emotional systems which are easily pressed beyond the optimum for successful action.

4. Introverts and extraverts

The behaviours of introverts and extraverts were described earlier as stimulus avoiding and stimulus seeking respectively. A second arousal system is involved in this dimension, arousal of the cortex in the central nervous system. This system is involved with the way that we receive information from the outside world, and it also has a function in motivating actions. Changes in arousal are perceived as pleasurable and can reward and maintain activity. Novel experiences make us curious to seek an explanation, and this activity raises arousal. Similarly, problems stimulate us to find answers and are equally arousing, while finding the explanation or solving the problem releases the tension and reduces arousal, again giving a rewarding sensation. The difference between introverts and extraverts on this dimension is that introverts are easily stimulated and avoid over excitement. A light touch on the accelerator is sufficient to supply all the arousal they need while extraverts drive themselves much harder and take risks in the interest of maintaining excitement.

5. The Psychotic dimension

Most people would not score significantly on the psychotic dimension but it does sometimes detect mild eccentrics and individuals who are reckless in behaviour and isolated from other people who in the wrong circumstances could have a mental breakdown. It has also been noted that highly creative people score higher on this dimension and their divergent thinking and fluctuating emotions may well be the dynamo that empowers their creativity, but perhaps at the cost of personal tranquillity and peace of mind. You might like to compare Eysenck's views about this creative aspect of the Psychoticism dimension with the description of the Openness factor on the 'Big Five' theory which follows below.

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6. A further prospect

After a great deal more research, it may turn out that there is one part of the brain that links all three personality dimensions. That might be the Ascending Reticular Activating System or Reticular Formation. This is a vital network of nerves within the brain stem which is deeply protected within the brain and skull because of the vital nature of its work. It has both ascending and descending connections with the cortex and seems to play a critical role in determining consciousness from the broad function of governing sleep and wakefulness to the much more precise selective mechanism which decides which particular aspect of an incoming stimulus shall be consciously processed. The ARAS is linked with the limbic system governing emotional responses and with the cortical arousal system where it alerts the appropriate area of the brain to attend to incoming signals. It also seems to be linked to a much more finely tuned selector mechanism which enables us to filter out unwanted signals and selectively attend to important incoming information. It is this finely tuned selector mechanism which seems to be disturbed in schizophrenic attack so that the sufferer becomes overwhelmed by signals from channels and he or she can no longer organise them to make sense of the outside world. He or she is out of touch with reality, and his or her thinking is disordered and so the demands of daily life can no longer be met.

B. THE FIVE FACTOR PERSONALITY MODEL

1B. The development of the model

1. Genesis and context

In the past decade or so there has been a major development in the study of personality. Whereas it was previously true that almost every personality theorist designed his or her own measure of personality, it has now become more important to relate the major measures together to look for patterns and consistencies in personality descriptions. The five factor model of personality is an important result from this movement. We will first of all then present an outline of the theory and its origins and then compare the approach to that of the Myers-Briggs type indicator. This indicator is widely used in both occupational and counselling psychology and has an influence in making vocational choices as well as the selection of employees. I shall be relying heavily on the work of McCrae and his co-workers in both the description of the 'Big five' and in making various evaluations.

2. The two roots of the five-factor model

(a) Everyday terminology

The five factor model has two lines of development, both of which rely upon factor analysis. One set of researchers is engaged in lexical analysis of the many words used in everyday speech to describe personality. The fact that there are many such terms pays tribute to the importance of the understanding of the personality in our daily interactions. Many words were collected and composed into scales, and groups of subjects were asked to rate relationships between various terms. The results were factor analysed to see which descriptions belong together in general usage. Five factors emerged from the analysis which occurred in both English and German samples. Five factors were also found in Chinese but they do not match the English/German set exactly.

(b) Inter-correlation of existing personality measures

The other line of development is based on the inter-correlation of personality measures which have already been produced. In such an activity **Norman** (1969) suggested five factors. The

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same number have emerged in subsequent studies whether the measures were based on self report questionnaires, trait rating sorting scales (like the Q-sort) or observer rating scales. When factors emerge in factor analysis they have to be named on the basis of the traits that seem to be contributing most to the measurement of that factor and this is where some of the disagreement about the five factors occurs. The existence of a mathematical relationship is objectively determined but deciding what aspect of personality it represents, and what to call it, is inevitably subjective. **McCrea** and **John** name and describe the factors as follows.

2B. The five factors

1. 'N' Factor

'N' factor is usually called, 'Neuroticism'. Here is a great deal of agreement about this factor in the various personality measures, and it is the label used by Eysenck, as we have already seen. It describes individual differences in the tendency to experience distress and negative emotions like nervous tension, depression, frustration, guilt and self-consciousness. These lead to related ways of thinking and behaving which can be characterised by irrational thinking, low self esteem, and poor control of both impulses and cravings. High N-scorers also suffer from psychosomatic illnesses and are often ineffective in coping skills. Low scorers would appear calm, relaxed, even tempered, and unflappable. In Eysenck's measures it would be possible to be too relaxed and not to be stirred up or motivated to do anything, but the five factor theory seems to have only one, negative, side to this dimension and to see low scoring as an asset. **Costa** and **McCrea** (1985) assessed the domain of Neuroticism on a six, eight item scales to measure the following six facets. (1) Anxiety. (2) Hostility. (3) Depression. (4) Self Consciousness. (5) Impulsiveness. (6) Vulnerability.

2. 'E' factor

The 'E' factor is usually called 'Extroversion'. Here is less consensus about the contents of this factor though something like it appears in most personality theories and descriptions. **McCrea** and **John** think that this is explained by differences of opinion about the relative importance of dominance and warmth in extraversion, although they think that it should stand nearer to dominance. Traits included in 'E' are venturesomeness, affiliation (including warmth and gregariousness), positive emotions (like cheerfulness, enthusiasm and optimism), energy, ascendancy, and ambition. This is a description of social extraversion which is rather different from that of Eysenck's dimension which includes cognitive traits like response to stimulation leading to being stimulus seeking. In their scale designed to measure the dominance of Extraversion, **Costa** and **McCrae** (1985) include six, eight item scales to measure the following facets. (1) Warmth. (2) Gregariousness. (3) Assertiveness. (4) Activity. (5) Excitement seeking. (6) Positive emotions. Low 'E' scorers are quiet, reserved, retiring, shy, silent, and withdrawn.

3. The 'A' factor

The 'A' factor is usually called 'Agreeableness' but in some descriptions there is a highly evaluative tone which relates the dimension to good and evil. This factor seems to involve the more humane aspects of personality such as trust, altruism, nurturance, caring, giving emotional support, and modesty. An alternative label for the dimension is 'friendly compliance' and the negative end of this dimension, 'hostile non-compliance'. Because this dimension is seen as Orthogonal to 'E', the detailed interpretation of it depends on how much of the traits of warmth and love are seen as an essential part of 'E' and how much are included in 'A'. Low scorers show hostility, indifference to others, self centredness, spitefulness, and jealousy.

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4. The 'C' factor

The 'C' factor is usually known as conscientiousness' but this word has two meanings. It refers to the inhibition of impulsive behaviour. This relates to the traits of constraint or prudence but it can also refer to the determination to achieve, will power, which is a strong motivator to organise and direct one's behaviour towards long term goals. High scorers are seen as thorough, neat, well organised, diligent, and achievement orientated, whilst low scorers are disorganised, untidy, lacking in impulse control and persistence, and lacking in achievement orientation.

5. The 'O' factor

The 'O' factor is usually called 'Openness', but there is least consensus about this factor both in its label and content. Factor descriptions which come from the linguistic tradition stress intellectual aspects like imagination, whilst those deriving from questionnaires and rating scales have a wider definition. They include creativity, intellectual interests, differentiated emotions, aesthetic sensitivity, a need for variety, and holding unconventional values. The label 'Openness' is given because it is thought that this factor relates to depth, scope and permeability of consciousness which allows the individual to tolerate ambiguity and enjoy wide ranging experiences. This also results in a motivation to seek experience of varied kind. The definition of 'experience' covers ideas, fantasies, feelings, sensations, and values so that the individual is seen as more open to any or all of these. High scorers will, then, have wide interests, be imaginative, original, curious and artistic whilst low scorers are seen as conventional and conservative.

6. The NEO-PI

Having completed the work in discovering and naming the factors through factor analysis, Costa and McCrae (1985) constructed a Questionnaire, called the NEO-PI with 181 items to test for the five factors. The items are scored on a five point Likert scale which means that subjects say whether they strongly agree, agree, disagree or strongly disagree with an item as a statement about the self. The fifth, central, point is neutral or non relevant which means that the individual thinks that the statement does not apply to him or her. Some of the items are stated negatively to control the tendency that occurs in self report inventories for some subjects to acquiesce to everything. These respondents are often called 'yea-sayers'. They quote good internal consistency scores for the five scales ranging from .76 to .93 and retest reliability coefficients from 3-6 years ranging from .63-.83. This was the test used to investigate relationships with the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator.

C. THE MYERS BRIGGS TYPE INDICATOR (MBTI)

1C. The Jungian background

1. Use of the Myers-Briggs type indicator

I stated earlier that the Myers-Briggs type indicator is one of the most widely used instruments for measuring personality in occupational psychology and in counselling psychology. As an indicator it is also used by individuals by individuals as a guide to theirs or another's personality. It has been developed on the foundation of **Jung's** description of personality. It is an attempt to measure the aspects that he described but never measured.

2. The indicator does not take account of unconscious motivation

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On a theoretical basis, a problem with the indicator stems from Jung's conviction that much of human *behaviour was motivated from the unconscious*, and so personality could not be assessed using only an instrument that measures conscious thought. Jung admitted that this would make it particularly difficult to assess an *introvert* who is orientated toward the subjective world anyway, and concerned with archetypes and images which are difficult to communicate. He thought the most difficult to understand would be the introverted, sensitive type whose inner world would be almost inaccessible to internal observation, and he felt that such an individual would have little chance of understanding himself/herself. Test designers accept this, and do not claim to assess unconscious motivation, but focus on operationalising and measuring the main types described by Jung. **Bayne** (1994) tries to defend the Myers-Briggs type indicator by claiming that the instrument is successful in fulfilling those claims, and is not worried by criticisms of its neglect of unconscious motivation.

3. Introversion and Extraversion

Jung's theory claims to make a central distinction between *introversion* and *extraversion*. (N.B.: This is a correctly spelt technical psychological term, 'extrovert' is not the correct spelling.) Introversion and extraversion are seen as attitudes which determine a person's orientation towards the world as focused on either the objective or subjective world. That distinction having been made, he believed that we relate to our world, be it subjective or objective, through two opposed and dichotomous functions. The first is the rational, judging function of thinking and feeling. The second is the irrational, perceiving function of sensing and intuition. It is expected that one of the four aspects of the functions will be dominant in the individual, and a second will be auxiliary. The other functions will be labelled 'third' and 'fourth' respectively. The fourth function will be the least favoured and accessible, and possibly the least developed of the functions. However, it may take over in individuals who are severely stressed, and they will be seen to act out of character from their test scores and usual behaviour. **Hirsh** and **Kummerow** (1990 /10) give an example of a person whose fourth function might have been assessed as 'feeling' who, when stressed, produces an emotional outburst or claims to be isolated and unloved. Similarly, a person whose fourth and least favoured function is 'thinking' may go in for a great deal of analysis-critical appraisal.

2C. The workings of the MBTI

1. Polarities and indicies

In Jung's description the types overlap considerably. Hence, a great deal of work on separating the functions and carrying out scale correlation and item analysis had to be done before appropriate measurement could take place. **Jung** described the traits of extraverts as open, sociable, jovial, friendly, approachable, morally conventional, and tough minded. Subsequent research has not found such a wide range of traits cohering together, and the Myer-Briggs type indicator puts tough minded-ness into the thinking function. The final questionnaire contains sets of indices to measure extraversion/introversion (EI), Sensing/Intuition (SN), Thinking/Feeling (TF) all of which had been shown to have internal consistency but to be orthogonal to each other. The Judgement/Perception index was added to be used with EI preference to determine the dominant function. Each index is bi-polar around a theoretical zero, and the individual is classified as clearly belonging to one type or its bi-polar opposite in the form of a four letter code. Numerical scores are calculated to determine the strength of each preference, which should give a much higher score for the dominant and preferred function, a moderately high score for the auxiliary function, and low scores for the third and fourth function.

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2. Four letter combination delineation of personality type

The combination of four letters delineates the individual's type and 16 different types are therefore possible. **McCrea and Costa's** (1989) discussion of the Myers-Briggs type indicator in relation to their own NEO-PIU tests suggests that the biggest criticism of both **Jung** and **Myers-Briggs** is the assumption that each of the sixteen types is qualitatively different, and the individual will be within one of them. Most other measures of personality assume a normal distribution of qualities, with most people being on the average mid way between the two poles of each scale. To claim that individuals can be categorised at one pole or the other, **Myers and McCaulley** in the Myers-Briggs type indicator manual would need to show that scores on each scale are distributed bi-modally. They are not. However, **Myers and McCaulley** have answered back with a claim to support their dichotomies by using regression co-efficients for the two types EI. However, even they have to say that it is a very subtle effect requiring sample sizes of 4000-5000 to become apparent. They admit that their evidence is weak.

3C. Critique of the Myers Briggs personality type indicator

1. MCCRAE & COSTA: No evidence for presumed MBTI interaction effects

In their analysis of variance of the Myers-Brigg type indicator results from their own comparative sample, **McCrae and Costa** (1989) could not find the interaction effects which would have been required to support a 16 box matrix of the Myers-Briggs type. **Stricken and Ross** also failed to find such evidence as far back as 1964. But, if it is difficult to find evidence to support the idea of sixteen discrete personality types, there is even more of a problem about support for the Jungian concept of one factor being dominant, and the other auxiliary. The validation would require that subjects show higher preference scores in the dominant function as opposed to the auxiliary function, but **Myers and McCaulley** (1985) admit that *this is true in only 50% of their cases which does not exceed the level that would be expected by chance.*

2. MBTI does not distinguish the sixteen types in a quantitative way

In their research **McCrea and Costa** (1989) inter-correlate results from the Myers-Briggs type indicator and their own NEO-PI with participants in the Baltimore Longitudinal Study of Ageing, consisting of a group of 267 men aged 21-93 and 201 women aged 19-93. The results showed that when subjects were classified into the four letter codes that specify the types, men clustered into two groups (ISTJ (27%) and ESTJ (18%)) whilst the women were more evenly distributed amongst the sixteen types. Preliminary calculations showed few effects of age and gender, except older subjects were more likely to prefer judging to perceiving, and women more likely to prefer feeling to thinking. Longer time spent in education tended to relate to intuition. However, they could not conclude that the Myers-Briggs type indicator distinguishes the sixteen types in a quantitative way. Also, against Jung's predictions, the authors found no evidence of developments with age that would lead to subjects showing less extreme scores on opposing functions.

3. The advantages of NEO-PI over MBTI

When comparing scores on the two tests, **McCrae and Costa** found a strong correlation between each of the two measures of extraversion, and an equally strong relationship between Intuition (MBTI) and Openness (NEO-PI). There were substantial relationships between TF (Thinking/Feeling) and Agreeableness, and between JP (Judgement/Perceiving) and Openness. Since *the four indices all show convergence with at least one of the five factors in*

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the *Big Five Theory*, **McCrea** and **Costa** consider that this theory gives a clearer explanation of the differences measured by the MBTI. They also claim that it helps to explain some of the anomalous findings presented in the manual when comparing MBTI with other personality findings.

4. MBTI: 60% of individuals ‘ambiguous’ and so in reality unmeasured

These major criticisms need attention. *The failure to find unique configurations specified by the sixteen types undermines the main assumption of the Myers-Briggs type indicator that personalities fall into discrete types.* **McCrea** and **Costa** argue that the only difference between a person categorised INTJ and another, ENTJ, lies in the way the introverts differ from extraverts. Why? Because the scales have no way of measuring interactions between types to show how an extraverted intuitive person would behave differently from an introverted intuitive type, and so on for all the scales. In real life there are clearly differences in behaviour due to the interaction between functions. They suggest, as an example, that if both were going to a party, anxious introverts might worry about meeting strangers whilst anxious extraverts might worry about being left alone. If there were real differences in traits then different items would be required for Introverts and Extraverts on each of the other scales to produce the sixteen unique configurations required by the theory. They consider that practitioners would be better off using the transformation to continuous scales allowed in the manual, because this would avoid the problems of mis-classification of individuals who score close to the cut off points for each of the poles in a bi-polar scale. If the qualities assessed by Myers-Briggs type indicators are normally distributed in the way that other human characteristics seem to be, then up to sixty percent of individuals could be expected to fall into these ambiguous zones.

5. Other limitations of the MBTI

A scale that classifies a person as an extravert, but without teasing out different facets of that dimension, would be likely to produce odd groupings. Here is one. A similar middle range score can be obtained for a good, warm, active, assertive leader who is sober and serious; and a cheerful, excitement seeking, jovial character who would rather allow others to be active and make the decisions. These are differences which, for example, would certainly matter to many an employer. **McCrea** and **Costa** argue that practitioners need the additional information supplied by NEO-PI which assesses six facets of extraversion: Warmth, gregariousness, assertiveness, activity, excitement seeking, and positive emotions. This argument draws attention to the inherent weaknesses of attempting to measure personality at all, and the fact that accuracy depends on having a lengthy questionnaire that enables a user to draw out complex information through multiple scales. It is unlikely that the enormous complexity of individual personality differences could be characterised in a model which has but sixteen discrete slots.

6. No indicator related to Neuroticism

However, one of the greatest criticisms has been saved until last. The Myers-Briggs type indicator has no scale for Neuroticism. In fact, this dimension does not occur in **Jung’s** system, and it would be difficult to assimilate because it is not usually seen as a bi-polar concept. In many scales individuals score somewhere between normal and neurotic. The authors of the Myer Briggs Type Indicator wanted to maintain positive values at each end of all their scales with equal weighting, and neuroticism has a negative value at its extreme. Anxiety is undeniably a factor in human performance, so Neuroticism scores would be of value to all users whether they are employers and counsellors, or individuals seeking information about their own characteristics.

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7. Advantages of the MBTI – but at what cost?

Perhaps we should finish on a more positive note. The Myers-Briggs type indicator has added a great deal to human knowledge about how to describe and assess personality. It has given people a language, and set of concepts for exchanging information about personality differences. It has the advantage of being based on a well known theory about the nature of personality, whereas the five-factor approach has no such theory behind it. It also apparently has given an instrument for dividing people into groups for empirical work so that we can begin to find out why different people have different ways of behaving, or even of being religious. However, all this has been at a cost. The theory behind it, and the sixteen categories themselves are flawed. What then are we doing to people whom we are assessing? It is possible, incidentally, that the NEO-PI with its concept of five factors of personality will now lead the field for a while. This will add greater flexibility to measurement.

8. In Conclusion

The important thing, therefore, is to realise that human personality is so complex that it cannot be encapsulated either in a set of dimensions or a range of types. Any measurement we do, therefore, is strictly for empirical reasons. There must be an understanding that we are taking a snapshot that is relevant to the hour. It is not a complete characterisation of a person for all of time. Such an image may be helpful in counselling and in guidance, but we should be very, very careful about using such a fallible instrument for deciding, for example, on an individual's suitability for employment, or deciding between individuals in an interview.

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UNIT 6: SELF CONCEPT THEORIES

A. INTRODUCTION

1A. Bibliography and Aims

1. Aims of this unit

In this unit we shall be adding self concept theories to our range of theories about personality and beginning to look at different views of emotional development and maladjustment. You will then have a basis for comparison of the ways of describing personality and you can choose the model that suits your situation best. We shall also look briefly at some of the social learning theories that have grown out of self concept theories.

2. Bibliography

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2A. Questions and activities

1. Questions

- (1) Are the 'Super Ego' and the 'Ideal Self' descriptions of the same aspect of personality or are there some essential differences? How would you help a person overwhelmed by feelings of guilt using the concepts of either theory?
- (2) How do you attribute your own failures? Could you change your attitude on one or more of the dimensions internal-external, controllable-random, changeable-unchangeable, and

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build up your self esteem? Is there anything in religious teaching that tends to produce negative self concepts and de-value self?

2. Activity

(a) Instructions

Here is a practical activity for you to try after the work that we are to do in Unit 6. We are asking you to construct your own repertory grid based on Kelly's approach for describing personal constructs.

- (1) Make a list of people that you know well. They can be relatives or friends. Include yourself on the list as both self and ideal self.
- (2) Construct a table by listing all the names down the left hand side of the page. Eight to ten names would be enough. Draw columns alongside the names.
- (3) Write each name on a separate piece of card. The backs of the cards should look the same.
- (4) Draw three cards randomly from the pack and decide how two of them are alike and one of them is different. You can make the comparison on any dimension you like. A and B are cruel to animals, C loves animals, etc..
- (5) Write the names of the dimensions above one of the columns using the positive pole to name the dimension. For the example in 4 the label would be, 'Love animals.'
- (6) Put pluses and minuses alongside the other names on the table in the column you have just labelled according to their position on the dimension.
- (7) Repeat steps 4-6 at least ten times.

You will not be able to do a statistical calculation on your results to extract your major constructs. But, on the whole, the ones you thought of first are likely to be the most important for you and you may find that several of them do relate together to form a general construction. You will be able to read along the lines to see whether your perceptions of each of the selected the people are generally positive or negative. Finally, you can compare the 'self' and the 'ideal self' columns and assess the gap between aspiration and reality.

(b) A further suggestion

If you are really interested, try it on someone else. If you do not want to use the technique in relation to people it can also be used to assess a set of activities, churches, books, subjects of study (history, geography, etc.), Theologians. You replace the names on the rows with the names of the set you want to consider and draw three at random in the same way, deciding how two are alike and one is different.

B. SELF CONCEPT THEORIES

1B. Basis and Conceptualisation of self concept theories

1. Non-Freudian & Personality cannot be categorised by type

The self concept theories have grown up in opposition to both psychodynamic (Freud) and factor-analytical schools (Eysenck). Their authors are opposed to **Freud** because they feel he stressed unconscious motivation and inaccessible personality processes at the cost of the ego and personal freedom of action. They are opposed to **Eysenck** because they resist attempts to characterise a human person's unique personality in terms of a finite set of traits and types.

2. The basis of Self-concept theories

Self concept theories focus their research on that part of the personality that the individual knows and experiences directly, and which he or she think make decisions about behaviour

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and feels responsible for the consequences of those decisions. They concede that other factors may be operating but contend that they are not accessible either to study or to change. They suggest that it makes more sense to study the self that is open to consciousness and promote change through it. **Allport** (1961) also insists that there is a 'self' or 'me' which is the central organising factor within the experiences and the decision-maker. He says that the self is, 'the dynamic organisation within the individual of those psychological systems that determine his characteristic behaviour and thought.' Self concept theories are often condemned for being unscientific in that there is no demonstrable part of the brain that is the self. It is hence argued that they are in danger of creating an infinite regress by postulating a self inside the brain receiving and self consciously reflecting on experiences, perceptions, and motivations. Self awareness has been an ongoing problem for both psychologists and philosophers.

3. Self concept theories as a constellation of concepts integrated around 'me'

For the moment I will forget the objections to self concept theories and try to describe what they are. The self is described, like any other concept, as being built up over time from both memories of our own actions, and also from memories of other people's treatment and attitude towards us. It is not a single concept but a constellation of concepts integrated around 'me' whom 'I' perceive directly as having continuity over time and being the same individual as received my childhood and early adult experiences. I know that 'I' persist over time. Although some of 'my' behaviours are very different because my body has changed, and I have learned many more things. 'I' also directly experience my emotions so that I know when I am feeling afraid or unhappy.

4. Important aspects of self concepts

It is useful to distinguish three important aspects of the self concept because their inter-relationship has effects on behaviour. Since pronouns can get very confused in this sort of writing and lecturing, I will relate everything to myself.

5. 'Self for others'

(a) Definition

First of all, I have a **self for others**. This is a set of masks that I can adopt in different situations. They are roles that I play as I tune into the information I am receiving from those others about the behaviour that they expect from me. This aspect of self is closely related to language acquisition because I have learned from experience the appropriate language registers to adopt when I am talking to different people in different situations.

(b) Interaction with 'the other'

I am one kind of self when talking to colleagues, another to students or pupils, another to policemen, another to shop assistants, another in the family and so on. I am aware that I am the same person reacting to all these different people, but each of them may perceive me as a totally different person, and I could be very inconsistent in different people in different situations.

6. 'Real Self'

I also have a **real self** which is a concept I have built up from a more or less objective assessment of how I actually behave and whether or not that behaviour reflects what I consider to be the real me is out of character with my image of myself. Some people are better than others at knowing their real selves. Some become confused by one or other of the masks that they have assumed, or roles that they play, and lose track of their real self. Some children

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who are continually criticised and undervalued by their parents can develop a negative self-concept where they become self destructive because they have not learned to value or esteem themselves. Some children are caught in a double bind because a parent is hostile to them, resenting their presence yet outwardly conforming to the mark of a 'good parent'. The children receive both sets of signals; the overt protestations of love and the covert hatred. They are hence not able to form a unified, positive self-concept since they do not know whether they are loveable or despicable persons.

7. 'The Ideal self'

The third aspect of the self concept I need to consider is the **ideal self**, the subject of my daydreams and aspirations. Some parts of this ideal concept I know are unrealistic, escapist fantasies, but other parts are images of what I would like to become, characteristics and goals distilled from my respect for the significant other people in my life, and the expectations they have of me. Again, parents may play an important role in the formation of the ideal self, and if they set objectives that are unrealistic, I may internalise standards of perfection that I could never attain. The conflict between an unattainable ideal self and a negative real self concept can be serious, since the sense of worthlessness can cause a state of guilt and depression which is self destructive.

8. A cross reference note

Fonagy and **Higgitt** present a summary of two self concept theories in Chapter 5 of their book where they are called *Humanistic theories*. We shall encounter **Carl Rogers** again when we think about counselling techniques and part of the work for this block will include a practical based on **Kelly's** repertory grid technique.

2B. Heider's Attribution theory: A worked example

1. Introduction

For the rest of this unit I want to look at attribution theory which is not handled in such detail in the standard textbooks, but which may offer some insights into the complexity of self concepts and their relationship to environmental influences.

2. Heider's Attribution theory stated

Attribution theory arises from a theory by **Heider** (1958). He was trying to find a formula for explaining differences in performance, and suggested the following:

$$\text{Performance} = (\text{Ability} \times \text{Motivation}) + \text{Task Difficulty.}$$

$$\text{i.e.: } P = (A \times M) + D$$

If either ability or motivation are absent there can be no successful performance, so these two are put in a multiplicative relationship – zero on either would result in no action. This is not a formula that could actually be applied mathematically unless the variables involved can somehow be measured. Rather, it is a model for the relationship between wanting to do something, having the ability to do it, and the difficulty of doing it. Each of them can vary independently, and we can take them all into account when we try to explain a failure to ourselves- or other people. We might say that we didn't really want the job – after being turned down at an interview; or the examination questions were so hard that no-one was expected to pass.

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3. Attribution theory: Types of Explanation by a person for success or failure

(a) Comment

Heider's work led to a spate of theories about the attributions people make about their failures, and a considerable amount of research to locate the applicable variables. Currently, it is the general thinking that we each have individual tendencies to use one or more of three types of explanation. These can be represented on bi-polar dimensions.

(b) Bi-polar dimensional mapping of explanations

(1) We may make an attribution that is either internal to ourselves, or external to ourselves. So: I might say that I have failed my music exam because I am not musically gifted, or because the piano that I was playing had notes that stuck and the examiner seemed to take no account.

(2) We may use explanations that are changeable or fixed. To take again the musical example: I might think that I cannot change my musical ability, but, the piano could be repaired.

(3) We might use an attribution that is either under our own control, or out of our own control either because it is a random factor, or because it is controlled by other people.

4. Factors for failure or success in bi-polar mapping

(a) A tabulation

Now, some of the factors involved can appear under one or more of these headings. So here is a table with some suggestions. It attempts to make things clear in relation to success in one's career.

<i>Internal</i>	<i>External (to self)</i>
Ability	Luck
Effort	Marital status
<i>Controllable</i>	<i>Uncontrollable (by self)</i>
Time spent studying	Economic depression
Effort	Resources at place of work
Good planning	Promotion policies
	Luck
<i>Open to change.</i>	<i>Fixed or constant</i>
Luck	Male or female
Marital status.	Ability (?)
	Personality (?)

(b) Our story in these terms

The story we tell to ourselves to account for success or failure is very closely related to our self esteem, the extent to which we value ourselves positively or negatively, the difficulty of the task, and the amount of success or failure we previously had. A positive person whose previous experience has led him or her to expect success but who encounters failure will tend to adopt an internal, controllable explanation that is open to change, perhaps failing to plan effectively, or not having made enough effort. He or she is quite likely to adopt the same explanation when faced with success, i.e.: the attempt was well planned and he or she worked hard for it. So each success will add to the positive feelings about himself or herself, and to the belief that every situation can be controlled if you work hard enough, while failures will be shrugged off as temporary setbacks that do not affect the generally positive and confident feeling about the self.

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5. Description of the person with negative self concept

A negative person who expects and then experiences a failure will tend to adopt either an internal, uncontrollable, and fixed explanation such as believing that he or she does not have the ability to succeed at that particular task. This will mean that each new failure will add another increment to the negative self concept and make him or her less capable of succeeding in the future. Alternatively, he or she may adopt an external, uncontrollable, and fixed explanation, like a failing teacher blaming their behaviour on the children who originate in disturbed homes. Either way, the person with a negative self concept is caught in a vicious circle where every experience is expected to produce failure. When it does it merely confirms to them the worthlessness or the helplessness of the individual concerned.

6. FONAGY & HIGGITT: Learned Helplessness

A vicious circle of this kind is very difficult to break. Even if you manipulate the situation so that the person achieves success, he or she is likely to attribute it to external and uncontrollable circumstances like luck. It will not therefore add to his or her self concept to make it more positive. The solution to this problem is to change the individual's attribution pattern, particularly in respect of controllability. **Fonagy** and **Higgitt** present **Seligman's** theory about learned helplessness in some detail. You will see that a great deal of the damage is done in the early relationship between child and parents, and so it is difficult to change a negative self concept in an adult. But, this is the kind of work that counsellors undertake, and **Rogers'** client centred therapy is one of the ways of approaching the problem.

7. Attribution theory and Freud's Ego defence mechanism

(a) Similarity stated and analysed

In my mind there is a parallel between the concepts of attribution theory, and **Freud's** Ego defence mechanisms. The function of both is to protect the self from damage when it feels under attack. Our attributions are conscious ways of explaining the consequences of particular actions, and for a positive person they protect self esteem from feelings of failure. The Ego defence mechanisms also protect the conscious self or ego, but generally on a narrower front. They protect us from feeling the effects of our unconscious conflicts and unresolved feelings of guilt and shame, so they operate mainly in the emotional realm. Our attributions, on the other hand, operate on a much broader front covering all behaviour, including how we learn, make friends, and carry out our normal social life. In fact, they could cover any area of activity where we might judge ourselves to be a success or failure.

(b) Involuntariness of negative self concept

The similarities are perhaps greater if we think about the formation of a negative self concept and its effect on behaviour. We have seen that a person who has a negative self concept has lost control of what has happened to him or her. This is because everything he or she sees or does is perceived through the distorted glass of the negative self concept which selects those explanations that confirm the growing sense of failure and helplessness. This distortion is applied involuntarily and unconsciously, and we have seen that it is difficult to change by methods that appeal to reason and the conscious self. The negative self concept is also formed in early childhood like the super-ego, which can have an equally distorting effect by censoring what we perceive and do on the basis of infantile concepts of unacceptable behaviour.

(c) Synthesis

Attribution theory seems to me to be an attempt to describe and explain the same kind of personality problems as Freud was struggling to interpret. We do not always behave in ways

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that are rational and in our own best interests. Through no fault of our own we can sometimes do things that are self destructive. The self concept theorists have tried to explain this by using ideas and language drawn from cognitive psychology and avoid the possibility of deep unconscious personality structures driving behaviour. **Freud** is happy to postulate such structures, although their existence would be difficult to prove.

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UNIT 7A: GENDER

A. INTRODUCTION: QUESTIONS AND CONCEPTS

1A. Aims and concepts

1. The aims of this unit

In this unit we will be examining a selection of issues related to gender with the intention of raising questions to lead you into further study. All the major religions have doctrines concerning gender differences and sex roles. A critical examination of the effect that these have on behaviour, lifestyle, family relationships and breakdowns, and the Twentieth Century struggle to achieve equality for women will need to be made. An underlying theme is to look for the origin of gender differences and sex stereotypes within the history of society and the development of the individual.

2. Concepts

The following are important concepts linked with this unit. Gender. Gender Identity. Gender stability. Gender constancy. Sex role. Sex role stereotyping. Masculine. Feminine.

2A. Questions and Bibliography

1. Questions

Here are some questions to keep in mind as you study this unit. You may like to sketch your perspectives or answers to them at its end.

- (1) How do children develop their concepts of gender identity and sex roles?
- (2) What are the relative importances of genetic and environmental influences on gender development? How do they interact?
- (3) Historically, women and women's roles have been valued less than men and men's roles. What could or should be done about this?
- (4) Will equal opportunities best be achieved through legislation?
- (5) Do religious ideas hinder or facilitate equality of treatment for women?
- (6) By what principles can we decide about sex roles in our society?
- (7) How do gender stereo-types confuse the roles adopted in counselling?
- (8) What is the best way to achieve equality of treatment for men and women?
- (9) Is androgyny the ideal for the Twenty-first Century?
- (10) How do gender concepts affect relationships between men and women? How might more equal attitudes improve relationships?

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B. THE FORMATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF GENDER CONCEPTS

1B. The formation of gender concepts

1. Introduction

The Gender concepts is one of the main parts of the self concept at which we looked in Unit 6. So Gender concepts play an important role in what an individual believes about himself or herself and the way that belief affects choices, expectations, behaviour, attitudes, and above all, self esteem.

2. Some definitions

If we are to understand the process of formation of gender concepts we need to distinguish some definitions.

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- (1) A 'gender concept' is a cognition about what it means to be a girl or boy, man or woman. It starts when a child first realises that there are gender differences and that he or she has a particular 'gender identity'.
- (2) A 'sex role' is a set of behaviours, attitudes, rights, duties, and obligations that go along with belonging to a particular gender.
- (3) Gender identities, i.e.: the ability to label one's own sex correctly, are determined, in the main, by genetic structure. The possession of a 'Y' chromosome will result in a male sexual characteristics and gender identity, and the lack of 'Y' will result in a female identity. The basic genetic instructions contained in every cell are to make a female unless the process is interrupted at critical stages by the 'Y' chromosome. There are some exceptions to this rule in that a few people, mainly men, are convinced from early childhood that they belong to the opposite gender in spite of having the sexual characteristics consistent with their chromosomal structure and there are even fewer individuals who are genetically male but who do not fully develop male sexual characteristics because the 'Y' chromosome has not operated correctly, who have the main appearance of being female, who are assigned to that gender at birth and are raised as such.
- (4) 'Sex-typing' and 'sex role behaviour' are terms used to describe whether or not a person's behaviour matches the sex role to which he or she has been assigned as is expected to play. These terms make no value judgements about the origins of those sex roles or the fairness of the expectations but refer to the extent to which any individual has internalised the role of male or female as presented in his or her society and family. A girl may know that she is a girl and explain that she will be a mother when she grows up and accurately describe behaviour expected of girls while at the same time preferring to climb trees and play with 'Meccano' in conflict with her known sex type and role behaviours.

3. Sex-role stereotyping

'Sex role stereotyping' refers to the way we define and treat individuals according to their different sex roles and enforce the roles in ways that conflict with that freedom, individual differences, and preferences. Stereotyping is often a consequence of insecurity about expected roles, so fathers may discourage their boys from showing emotions because they are afraid that their sons will be thought less than masculine if they display any of the 'female' emotions like crying. Stereotyping is often described as an exertion of power to force women in particular, into playing menial roles which are less valued than male roles. It is widely present in society, often operating at an unconscious level through group norms, the media and literature though sometimes deliberately and cynically used to promote personal power.

4. Discerning the issue and its parameters

In a society which is busy re-thinking its attitude to gender, there is a great deal of confusion about whether sex roles should be, or need to be, different. Would, for example, abolishing stereotyping result in role confusion or even role fusion with a loss of distinctive gender traits that may play an advantageous role in the structure of society. The discussion of what it means to be a man or woman should not confuse the discussion of fairness and equality. If the final conclusion is that there are some distinctive qualities associated with each gender identity which are to be nurtured, this must be accompanied by an equal valuing of both genders, the work they do, and the roles they play. Many women experience unfairness and oppression at home and work which they want removed but they wish to keep their feminine identities and not have to take on some of the unacceptable aspects of masculinity in order to achieve equality.

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2B. Development of Gender Concepts

1. THOMPSON: Stages of a child working out his or her gender concept

(a) A first stage

There seem to be three steps in a child working out his or her gender concept. The first step is noticing that there are differences between men and women and being able to identify them correctly. This step seems to start at about the age of fifteen to eighteen months, and is complete by about the age of two years. The research is done by showing children pictures, and asking them to point to the boys or girls, men or women. They are also asked to pick out, 'Which one are you?' (Thompson 1975 cited in Bee /357.) The main features used at this stage are length of hair and clothing so it is possible for children to become confused when men have long hair and women wear trousers.

They seem not to have any idea of gender stability at this stage and they may give wrong answers to questions like, 'When you were a tiny baby, were you a girl or a boy?' 'When you grow up will you be a mummy or a daddy?'

(b) A second and third stage

Gender stability is usually established around age four years (Slaby and Frey 1975) but a child who knows that s/he will stay the same gender throughout life still needs to take the third step of realising that people remain in one gender in spite of changing their clothes and appearance. This concept of gender constancy is usually grasped around the same time as the other constancies of mass, number, and weight which are acquired at the age of five or six years.

2. KUHN, NASH, & BRUCKEN: Very early child perception of sex roles

The concept of gender has to be slowly filled in with knowledge of what it means to be a boy or girl; the sex role concept. It is easy enough to explore what children think about sex roles. The arguments start when psychologists explore how they come by their ideas. Children of thirty months can be shown pictures of boys and girls, or given doll toys, and asked about what the figures would like to do and play with. The answers are already strongly stereotyped even by children brought up by parents who wish to be non-sexist. Both boys and girls agree that girls like to play with dolls, help mother, play at cooking and cleaning the house, talk a lot, never hit people and often ask for help. Boys like to play with cars, help father, build things, and say, 'I'll hit you.' In addition girls think that girls look nice, give kisses, and never fight, whilst boys are mean and weak and like to fight. Boys think that boys work hard and that girls are often crying and being slow (Kuhn, Nash, and Brucken 1978 in Bee /359).

3. DAMON: Fluctuations in stereotyping during the growing-up process

(a) Damon's thesis

It is easy to see that these concepts match adult stereotypes when men are seen as competent, skilful, assertive, aggressive and efficient at getting things done while women are perceived as warm, expressive, tactful, quiet, gentle, aware of the feelings of others and lacking in competence and independence. Damon 1977 (in Bee /359) found that stereotyping fluctuates over the growing up period. Stereotypes are most strongly held by primary school children from six to eight years of age. His method of research was to tell the children a story about George who likes to play with dolls. They buy him other toys, but George still prefers dolls. Damon then asks why people tell him not to play with dolls; whether they are right to do so; what George ought to do about it, and whether he has the right to play with dolls. Finally he asks whether it would be acceptable for George to wear a dress to school.

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(b) Data from Damon's supporting research

In the research four year olds thought that it was alright for George to play with dolls because there was no rule against it. Six year olds thought it was definitely wrong for George to play with dolls and there were rules about what boys and girls ought to do which were enforced by peers through teasing and isolation. By age nine the children had realised that it was not actually wrong to play with the dolls in the same way that it might be wrong to break a window. He could do it but counted it among things that boys usually did not do.

4. BEE: Gender identity and 'fulfilment rules' in early primary children

(a) General observations

Bee (1985) and other cognitive psychologists suggest that by the age of five or six most children have worked out their gender identity and are searching around for 'rules' that will tell them how to fulfil their sex roles. They collect information like this from many sources, including statements made to them like, 'Boys don't cry.' Expectations conveyed by their parents and teachers, roles played by the adults around them, and in the media. At first each new item is treated as an absolute, moral rule, but later they become aware of the variation in the information being conveyed and become more flexible, though, as already stated, stereotypes do persist into adulthood. Male stereotypes and sex role concepts develop earlier and appear to be stronger than female. In observations of fathers with babies and young children, they are seen to be reinforcing stereotypes much more strongly than mothers who tolerate cross sex choice of toys and occupations more readily. From an early age more children agree on what a man should be like than a woman perhaps because they see more of women and receive many messages about what women do whilst their contact with men is limited. Flexibility in women's roles and dress is common in our society so it is perfectly acceptable for women to wear trousers and mend cars, and for girls to be tom-boys. But it is not acceptable, for example, for men to wear skirts and cry in public. In any case, both sexes show that they have learned early on that male roles are more valued and it is good to be independent, assertive, logical, and strong, and less good to be warm, tactful, and gentle. So it may be that girls aspire to some of the valued male qualities whilst boys need to assert their different identities by rejecting everything female.

(b) Toys and sex role behaviour: An experiment in reversal

In their choice of toys, children show implicit knowledge of sex role behaviour from two to three years of age. If left to choose their own occupations in nurseries the girls will gravitate to house-keeping games, manipulative toys and dolls whilst boys will select guns, cars, and construction kits. If the situation is managed by the teacher so that sex role choices are reduced and boys play in the Wendy house and the girls with the construction kits, they will play in completely different ways; the boys often using the utensils as weapons, and the girls making houses and figures from the construction kits. When eight or nine year olds are asked for their Christmas choices, the boys still choose the computer games and the girls the fantasy animals and books. Sociologists blame parents for buying sex labelled toys and equipping their bedrooms from babyhood so as to reinforce gender stereotypes, but no one has as yet achieved the definitive study which will show whether parents buy what their children prefer because they just find it more fun to play with their own choice of toys, or whether children prefer what their parents buy them because they are responding to years of social expectation.

5. MACCOBY & JACKLIN: Child sex role behaviour is self generated

In a classic longitudinal study, **Maccoby and Jacklin** (1974) found there was little evidence that parents consistently reinforce appropriate sex role behaviour and they were quite tolerant of play with cross sex toys in early childhood. And yet, the two to three year old girls chose

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to play with dolls, and boys with cars and guns. They also found that there was little evidence that children imitate same sex adults rather than opposite sex adults until they are five or six years old, which is after they have developed and demonstrated in research, a strong set of ideas about their sex roles. It can be seen that while pressures to fulfil their sex roles are present in their environment, children learn at their own pace what it means to be male and female. This is before those pressures have become strongly operative. Cognitive theorists argue that something more active than passive social conditioning and reinforcement is going on. They suggest that the formation of the gender concept is the mediating factor so that once children have fully grasped gender constancy they seek to maintain cognitive consistency by actively seeking for appropriate ways to fulfil their roles. At first they are rigid in their understanding and application of the 'rules' often accepting stereotypes that shock their more liberal parents, but as the sex role concept deepens they perceive the possibility for greater individual flexibility of behaviour.

6. FRENCH & FRENCH: Same sex school groups with boys dominant

From an early stage children choose to play with same sex play mates, and in primary school play and work almost exclusively with same sex groups. They are more sociable with companions of the same sex and it is possible to observe teasing and hostility between opposite sex playgroups from nursery stage onwards. Again, this antagonism increases in primary school where boys dominate the classroom and playground for their own activities and actively exclude girls from the best places and resources. Teacher behaviour has often been shown to be biased towards boys though not necessarily in their favour, and boys dominate the talk in the classroom, receiving most of the teacher attention, questions, criticism, and reinforcements. Even when teachers are trying to be fair, boys manage to monopolise their attention, often as **French and French** (1984) showed because of the behaviour of two or three boys who behave outrageously to attract attention and cannot be ignored.

7. School: An anti-male or anti-female environment

(a) How the genders seem to work out in schools

Theorists differ about whether school is an anti-male or an anti-female environment. Girls have been shown to be disadvantaged by the behaviour of both boys and teachers, and yet they are consistently more successful than boys at all subjects in the primary school. In secondary schools the situation changes, and girls seem to fail to fulfil their potential at mathematical and scientific subjects, and fewer of them go on to higher education than their achievements would warrant. Explanations for this range considerably. (1) The girls' own perceptions of the subjects as hard or a subject for boys. (2) The idea that they acquire that they will not have boy friends if they excel at school-work especially in boy's subjects. (3) Their perception that it is not feminine to be assertive and ambitious. (4) The bias treatment they receive from teachers which discourages them from taking chances and learning from their mistakes. (5) Boys under perform in the arts subjects and languages, but do not consider this to be a disadvantage since they consider these to be girls' subjects and less valuable than mathematics or science.

(b) Schools as anti-male environments?

It is difficult to see why it has ever been said that schools are anti-male environments, but this reason is advanced to explain why boys predominate in groups which have special learning needs, particularly in relation to learning to read and write, or who have emotional or behavioural problems. They are often said to be reacting to the fact that schools are dominated by females who teach effeminate subjects like reading, which are not valued or used by their fathers. Children's books are said to be full of sex-stereotyped behaviour which

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under value girls' activities and show boys doing all the exciting and adventurous things, and yet it is the girls who learn to read easily and most effectively, and the boys who have most of the difficulties.

C GENDER STEREOTYPING CASUALTIES: ATTACKING STEREOTYPES

1C. Attacking stereotypes

1. Equality of treatment for girls and ethnic minorities in school curricula

Teachers in training have been made aware of sex stereotypes in training for some thirty years now. Efforts are being made in policy documents and buying of resource to promote equality of treatment not only for girls but also for children of other ethnic origins. These latter have been shown to suffer from prejudiced treatment, and under perform because of false expectations about them and lack of support in teaching in their mother tongues at an early age. Part of the promotion of equality has been related to the teaching of Religious Education, and within this subject a number of problems can be encountered and countered. From the point of view of children who belong to other religions, their faiths are now valued in the curriculum promoted by the government, for the teaching of other world faiths was for the first time enshrined in an U.K. Education Act in 1988. Nevertheless, Religious Education is 'largely Christian' and was legislated to be so that way also in that same 1988 Act. This issue is not relevant, however, to our studies here.

2. Gender stereotypes within different faiths and traditions

(a) Religions reinforce gender stereotypes

What is relevant, is that all major religions, including Christianity within some traditions, reinforce gender stereotypes which deny the equality of men and women. Passages of Sacred Scripture from all those religions can be quoted to justify the exercise of power by men, and the expected submission of women. Most religious people that they do this because of their deep respect for women, a claim which seems denied by actions at all levels. Some Hindu girls are so well respected that they can be killed at birth or even after marriage if dowry settlements turn out to be a problem. Muslim girls are told how to behave and dress in public relative to men and often have their marriages arranged for them in a way which totally denies their freedom. They have no equality when it comes to divorce, or the celebration of their religion. Similarly there are Jewish and Christian traditions that segregate men from women in the place of worship and give leading liturgical roles to men. In some Christian traditions women are so well respected that they cannot be ordained as priests or associated with them in marriage, though unorthodox relationships seem to be tolerated. One becomes well aware that there are of course more liberal branches of all religions that accept the equality of women and give them equal value in the place of worship, in the home, and before the law. But religious fundamentalism of whatever persuasion can lead to fanatical enforcement of anti-female doctrine, which is easily supported from the quotation of Scripture.

(b) The bankruptcy of Scripture in the eyes of the liberal quest

Liberal theologians of all religions have had to realise that questions about the position of women in society cannot for them be answered from the Scriptures which do not in most places address the question of equality and injustice. However much these Theologians look for stories and images that show, for example, the tenderness of Christ or His respect for women, all religions with a written tradition have a male Deity. He is described in words and images that celebrate masculine qualities in a manner that apparently potentially alienates

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some women from religion altogether. Indeed some teaching goes beyond a celebration of the male to a denigration of much that is female. This gives rise to the suspicion amongst some feminists that much of the anti-female behaviour that is perpetrated in the name of religion arises from deep seated fear and hostility to women that is rationalised on religious grounds.

(c) BORROWDALE: 'Distorted Images' (1991)

Borrowdale's 'Distorted Images,' (1991) gives a balanced review of many of the issues involved and shows how Christianity may be reinforcing the hostile stereotypes that give rise to pornography, domestic and sexual abuse and violence while simultaneously promoting a concept of the perfect, gentle, and submissive woman. She shows that the distortions have an equally limiting effect on men in their expectations of leadership and control of power and concepts of uncontrollable sexual urges which women must not provoke by their dress or behaviour.

3. The fount of authority for determining male and female gender roles

If the questions about male and female gender roles cannot wholly be answered from the sacred texts of major religions, there arises a moral dilemma about the source of authority that can determine them.

- (1) Appealing to historical custom will result in a stalemate because inequality has a long history dating from a time when the differences in strength and physique between men and women may have had a biological and survival function.
- (2) Some people see authority resting in the natural world. They assume that if there are differences in genetic programming for men and women leading to differences in personality and temperament, it must hence be right for men to have power, careers, and domination over women. Women, for their part, are to be confined to the home, child rearing, creative things, and submission. The major assumptions involved here are whether there really are such differences in temperament, behaviour etc..
- (3) Can these be shown to be genetically programmed? The science of bio-genetics has been making progress in the last few years and the genetic structure of human beings is rapidly being mapped in terms of the way the codes are represented on the D.N.A.. This has resulted in an explosion of work concerned with illnesses that may have a genetic base and the development of a range of experimental techniques. These techniques show how sex is determined and some of the sex-linked characteristics that result in an illness like haemophilia. They have not developed far enough to show that there might be a genetic base to gender roles perhaps determining differences of temperament like aggression and sociability. Even if bio-genetics do show that men and women have difference mental structures and emotional coding they will not be able to say that one set of characteristics is superior to the other because this is a matter for value judgements and moral decision making.

4. Single and two parent families

Some people argue directly on moral grounds that children need to be raised in families where there are two parents who divide the work between them. Since women are biologically and temperamentally better suited to caretaking they should be responsible for looking after the young children while the men take financial responsibility for the whole family and the home. Psychologists have something to contribute to this argument. It is clear from years of research on early learning, language development and the effects of divorce on children that very young children thrive with the attention of an adult caretaker with whom they can bond and with whom they can acquire mastery of language and a number of social and cognitive lessons. All children do better in cognitive, emotional and social development if they do not lose contact with one parent through social break up and divorce. The jury is still out about

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whether being raised by a single parent is equally damaging, but it does now appear that it is the particular circumstances of divorce rather than bereavement or single motherhood that produce most harm. This is a powerful weapon to wield against women who are looking for fulfilment in their work as well as in motherhood and often feel guilty if these two aims come into conflict. Psychology, however, does not argue that the caretaker has to be the mother and **Schaeffer** (1991) has reviewed the research on this issue and shown that fathers are equally effective as caretakers and their children bond with them just as well. Hence, the moral issue perhaps ought to be whether two parents take equal responsibility for the care of their children and both make equal sacrifices of personal freedom and promotion prospects within their careers.

5. Vision for the future: A concluding note

In the end discussion about the removal of gender stereotypes and oppressive behaviour of one gender against another will have to be about social justice and a principle of equality and treatment irrespective of sex, race, age or any other factor which can be used by one group against another. The work on moral development (see Unit 12) sometimes suggests that reasoning about moral principles involves a high level of moral thinking not attained by all. Many people may find themselves functioning at another level and having their moral thinking decided by some authority, which is why religious dogma has such a stranglehold on thinking about equality. On a more hopeful note, the major religions all have the possibility within their sacred texts for a principled morality if these aspects can be stressed against a narrow legalism.

2C. Casualties of Gender stereotyping: Evidence from counsellors

1. The family role of mothering women and its demands

Counsellors may find themselves involved with gender issues in many aspects of their work. Boys and girls are not educated in respect for each other and an understanding of each other's needs, and many come to believe in the stereotypes that they read and see around them in real life and on the media. This means that when they come to forging relationships with each other at work or within marriage and family life they start from an unrealistic basis and cannot hear each other's statements about unacceptable behaviour and destructive attitudes. Young men and women may have internalised their sex roles to perfection and begin married life in what seems to be a satisfying and complimentary relationship. As long as the woman can pursue her career she may well be happy. The arrival of a baby changes her position and produces role conflict as she faces decisions about how to follow best her two careers. It is a very unselfish partner who can recognise and help to supply her needs in this situation. Many women find they have to mature very rapidly indeed to deal simultaneously with their baby's needs and their husbands' problems of adjustment to the arrival of such demanding rivals for their wives' attention. *Panorama* in January 1994 quoted figures that show that marriages are now becoming more likely to break up shortly after the arrival of children because couples cannot make the necessary adjustments leaving an increasing number of pre-school children to cope with divorce and the loss of their father.

2. Further evidence: Fathers and recent child support agency proposals

It is interesting to be writing this at a time when the Child Support Agency has generated such wrath from fathers who have been asked to take an equal amount of responsibility for the children they have pro-created. It is no doubt true that some fathers have been wrongly assessed and asked to pay more money on top of previous settlements that they think were generous. But the interesting thing is that those who are protesting have assumed that it is

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perfectly acceptable for them to leave one relationship and produce children within another. They assume that it is only the first wife who should make a long-term commitment to raising the first set of children.

3. Changes in women's understanding of themselves

Changes in women's understanding of themselves and their own sexual responses also mean that they are less prepared to stay within unfulfilling relationships. The macho stereotype internalised by many boy children means that men have little knowledge of women's sexual needs and see their own in terms of satisfying an overwhelming drive by whatever means available. It is uncertain whether or not there is an actual increase in the amount of sexual violence both within and outside marriage, but there is certainly more reporting of rape and child sexual abuse. The existence of both hard and soft pornography suggests that some men have an extremely distorted view of their own and women's sexuality. While 'Relate' counsellors may see themselves as mainly helping couples to make better relationships with each other and to communicate, they find themselves increasingly having to help both sexes understand each other's sexual responses. They find here a defective knowledge gained from peers' magazines, books of a certain kind, and the media, all of which constantly re-inforce destructive sexual stereotypes.

4. Counselling and women within the working environment

(a) Women within the working environment

Counsellors may also find themselves involved in helping women to cope with the effects of prejudice within their career choices or place of work. Sometimes they need support to take on more challenging work because everything in their previous experience tells them that women should not be ambitious and draw attention to themselves. Sometimes they do take a step up the career ladder only to find that they are the focus of male jealousy and anger that isolates them from other workers at the same level of management and the ranks from which they have advanced. Sometimes they are blocked from making any advance at all on the grounds that they can give less commitment to their work because they are responsible for children who sometimes become ill and have short school days and long school holidays. The immediate assumption is that women can only have advancement if they are unencumbered with children, or have others to take care of their children. Men are rarely asked about their children at job interviews and their appointments and promotion theoretically depend on qualifications and competence. Although strictly it is illegal, intending female teachers are still sometimes asked at job interviews about their intentions for marriage or arrangements for taking care of their children. Compared with other European countries, Great Britain is backward at providing good, affordable child care facilities or creating conditions of employment that allow parents, fathers, and mothers, to be home in time to take care of their children after school.

(b) The role of counselling to limit damage and help adjustment

Sooner or later, anger, or resulting stress about the way they are treated at work surfaces for most women, and they need the support of counsellors or workshops to help them adjust to the situation that might otherwise result in physical or mental illness. Business managers also need training in how to create management structures and working conditions that minimise rather than maximise stress for all their employees, particularly the women. Whether counsellors should be engaged in reliving stress created by prejudice and stereotyping or working to eliminate it in the workplace is a matter for moral judgement.

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5. Same and opposite gender counselling

(a) The issue: Positive and negative factors

A further counselling issue arises when we start to consider whether it is best for men to counsel men and women to counsel women. There are some traditions of therapy based on psycho-dynamic traditions which suggest that the transference is more successful with a member of the opposite sex especially if the individual concerned is working through unresolved conflicts concerning a spouse or opposite sex parent. On the negative side, counsellors have to realise that strong emotions can be released in a counselling situation and they may become emotionally involved with their clients, and their clients with them. In many voluntary organisations the majority of the counsellors are women, whilst in most churches up to the present, the majority of ministers are men. It is possible that clients make a self-selection in the particular organisation they choose to give them counsel and certainly within voluntary organisations they can say they would rather talk to a man or a woman, and that wish will be accepted.

(b) The dangers

Gender concepts can distort counselling relationships if women play the submissive role to a male counsellor and expect him to act as the authority that dictates their choices, and vice-versa, if a male counsellor perceives himself as a patriarchal figure dispensing advice. The power role becomes particularly dangerous if it becomes linked with sexual feelings and all the related professional bodies will expel a member who breaks the code of ethics and develops a sexual relationship with a client. The danger for vulnerable clients is, that not all counsellors and therapists are properly trained and members of a professional body, so that they will have little protection if an unqualified counsellor behaves unethically. The implication of this paragraph is that only men confuse counselling and sexuality. This is not true. However, the male gender role is such as to require men to take the lead in sexual matters, and it is nearly always men who are expelled from such professional bodies for misconduct. We shall need to consider this potential confusion between dominance and sexuality in the next unit (Unit 8), because this confusion seems to be the source of much of the sexual violence against girls and women.

3C. A word in conclusion

A discussion of gender raises many questions for society in general and Christianity in particular. We are living in an age of changing concepts about what it is to be masculine and feminine and struggling towards an equal evaluation of the qualities of each. No one can foretell whether traditional ideas reinforced from Sacred Writ will eventually win the day. No one can tell whether women will achieve equality while retaining their distinctive feminine characteristics. No one can tell whether we shall develop an understanding of what it is to be human that accepts all facets of gender identity as of equal value and worthy of development in every individual. If the latter course is taken then there may well be a need to rethink images, symbols, and words used to encapsulate the Divine.

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UNIT 7B: HUMAN SEXUALITY

A. INTRODUCTION

1A. Aims, Activity Questions, and Important concepts

1. Aims

The work on Gender and Human Sexuality is inter-linked. The focus of these units is all aspects of human sexuality, including child and adolescent sexuality, education and sexuality, sexual orientation, and sexual violence. These studies are neither indicative nor definitive. They are given to you to raise awareness as you begin your Pastoral work.

2. Activity: Questions to consider

Here are eleven questions to consider. They cannot necessarily be answered by you now, or even at the end of the course. However, at least coming to an understanding of the direction in which their answers may lie would be helpful to you. Make some jottings, therefore, as to your mind on these matters. Date your jottings. Add to them from time to time in your thinking, praying, and ministry.

- (1) How can we best help our children and adolescents to an understanding of their own sexuality, and that of the opposite sex?
- (2) Is there an essential conflict between sexuality and spirituality?
- (3) What do you think would be the elements in a Christian view of sexuality? Are there aspects of doctrine that enhance or distort a Christian's development of their sexuality?
- (4) How do different religions approach sexuality?
- (5) Can we reconcile Biblical teaching and justice with equality of esteem and treatment for homosexuals and lesbians?
- (6) Should homosexual ministers and teachers hide their sexual orientation, or be open about it? Are there other options?
- (7) Rape and child abuse apparently stem from the will to co-erce weaker people. Is there any connection between sexual violence and concepts of masculinity and patriarchal domination?
- (8) What factors enable some people to break into the cycle of abused children growing up to be abusers themselves?
- (9) Is there any evidence that offenders who have committed violent sexual acts can be successfully treated or re-educated?
- (10) What changes in child rearing and family experience would be necessary to eliminate violent behaviour towards women and children?
- (11) How far do you think media representations of masculine and feminine gender roles and sexuality determine attitudes and behaviours?

3. Important concepts

Sexuality, spirituality, homosexuality, lesbianism, paedophilia, national curriculum, cross curricular themes, sexual violence, patriarchy.

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2A. Additional Reading

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3A. Introduction to the study of Human Sexuality

1. A media focus, and a Freudian starting point

At almost any time you choose to name, the media are pre-occupied with various aspects of human sexual behaviour. Many of them will be represented or mis-represented as bizarre or abnormal. This multiplicity of stories illustrates one point, that human beings are confused about their sexuality, but gain considerable pleasure from viewing other people's experiences or 'downfalls' at a level which makes Jesus' allegories about casting stones, and splinters and logs in eyes pale. Anyone with an interest in the **Freud's** theories might like to investigate the range of defence mechanisms employed by people to deal with their inner conflicts about sexuality.

2. Two aspects of Developmental Psychology

(a) Education and Human Sexuality from a developmental perspective

If you think particularly in terms of developmental psychology, you will need to study how our understanding of sexual needs and behaviour develops. You will also be interested in the best ways to educate children so that they can cope with their own perceived or imposed sexual needs and enjoy relationships with their future, intended partners. Adolescent

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sexuality and the delivery of appropriate education is an area of controversy between parents, schools, religious institutions (particularly the Roman Catholic Church) and governments which has not been resolved in spite of many attempts at legislation. A new field of education is becoming concerned with the sexual development and education of mentally and physically handicapped young people whose sexual needs have been largely ignored.

(b) Counselling teenagers and others from a Developmental perspective

A further Developmental interest for some of you will arise from your involvement with counselling teenagers who have become involved in early pregnancy or in relationships that challenge their own sexual development, and hence they may be struggling to find guidance in understanding their own sexuality and the nature of the opposite sex. Counsellors may also find themselves dealing with the victims of sexual violence whether in the form of child abuse or rape. Adult counselling will extend the field of study to marriage guidance and breakdown and conflicts experienced by homosexuals and lesbians in gaining acceptance for their way of life, or their desire for recognition of permanent loving relationships. They may also ask for help in dealing with hostility from peers, family and work-mates should they make their orientation known, and particularly in coming to terms with the condemnations and convictions uttered in the name of the Faith which they hold.

B. DEVELOPING UNDERSTANDING OF SEXUALITY

1B. Sex Education

1. HOLLY (1989): Education vis-à-vis Teenage Pregnancies in England

The first important issue is to decide who is responsible for educating the young to understand the development of their sexuality. Church, family, and state all have views on this, and it is rare for the young people concerned to have their preference considered. In all the argument we are obviously failing the children if we are to judge by the number of teenage pregnancies and failed sexual partnerships and marriages in our society. **Holly** (1989) in a paper on teenage pregnancy claims that from 1971 to 1989 there had been between 4000 and 5000 births to girls under the age of seventeen each year in England. About 1000 of these per year were to girls under sixteen years of age who under the English British education system should still be at school. In addition, 37,000 teenagers have abortions every year, of whom approximately 1000 are under the age of fifteen.

2. A comparison with the Netherlands

The 'Observer' for the year 1994 quotes the rate of conception amongst sixteen year olds at 8000 a year, which is seven times that of the Netherlands for that year where, incidentally, sex education is very central to the school curriculum. The **Holly** paper reviews the experiences of a group of teen-age mothers for whom abortion had not been an option from their own choice, or because they hid their pregnancies until it was too late for an abortion.

3. HOLLY & FINE (1988): Education, young mothers, and pregnancy

In this context it is significant that all the young mothers interviewed had been offered sex education lessons at school, but none of them had thought about contraception prior to their first sexual experience, and all but one of their pregnancies were un-intended. They retained considerable ignorance about the relationship between sexual acts and pregnancy assuming that if it was a short term relationship, nothing would happen. They said that they had not been given enough information about contraception, had not understood the options open to

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them, and had not had the opportunity to talk about it in relation to their own need. They needed more information aimed at the middle ability range in a full class lesson. They needed contraceptive counselling. The Orthodox religious lobby tends to oppose detailed counselling on contraception on the grounds that it may make adolescents promiscuous. **Holly** cites the work of **Fine** (1988) which shows that proper counselling gives teenagers the feeling that they can control their sexuality and postpones the age of first sexual experience. In the light of the appearance of the HIV virus, both boys and girls need more detailed counselling about the use of condoms. Girls are concerned about contraception to prevent pregnancy, but both sexes now need to be concerned with preventing infection from HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases like cervical cancer.

4. Sex education: Legal and responsibility dimensions

The legislation about sex education in schools says that it should be given in the context of the family and child birth and the needs of babies. This is so that young people grow up with a responsible attitude to the next generation as well as themselves and their peers. The new aspect of sex education for teachers and parents is created by the existence of HIV/AIDS and the need for everyone to know about and practise 'safe sex', if they must have sex outside of marriage, which, in Christian teaching is, of course, where it belongs. This leads us into thinking about moral issues and the question of who is both the appropriate and legally authorised person to give children sex education – the teacher, the parent, or the minister/priest, or a combination of these?

5. Attitudes to talking about sex amongst parents, boys, and girls

In the surveys, many parents wished their child's school to take on the responsibility, because they feel embarrassed to talk about sexuality with their children. Most can manage an explanation of where babies come from for their younger children, but give up when it comes to discussing sex and relationships with their teenagers. **Measor's** research (reported in **Holly** 1989) suggests that girls, at least, would rather talk about most facts like menstruation and child birth, one to one, with their mothers at home, and they are intensely embarrassed by films and discussions of these subjects at school, particularly in mixed classes. They feel that the boys get to know everything about their bodies and make jokes or tease them if they show the development of sexual characteristics or it becomes known that they have begun menstruating, but they never learn anything about boys. Further, naked female bodies appear on visual aids and films, but naked male bodies do not. They hated being offered sex education by men and felt inhibited about asking the questions that they really wanted answered. In the experience of the girls in this research, sex education just gave the boys a further weapon with which to oppress them, and it did not add further to their knowledge. This research indicates how tricky is the subject of sex education. Some of the girls reported that their mothers had given them wrong information, and teachers know that some children will have no sex education at all if it is not offered at school. Yet it is difficult to cope with the subject in the normal one aged, mixed sex classroom.

2B. School Provision for sex education: The legal and policy dimensions

1. The 1986 Education Act

Schools have been agonising over the problem of giving clear and more informative sex education for many years. When new powers for governors were introduced in the 1986 Education Act, they were given the responsibility of deciding whether and how sex education could form part of the curriculum. If they chose to include it, the teaching must give due regard to moral considerations and the values of family life. Some governors do not choose

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to include sex education within the curriculum for their schools so that the topic was only them included in the science syllabus as part of the topic of 'Life Processes, Growth, and Reproduction'. Up to 1993 it has been possible for teachers to cover topics like contraception and HIV/AIDS within this area, but the slimming down of the National Curriculum may yet result in the removal of these items from the science curriculum. Most governing bodies and schools chose to follow the recommendations laid down in the Cross Curriculum Guidelines for Health Education and Personal Social Education. These offer suggestions for a developing programme that should give children accurate information and guidance towards a fuller understanding of themselves and their bodies. Sex education becomes part of a syllabus that stresses the need to develop responsible attitudes towards self and others in relation to topics like substance mis-use, health and nutrition, personal safety, family life, and education, personal hygiene and environmental health. This is a huge programme for schools to 'cover' in addition to the allocated hours that must be devoted to the National Curriculum. Some of the topics can be included in other areas of study like Geography (population and statistics, and environmental health), Science (Health and Nutrition) and Religious Education (family and moral issues). That is why they are called cross curricular themes.

2. HUGHILL & JONES: The 1994 Education Act

As of 1994 all schools were asked, via their local SACRE, to revise their Religious Education syllabi to include topics on the family and discussion of moral issues. The Education Secretary introduced new guidelines in Autumn 1994. The draft paper warned that it could be considered a criminal offence for teachers to knowingly offer under 16 year olds advice about contraception without the full knowledge and consent of their parents. Parents have also been given the right to withdraw their children from sex education lessons. **Barry Hughill** and **Judy Jones** writing in the 'Observer' for February 20th 1994 suggested that there was a fierce argument in cabinet between the Education Secretary and the Health Secretary, the latter of whom has set a target of halving teenage pregnancies by the end of the decade. It has also been noted that at that time the Health Ministry was annoyed at the removal of abortion, contraception, and HIV/AIDS teaching from the compulsory science curriculum. **Hugill** and **Jones** claim, 'It is an open secret in Whitehall that the Health Ministry believes Mr Patten has been 'nobbled' by religious fundamentalists (Observer, News Section, page 3). Teachers will still be able to discuss them in the new sex education programme but they are not obliged to do so, and children can be withdrawn from lessons.

3. Personal, Social Education in schools and its limits

Most schools are conscientious about running programmes of Personal, Social Education. These are sometimes, but by no means always, linked with Religious Education. In most schools the Head of R/E and the head of Personal Social Education (2006) are separate posts. However, schools often cannot give the area of Personal Social Education sufficient time, deliver it in small enough groups to deal effectively with individual problems and misunderstandings, and create positive attitudes in children who are susceptible to negative attitudes from the media or in a minority of cases, from their own families. They certainly cannot offer the counselling on contraception that **Holly** found that teen-age mothers needed, and they are going to find it difficult if these trends continue, to arrange conditions that overcome the pupils' own embarrassment in relation to sex education.

4. Restrictions on teachers vis-à-vis sexuality

Schools are also hampered in the information that they are allowed to give on some aspects of the topic. They are not allowed to deal in detail with HIV/AIDS and explain to children what is meant by safe sex. This in spite of the evidence that it is teenagers who put themselves at

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most risk through episodes of un-protected sex with several partners and who show the greatest ignorance of the way the HIV virus is transmitted. The notorious clause 28 of the Local Government Bill 1988 also forbids teachers to present and intentionally promote homosexuality, or suggest that it is an acceptable expression of sexuality. Unless the age of consent for homosexual behaviour is reduced to sixteen years of age in the near future, neither teacher nor counsellor can help young people under this age claiming homosexual tendencies to understand their feelings, and where applicable, to understand how safe sex should be practised. The Philippine Independent Catholic Church in common with the Roman Catholic Church forbids homosexual *practice* to all Christians.

C. 'GAY' SEXUALITY

1C. The 'Normality Issue'

1. The Age of Consent debate

Campaigners for the reduction of the age of consent for male homosexuals have argued along four lines.

- (1) Their (apparently) most obvious argument is that it is an infringement of civil liberties to criminalise a private behaviour between two consenting people. If the younger person does not consent then laws about child abuse and assault ought to be sufficient to offer protection. Nevertheless, the concept and possibility of homosexual rape has not yet been accepted. In sustaining its age of consent at twenty one years, England has lagged behind many other countries who only more recently have acted to decriminalise homosexuality.
- (2) A second argument suggests that the age of consent for girls and boys should be equivalent since both sexes can be considered mature enough at the age of sixteen to decide if they wish a relationship to include sex. This is an appeal to fairness which is difficult to deny, and the only ground for so doing is to suggest that boys are not in fact as mature as girls at the age of sixteen and that hence they might be susceptible to seduction into a life of homosexuality that they might otherwise not have chosen.
- (3) A third argument by such campaigners is therefore to appeal to facts that can be researched and which seek to show that practising homosexuals claim to have known about their sexual homosexual orientation before the age of sixteen years, and to have had their first sexual experience with their peers. There is no evidence that youngsters can or have been corrupted by much older partners or that older homosexuals seek younger partners. To think that there is, is to confuse homosexuality with paedophilia.
- (4) This leads to a fourth argument that if the age of consent was lowered, it would be possible to give boys counselling about their sexuality where it is perceived that their understandings and feelings have become confused.
- (5) For us in the PICC these arguments are of largely academic interest, since the Church teaches that the practice of homosexuality is sin.

2. Is Homosexuality and Lesbianism 'normality'?

(a) Religious perspectives

The consideration of how best to help young homosexuals raises one of the most contentious issues in this unit; whether or no we should regard homosexual and lesbian relationships as normal. Most of the worlds religions do not regard these as normal, and at times have regarded homosexuality as at best mental illness, and at worse, perversion. Lesbianism tends not to be mentioned as often and is supposed to have escaped the net of Nineteenth Century legislation because Queen Victoria could not believe that it existed. For those who accept the dictates of Scripture and the teaching of the Church over the last two thousand years, the

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matter is closed. Homosexuality and Lesbianism existed in ancient society as they do now, but their practise is a sin.

(b) The origins of homosexuality as a clue?

For those who reject the dictates of Scripture and Church to date as the basis for their decisions about the 'normality', the question becomes one of finding criteria by which to make their judgement. This is a similar dilemma to the one faced in unit 7 about deciding the validity of various sex roles. One solution has been to search for the 'causes' of homosexual behaviour, and to find them in genetic codes. Whilst there is presently strong evidence for homosexuals to claim that they have known of their sexual orientation from an early age and there are no environmental patterns that are consistently related to homosexuality, we still have too little evidence on this topic to be certain about its origin. Every six months or so a researcher publishes a report claiming to find differences in the brains of homosexuals or distinct genetic codings, but the methodology of most of this research is seriously open to question.

(c) Lesbianism: A different scenario

The experience of lesbians with respect to knowing or acknowledging their orientation seems to be different. **Christina Kent** in an article in the 'Guardian' (February 15th 1994) quoted the research of **Markowe** which showed that 40% of lesbians surveyed, aged 18-60 had been involved with men before deciding that they were lesbian. 25% of them had been married and most of them had children. She found that lesbians were not so certain of their sexual orientation from an early age, and their first sexual experiences were often in their forties.

3. 'Normality' by statistical proportion?

In child development, a common way of deciding whether or no certain behaviour is 'normal' is to decide what proportion of children exhibit it. If we apply this criterion to homosexuality and lesbianism, we are handicapped by the ambiguities in the figures. The **Kinsey Report** of 1948 found that 37% of male respondents said that they had at one time or another engaged in homosexual behaviour. But this result reflects his view on the nature of homosexuality, and the way that he framed his questions. He had a seven point scale, running from 0 for men who claimed never to have achieved sexual gratification in a same sex relationship to 6 for those who were exclusively homosexual. Many of his respondents located themselves somewhere between the two extremes, but there is some doubt amongst researchers as to whether they should all be labelled homosexual. The most frequently quoted figure is from the Gay Liberation Movement who claim that ten percent of men are homo-sexual or bi-sexual, whilst other figures in the press suggest a much lower figure of 2-3% of practising homosexual men. Figures for women are even more problematic. However much the figures vary in different reports neither homosexuality nor lesbianism is practised by a majority of men and women, so it is not possible to argue for its acceptability on the ground of numbers, or numbers alone.

4. 'Normal' from an historical perspective?

This leaves for consideration historical arguments, such that homosexual behaviour has been accepted in the past by some societies, e.g.: Ancient Greece. Personality arguments are sometimes brought into play in which it is said that whether through heredity or environment, gay men and women have not chosen their particular orientation, but discovered it as an aspect within their developing self concepts, so they should not be pilloried for feelings outside their conscious control, and which some believe should be seen as much of a gift from God as hetero-sexual activity.

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5. A perspective from the Church of England House of Bishops

The Church of England House of Bishops in 1991 published, 'Issues in Human Sexuality.' Here they considered the argument that same sex love is one of a range of equally legitimate ways of being human and expressing sexuality. They finally stated a principle that, *'Homosexual orientation and its expression in sexual activity do not constitute a parallel and alternative form of human sexuality as complete within the terms of the created order as the heterosexual.'* [5.2].

6. The reasoning of the Anglican Bishops

The two reasons given for this are that sexual relations serve two functions: procreation; and the bonding of two people leading towards their increased maturity and fulfilment. While homosexual relations can apparently serve the second function, they play no part in the first. Homosexuals for their part have argued that the two functions are separated in many heterosexual relationships. Couples who are postponing their families, or who have completed them and are past child-bearing are (apparently) examples. Some homosexuals hence argue that they cannot see why the expression of their own love should be forbidden on the ground that it is not procreative. You will need to study various Church reports in some detail to see what attitude they take to defining the function of sexual relations and how they respond to the claim that same sex love is a parallel and alternative form of human sexuality.

2C. Fashioning a Response

1. The problem: How to respond: Homosexuals are redeemed by Jesus Christ

The Churches' main problem is knowing how to respond to gay men and women who are open about their sexuality and want to be full members of the Church or Ministry. The House of Bishops responded to this dilemma by outlining a second major principle that *'homosexual people are in every way as valuable to and as valued by God as heterosexual people.'* [5.4].

2. Celibacy commended

This is extended to mean that homosexual Christians are to be accepted within the Church whether they choose to be celibate or part of a loving partnership. The same freedom is not extended to clergy who are expected to be celibate because the Church and many of its members – for reasons of Scripture and tradition amongst others, would be offended by any other course. Recognising that there are homo-sexually active clergy within the ordained ministry, the report goes on to say that there should be no witch hunts. Bishops who are responsible for the Pastoral care of their clergy, it further states, should deal with any arising problems.

3. The 'gay' response

Deeply religious homo-sexual and lesbian Christians find this division offensive to what some believe is their calling from God to be both ministers and homo-sexually active. If the figures bandied about in the media in the mid-1990s are even only partly true, a significant number of clergy in both the Roman Catholic Church in England and Wales, and the Church of England are homo-sexually active. These will have to decide whether to conceal their orientation or to be more open and possibly leave the Priesthood/Presbyterate. Incidentally, in 2005 Benedict XVI forbade Ordination of any homosexual to the Diaconate or Priesthood.

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D. SEX AND VIOLENCE

1D. Women and their environment

1. Sex and violence: Women at risk

(a) Safety of women at risk everywhere

For many women the link between sex and violence is the most bewildering aspect of sexuality to understand. Though they are capable of being cruel and violent, sometimes in sexually orientated ways as the Bobbit case recently showed, women do not usually appear in the statistics concerned with child sexual abuse, and only as victims in rape cases. Feminists have emphasised that women are not safe even within marriage and the family, and that in some countries ill treatment of females whether as children or adults is the male norm.

(b) Female lifestyle affected

Fear of sexual violence affects every woman's life because she is expected to adapt her dress and appearance, behaviour and lifestyle, to preserve her own safety in every circumstance. Even young girls who have been victims of sexual abuse have been blamed in the courts for being 'less than innocent'.

(c) Sexual violence in the media

The existence of sexual violence and its publication in the media distorts relations between men and women. This is because women can never escape the need to be wary in their relations with men. Gentle-men resent the assumption that all men are potentially rapists and abusers.

2. The pornography industry as witness

A further aspect of sexual violence that puzzles women is the existence of pornography and a massive industry devoted to its production and distribution. Wives may be shocked to find that their husbands have an interest in such material, while many men cannot see why they are making such a fuss.

3. BORROWDALE: Pornography demonstrates need for men to dominate

Borrowdale argues that pornography is another manifestation of the male need to exert power over women which is shown in rape where the motive is seldom shown to be sexual but always to terrify and degrade the victim. Female students in self defence classes are taught to walk confidently because the showing of fear and anxiety by lowering the eyes when passing a man may be all that the potential rapist needs to select his victim. This advice goes against the evidence that many rapists plan their crimes well in advance, and may have been stalking their victims for some weeks.

4. Sexual violence associated with war and political oppression

Though all forms of male co-ercion of women are shocking, there is nothing worse than the sexual violence that is associated with war, and political oppression and torture. Soldiers of supposedly civilised nations assume that they have the automatic right to rape the women of defeated nations as the recent history of the war in Bosnia has demonstrated yet again.

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2D. The evidence and response of the establishment

1. Counsellors: Evidence and response

Counsellors having to deal with victims of sexual violence encounter many barriers to healing. The most difficult to overcome is the destructive effect the violence and degradation have on self esteem. However, complementary themes include the deep seated fear that colours all future relationships, and the sense of injustice that the legal system offers little justice to the victim and often further degradation. It is not a matter of chance that only ten percent of child abuse cases actually come to a court because of the difficulty of obtaining evidence that will stand up to rigorous defence counsel . Most of these cases are lost because the child is believed to have been led on in disclosure interviews, or withdraws the story when faced with the abuser, or becomes confused about incidents that may have taken place twelve to eighteen months before the case gets into court.

2. FERGUSSON & LEES: Conviction only obtained in 14% of rape cases

Similarly, **Lynn Fergusson** and **Susan Lees** (1994) in research carried out for Channel 4 Television's 'Dispatches' (February 16th 1994) evidenced that conviction is only obtained in 14% of rape cases reported to the police (Home Office figures 1991). Again this was because the defence counsels could discredit the victim's evidence when she has no legal representative of her own to counter the arguments. The programme shows that men with five or six acquittals for rape can be said in court to have good reputations because they have no previous convictions. The women in question may have their characters torn to shreds, and evidence produced about their clothes, make up, previous relationships with men, single parenthood, preferred entertainment, and any other factor put before the courts as evidence of untruthfulness. Judges are currently required to warn juries that women can make false allegations of rape. **Fergusson** and **Lees** conclude their argument by suggesting that judges should warn juries that men sometimes use sex as a form of power and subjugation against women, and that threats of violence may stop women fighting their assailants.

3. A Feminist perspective

This brief consideration of the subject of sexual violence brings us back to where this part of the lecture started – in the way that children are raised and internalise their sex roles. There seems to be something about the way that most societies bring up boys that allows them to internalise a sex role that is hostile to females. Many societies have a religion that legitimates this denigration of the female role, and legal systems that are biased against all attempts to punish violence against females in any form. The feminist struggle is not just a fight for recognition and justice for women, it is a plea to rethink what are the essential qualities for being masculine and feminine.

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UNIT 8A: AGEING

A. INTRODUCTION

1A. Aims and Activity Questions

1. Your focus and challenge

In this unit you are being asked to challenge some of the common misconceptions associated with ageing, and instead to seek to identify the realities of growing old. Part of the focus will be on the changes that take place in body and mind over time and the effect these will have on individual expectations and self-concepts. At the same time we will look briefly at the way families and groups respond to older members.

2. Religious and Psychological responses to ageing, old age, and death

A major consideration for older people is that they are growing nearer the expected time of their death, a fact that can elicit a range of responses from fear and denial to serenity and acceptance. We shall need to review the religious and psychological factors that relate to some of these different responses.

3. Questions to consider

- (1) Research methodology can make a critical difference to findings about the effects of ageing. How near are we to the truth of what really happens?
- (2) Is it inherently more difficult to adjust to the changes of body and mind that occur after middle age than to those happening in adolescence or in the birth of a child?
- (3) How can families and social services secure the highest quality of life for the elderly?
- (4) What are the best preparations that individuals and employers can make for retirement?
- (5) Is fear of death an universal phenomenon? What factors are involved in the concept?
- (6) Is there any evidence that the dying and the bereaved go through stages of adjustment to death?
- (7) How can we decide whether it is best to inform a patient of terminal illness?
- (8) Of the animal kingdom, only human beings can have a certain knowledge of death. How can doctors and nurses, pastors and counsellors deal with the responses that the knowledge creates?

4. A further focus

This is a most important unit. Your Pastoral studies courses give little further input into this aspect of your relating in the Lord's Name to people. Hence, you need to continue reading and developing your knowledge on how to pastor the aged, the ageing, and the old, and those preparing for their death.

2A. Bibliography

Further material to this unit related to theories of people's attitude to death and dying, as well as general Gerontological matters related to ageing and old age can be found from books in the initial indicative bibliography below. N.B.: In Great Britain and the British Commonwealth, 'Ageing' is the spelling of this topic title, the same word in literature from the U.S.A. is spelt 'Aging'. Both are correct therefore in a Philippine context.

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1. Journals

The following are fertile quarries for research in this area: Developmental Psychology; Experimental Ageing Research; Human Development; International Journal of Ageing and Human Development; Journal of Gerontology; Journal of Religion and Ageing; Omega: Journal of death and Dying; Research on Ageing.

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| Henwood | M. | Community Care and Elderly People, London: Family Policy Study Centre, 1990. |
| H.M.S.O. | | Social Trends, London H.M.S.O., (An annual publication. Ask for the year volume that you need). |
| Hobman | D. (Eds.) | Coming of Age: A positive guide to growing older, London: Hamlyn, 1989. |
| Gearing | B. & | Mental health, Problems in Old Age, |
| Johnson | M & | Milton Keynes, Open University Press, |
| Heller | T (Eds). | 1993. |
| Johnson | J. & | Ageing and Later Life, London: Sage Publications for |
| Slater | R. | The Open University, 1993. |
| Light | L.L. & | Language, Memory, and Ageing, Cambridge: |
| Burke | D.M. (Eds). | Cambridge University Press, 1993. |

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Neuberger J.	Caring for dying people of Different Faiths, Austen Cornish, 1987.
Nuland S.B.	How we die, London: Chatto and Windus, 1993. (This is quite a disturbing book written by a doctor observing death).
Pearson A.	'Growing through Loss and Grief,' London: Harper & Collins, 1994.
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B. FACTS AND FIGURES ABOUT AGEING

1B. Some statistics for consideration

1. Ageing within Developmental Psychology

Studies of Ageing take place within the field of Developmental Psychology. At first sight it may seem strange to refer to growing old as a development, but that word can be precisely defined as describing changes that occur over time, and not all development necessarily implies an improvement.

2. A problem: Distinguishing Ageing and Illness

One of the difficulties that prevents the drawing of accurate conclusions about the nature of Ageing is that it is often difficult to make a distinction between changes that may occur because a person is older, and those that may happen because of illness. Many people expect to lose some of their hearing acuity with age and may neglect signs that they are finding it more difficult to hear. The reason is often that a proper medical investigation may disclose that the loss of acuity is in fact a symptom of a disease which might be alleviated with suitable medication. Many old people suffer excess discomfort and pain because symptoms of curable illnesses are explained as signs of ageing and they frequently hear what can be a depressing refrain, "That is what you must expect at your age."

3. Vulnerability to illness and disease and reflection on costing co-efficients

This similarity between the effects of ageing and the symptoms of some illnesses can also confuse attempts at collecting statistics about older people. Because of other factors related to their age, the older generation may be more vulnerable to illness. It may very well be that the figures show that proportionately more older people suffer from visual or hearing defects than younger people, but until the effects of illness have been controlled, it would not be valid to conclude that poor eyesight or hearing loss is caused by ageing directly. What is true is that many older people seek medical attention and the cost within the hospital and community health service per person over 75 years is £1300 in comparison with the highest cost which occurs at the time of birth at £1500 per head (HMSO: Social Trends, 1992 /143). (N.B.: The *ratio* of these costings is approximately the same today in the Philippines.)

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4. Life expectancy and maximum life span

(a) Life expectancy from the point of birth

Figures of life expectancy and maximum life span can also be a source of confusion when the definition of the two terms is not clear. *Life expectancy* figures are calculated on the basis of the number of people born in a particular year, and the average length of their lives. In the past, many babies died shortly after birth, and young children were much more prone to disease, accident, and hunger. Hence, life expectancies at birth were low: E.g.: 22 years in Ancient Rome, 41 years in nineteenth Century England and Wales. This contrasts with the life expectancies of children born in the United Kingdom, for example, in 1991 which stood at 73.2 years (males) and 78.8 years (female) (HMSO Social trends, 1992 /123).

(b) Life expectancy and maximum life spans much closer in the modern era

This does not mean in that in the previous centuries most adults died in their early forties. Those who survived the dangers of birth and childhood often lived to a considerable age, and there is less difference in maximum life spans than in life expectancy.

(c) Life expectancy from specific ages

There is another important statistic to add to this argument. Life expectancies are not only calculated from birth. They can be calculated from any particular point within the human life span. 'Social trends' (HMSO) for 1992 shows that 60 year old males might expect to live an average of a further 13.3 years in 1901, but a further 17.6 years in 1991. The comparable figures for women are 14.6 and 21.9 years of life. So life expectancies have also increased by 4.3 years for males and 7.3 years for females across the Twentieth Century. Not only are more people surviving to adulthood and old age, but older people are living longer as well. **Schulz & Ewen** (1993) calculated that 42 people reach the age of 100 years in the U.S.A. every day. In England, because , of course, there are fewer people, the comparative figure is probably 8.

5. The Second World War and Subsequent Baby Boom.

The effects of the loss of a high proportion of some generation cohorts (e.g.: through death whilst on military service in the Second World War), and fluctuations of birth rates can also affect predictions. Taking into account as many factors as possible, it can be calculated that in England U.K. in 2025 the percentage population over 65 years of age will have risen from 15% to 19%. This is because the children born in the post-Second World War baby boom have passed retirement and entered old age, Many of these will eventually appear in the group known as 'the oldest old' of whom the majority will need a great deal of care and attention.

6. The increase in average life spans.

While average life spans are increasing, there does not seem to be a trend for people to live beyond the 'maximum life span' which currently stands at 120 years for a Japanese man who died in 1986. Though claims for greater age have been made, these have been shown to be false when records have been more closely examined. However, Longevity (long length of life) is a particular feature of life in the Black Sea European state of Georgia and intensive research is focused on discovering why. That having been said, it is known to me that the father of the eventually oldest serving bishop in the Anglican Communion, Archbishop Vicente Dayagbil of the Philippine Independent Catholic Church, died at the age of 125 years in the late 1960s.

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2B. Consequences of the statistics: Food for Community Pastoral Planning

1. Funding for retirement: Workforce and the pension burden of the future

The increase in the proportion of old and elderly people in the population will force us to re-consider a number of personal, social, and economic questions in the next few years. We shall need to think again about retirement ages because a declining work force will not be able to generate sufficient wealth to support the needs of an increasing number of elderly people which become more expensive with greater age and though many people welcome retirement at the current age of sixty to sixty five years, others are not happy about spending the equivalent of a third of their life spans without paid employment.

2. Medicine and medical care

An ageing population also poses problems for medicine and medical care. As people age they become increasingly vulnerable to illness of a more debilitating kind than disease prevalent in youth and middle age. Geriatric medicine often involves the administration of a cocktail of expensive pharmaceutical products (pills, drugs etc.) to sustain an older person's life as largely pain free. Care workers also come at a cost which the Governments of the early Twenty First Century are reluctant to pay, and which private medical insurance companies are not yet prepared to accept.

3. Families and Housing

At a personal and social level, problems are also likely to occur in families and in the provision and ownership of housing. As an increasing number of elderly people survive into extreme old age, they become the responsibility of their children who have themselves reached retirement age with accompanying reduced incomes and vitality. Those who are married may find that a spouse requires full time attendance because of physical and mental incapacity. Others lose their partners through death and have to face living alone, perhaps for the first time in their lives at an age where their increasing vulnerability makes this more and more difficult. Although legislation exists in the United Kingdom to enable people to be supported in their own homes as long as possible, it has already become plain that our society is not prepared to finance such care at the level of need. Frail old people remain alone for most of the day in often cold, or badly maintained accommodation. Often they cannot easily clean for themselves, and await the flying visit of the meals on wheels delivery five days a week. There is an ever increasing need for good neighbours who call regularly and do small amounts of chopping, or family members of the younger generation who live near enough to visit often and offer constant support and focus of interest. All too often in the United Kingdom, old people are in unsatisfactory old people's or nursing homes. Since 2002, however, these have been far more strictly regulated in the United Kingdom, and are becoming far fewer. Amongst other things, stringent government regulations and requirements have seriously eroded potential profit margins and prevented exploitation. However it must be borne in mind that places in Old People's Homes are usually greater than the cost of any allowance for this made by the Community Health Service.

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C. RESEARCH METHODS USED TO INVESTIGATE AGEING

1C. Experimental Designs

1. An Experimental Design

All fields of psychological research (as you will recollect from Unit 1) tend to use the same set of experimental designs. The first of these to which I will now draw attention in connection with Ageing is the *Experimental*. Here the aim is to see if any intervention, like training in the organisation of memory) would help old people to counteract some of the effects of ageing. The experiment would be set up so that a sample of subjects would be given a pre-test for current performance in remembering, then divided randomly or by deliberate selection into experimental and control groups. The experimental group would receive the training programme, and the controls nothing, or a neutral activity. A post test of memory function would show whether or no training helped with memory.

2. Quasi-experimental design

Quasi-experimental designs are used when it would be unethical deliberately to vary the independent variable on account of potential harm to subjects. **Schulz & Ewen (1993)** recount a way of investigating the effect of loud noise on hearing. Now, it would be wrong to subject individuals to stressful noise as a part of these tests. Also, there are individual variations in the amount of exposure to noise because of place of work, or residence, choice of entertainment, and so on. So, a sample of people working in an engineering factory could instead be compared with a group of gardeners or farmers; or pop fans could be compared with devotees to Classical or Baroque music. If those generally exposed to the least noise have significantly less hearing loss than those constantly exposed to loud noise, it could be suggested that noisy environments increase hearing loss. Because the subjects were not randomly assigned to their groups, it is not possible, however, to eliminate alternative explanations for the hearing loss within this experimental design.

3. Correlation design

A third approach is to correlate the results of tests of two or more variables such as the amount of smoking people in a sample have done, and the incidence of lung cancer in the same sample. A *correlation design* will show if there is a relationship between two variables, but it will not give the direction of causality. So it is not possible to say from such a design whether smoking causes lung cancer or whether both are caused by another unmeasured variable like personality.

2C. Problems with interpreting data vis-à-vis Ageing effects

1. Cross Sectional or Longitudinal design

(a) Introduction

If we want to look at the effects of Ageing, we have a further choice between a *cross-sectional* or a *longitudinal* design. The relative merits and drawbacks of these were considered in Unit 1.

(b) Cross Sectional Studies.

In particular, cross sectional designs are not good for studying development and ageing. If groups of subjects of different ages are measured on personality or attitude tests, it would almost certainly appear that there are significant differences in scores. This cannot, though,

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be attributed to Ageing because with forty or fifty years between the groups, the older cohort will have grown up in a very different world and experienced different child rearing practices and education techniques that could well account for differences in personalities, attitudes, and behaviours. We cannot conclude, e.g.: that people become more conservative as they age even if they do score higher on this dimension than younger cohorts. They grew up in a more authoritarian and conservative age and might have been just as conservative when they were young, and stayed that way now that they are older. *This kind of research confounds and confuses age effects with cohort effects.*

(c) Longitudinal effects

Longitudinal research escapes this effect to some degree but really only studies the development of the cohort under focus. The results cannot be generalised to a cohort starting life twenty or thirty years later which may have a completely different pattern of development. Another problem of longitudinal research is that it can be confounded by the effects of the time of measurement. It is carried by repeatedly measuring the same subjects at different times so any significant result obtained could be due to ageing, or to historic events or changes that have taken place over the time between measurements. Quite complicated sequential research schedules have to be designed to disentangle the three effects of age, time, and cohort (Schulz & Ewen 1993). Even these complicated schedules can only be said to provide us with better descriptions of the changes that take place over time (development). They cannot explain *why* these changes take place.

2. The boundary between Middle Age and Old Age

There is still one final complication to the study of Ageing and that is the variation in physical and mental health and maturity that can be associated with *chronological age* which makes it difficult to specify when old age begins. Some people appear and feel younger than their age. Why? It may be because they have taken the trouble to remain fit, there may be a genetically linked reason, there may be factors of heredity and early years environment, or it may be that encounter with serious illness has made some 'older' than others of their chronological age. Incidentally, Maturity does not increase steadily with age either. Some people can be emotionally depended on their parents into their forties, whilst others achieve independence in their teens. There is no point at which Middle Age turns into Old Age because this varies from person to person. But it is usual to set arbitrary cut off points in relation to the Middle and End of expected life span.

D. PATTERNS OF AGEING

1D. Reasons for Ageing

1. Introduction

Bearing in mind the limitations of research discussed above, there are a few patterns of Ageing that have become fairly well established through careful designs and replication, and some common misunderstandings that need exploding. The reason why ageing occurs is still a matter for controversy. All organisms have a maximum life span that varies very little in relation to environmental change that can alter life expectancies.

2. Genetic Factors

Genetic factors are certainly involved in determining maximum life spans. Being born into a family of long lived parents and grandparents is an important determinant of individual life

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span. This observation has led researchers to look at cell structures and genetic codes contained within them for an answer to the ‘Why?’ and ‘How Long?’ of the Human life-span. Among the possibilities still under investigation is an apparent limitation in the number of cell divisions that are possible in tissues culture experiments before the cell dies. **Hayflick** (1980, 1986) found that human body cells make about fifty divisions. This implies a clock mechanism within the cells, probably in the DNA or genetic code, which controls the replication of cells and the renewal of body tissues. Damage to the DNA from environmental causes like radiation is probably not a cause of ageing since the usual result of such damage is to increase or to distort cell division not to arrest it.

3. Transmission between DNA and RNA

Another explanation is the suggestion that errors increasingly occur in the transmission processes between DNA and RNA so that exact copying of proteins and enzymes is disrupted and cells grow older and die.

4. Wear and tear and harmful substances

Non-geneticists argue that cells age as a result of wear and tear. The passage of time means that we become less capable of replacing these damaged cells. Alternatively, some suggest that harmful substances accumulate in the cells restricting their function and ultimately damaging them. Other theorists have drawn attention to ‘free radicals’, i.e.: unstable chemical compounds, that disrupt the structure and function of enzymes and proteins that maintain the life of cells. However, as yet, none of these theories have strong experimental evidence in their support.

5. Failure of organisms to renew themselves

A third group of physiological theories suggests that some specific organs and systems responsible for repairing cells run out of steam, and fail to both renew themselves and hence also the rest of the body. The immune system and the endocrine system are candidates for this explanation, as it is already clear that they become more inefficient with age. Within the Endocrine system, for example, the pancreas becomes less efficient at controlling blood sugar, and consequently diabetes becomes common in older individuals causing quite far reaching effects in other body organs.

2D. Symptoms of Ageing and old age

1. Introduction

Although we do not yet know their cause, age related changes have been shown to occur in physical and mental functioning. These do not occur in any particular timetable, not do they occur to the same extent in everyone.

2. Skin and Hair Colour

The most easily observed effect of ageing is on skin, and hair loss and colour. As the human body ages, the skin becomes stiffer and less elastic, it does not spring back so readily from the lines habitually produced through facial expressions, which therefore show up as permanent lines. In men balding is more common than it was. In both men and women the sequence of hair colour graying, and then becoming white in oldest old age is usual.

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3. Within the Skeleton

Within the skeleton, the bones thin and become more brittle, and we lose several inches in height. Muscles decline in strength, tone, and flexibility, so that movements become less vigorous, and carriage less upright. Internal organs function less efficiently with consequences for the heart, blood pressure, breathing, and excretion. Reaction times increase, making tasks like driving more hazardous. These things in themselves need not incapacitate older people, but they do make the body more vulnerable to chronic disorders like arthritis; diseases like strokes and heart disease related to high blood pressure; and accidents. In the last case it is not that old people have more accidents than younger people, but that the consequences tend to be more severe.

4. Sensory impediment

(a) Introduction

One of the main fears that people have as they grow older is that they will lose vision and hearing to such an extent that their main pleasures, occupations, and indeed domestic living will become almost impossible. The inevitability of such loss of hearing and sight is a common mis-understanding. Most people retain quite acceptable hearing and eyesight well into their eighties.

(b) Changes in vision

Changes in vision include slower and less effective dark adaptation. An increase in lens size can occur in the eye. This gives a loss of flexible control and makes accommodation between near and far focus very much slower. Distant vision in older age is usually better than closer focus, so that many people need glasses for reading and driving. Older people also often find it harder to identify objects quickly, and find it even more difficult to process moving objects like the animation on a television screen, or information on road signs when driving. In general what happens is that the sensitivity of the visual system declines with age and in effect we are operating as if we experience poorer lighting conditions than younger adults. Some visual tasks become more difficult, but most people are not incapacitated, and can be helped with better lighting and correct lenses.

(c) Eye complaints

There are some common eye complaints affecting over or under production of tears to cleanse the eyes. These can be treated. There is also an increasing tendency to 'floaters' which are generally harmless. However, older people need regular checks on their vision because of the possibility of developing one of the rarer but more serious eye problems that can cause blindness. Amongst them are: Glaucoma (sugar related and common in diabetics); cataracts (a layer of translucent skin that forms across the eye and seriously hampers vision); and retinal detachments (the retina literally becomes suddenly detached within the eye and so 'blind blackness' is caused). These can all be treated if caught early, but can potentially cause serious visual handicap.

(d) The hearing system

At the age of forty the hearing system begins to lose its sensitivity because of the degeneration of hair cells in the ear's cochlea. These respond to sound. Middle and higher frequencies of sound suffer the most decline. Unfortunately these are all too often the frequencies involved in the hearing of human speech and so deafness can cut a person off from friends, relations and working colleagues. Interestingly, individuals may vary in their degree of hearing loss, and this is often relative to exposure to continuous or loud noise at home or at work. **Hunt & Hertzog** (1981) found that these incidences of deafness in the

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USA had increased between 1940 and 1980 from 200 to 300 per 10,000 head of the population.

(e) Social factors related to hearing loss

Old people are more likely to suffer serious hearing loss than visual impairment. About 40% of all over 65s in the United Kingdom have some incapacity which increases with age. Apart from social isolation caused by hearing loss, enjoyment of many pleasures is also impaired, watching films and television, playing or listening to music. Although hearing aids exist, they do not restore hearing to its original state, and may not help a wearer to decode speech or listen to music. Some new learning is hence often required before they produce maximum benefit, and many old people prefer not to wear them. Change can be made to environments to aid communication such as improvement of the acoustic qualities in rooms, the provision of loop systems, and the placing of seating so that people are face to face and can use visual cues to help de-code speech.

5. Memory Loss

(a) The tendency in older age

The most worrying part of growing old for most people seems to be the effect of changes in memory, or 'increases in forgetfulness'. Laboratory research has shown that there are changes in secondary or long term memory with age, so that older adults do not learn or retrieve information as rapidly as young adults. They do not organise the information to be remembered as effectively, or process it as speedily. This could partly be a cohort effect in that older adults are generally less well educated than younger people in the strategies of learning. But it is also due in part at least to the failure to process information as deeply as we become older. In simple terms, as we become older we seem to pay less attention to newer information, and so we are less likely to commit it to memory in ways that enable it to be recalled easily. We might be quite poor at learning new things, not because it is more difficult to do so, but because we do not make as much effort. This could be as much due to motivation, as changes in the memory system.

(b) Some everyday effects

In everyday life this can affect our ability to read and remember more complicated messages and books. We find it more difficult too to learn our way around new environments, and to follow complex plots in plays and serials! On the positive side we can watch repeats without remembering the conclusion! More seriously, since it is difficult for old people to learn strategies for storing material in memory and recalling it, it is, perhaps, better to give them techniques for using external aids like notebooks and diaries. Important messages like drug dosages need to be clearly presented on bottles and when possible dosage packages marked with days of the week help patients to keep a track of what they have taken. In the recent past some old people have acted as though permanently confused because of overdoses of tranquilising drugs to which they might have become addicted when they were prescribed in an emotional crisis. The supervised withdrawal of such drugs often restores a reasonable degree of independent functioning to otherwise dependent patients.

6. SIMONTON: Intelligence and Intelligence Quotient (IQ) Measurements

Misunderstandings about a decline in intelligence with age have generally been put right. Differences in scores on IQ tests can usually be shown to be cohort effect rather than age effect, or effect from artefacts of the method of testing used. This applies to aspects of thinking known as convergent thinking, or crystallised intelligence. The kind of thinking most closely associated with creativity – divergent thinking – is inclined to diminish with age. This finding is supported by real life investigation that show that productivity in research, art ,

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music, etc. reaches a peak in the late thirties and forties, Mathematicians, physicists and poets tend to reach their peak (in their early thirties) and decline rapidly, whilst historians, philosophers, and novelists peak later (in their fifties) and decline more slowly (Simonton 1990). Some artists have produced major works in old age, but a look at their records usually shows that they were even more productive in their early years.

7. Personality

(a) Problems with the study of Personality

The study of personality is made more complicated by its methodological problems. (1) When we try to measure personality using a cross sectional research it is impossible to distinguish age effects from cohort effects. (2) Chronological age is a weak measure of a person's level of maturity.

(b) Stage theory

Stage theories tend to be produced by cross sectional methods, and although they draw attention to major life transitions, they are not very predictive of either the process or timing of ageing.

(c) Measured personality traits

Measured personality traits have often been found stable with increasing age, and it has not been shown true that most people become more rigid, introverted, and cautious with age, or perceive themselves to be more powerless. This is a classic case where cohort and age effects have been confused; older people experienced an upbringing and education that stressed conservatism and conformity. It appears to be true that we develop certain coping strategies as we grow up relating to our attribution of causality and internal or external locus of control. Those with an internal locus of control deal more positively and constructively with old age and retirement than those who have an external locus of control, who are often more defensive and hostile.

3D. Social Relations in old age

1. Introduction

One factor to which old people continually have to adapt is that as the years pass, they will increasingly lose friends, siblings, and other family members who form their supportive circle. The question of bereavement and death will be considered in the next section of this unit. In this sub section we will look at matters of friendship in old age; the sustenance of old friendships and the possibility of forming new friends.

2. MATTHEWS: Three styles of Friendship

Matthews (1986) suggests that there are three styles of friendship: (1) Independent; (2) Discerning; (3) Gregarious.

1. *Independent friendship style.* People who have an independent friendship style may enjoy the company of others in social situations, but keep a distance between themselves and others, and emphasise their own self sufficiency. They tend not to have close friends or best friends, and they do not share their intimacy or secrets with anyone.
2. *Discerning Friendship style.* Those who have a Discerning style of friendship have an intimate relationship with a small number of people and they regard their closeness to such friends as emotionally important. In addition to these close, trusted, often long term friends, they have a number of more casual acquaintances.

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3. *Gregarious Friendship style.* Adults who practise a gregarious friendship style feel close to quite a large number of people, and have nevertheless six or seven special friends, but forty or so others whose company they particularly enjoy. This group in particular feel hopeful about making new friends in the future, not least in old age.

3. The social purpose of friendship

Friendship serves a number of important psychological purposes. Most people only disclose their innermost selves to close friends and choose friends who have similar beliefs, interests, and personalities. The relationship gives each partner support for mutual growth. Friends can also supply emotional and intellectual challenge, stimulation, and companionship for various activities that sustain our interest in life.

4. SCHULZ & EWEN: Our number of friends is stable across life

Schulz and Ewen (1993) suggest that the number of friends that we have tends to remain stable throughout life, although these are not necessarily the same friends. Sometimes friends are separated by jobs, marriage, or mobility, but remain in contact through letters, E-mail or telephone calls until the opportunity arises to meet again. Sometimes separation means the ending of a friendship as permanently as the death of one of the partners would do, but new contacts are sifted for possibilities of finding new friends. This way the overall number of good relationships for each individual is maintained.

5. Closer to friends or relatives as we age?

There is some conflict in research about whether or no we remain closer to friends or relatives as we grow older. **Stueve & Fischer** (1978) found that their interviewees decreased the amount of time spent with friends and increased that with relatives after middle age. **Palmore** (1981) and **Wood & Robertson** (1978) find that frequent contact with friends is much more likely to produce satisfaction with life after the age of fifty five years than frequency of contact with family. Why? They speculated that close contact with friends gives individuals acceptable support when facing physical disability, serious illness, loss of jobs, or bereavement, whilst asking help from the family might be conceived as loss of independence.

6. SCHULZ & EWEN: a Conclusion

Schulz and Ewen conclude that evidence indicates that friendship is very effective in these above-mentioned crises and at all adult ages results in lower mortality rates and better mental health. They also claim that the stereotypical friendless older adult is simply not the real situation, and with few exceptions, most adults see little decline in the number of their close friends, as opposed to acquaintances, with increasing age.

E. WORK AND RETIREMENT: ENGAGEMENT AND DISENGAGEMENT

1E. Work

1. Engagement: the meaning of work to an individual

Most adults invest a great deal of their self concepts into their work which they find more than an economic necessity because it adds self identity, defines social status, and offers social and emotional rewards. In the main there is no relationship between increasing age and job performance, although, as we have seen earlier, creativity and muscular strength do begin

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to decline quite early in life, and may affect occupations where these are at a premium. Opportunities for further promotion decline with age, but there is no clear evidence that this results in lower job satisfaction. However, in an economic climate which stresses market forces at the cost of quality delivery, this may change. An indicator of dissatisfaction may be the rapidly increasing numbers of early retirements. Early retirement can also be the result of age discrimination which is found to exist in places of work where a general, incorrect, stereotype exists that older workers are resistant to change, slow to make decisions, and more liable to absence and illness. These, of course, could be excuses used by management who wish to pension off their more expensive employees.

2. Older women in work

Although there are still many more men than women in the work force, many more women are being trained and entering professions to which they return after the birth and or rearing of their children. In times of recession it is also common to find more women than men employed in heavy manufacturing areas hit by changes in work practices, although the available jobs are often part time and poorly paid.

2E. Retirement

1. Retirement, age, income, and fulfilment

Some people work after the statutory retirement age, and do so successfully up to the age of seventy years and beyond. Most people, it seems, start to look forward to retirement after the age of forty-five. They feel that they have worked long enough to earn it, and that they will be relatively well off in retirement. Other people choose to postpone retirement as long as possible if they are in well paid jobs that give them a great deal of satisfaction. Yet these are the very people who can afford to retire early and retain a satisfactory level of income. Those with the lowest pay and least job satisfaction often find that they cannot afford to retire. The consequence of this is that it is those in the middle rank of their professions who tend to retire early because they have less job satisfaction, little opportunity to achieve promotion, and no desire to continue working past the retirement age. Incidentally, ill health is often given as the reason for retiring, and it seems that this is often because it is deemed more socially acceptable than saying one doesn't want to work anymore.

2. A sequence of disengagement?

A common misconception about retirement is that individuals tend to go through a progression of stages starting with a kind of honeymoon effect followed by disenchantment. After this there is a tendency to reduce activities, and to rest. This is followed by a re-organisation of life to set up new routines. There seems, however, to be no good evidence for such a progression. There is much individual variation as to whether people adapt easily to their new way of life or become disillusioned. The variation is more likely to be on account of personality and productivity of life style before retirement. There is more disenchantment for those people who had little money, few hobbies and interests, poor health, and unhappy marriages before retirement. Retirement tends to exaggerate the disharmonies for those who have not managed to make personal and social adjustments up to that age and continue to enhance the lives of those who have always taken a positive line on life's events.

3. Poverty and old age.

It is difficult to estimate the number of elderly people who are living in poverty, unable to pay for sufficient warmth, or keep their houses in proper repair. Whilst the majority of pensioners

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are comfortably off with occupational pensions and houses that they own and have paid for, our society will have to work hard to supply an adequate way of life for the minority who depend entirely on social security payments for their existence. The main worry for the next century is that the old will have outlived the worth of their savings, and will be faced with bills for support that they cannot meet in their final decade of increasing disability.

3E. Stress in Old Age.

For work on this aspect of Ageing and Old Age, please refer to the relevant section in Unit 9.

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UNIT 8B: FACING DEATH

A. FEAR OF DEATH

1A. Introduction

1. The scope of this sub-unit and its aim

There are two aspects to this issue which need to be considered within a topic concerned with growing old. (a) We need to gain and understanding of how people face up to their approaching death. (b) How we cope or otherwise with the death of a loved one. This latter section will be widened to the counselling of all bereft persons, irrespective of their age. However, with increasing age there is increasing likelihood of bereavement.

2. To tell or not to tell?

Studying how people deal with the expectation of death is probably the most difficult brief in psychology. Terminally ill people can be observed, and their reactions recorded. However, few people would wish to intrude on their precious remaining time to ask the crass question, 'How do you feel about having a terminal illness?' because accurate information is so difficult to obtain, we cannot here and in the context of this unit begin to answer the vital question as to whether and in what circumstances people should be told that they are dying.

2A. The fear of death

1. Encountering the reality of death

Younger people tend to repress and seldom exhibit a fear of death except when suddenly faced with its reality. This can happen through war, natural disaster, fatal accident, fire, sudden and serious illness, and of course how so ever happening, the loss of parents. It can also happen through the young person's involvement with a near escape from death, especially if someone else known to them died in the incident. Whatever, when the reality of death is encountered in a way that surprises and shocks, a number of people suffer from post traumatic shock syndrome which can produce severe psychological consequences. Amongst these are sleeplessness, night horrors, inability to concentrate on everyday activities, and depression.

2. Accepting the reality

If fear of death has never been dramatically aroused by a particular experience, many people push the idea into their background thoughts and live with the expectation that bad things can only happen to other people. Most of us cannot imagine that we would cease to exist, but many of us do spend some time thinking what it must be like in the realm beyond death. We also have unrealistic ideas about potential dangers in the activities that we undertake. Health educators who try to persuade us to give up dangerous practices like smoking commonly encounter defences based on unrealistic perceptions. People say they face danger all the time – even when they cross the road. But although they have repeatedly been told the figures, they do not believe that their chances of dying in a road accident are infinitesimal relative to dying from a smoking related illness.

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3. A Freudian perspective

If we accept the Freudian suggestion about defence mechanisms, we would say that our unwillingness to think about death is evidence for a deep underlying fear that could motivate a great deal of our behaviour.

4. Older people and the reality of death

Older people have to accept the reality of their own death and often have to do so when coping at the same time with the loss of ageing spouses, relatives, and long term friends.

5. Not afraid of death, but of the manner of passing

If asked a direct question, most people young and old will say that they are not afraid of death, but only of the manner of passing or the process by which they die. This is an oversimplified description of a complex fear experience. **Schulz and Ewen** (1993 /391) point out that there are several kinds of anxiety linked with the fear of death, and these have different weightings for different individuals in different situations.

6. Changes of balance in the causes of death

In the last part of the Twentieth Century there has been a change of balance between the various causes of death. Instead of dying quickly following an acute illness, most people can now expect to die slowly of a chronic illness. Hence one of the major components of the fear of death is the fear of the process of dying. This may involve pain, intrusive medical treatments, deterioration of body function, loss of mental ability, change of personality, disfigurement, dependency, and loss of control. It is usually to escape these aspects of the process that some people make 'living wills', asking not to be kept alive by medical intervention, and others take steps to end their lives prior to deterioration.

7. Emotional isolation

Another consequence of long illness is that people may become emotionally isolated from friends and families, and come to fear the loneliness of the dying process. They feel that they cannot talk about their death for fear of upsetting their loved ones, and may re-experience the separation anxiety that was overwhelming in early childhood. The obverse of the separation coin is the fear of the impact that their death will have on friends and family, and the knowledge that they cannot take any steps to reduce the particular pain, even though they have tried to leave their affairs in order.

8. Fear of fear

As in any situation where fear plays a part, we can become afraid of fear itself because we do not want to seem cowardly in the face of pain and suffering.

9. The soon-ness of death and its fear

Some people fear death because they think it may come too soon, while they still have many of life's tasks to accomplish. When younger people die, the mourning of others can be heavily tinged with the thought of the waste involved in early death.

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10. Questionnaire research

Some attempts have been made to explore people's concept of death through questionnaires or projective tests, but these are of doubtful validity because of the complexity of the whole concept. Participants may fear some aspects of death, but not others. Questionnaires, unfortunately, usually score on only a single dimension of fear of death, and rely on that fear being a conscious emotion when it may well have equally powerful unconscious effects that cannot be measured. Such research also suffers from situation effects. Participants may fill in questionnaires as honestly as they can, but without the direct experience they will of course not ultimately know how they feel about death until the time comes.

11. Faith and fear of death

Research done in this way has however been used to explore the extent to which people who have a strong Faith are more or less afraid of death. **Spika, Hood, & Gorsuch** (1985) assessed the results of such studies known to them. They found that twenty four out of thirty six studies demonstrated that increased faith was significantly related to decreased fear of death, seven found no difference, and three found that religion increased fear of death, presumably because respondents had strong concepts about eternal punishment.

B. HELPING DYING PATIENTS

1B. E.KUBLER ROSS: Stages of adjustment to expected death

1. KUBLER-ROSS's thesis stated

Kubler Ross suggested in 1975 that dying patients show a similar pattern of stages in their adjustment to their expected death. Initially they may be *shocked* and *numbed* when first told of a terminal illness, and this can be followed by a *refusal to accept* the serious nature of the illness. They may then become *angry about their fate*, and hence *attempt to bargain with God* to be released from it. There can also be a stage of *depression* as the illness takes hold and the reality sinks in, followed by a much calmer acceptance.

2. Two critiques of Kubler-Ross' thesis

Kubler Ross's research has been heavily criticised on methodological grounds, and in particular the criteria for identifying the stages are so unclear that it has not been possible to replicate the research.

- (1) **KASTENBAUM & WEISMAN**. **Kastenbaum and Weisman** in 1972 found a greater variety of responses. Some patients appear not to alter in behaviour right up to their death; some kept themselves active with their normal pursuits; some patients show a steadily increasing sadness and depression as death approaches, and some patients fluctuate between hopelessness and contentment, calmness and fear.
- (2) **SCHULZ & SCHLAB**. **Schultz & Schlab** (1981-1988) contend that the balance of research shows that while dying patients show a variety of responses, the negative ones of fear, anger, sadness, and depression predominate, and do not occur in any particular order.

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2B. Policy in the care of the terminally ill

1. GREER & MOR 1983: The needs of patients immediately before death

Given the range of different responses to knowledge of impending their death, it is difficult to create care policies that will be beneficial to the dying. The most extensive published study is by **Greer and Mor** (1983) who surveyed 1,745 patients. They asked them what they felt to be important in the final eight to two weeks before they died. Most patients mentioned the value of supportive friends, followed by Faith, followed by being needed in this situation by someone else. During the last three days of life they wanted certain people present who could be physically capable of doing things, and so that surrounded by these people, they could be at peace.

2. The rationale of Hospice care

Hospice care for the terminally ill includes the above in its objectives that pursue their aim to allow patients to continue their lives with as little disruption as possible. The stress is on maintaining freedom from pain and as much mental alertness as possible, so that patients can maintain their social contact with family and friends. Staffing ratios are high so that medical staff have time to spend with patients, listen to their fears, and comfort them. Because hospices have changed practices in the care of the terminally ill both at hospital and at home, there are equivocal results as to whether patients suffer less pain in a hospice than under another caring regime. However, many studies have found that patients are satisfied with their care, and their families are helped by being actively involved in caring. This in turn helps them in their dealing with bereavement when it comes.

3. Medical carers

There is still much work to be done to help doctors and nurses to deal with terminal illness in their patients. (1) If they have not worked through their own fear of death, they may unconsciously avoid eye contact or withdraw from dying patients and their families, so contributing to loneliness and despair. (2) The focus of the profession on the expectation of healing may make a death seem more like a failure, and result in the kind of desperate interventions that many patients say that they do not want. (3) Carers sometimes protect their own emotions by distancing themselves, literally or symbolically from their patients. Relocation of a bed, or referring to them by their illness rather than their name are both sometimes a part of this behaviour. (4) The medical professions' own fear of death may result in an habitual assumption that patients do not want to be told that they are dying. This has been found to be particularly true of those doctors who are inclined to make decisions without reference to a patient's wishes, or who try to insist that a patient is not told the gravity of his or her illness. (5) In support of the foregoing, a simple piece of detective work. Should you have the opportunity, compare publications intended for physicians with those intended for nurses. You will find that publications intended for doctors and physicians concentrate on issues concerning treatment. Publications for nurses include articles about the emotional needs of the dying, and since they are more closely involved in the day to day care of patients, nurses often do see the need to be honest with the dying.

4. SCHULZ & EWEN: Tell the dying gently, and help them to accept

Schulz & Ewen note that the majority of published research in this area demonstrates that with a few exceptions, patients want to be told if they are dying. The problem for carers is to discover who are the exceptions. Conventional wisdom is that patients should be given the truth as gently as possible, and then given counselling towards a state of calm acceptance.

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There may be an immediate rejection and traumatic response, but eventually most patients value taking part in the decisions about their own care. Incidentally, corresponding research shows that most doctors do not want to tell patients that the illness is terminal, thinking this to be cruel, and the equivalent of passing a death sentence that will take away all hope. However, despite their non-verbal signals, knowledge of their symptoms and nature of their treatment, some patients do remain in ignorance of their impending death, and this can impose strain on the relatives who find themselves 'in conspiracy' to 'keep the secret'.

C. COPING WITH THE DEATH OF A LOVED ONE

1C. Grief and the Grieving process

1. OSTERWEIS (1984): Social dimensions of bereavement

(a) Men and Women compared

The complex customs and rituals which have surrounded mourning in all known societies are a tribute to the pain experienced as a result of bereavement. But, who suffers the most in a bereavement? (1) Men are said to be worse affected when their wife dies than wives are when their husband dies. But because of the sage relationships in most partnerships, and the greater longevity of women, widowhood is a normative experience for women, and they are likely to have a group of friends who share their experience. Men are also likely to suffer more when a wife dies young, but they also remarry more quickly after the loss than widowed young women. Individuals who already have poor physical and mental health, who abuse drugs or alcohol, or who have financial problems, are more likely to suffer further health problems after bereavement.

(b) Sudden death and suicide

While sudden death has not been shown intrinsically more likely to produce negative outcomes in the bereaved, suicide is damaging to those left behind, and may leave them vulnerable to taking their own lives as well. **Osterweis** suggests that depressed people will often marry other sufferers of depression, and hence surviving spouses are vulnerable on two counts.

2. Grief

(a) The nature of grief

Grief is a healing and adaptive process which many people survive without specialist counselling, especially if they have helpful friends who can listen and be with them whilst they cry and talk about their loss and feelings. This will never be a pain free process, and attempts to take away the pain through use of alcohol or sleeping drugs usually prove maladaptive because they remove the possibility of healing through expression of the grief.

(b) The grief process

Grieving is not a short process. Most people find that acute grief with its accompanying sleeplessness and desolation can last for two weeks up to two months, and this needs to be followed by a long period of healthy mourning taking from nine months to two years. The work of this period of mourning is to enable sufferers to learn how to reconcile good and bad memories of the deceased with the fact of their absence. A new view of the world has to be accepted without the loved one and ways of continuing life developed.

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3. Normative grief, and grief needing specialist help

The majority of bereaved people pass through the phases of grief at their own pace and with the support of friends and family. About 25% of people may need more help than this, and clergy, professional counsellors, and friends in non-professional counselling groups such as CRUSE and Compassionate friends can help mourners to acknowledge their feelings, and work through them to a positive outcome. Where grief becomes pathological, psychotherapy is often resorted to, but my own ministerial experience has shown me it has only very limited use and fruit.

2C. Counselling and Pathological grief

1. Identifying pathological grief I: discerning phases of grief

The hardest things for counsellors is deciding when normal grief has become pathological and destructive rather than functioning as a healing process. Most books on counselling the bereaved suggest that grieving will pass through several phases. *Shock* and possibly *denial* at the time of death are two. These often produce an *emotional numbness* which helps to ameliorate the overwhelming pain and suffering. When the initial numbness passes, a period of *great sorrow* usually passes for several days or weeks. This is usually characterised by *weeping*, *sleeplessness*, and often also *frantic activity* all of which partly block out thoughts related to the bereavement. Sometimes this activity centres around the removal of a dead person's belongings which serve as revivers of the painful feelings about death.

2. The sorrowing period

This is a period of intense emotions when people may also experience guilt for things said and done and now regretted, of things that might have been done for the good of the deceased. The bereaved person may search desperately for someone or something to blame for the death. If this blame is not turned on the self, it may be turned against medical staff, God, or even the loved one in person. Such emotions are both powerful and painful, and mourners may need reassuring that they are not having breakdowns even when they find themselves seeing their loved ones or hearing their voices. They may also find that they cannot stop thinking about scenes associated with the death, and want to talk compulsively about it. However, they constantly find that other people do not want to listen, especially if the re-telling activates their tears. Although such emotions are painful, and talking hurts, it is at this time that clergy or counsellors can be most helpful in supporting the 'grief work' so that anxieties and painful thoughts are externalised and dealt with.

3. Thinking on life after death

Almost inevitably a bereaved person will want to sort out some ideas about the meaning of life and death, and the possibility of life after death. A parish priest can usually help them to reach a satisfactory conclusion. At these times, however, a strong Faith can sometimes be a help, and sometimes an hindrance. For some Christians, their Faith helps them to understand and accept death and the place of the dead in life beyond the grave. God shares their suffering with them and shares and relieves the pain and load of the heavily grief laden. For others, they find it hard to escape the idea that God could have performed a miracle and saved the life, so they either reject an uncaring God, or blame themselves for not having enough Faith. People who have no Faith are rather worse off. They still have to find basic answers to the meaning of it all, and are entitled to be helped to their own solution. They may not be able to accept religious explanations, so we need to find other ways of helping them to re-discover their significance of their own lives as individuals now separate from someone they love.

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4. A further phase: apathy and depression

The very active grieving phase may gradually pass over into, or alternate with, apathy and depression. This makes it impossible to plan for the future or think of the possibility of living or enjoying life again. Some people find the will to carry on for the sake of their children, who need to be helped to adjust as well. Others are so overwhelmed by their own grief that they cannot think of others who may be suffering. In such situations the children and anyone else who suffers because of the loss of the deceased one may need separate counselling.

5. Leisurely timing

These steps in the grief process can take many months and years to accomplish, but eventually, if the grieving has worked there will be small steps back towards normal living, and new learning in order to cope with the changed situations. Since major changes in life style such as moving house or going back to work can add to the stress created by bereavement, clergy and counsellors need to encourage mourners to wait a while before they make big decisions so that stress can be kept to a minimum.

6. Identifying Pathological Grief II: other signs

- (1) Pathological grief would be recognised if there seemed to be no relief from the most acute phases of grief, and therefore no attempts to pick up the threads of life.
- (2) Pathological grief can also be discerned from a turn in the individual's behaviour. It becomes self destructive, reckless about safety or finances, incompetent in relation to work or parenting, aggressive and hostile towards other loved ones, or depressed and listless, so that nothing is done to take care of elf and home, etc..
- (3) Another sign of pathology might be a period of apparent calm and well being immediately after the death as if its significance was not registering. This is followed by an acute change of behaviour into one of the negative patterns just described.
- (4) Pathological grief can have negative outcomes because it side-steps the healing factor of grief. If the sorrow has been repressed and so continues, it may have consequences in psycho-somatic illnesses, psychological disorder, or even suicide.

7. OSTERWEIS (1984): Bereavement and mortality

There is an increase in mortality following the loss of a loved person. Spouses, in particular widowers, are twice as likely to die following *bereavement* than the mortality for the general population rate would predict. Though various explanations have been offered to explain away these figures, it does seem that *desolation* can sap the will to live. Also, lower resistance to disease because of the effect of stress on the immune system in the wake of bereavement, and an unwillingness to care for oneself can lead to greater vulnerability to illness. The overall number affected in this way is small, and the association is with pathological grieving. The vast majority of widows and widowers pass through a period of mourning and return to normal life.

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UNIT 9: UNDERSTANDING EMOTION

A. INTRODUCTION

1A. Aims; and some Questions to consider

1. Aim of this unit

Our aim is to deepen your knowledge about the nature of emotion, the stresses we may experience in life, and the healing offered through psychology and (Christian) Faith.

2. Some Questions to consider

- (1) How would you define the key concepts of 'emotion', 'maladjustment', and 'normality'?
- (2) Can you recognise the signals that make you angry or afraid? When did you learn them?
- (3) What differences do you perceive between psychological and religious happiness? Do we need both?

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B. WHAT IS EMOTION?

1B. The Physiology of Emotion

1. The Cortex

Human emotion is at the same time one of the most complex aspects of our experience, and one of the most primitive. The structures of the brain that initiate and control our emotional responses are closely related to the same systems that exist in many of the mammals. They are

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changed very little in the human being. What makes human beings different from other mammals in this respect, however, is a possession of a relatively huge cortex which lies on top of the 'old brain' or 'sub-cortical structures' and which has a complex inter-relationship with the systems that control our physical and emotional responses. The cortex is the part of the brain that is capable of the conscious processing of information and remembering old experiences.

2. The function of the cortex: existence is turned into Human Being

Most aspects of psychology featuring in our study to this point have been centred in the thinking that is the function of the cortex. For example, our self concept, or our understanding of religious experience. Nevertheless you should have picked up the hints that there are other parts of our brain that exert a powerful influence on our behaviour, but which are less subject to the rational control of the cortex. **Freud** included unconscious motivation in his theory which springs from the 'Id' and seems best located sub-cortically. **Eysenck's** theory is based on Neuroticism on the arousal of the limbic system and the balance between sympathetic and para-sympathetic branches of the Autonomic Nervous system. A human body can survive without a cortex. Some tragic babies are born *anacephalic* which means that their cortex has failed to develop. Some people suffer brain damage which destroys the cortex. Such children can never learn anything, or even know of themselves as existing. The cortex, then, is a relatively separate part of the brain which is not necessary for the maintenance of life itself, but intervenes in ways that turn existence into human being.

3. Make distinction between conscious-voluntary and innate-involuntary emotion

Part of the complexity of studying emotions lies in the definitions of terms. It is useful to make a distinction between those aspects of emotion that are conscious and subject to learning and voluntary control, and those which are innate and involuntary and so operate unconsciously.

4. Innate inner physiological responses to emotion

We are born with some aspects of emotion wired in. These include the physiological responses to threat which are produced by the autonomic nervous system. They form a pattern of changes that prepare the body to fight, or to run away from perceived threat. There are changes in the heart rate, blood pressure, and distribution of the blood. Ongoing peaceful processes like digestion are stopped, and the blood is given a higher proportion of oxygen and concentrated in the brain and muscles. When fear or anger are activated in this way, our bodies become more powerful than in a relaxed state, so people who cause injuries to others while in a rage can actually be said not to know their own strength. Athletes deliberately use this response to help them achieve greater performances. It is mediated by the circulation of two hormones, Adrenaline and Nor-Adrenaline. The balance of each is slightly different for anger and fear. Hence, athletes say that they are trying to get the adrenaline flowing. There are some other physical consequences of the activation of the stress system which are utilised in lie detectors. These can measure changes in the electrical skin conductance, skin temperature, and sweating which occur when we are anxious or aroused. Theoretically it is possible to detect when someone is lying, because their anxiety is betrayed in the skin response. It is of course quite easy to fake the response by thinking emotional thoughts which make the meter jump at inappropriate moments. However, faking a lie is one thing and is in itself a lie, but the truth cannot be easily faked on such a machine.

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5. Response to outward stimuli

As well as inner physiological responses to emotion, we have outward signs of our feeling, such as laughing and crying, facial expressions, and hitting out or trying to escape. This aspect of emotional behaviour is probably innate. If a baby is startled it will pull a particular face and cry. Nobody teaches him or her that this is the appropriate response rather than laughter. At a slightly later age the child will smile with pleasure when greeting the return of a person to whom he or she is attached, or when he or she re-discovers a favourite toy. In the USA **T.M. Field & A. Fogel** (1982) have used the presence of facial expressions, from about the first month after birth, to study the emotional experience of infants. They have had to make a large assumption, however, in order to even begin this research, namely, that there is a direct connection in such a baby between facial expression and felt emotion. In adults it is possible to use a Facial action coding system (FACS) to make a valid record of emotions. The differences between, say, fear and anger, can be classified in terms of position of eyebrows, degree to which the eyes are open, shape of mouth, and so on. The coding system is precise enough for several observers to witness the same experience, and make the same decision about the person's state of emotion. Most of us cannot put into words our detection of these signals, but we do respond to them in our own behaviour, so we must have picked up some information. **Desmond Morris** has worked on decoding non-verbal signals and presenting them in a popular book. However, there is serious research into non-verbal signals and people's sensitivity to them which relates to the effective performance of teachers and counsellors.

2B. A developmental approach

1. Baby facial expressions and responsive parents

Babies show a range of facial expressions from about one month onward. Some researchers argue that these are the direct mirror of their feelings. Below the age of about two years, children have no conscious control over their facial expressions. As they grow they will soon learn the adult trick of dissembling. This is either showing emotions that they do not feel, or covering up emotions they do feel, although we become rather better at doing this with our words rather than our faces. Hence, we may often achieve no-verbal leakage, a term used by psychologists when our faces or intonation of our voice betray the real situation. **Field** and **Fogel** have demonstrated children mostly receive positive displays of affection from their parents, and become very distressed if their mothers are depressed and fail to make facial responses. A more interesting part of their research is concerned with how parents perceive responses of their children. They divide parents into three groups. The majority are extremely responsive to signals from their children. They perceive when the child signals that he wants to interact and play or talk or tickle, whatever seems appropriate, up to the point when the child smiles. This is the child's way of terminating the contact because he or she has reached the point of optimal arousal, and so will turn away their head. Responsive parents then wait until the child signals readiness for another round of inter-action. In this model the child sets the pace, and sensitive parents readily respond to the signals.

2. Insensitive parenting and its consequences

There are two kinds of insensitive parents.

- (1) *Over controlling parents.* These fail to notice the child's signal to terminate contact, and they do not give enough time for the child to make his or her response to their stimulus. As small children have quite a long response time, they are constantly intervening, trying to regain contact and stimulating the child into what he or she can do – 'A nice smile for granny!'

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- (2) *Under controlling parents.* These are like the depressed parents previously mentioned, who cause their children's distress. They fail to notice the child's signals that the child wants to start an interaction or repeat one that the child has just enjoyed.

Whether parents are under controlling or over controlling, the result seems to be similar. The children fail to learn about inter-action and turn taking, and they do not develop the feeling of being able to control what happens in inter-actions. In later life they show the learned helplessness which is so damaging to self concept and self esteem. **Demos** (1982) studied the facial expressions of one to two year olds observed in home situations longitudinally. He shows that some of the children were producing strange blends of emotions at an early age, fear perhaps coupled with a smile, or fear and anger together. These he takes to be an indication of emotional mal-adjustment consequent upon having over-controlling parents.

3. FIELD & FOGEL: the feeling state and facial expressions are coupled

We have, then, two innate aspects of emotional behaviour; the physiological responses, and the external signals that trigger them. But there is another aspect to emotion that we experience consciously, and that is the feeling that we have during an emotional state. **Field** and **Fogel** note that researchers think *the feeling state is directly coupled to the external facial signals, and innate*. So, if a two year old shows fear on his or her face, the child is also feeling fear inside. There is even a school of thought that *the facial expressions actually produce the feeling in a state of direct feedback from the muscles involved*. So, if a person is feeling unhappy and depressed, they should smile, and this will produce a mood change. This theory is of course more complex, but there is respectable research in its favour. Try it!

4. An alternative view: general activity response GAR

The opposing view is that we have to learn to interpret our feeling states, and they become differentiated with age. For the first few months babies seem to have two states of existence, calm or asleep, and activated. The activated state is thought to be a forerunner of emotion and is known as GAR, or General Activity Response. It involves crying and thrashing one's limbs about. Within a couple of months this has differentiated into different sorts of crying which most parents recognise. There is startled response to fear arousing situations, often with a sudden onset beginning with a scream. There is an angry sort of crying, loud and continuous, accompanied by limb movements and a screwed up red face. There is the lonely cry with a slow quiet onset which builds up if the child is neglected. As these are caused by different circumstances, it is assumed that they relate to different sorts of feeling within the child. This feeling is mainly one of unpleasant arousal. The child is not consciously aware of the difference until he or she learns language and then begins to associate the various labels with the different arousing circumstances, and knows that he or she is feeling angry or afraid.

5. Dimensions of emotion: case study on fear and anger

(a) Diversity within fear and anger

Research on emotions tends to concentrate on fear and anger. But, babies also seem to have a pleasant feeling state which they signal by laughing, gurgling, or cooing. By about the age of one year old, there are three distinct emotional responses in children recognised by adults as fear, anger, and contentment. On this theory, the process of differentiation continues through development, and is very closely linked with language development. Most adults can produce a list of words that describe feelings of fear, anger, or happiness, and can put them into order of intensity. Here are some examples using fear and anger. Try them in the order that is right for you, or try working instead on 'Happiness' in the same way.

Apprehension AnxietyFear Panic Terror

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Confidence Courage BraveryRashness Hostility Fury

Each of these words expresses a different kind of anger or fear. They vary according to whether they precede or follow the perceived threat. They vary in intensity and duration as well as in the kind of behaviour that they might elicit from someone else. In terms of the physiological response each might produce, the variation might be less. Each is likely to increase heart rate and blood pressure, disrupt digestion, and produce a galvanic skin response. Differences between people are only a matter of degree. Facial expressions may vary. One would usually expect to have more voluntary control of one's facial muscles when apprehensive than when terrified, and when confident than when furious.

(b) A positive as well as negative aspect

The words used to describe these feelings not only illustrate that emotions can be ranged along a continuum, they also show that even fear and anger, generally thought of as negative emotions, actually can have positive value for individuals. Fear warns us to beware of danger and the individual who is fearless is actually foolhardy and dangerous. There are circumstances in which we ought to feel afraid. If we teach children (boys in particular) to deny or repress fear, we deny them an important protective mechanism. Similarly, anger can be one of our basic energisers to action, a source of our drive and our ambition to accomplish things. If we teach girls to deny or repress anger, we make them passive and submissive, and unlikely to compete and succeed in their work and play.

3B. PAVLOV: Unconditioned and conditioned stimuli and responses

1. Classical conditioning

We have looked at the innate aspects of emotion; the physiological responses and the external signs and facial expressions. We have also found that the feelings that we have may have an innate undifferentiated base. But they develop as we grow into complex systems of feelings that we learn to discriminate and label. Hence, they appear to be far removed from the three initial states of fear, anger, and contentment. The consideration of 'feeling states' leads us into other leaned aspects of emotion. Babies are born with some signals innately coded to an emotional response. They will therefore show fear to loud noises, sudden events, flashes of light, loss of support, novel or strange objects. They will show anger to pain, cold, hunger, restriction, tiredness, or change of routine. These innate signals for emotional responses are called unconditioned stimuli (US) and the responses are also unconditioned (UR). You may recognise the terms as coming from **Pavlov** whose research taught us the mechanisms for understanding and dealing with emotions. Because it is one of the oldest research paradigms in psychology, it is called, 'Classical Conditioning'.

2. Pavlov's dog experiment

A brief look at how Classical Conditioning works will show both how emotional signals are acquired, and how one of the treatment methods for phobias works. **Pavlov** worked with dogs and showed that they had an innate behaviour pattern that linked the signal, food (UCS) with the response salivation (UCR). He paired the giving of food with the sound of a bell for a number of trials, and found that salivation could now be produced when the bell was rung alone. The bell, rather than the giving of the food, had become the conditioned stimulus, and salivation to the bell had become the conditioned response. In diagram form:

Food (UCS)----- → Salivation (UCR).
 Plus
 Bell (CS)----- → Salivation (CR) ----- Food.

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Food is the reinforcement that sustains the conditioned response, and if it is not given, even if the bell is rung, that response will soon reduce or be extinguished.

3. Applying Pavlov's insight: fear of dogs

Now, Fear signals are acquired in a similar way. Children are naturally afraid of sudden events that give them pain. If a dog bounds up and bowls over a toddler, the sequence is as follows:

Sudden event (UCS)

Dog (CS)-----→ Fear (UCR) -----→ escape.

Fear will be produced every time the child sees a dog which will make him or her take avoiding action. If the child escapes the dog, fear will go away, and the avoiding action will be reinforced. It is the success and enforcement of the avoiding action that makes fear so difficult to eliminate. As long as we keep away from the feared stimulus, we keep our anxieties at bay, but we never actually learn. What do I mean? In this instance: We will not learn that dogs are really nothing to be afraid of, because we never stay around long enough to find out.

4. De-conditioning

(a) An example of the technique: treating spider phobia

Fear signals that have become conditioned stimuli can be de-conditioned, and that is the basis of desensitisation technique. This technique also makes use of the two parts of the autonomic nervous system. A person who has a phobia is first taught to recognise the physiological signs of fear, and how to relax and control them. Then he or she is taken through a series of staged contacts with the feared object or event in which each step comes nearer to the real thing. The person is taught to control emotional responses as they arise, and the next step is not taken until he or she has full control of his or her responses at the stage before. Let's illustrate this with a phobia of spiders. The steps might run as follows.

- (1) Looking at a picture of a spider on the opposite wall of the room.
- (2) Bringing the picture closer.
- (3) Seeing a dead spider in a perspex box at some distance, and the closer.
- (4) Seeing someone handle it.
- (5) Handling the dead spider for himself or herself.
- (6) Repeating the last four steps with a live spider.

(b) The role of the therapist

If at any stage the person's emotions were aroused, the therapist would stop the sequence and retrace the steps to a safe stage, and build up again. The person is learning to cope with emotions in the presence of a fear stimulus in a way that we all need to in order to cope. The person has to acknowledge that there is a cause for fear and consciously deal with it. De-sensitisation techniques for children are a little more complex since they cannot co-operate quite so deliberately with the therapist. However, the approach has been used extremely successfully to deal with school phobia, fear of hospital or doctors etc..

4B. Emotional learning through the need to live with others in society

1. Socialisation to control emotions

The final kind of learning that we have to do in relation to emotion arises from having to live with other people in society. We have to acquire the attitudes to emotion that are acceptable in our group if we are going to make social relationships. This brings us full circle. We started by thinking about the relationship between the sub-cortical emotional system, and the

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cortical learning system. It is now unacceptable for us in our society to express fear by running away or anger by attacking whatever threatens us, so we socialise children into controlling the expression of emotions. Babies are able to cry when they are hurt and afraid. But when they become older people start to say, 'Be brave, don't cry!' As adults we are expected not to show emotions in public, or at least for not too long after an immediate cause of public sadness is passed. This expectation weighs more heavily upon men than upon women. In the counselling part of this course we will need to consider whether it is helpful to teach children to repress the expression of their emotions in this way. Perhaps we should spend more time showing both boys and girls how to acknowledge their feelings and cope with fear.

2. Gender and passivity: striking the balances

When, however, we consider anger, the gender expectations are reversed. There is a general expectation that boys are more aggressive and that they are allowed to express their anger more openly and physically. Girls are expected to conform to a more passive, feminine approach. We have already noted that anger can have a positive aspect – usually known as 'thirst for righteousness' (Matthew 5:5) in New Testament Christian terms – as a drive to get things done, which in turn is an important part of self fulfilment. But it is not only girls who may be taught that all anger is wicked. Some of the major world religions advocate non-violence and self denial as a way of life. Care must be taken here to strike the balance. Take the issue of Pacifism. Pacifism can be achieved in two ways. (1) The individual may totally repress all aspects of anger and self assertion so that they are no longer felt as emotions. (2) Alternatively, an individual may recognise the existence of the self assertive angry response to threat, and channel it to achieve good outcomes that do not damage other people. Now: In Freudian terms this is the difference between *denial* and *sublimation*. **Freud** would not have hesitated to claim that denial is a maladjusted response. When in counselling sessions we move to a consideration of *depression* we may have to find ways of restoring a positive self image to people whose anger has been denied and turned in on themselves so that they feel worthless.

5B. Conclusion

1. A concluding question

I will conclude this sub-unit on defining and describing emotions by asking a question that we have already considered, but this time asking it in this context. What do we mean by the *development of emotion*? Does the Christian Faith have a particular comment upon this question, or a particular answer to it? Undoubtedly there is a change over time between infant and adult emotions – but what actually changes? This sub-unit has raised some of the possibilities which I will now try and bring together.

2. Emotional development as process of enrichment or differentiation

'Emotional development' might refer to a *process of enrichment* or to a *process of differentiation*. A human being starts with three physiological feeling states. Gradually, through learning language, and interacting with people, that person comes to feel and describe the full range of human feelings. Though the internal physiological effects may be pretty much the same when we are jealous, angry, or disgusted, we actually *feel* different. Through learning, using our complex cortical structure, we overlay a rich pattern of experiences on top of the primitive activity states. The differentiation must be even greater for the positive feeling state variously labelled 'pleasure' and 'contentment' in babies. That state develops to encompass some feelings that are essentially self related like joy, satisfaction, delight, and

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others that are focused on other people like sympathy and tenderness. Perhaps the theory needs to be changed to include a fourth primitive emotional state focused on others, a kind of *empathy* or *altruism*. In theoretical terms it is quite challenging to find the source of our ability to care for others when we seem to be totally ego-centric as infants. Hence, we will consider **Bowlby**'s theory to explain the growth of love in Unit 11: Childhood Experience.

3. Emotional enrichment shaped by socialisation needs

Another way to think of emotional development might be to stress *socialisation to control emotional expressions*. Many people will say this is vital if children are to become acceptable members of society. A mature person is thought to be someone who is never overwhelmed by emotions so as to lose temper or run away in panic. This definition is preferred by people who think of humans as typically rational, thinking beings who have escaped from the instinctive responses that tyrannise animals. Whole philosophies and applications of religion and faith have been built up on these opposing viewpoints. In my understanding, Existentialism values the enrichment of life through feelings, directly known, deliberately explored and cultivated. Why? It is because this is the only psychological 'reality' we can know for certain. Similarly, we noted at the outset of this course that some religions are based on the individual's direct and enriching experience of God. On the other side, Stoics aim to exert rigid control over their feelings and bodies; and puritans or fundamentalists in all religions work for the denial of self-indulgence, particularly in the realm of the emotions.

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C. WHAT IS STRESS?

1C. Positive functions of stress

1. The aim of this section

In this sub-section we will bring together what we have found out in this course about the human brain and emotional system so that we can briefly air the questions of stress. Stress is one of the diseases of Twentieth Century (Western) humankind.

2. EYSENCK: Parasympathetic and sympathetic dimensions

In a previous unit we examined **Eysenck**'s theory of personality. Now, Neuroticism is one of his three dimensions, but it is clear from the neurological base of this dimension as he conceptualised it that he was thinking of the balance between two aspects of the nervous system. These are the *parasympathetic* and the *sympathetic*. The sympathetic system is operated when the individual perceives a stress of any kind, and **Eysenck** considered that highly neurotic people were labile, that is, their sympathetic systems were more easily aroused. Consequently, they perceived situations as threatening more easily, and they were generally more emotional.

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3. Fear & anger, happiness & contentment as biological triggers

In this unit of the course we have looked at the nature of emotion. Again, it is clear that the autonomic nervous system is involved, particularly in the physiological responses that accompany fear and anger. Happiness or contentment have the opposite effect physiologically, by producing hormones that relax our bodies and contribute to our well being.

4. The balance between arousal and contentment

Superficially it would appear that the key to happiness is damping down the more violent emotional responses mediated by the sympathetic system, and maintaining a balance between a positive emotional state, so allowing the para-sympathetic to operate without disruption. But reality is more complex than this. Not only is a certain amount of arousal necessary to motivate us to act, but many people find it a pleasurable experience and take risks in order to produce a sense of excitement that drives them forward. A low level of anxiety or a small degree of assertiveness may be the motivating factors that cause us to attempt things and be successful. We noted earlier that children learn things because their curiosity is aroused by novel experience. However, novelty is intrinsically stress inducing, and babies only learn if their anxiety is kept under control. This for them means either being in a familiar place or familiar with the person to whom they are attached.

5. Motivation: changes of arousal in both directions can be rewarding

Studies of motivation are beginning to suggest that we find changes in arousal in either direction rewarding. So we are drawn towards novel and challenging experiences, and are intrinsically reinforced by the 'buzz' of arousal and stimulation that they give us. At times we are also drawn to practising precise and detailed skills such as quietly reading, or pursuing other activities that give us peace and relaxation. We find the lowering of our arousal level equally reinforcing. What we seem to find boring is no change in either direction, but, as **Eysenck** has pointed out, individuals vary in the level of arousal at which they can work best. There are even studies which suggest that we can become addicted to our own hormone excretions. When this happens we punish our bodies severely by exercising too vigorously because the effect of the consequent increase in our endorphin level gives us an increased sense of well being.

2C. The negative function of stress

1. Fight and flight

So, if stress has a positive function of alerting us to danger, motivating us to action, and even conveying a pleasing sense of alertness and excitement, when does it become damaging? The sympathetic nervous system operates to prepare our bodies for fight or flight. If it is operating all the time it can have a detrimental effect on both body and brain.

2. Negative factors arising from a permanently active sympathetic system

(a) A case: The climber who died from exposure

You may have heard the phrase (in Europe) about climbers who are lost for a long while in bad, cold weather and tragically 'die of exposure'. Someone who falls into ice cold water may have 'died of exposure' rather than drowning. Why do I mention this? Because cold is a stressor which activates the sympathetic system. In both these instances, the stress was

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extreme. Though every attempt was made to maintain the vital life support systems like temperature and blood sugar level, the stress system failed to cope, and the individual died.

(b) The bio-chemistry of (negative) stress

Most stresses are not that extreme, but if the sympathetic system is mildly activated all the time, then certain things occur. The circulation system is always under pressure, the digestive system cannot cope normally, and hormones circulate in the blood stream. These hormones repress the body's immune system and encourage the laying down of cholesterol which narrows the arteries. People then become liable to suffer from ulcers, high blood pressure, heart attacks, and are more vulnerable to infections and diseases that would normally be defeated by their immune system. Many doctors realise that 30-50% of their patients are actually suffering from stress rather than the physical symptoms presented in the surgery.

3. Other major causes of stress

We have seen that our bodies respond to physical stresses such as extremes of cold and heat, over exertion and noise. Recently the press has carried articles about how much noise factory workers endure from machinery. This is not only going to make them deaf, but it also activates their stress system. Overcrowding is another stress that people often experience. Some people are crammed into living spaces that are not only physically unpleasant because of dirt and damp, but are also full of people. Such conditions are stress inducing. They cause an increase of aggressive and destructive behaviour. Many more physical and psychological illnesses occur amongst these as compared with those of the population who are more agreeably housed.

4. Negative Stress: arises from unpredictability and uncontrollability

Apart from these major physical stresses, we are all subject to psychological stresses because of situations which occur in our lives that we perceive as threatening to our self esteem, our well being and happiness, our goals in life, and so on. The list of possible stresses is seemingly endless, and individually variable in relation to our personality differences. One person, living alone, might find it stressful to go to a club full of strange people while another, used to sharing a home with a spouse, might be defeated by the stress of living alone. We can work out the sort of situations that are likely to be stressful if we go back to what stresses a child. Sudden unexpected experiences, strange situations, novelty, separation from loved ones, loss of treasured objects, and too many strange people can all be stressful to children at certain times. The factors, of course, that all these have in common are *unpredictability* and *uncontrollability*. We do not cope well with too much change. We are distressed by having to make decisions when we are equally balanced between alternatives, and cannot predict the outcomes.

5. Greater negative stress leads to greater physical and psychological symptoms

B. Hopson in **M. Herbert (Ed.)** 'psychology for social workers' shows the range of possible change and some ways of helping people control their response to it. People seem to agree fairly well when asked to rate the seriousness of each kind of change. The more serious the rating of stress, the more probable it is that the individual experiencing it will also show physical and psychological symptoms. Counsellors may find that they have to help people to avoid over-stressing themselves, or recognise that two or three major stresses have come together for a particular person. Recently widowed people might feel desperate to move house to escape painful memories, but this often adds to rather than alleviating their burden of stress.

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3C. Stress in Old Age

1. WILSON & SCHULZ (1983): Stressful life events

I am returning briefly to the work on 'Ageing' that we undertook in Unit 8A. If we look at the **Holmes-Rahe** list of stressful events we shall find that older people are subject to some of the more negative stresses: Loss of spouse, death of a close family member or close friend. They tend to no longer experience some of the more hopeful life changes: Marriage, gaining a new family member, ending education, and vacations. This scale is often criticised as only proposing a limited set of life changes that require us to make serious readjustment of our lives patterns. It is also often said that this list neglects other stresses whose effect is more long term: Consistent overwork and chronic illness; and that its listing is focused on dramatic changes that occur principally to young people. **Schulz & Ewen** (1993) quote a more appropriate list for old people taken from **Plomin et.al.** (1990) and adapt it from their own research. (1) Changes in financial resources, (2) Changes in personal relationships, (3) Changes in environment and location, (4) Changes in health, (Wilson and Schulz 1983).

2. Stresses in youth and old age: Age linked stress more complex

Each of these areas can be examined separately, and comparisons made with changes that take place in youth. The effect that changes will have on people will be modulated by whether the event can be said to be temporally normative and likely to happen to your friends of the same age, or non-normative. For older people the probability of divorce is much rarer, and if it occurs, likely to be much more stressful than the death of a spouse which is counted as a normal event. For young people, on the other hand, widowhood comes as a shock and is associated with a higher illness and mortality rate at that age than for older widows and widowers. In comparison, ill health is non-normative and likely to produce more stress in young people than in old age where people begin to expect some health problems. The relationship between ageing and stress is, therefore, more complex.

3. Stress in old age: location and environment

Changes that seem to cause most stress in older adults are related in the main to changes in environment and location. Being relocated from home to hospital or from one institution to another is associated with higher death rates than being able to stay in a familiar environment. There is a problem about interpreting these figures because people are usually moved when they are too ill to look after themselves. This, and not simple relocation, is often therefore the major cause of subsequent death.

4. Stress mechanisms: emotion focused in the old, problem focused in the young

Do we learn to cope with stress as we become 'older and wiser'? Decisions about this will depend on the coping style of the individual. For some problems like dealing with serious illness or readjusting to a smaller income, it might be effective to take a problem focused strategy and seek out advice from doctors or accountants to solve the problem. If the situation is difficult to change, it might be better to adopt a positive, emotion-focused coping strategy by concentrating on maintaining a positive attitude and looking for a silver lining. Some individuals, however, might want to follow a negative strategy, and put the situation out of mind using some form of defence mechanism. **Schulz & Ewen** found research showed that old people tend to go for the emotion-focused strategy, mainly because their problems are related to health and location, and there is usually no way of changing the situation, e.g.: suffering from the chronic pain of arthritis which may be better alleviated by acceptance.

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Younger people, by contrast, tend to adopt a problem focused strategy because many of their stresses fall in the area of finance and work.

Bibliography on stress

To help your further study and investigation, here is a bibliography.

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UNIT 10: CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCE

A. INTRODUCTION

1A. Essential Reading, Aims, Outcomes and Activity

1. Reading from the course material

Spika	B. &	The Psychology of Religion: Theoretical Approaches
McIntosh	D.M. (Eds).	Colorado: Westview Press, Chapters 8 & 10.
Herbert	M.	Psychology for social workers, London: Macmillan, BPS 2 nd Ed. Chapters 2,3,4,5,9.

2. Aims

Unit 10 is focused on theories about Child Development in general. It makes a particular study of **Bowlby's** (influential) theory of maternal deprivation and its effect on children's emotional, social, and cognitive development. The Unit also raises important questions about the possible determining effects of our early experience, and the challenge this poses to the ideas of individual freedom.

3. Activity

Here are some questions to consider whilst digesting this unit.

- (1) Should mothers go out to work whilst their children are under five?
Should fathers?
- (2) Can a young abused delinquent who attacks a helpless old person without feeling or guilt or caring about the pain he or she caused be thought of acting freely or being responsible for the consequences of his or her action?
- (3) Can a loving parent who raises his or her children within the same kind of warm, continuous relationship as he or she received from his or her own parents be said to be acting freely or be responsible for the consequences of his or her actions?
- (4) What forms of healing can the Christian Faith offer to damaged personalities?

4. Outcomes

When you have completed your study of this unit, you will have studied one of the important theories used to explain the nature of human relationships and their development. You will also have studied its application to many situations of separation and loss including divorce and bereavement.

5. Important concepts

- (a) Attachment and bonding in early development. (b) Critical periods in early experience, maternal separation, rejection and separation. (c) **Ainsworth's** 'strange situation' experiment. (d) The possible relationship between early experience and maladjustment and delinquency.

2A. Additional Research Bibliography

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2. Divorce

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B. CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCE

1B. Learning Theory: the 'Critical period' thesis

1. The importance of a child's early years and experience

Some of the self concept and personality theories we studied earlier in the course stressed that what happens in the early experience of a child can have important outcomes in later development. **Freud's** theory in particular suggested that the critical phases in the development of the id, and super-ego were completed by about the age of six years, although some of the Neo-Freudians like **Erikson** have perceived the course of development as continuing until old age and death.

2. An example: the early years 'critical period' for language learning

In the 1950s and 1960s this emphasis upon early development reached its high point, and the concept was researched in both human and animal psychology. A new phrase was coined, 'critical periods' of development. It implied that there were optimal times in a person's or animal's growth when certain steps of learning ought to take place. When the moment was past, the piece of learning would either have been completely missed, so distorting development, or very hard to catch up. The clearest illustration of this can be taken from human language learning which happens naturally and easily in children between eighteen months and four years of age, but which becomes very difficult when one tries to learn another language at a later age. Pre-school children are so receptive to language learning that they pick up two languages almost as easily as one, with natural accents in both. Yet if one moves to a new country after the age of seven years, although one might become fluent in the language, one almost always carry with one an accent that betrays one's country of origin. The explanation for this is that pre-school children have brains and hearing that is particularly receptive to the language around them. They also possess the ability to produce a wider range of language sounds than they will habitually use at a later date.

3. PIAGET: learning as assimilation or accommodation

Piaget was saying something similar when he described the process of learning as *adaptation* using either *assimilation* or *accommodation*. When we are young we are constantly challenged by our experiences, and we have to accommodate our schemata to cope with them. As we age, our brain structures become more crystallised so that we assimilate new information to existing schemata. We are often selective in what we perceive. We may even distort our perceptions to make reality fit our pre-conceptions. Some new information might be so challenging to our hard won equilibrium that it would require a total restructuring of a set of inter-connecting schemata, and we might not choose to accept that information.

4. The consequence of learning being missed in the 'critical period'

Early experiences of learning, then, can potentially lock us into patterns of organising the world and responding to it. So much so can this be, that it may actually determine what we learn in the future. A great deal of concern is shown for those children who are brought up in impoverished homes, in stressful living conditions, and who do not receive the adult attention needed to develop their language, and the learning experiences needed to develop their concepts. They arrive in school with gaps in their knowledge that make it difficult for them to adjust to school learning. These are never made up because teachers do not have the time to supply that one-to-one adult attention that is crucial to the steps in learning that they have

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missed. In subsequent years they fall further behind in their progress, and come to see themselves as failures.

5. Are there similar critical periods in emotional development?

The question that I am raising in this sub-unit is whether there are similar ‘critical periods’ in emotional development during which certain kinds of experience can have positive or negative effects that in turn determine our emotional balance. There is a strong theory in the field which has dominated thinking in family social work since the 1950s, and I want to present it in some detail followed by a selection of the research which has challenged it.

2B. BOWLBY's Thesis

1. ‘Child Care and the Growth of Love’

In 1953 **John Bowlby** published a book with an evocative title, ‘Child Care and the growth of Love’. This was a summary in popular readable form of his intensive research for the World Health Organisation (WHO) into the effects of the disruption of family life that was an extensive result of World War II. He collected evidence of serious deprivation, particularly for children who had been orphaned or abandoned, or raised in children’s homes. He thought that the deprivation had observable effects in all realms of development; physical –the children failed to thrive, suffered from frequent illness, and often died young; cognitive – they were slow to learn and had poor language development; emotional – they were unable to make lasting, loving relationships; and social – they were often destructive, delinquent, and lacked any sense of guilt about bad behaviour.

2. ‘Attachment and Loss’

Bowlby saw the main focus of this deprivation in the absence of a mother figure, and for the next twenty years, he pursued a line of research into the whole question of making and losing relationships. It is published in ‘Attachment and Loss’ which is a three volume look at three aspects of bonding, (1) Attachment (1969), (2) Separation (1973), (3) Loss (1979).

3. The basis of Bowlby's thesis

Bowlby's thesis was stated in a strong form. He believed that all children need a secure, continuous, warm, and loving relationship with a mother or father figure. That relationship was formed between the age of 0 and 2 years which were thought to be a critical period for the formation of the primary bond. Evidence of an attachment to the mother comes with most children at about the age of eight to nine months when they follow their mother wherever they can, and show anxiety and distress if they are separated. Children who fail to form a bond during this period or who experience the loss of their primary attachment figure will be emotionally damaged, and in particular will fail to learn how to love and be incapable of forming loving relationships at a later date.

4. Further refinement of Bowlby's thesis

(a) Introduction: Various kinds of Maternal Deprivation

Bowlby included a wide range of experience in his concept of maternal deprivation, but expected the consequences of all the experience(s) to be broadly similar. But, later research by **Bowlby and others** showed that various kinds of deprivation should be considered separately: *Maternal Deprivation*, *Maternal Rejection*, *Maternal Separation*. We will examine each in turn.

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(b) Maternal Deprivation

This term is applied to the experience of a complete absence of a mother figure. This may be because the child has been sent away from home and brought up in an institution. This may happen from birth if the mother is unmarried, or incompetent, or dies. It can also occur later in life after a bond has been formed because there is a divorce, or it may occur because the mother dies. Within this category there are different results. Children who are deprived from birth have no positive experiences on which to base their knowledge of love and trust, and may constantly seek for attention and affection. Children who have formed an attachment which was then broken may blame themselves for the absence of a mother, and grow up feeling guilty and depressed. Losing a parent who has died is often less damaging than losing one through divorce. However, it does depend on whether the death was sudden or unexpected, what the child was told about the illness and death, and the remaining parent's ability to adjust. The problem about losing a parent through divorce is that the quarrels and bad feeling that preceded the separation may distort subsequent relationships.

(c) Maternal Rejection

Maternal rejection covers the situation where the child is brought up at home by a mother who is incapable of giving love. This often occurs because the mother herself was rejected in the same way and has no experience of receiving love from which to give love. It can sometimes happen if the mother suffers from post-natal depression. This reduces her capacity to give love to the baby. It can also occur when a child is premature so that the early formation of the primary bond between child and mother is prevented while the child is in the incubator and hence seldom touched by his or her mother. Premature babies are also often difficult to take care of, because they cry a great deal and seem to reject the mother's attempts to console them. Maternal rejection from whatever cause is closely related to the ill treatment of babies, and there is often a cycle of deprivation passing the inadequate mothering from generation to generation. This is Bowlby's typical situation which gives rise to the central concept expressed in the title of the book, 'Child Care and the Growth of Love'. Both good and bad mothering seemed to be learned in infancy from one's own caretaker. Most people rear their own children in the same way that they were raised even when they are consciously trying to do the opposite of their own parent's treatment of them.

(d) Maternal Separation

Maternal Separation refers to the many situations when a mother is separated from her child for a period of hours in the day because she goes to work, or because she or the child go to hospital. A great deal of the most convincing work on this situation was done by the **Robertsons**: e.g.: they made a film in 1953 called, 'A Two year old goes to hospital'. They were able to show that within a few days, whilst he underwent a minor operation, the child showed the classic patterns of mourning that adults show at the loss of a loved person. First, there was distress and anger. This was followed by quietness and withdrawal when the child seemed to have forgotten his sadness. Finally, when mother came to take him home there was a turning away and rejection, followed by a very disturbed period at home when the child behaved badly and tested the mother out before allowing the loving relationships to be restored. The Robertson's film was widely shown to teachers and nurses, and hospital policies were eventually changed to ensure that parents were encouraged to stay with young children if they went to hospital.

5. Other researcher's initial modifications of Bowlby's thesis

The first modification of Bowlby's theory, then, was to differentiate between the various kinds of separation, and the loss of a mother figure. Whilst this research was happening, other refinements of the theory began to appear. It was discovered that one of the most severe forms of loss was the state of deprivation suffered when a child was reared in an orphanage.

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Closer investigation showed that while the loss of a bond with the mother figure was devastating, some of the effects previously attributed to emotional development in fact had other causes. The cognitive deprivation, in particular, was caused because the children lacked the regular stimulation from an adult who was both playmate and language partner,; a role most often fulfilled by mothers. The difficulty of looking after such large numbers meant that children were left lying in their cots all day staring at white ceilings, and often also having white drapes around their cots which were thought at that time to reduce their chances of infection from other children. So, although they were often adequately fed and cared for physically, they were seriously deprived mentally. Even when children were adopted at a later stage, they seemed to have suffered some intellectual impairment which slowed down their later development. However, we have now come to realise that they might have created an un-stimulating environment for themselves in their new homes, and because their new parents may not have known how to counteract this.

6. Child Abuse

A closer investigation of child abuse confirmed that there was a cycle of deprivation that had serious effects on the development of each generation. It produced children who were small, unhealthy, and at greater risk of dying of disease, let alone also of attacks from their parents. Bowlby identified failure to thrive as another consequence of emotional deprivation. However, closer observation of showed that rejected children were underfed and malnourished, and this made them both small and sickly.

7. Two Questions to be put to Bowlby's thesis

As research chips away at Bowlby's strong statement about maternal deprivation, we need to enquire what actually remains of his theory. This can be done by conveniently considering two questions. (1) Is it essential for a child to have a warm, loving relationship with a caretaker if he or she is to learn the meaning of love and make relationships with others in adulthood? (2) Does it have to be the mother who is the agent of this relationship?

3B. Refinements and critiques of Bowlby's thesis

1. SCAFFER & EMERSON: Attachment begins earlier and includes the father

When Bowlby first observed that there was a bond between mothers and children that was so strong that it produced anxiety if the mother left the room, he was only able to find signs of the behaviour at about seven months of age. He concluded that, below seven months, babies were not able to discriminate their caretakers from strangers, and so the bond did not exist. But he reached this conclusion because at that time he could only observe external behaviours, and below the age of seven months babies were not able to produce the attachment behaviours of following and clinging that started to emerge about then. We now have more sophisticated techniques such as recording heart rates, and we know that within a few weeks, babies are responding differently when picked up by mother or a regular caretaker as compared with a stranger. As soon as they learn voluntary control of smiling, they smile more at their mother. **Schaffer** and **Emerson** (1964) showed that infants recognised their mothers by smell during the first week of life and show pleasure at being with their mother from one month old. They can distinguish both parents from others by two months, and mother from father at three months. So attachment begins much earlier than Bowlby thought, and it includes the father.

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2. AINSWORTH: A link between attachment and cognitive development

(a) Ainsworth's experimental research.

Bowlby thought that there was a link between attachment and cognitive development. This link has been well supported in recent research. **Ainsworth**, who did a whole series of experiments in the 1960s and 1970s has created an important experimental technique which has yielded a great deal of information. It involves putting mother and infant pairs in strange situations, or with strange people, and observing the child's responses. (1) One of the situations involves two rooms. One is sparsely equipped, and mother sits on a chair with the child beside her. The other room is full of attractive toys that tempt the child to explore. Children who are strongly attached to their mothers use them as a base, but move towards the attractive toys. They return to base continually, and if they should be tempted out of sight of their mother, will keep coming back to check. As long as they feel safe, they will play with the new toys, and have the potential for learning from their experiences. If the mother leaves her child alone in the first room, he or she freezes, and refuses to explore whatever the attraction next door. In a similar way, a child can handle the approach of a stranger as long as mother is there as a base, but becomes distressed in the mother's absence. (2) **Ainsworth's** observations of children and mothers in parks is fascinating. If mother sits down on a seat, her child will keep making forays out from base and back again more or less in a straight line stopping at a particular distance as if literally attached by a piece of string. Children will vary in how far they will go, and each child has his or her own 'string length'. Similarly, toddlers are extremely reluctant to walk alongside mother, but will frequently try to stay ahead or follow behind at their own optimal string length. The old idea of putting a toddler on reins seems to fit well with their preferred way of walking.

(b) Ainsworth's conclusions

Ainsworth concluded from her research that the presence of mother moderated the child's level of anxiety. We have already seen that our stress system is activated by threatening situations, and if we become too anxious we cannot respond or learn. If a child is meeting a new person or a new situation, this is potentially anxiety arousing. *Curiosity* is the initial stage of arousal in response to novel stimulation. It is our motivation for learning as we try to make sense out of new information, but it is easily swamped if we feel anxious because the new situation is threatening. The presence of mother dampens down the infant's anxiety response, and allows her to be curious, explore, and learn. **Ainsworth** has shown that the primary attachment to mother is critical to intellectual development. Without it, a child has no way of dealing with stress, and is likely to be threatened by, rather than attracted to, novel stimulation. Hence there will be only limited opportunities for learning.

3. GORDON WELLS: Language and emotional attachment

(a) A direct link between language learning and mother attachment

One aspect of intellectual development that we know requires the presence of a familiar adult is language. We shall take a more detailed look at language development later in the course, so I shall only report some of the major conclusions of **Gordon Well's** research at Bristol University, England over the last twenty years. Children learn language by talking with an adult who is sensitive to their needs and so helps them communicate. This adult language tutor is usually mother who talks to her child during all routine caretaking, and as they share activities. At first she does all the work, by interpreting every look and gesture from the child as a response to her, and putting it into words. As the child masters a few words, mother has to expand on what he or she says to check out the meaning. All the time she is modelling language for the child, creating a language rich environment and supporting his or her efforts to communicate. Many mothers share books with their children so giving them experience of the written language register as well as the spoken one.

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(b) The (maternal) language tutor role and later school learning

Well's research showed that this language tutor role was critical to children's later development in school. Those pupils who had the advantage of sharing books with mothers who were sensitive to their language difficulties were well ahead in learning to read and write at age seven. Children whose mothers have rejected them, on the other hand, lack this language interaction with a sympathetic tutor whose presence controls their anxiety so that they are free to experiment and learn. Children are also more likely to attend to, imitate and learn from a person to whom they are emotionally attached and with whom they are identified. Teachers are hence handicapped when they try to compensate for these depriving early experiences.

4. KOTELCHUCK: Caretaking is also an important activity for fathers

(a) SCHAFFER AND EMERSON (1964): Father recognition by babies

So far we have been stressing **Bowlby's** conclusions – that the primary attachment figure is the mother. However, **Schaffer** and **Emerson** found in 1964 that infants could recognise their fathers from a few months of age. In a longitudinal study of children aged from six to eighteen months they found that while the majority of children were attached to their mothers, some had a stronger bond with another figure. This person might be a father, grandparent, sibling, or other relative. The special attachment seemed not to relate to caretaking activities or length of time spent on the child, but to the quality of the person's interaction with the child. Children became attached to people who talked, touched, and played with them, the more stimulating the play partners, the better they liked them.

(b) KOTELCHUCK: The importance of fathers as caretakers

Kotelchuck in 1976 found that caretaking was an important activity for fathers. They were more likely to be attached to their infants if they helped to take care of them from an early age. At a later date they played more with their children, and their children showed themselves to be more securely attached to their fathers in the 'stronger situation'. **Pedersen** and **Robson** (1969) confirmed their connection between play and attachment but only for boys and their fathers, not for fathers and daughters. **Kotelchuck's** research found that children who were more securely attached to a parent, father or mother, were more likely to react positively in a 'stranger situation' and have better relationships with other children. **Bowlby** seems to have been right on another point. *A secure parental attachment is the first step on social relationships and facilitates the formation of friendships outside the family.* But, his exclusive attention to the primary bond with the mother has not been upheld. Though many children are closely attached to their mothers, most have attachments to other adults who figure large in their lives and for some the closest bond is with one of these other people.

5. Some conclusions vis-à-vis Bowlby's work

We have now achieved some sort of answer to the initial question. Yes, it seems to be necessary for a child to have a warm, loving relationship with one or more people who figure regularly in his or her life. These attachment figures mediate the child's emotional responses so that he or she can learn from novel experiences, provide the major base for language learning, and provide models for positive, loving relationships with people outside the family. No, it does not have to be the mother. The child will quickly learn to discriminate the person(s) who regularly takes care of her and form a bond with the one(s) who provide(s) interest and stimulation. The caretaking activities seem to be more important for the adult in their relationships, so fathers who do routine caretaking tasks form better attachments to their children. Conversely, mothers whose babies are premature or sick at birth and separated from them in incubators sometimes find it difficult to love their babies. **McFarlane's** work in

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Oxford suggests that *mothers and fathers should hold their babies soon after birth because the direct touch contact mediates the formal bond – both ways.*

4B. ‘Critical periods’

1. Some arising questions

At the outset of this unit we learnt about ‘critical periods’. We suggested that **Bowlby**’s theory was representative of research on the implications of these. So, we need now to consider some final questions.

- (1) Is it critical for a child to make an attachment before the age of about three years if he or she is to develop normally in emotional and social relationships?
- (2) If we do not learn love through a primary bond made with one or both parents in infancy, is it impossible for us to understand what love means?

2. BOWLBY: a Response

Bowlby certainly thought that the answer to this second question was, ‘Yes – it’s impossible!’ As far back as 1944, **Bowlby** had undertaken a now famous piece of research that he published soon after with the title ‘Forty-four juvenile thieves.’ He found that a significant proportion of them had suffered from maternal deprivation in their early years, and he considered that this was the main factor in their formation as affection-less delinquents who could commit acts of destruction and violence without feeling any guilt. In a collection of papers published in 1979 called, ‘The making and breaking of affectional bonds,’ **Bowlby** cites evidence from many other researchers. He shows that people who as children suffered from maternal deprivation figure strongly in populations in mental hospitals, prisons, as clients for various counselling services, and as the current parents of children who are being ill treated. But, we have to honestly ask – Is it as straightforward as this? Was the course of their adult lives *really* determined by their experience as children?

3. A first line of enquiry: RUTTER: Diversity in deprivation

There are two lines of research enquiry that we need to pursue to answer this question. The first arises like this. **Bowlby** had no control group for his study of forty-four juvenile thieves, so he did not know the incidence of maternal deprivation in the general population. **Rutter** found that deprivation in all of its forms was very common. This led him to consider whether the different kinds of deprivation might have different effects. Separation would be the least damaging, but even allowing for this he nevertheless noticed that some children brought up by careless and cruel parents in the most deprived conditions *do not* in fact grow up to be affection-less criminals or mentally ill. Some children then appear less vulnerable than others.

4. The direction in which this first line of enquiry is pointing

It seems that this line of research might eventually show that **Bowlby**’s thesis is wrong because maternal deprivation cannot *always* be shown to cause later disturbances. Nevertheless, a correlation between the two *can* be demonstrated. However, correlations do not always show the direction of causality, and other factors sometimes have to be taken into account.

5. BRUNO BETTELHEIM: A second line: Redeeming bad childhood

The second line of research, which is needed to answer questions about critical periods of early development, investigates the possibility of *reversing an earlier deprivation by later*

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good parenting. The results here are equivocal. In 1976 the **Clarkes** published a study of early experience in which they challenged the concept that early damage was irrevocable. They have collected a number of case studies that show that severely deprived children, some locked away from human contact by insane parents for years, have been able to learn the normal lessons of childhood when released and given special care. **Bruno Bettelheim** has been a pioneer of the redeeming work that can be done with severely damaged children. He writes about his work and shows the cost that has to be paid to love these children in the book he wrote called, 'Love is not Enough'.

6. A further consideration: the experience of social workers

On the other side of the scenario, however, are the files of social workers from all over the country. They are full of case studies of children such as Alice and Andrew who were reported by **Polly Toynbee** in 'The Guardian' in 1985. These two were taken into care at an early age and, in Andrew's case fostered in seven different homes. Alice was shuttled between parents' home, children's homes and foster homes. The problem was due to their parents continually changing their minds and circumstances, and then wanting the children back or vice-versa. But this was also compounded by the behaviour of the damaged children who soon became impossibly destructive of all attempts to love them. There are very few foster parents who have the knowledge, skill, and depth of love to see them through the onslaught of a child who is certain that he or she is unlovable and determined to prove it. *For such children early experience is decisive and the damage to their personalities and emotions is irreparable by know psychological interventions and techniques, or by normal family type love.*

7. MURRAY PARKES et al: A closing word

Murray Parkes and others (1991) have recently brought this research up to date in a compendium of articles from leading researchers in the field. Some of their important findings include the following.

- (1) It is possible to assess attachment to parent figures in older children who show it in different ways from infant attachment behaviours. This has enabled researchers to do longitudinal research and see the relationship between the quality of the early attachment bond and later emotional adjustment.
- (2) Failure to make good bonds is transmitted across generations because parents, who themselves lacked an attachment figure are unable to respond in a predictable and affectionate way to their children's attachment behaviours.
- (3) Breaks in attachment in infancy make people vulnerable so that they have difficulty in coping with separation from people they love in adulthood. They may need extra help in coping with divorce and bereavement since these situations reactivate early insecurities and feelings of helplessness that may have been repressed in childhood.

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UNIT 11: MORAL DEVELOPMENT

A. INTRODUCTION

1A. Initial reading, Aims, Questions, intended outcomes, and concepts

1. Reading

Meadow	M. &	Psychology of Religion, New York: Harper and Row,
Kahoe	R.	Chapters 3, 4, 5, and 14.
Fowler	J.	Stages of Faith, San Francisco: Harper and Row. (Re-read or read Part II).
Spika	B. &	The Psychology of Religion: Theoretical approaches.
McIntosh	D.	Colorado: Westview Press, Chapter 7.

2. Aims

This unit has close connections with Units 1-10. In particular, whilst considering *Moral Development*, it helps to integrate the concepts of *Development* and *Personality*. Both Psychology as an academic scientific and social scientific discipline and the Theology of the Christians Faith (to say nothing of the Christian Pastor himself or herself) take a central interest in how people develop morally. Again, therefore, this unit will draw attention to an aspect of the relationship between the fruit of current psychological investigation, and Christian Faith.

3. Questions

Whilst you are undertaking the lectures, investigations, and other discussions that are a part of this unit, here are four questions to keep in mind.

- (1) How do we acquire moral concepts? Is it from the teaching of authorities we respect, or from living together with other people, or both?
- (2) What is moral conscience? How does it develop?
- (3) Is a stage theory an appropriate description of moral development? How does this tie in with the development of Faith?
- (4) Does moral development follow the same pattern in women as in men?

4. Intended Outcomes

By the end of this unit you should have reviewed theories of the development of moral thinking, and made some decisions about how this might be related to personality development, gender, and Theological and other thinking derived from the Christian Faith. If you want to undertake deeper study in this field, you may want to attempt some practical work using one of the measurement techniques and relate it to your work and pastoring.

5. Important concepts

Distinguishing moral development, behaviour, and conscience; the value of stage theories in explaining moral and other development; the theories of **Piaget**, **Kohlberg**, **Fowler**, and **Youniss**.

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2A. A short study guide to this unit

1. Study brief

- Please note that this unit is longer than some, and hence is split into sections.
- If you have not already done so, make your own notes on **Piaget's** and **Kohlberg's** theories of moral development.
- Write a short response to the question: 'Is a stage theory the most appropriate way of describing moral development? Does it work like that? If it does, what causes a person to move from stage to stage?'
- Do you agree with **Kohlberg's** ordering of the stages? Is the final stage in fact the highest level of development of moral thinking?
- Make sure that you answer this sections (Questions (above)).
- Piaget** suggests that our moral thinking and conscience develop because we learn reciprocity in our relationships with peers. This could be hindered by authoritarian instructions from parents. **Freud** thinks the *Ego* is the centre of moral control. Can you reconcile these viewpoints?

2. Research brief

If you are interested in doing some further investigation in to the content of this unit, there are three lines of enquiry that you might like to follow.

(I) Fieldwork I: Youniss's work on the development of relationships

Investigate children and young people's ideas about friendship using the situations employed by **Youniss** given below, and classify your results on the basis of his model.

Ask children to tell you a story about what might happen in response to these situations?

- If two new pupils arrive at a school at the same time, what might happen? What might either of them do so that they become friends?
- What might happen or what might either of them do that would make them become really good friends?
- What might happen or what might one or both of them do that would break up the friendship?
- What could either of them do to make friends again?
- What might happen if one of the friends was kind to the other?
(Use this question if your subject hasn't said something about it already).
- What might happen if a grown up was kind to one of the children? – it might be a parent or another grown up?
- What might happen if a grown up was unkind to one of the children?
- Do you think that children are sometimes kind to their parents or another adult? What might they do?
- What would a child have done if he or she was unkind to his or her parents, or another adult?
- What do you then think that these words mean? *Friendship, Kindness, un-Kindness?* (Add any other interesting words that the subject has used).

(II) Fieldwork II: Piaget's Pairs of Stories

- Investigate the moral concepts of a group of children about 8-12 years using **Piaget's** method of pairs of stories as shown below.

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- (2) You could do something similar with young people and adults using **Kohlberg's** method of presenting a dilemma which is also shown in this example. Then try to classify your results on the basis of **Kohlberg's** model of moral development.

Say: 'I am going to tell you some stories and ask you some questions about what the children did. Read or tell the stories making the sex of the actor appropriate to the child, and ask the questions that follow the story. Add supplementary questions of your own and take every opportunity to explore the child's ideas. The objective is to start a discussion.

First Pair of Stories. First: A boy (girl) went for a walk by the river. He was balancing across the parapet of a bridge when he fell in and got very wet. When he got home he told his mother that two bigger boys had chased him and pushed him in.

Second: A boy went for a walk in the woods. As he came out of the woods he saw a plane come out of the clouds with the sun flashing off it and disappear very quickly. When his mother was angry with him for being late home, he told her he was late because he had seen a UFO land at the edge of the wood and take off again.

Which of the two boys told the worst lie? Why do you think it was the worst?

Second Pair of Stories. First: John's mother was ill and stayed in bed one day. John thought he would be helpful and cook the supper. He didn't really know how to use the microwave properly and put the meat in a metal pan. The cooker was damaged.

Second: Chris was forbidden to play ball games in the garden. One day he/she was playing cricket/tennis in the garden when his/her parents were out. He/she hit the ball wildly and a pane of glass in the greenhouse was cracked. Which of the boys/girls was most wrong? Why do you think so?

Third Story: First: A boy was shopping in town one day. When he went home he managed to get on the bus without paying his fare. When the bus reached his stop it had to brake sharply to avoid a dog that ran across the road. The boy was thrown down the steps of the bus and broke his arm. Do you think that the accident would have happened if he had not cheated on his fare?

Fourth Story: A boy broke his brother's Walkman. How should he be punished? (1) Give his brother his own Walkman? (2) Pay for it to be mended? (3) Be stopped from watching television for a week?

And: **An Adaptation of one of Kohlberg's moral dilemmas**

This forms a fifth story.

Fifth Story: In Europe a woman was dying from rabies after a dog had bitten her. Only a rare and expensive drug could save her life. This drug had recently been discovered by a scientist who had spent many years searching for a cure for rabies. The woman's husband could not afford to pay the price that the scientist was charging for the drug.

He tried to borrow the money but couldn't get enough. He talked to the scientist and told him his wife was dying. He asked him to reduce the price, or to let him pay later. But the scientist said that he had devoted his life to discovering the drug, and he ought to be paid what it was worth.

The man was desperate – he thought about stealing the drug. Do you think that he should steal the drug? Why or why not?

Follow up to Fifth Story: Follow the initial questions with more appropriate supplementary questions that will explore the moral concepts more deeply: e.g.:

- (i) If he did not love his wife, do you think he should steal it for her?

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- (ii) Supposing it wasn't his wife but a stranger – should he steal it then?
- (iii) What if it was an animal? Should he steal the drug to save the life of an animal?
- (iv) It's against the law to steal – but does that necessarily make it morally wrong?
- (v) Why is it important to save someone's life. Is it always the right thing to do?

(III) Fieldwork III: Gilligan's theory of Gender difference in moral development

Try either of the above activities on equal numbers of boys and girls. See if Gilligan is right to say that they have different moral principles and development.

3A. Bibliography

1. Essential texts

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B. KOHLBERG'S STAGES OF MORAL REASONING

1B. A Table

Level 1: Pre-Conventional

Stage 1 – Heteronomous Morality

Punishment Orientation.

Obeys to avoid punishment
Values humans by status or physical attributes
and objects by cost.

Stage 2 – Individualism

Hedonistic Orientation.

Obeys to obtain reward
Is kind to receive kindness back
Thinks fairness important
Values humans as necessary to supply needs.

Level II: Conventional

Stage 3 – Good boy/Good girl

Conformity Orientation

Needs to be accepted and approved by others.
Conforms to gain approval or avoid disapproval.
Beginning to judge behaviour by intentions.
Values life because of empathy and affection for others,
especially family members.

Stage 4 – Social System and Conscience

Authority Orientation

Deeply concerned about law and order
Conforms to avoid breaking law and feeling guilty
Beginning to judge behaviour by intentions
Values life because of empathy and affection for others,
especially family members.

LEVEL III: Post-Conventional or Principled

Stage 5 – Social Contract

Democratic Orientation

People may have a variety of opinions and values
Rules are relative to the group
Conforms to maintain the welfare of all of the community
Social contract freely accepted, aiming for the greatest good of
all
Life valued as a universal right
Freedom also highly valued: It should be upheld regardless of
majority opinions.

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Stage 6 – Universal Ethical Principles Morality of Individual conscience

Still accepting socially agreed laws **but**
 Follows self chosen principles if these conflict with laws
 Conforms to avoid self condemnation
 Principles include justice, equality of human rights
 Persons are valued in their own right
 Behaviour is governed by how a rational, moral person
 would respect and treat others

2B. What Causes a Person to Develop Morally? Some Definitions

1. Introduction

Moral development has proved of equal interest to psychologists and Theologians, but it is difficult to create any rational structure out of the many conflicting theories. Part of the difficulty is that different theorists address different aspects of the problem and what is needed is a set of clear definitions before we try to classify and critique theories.

2. Moral Behaviour: a definition

Our first task is to define moral behaviour. This definition could be purely social, e.g.: moral behaviour promotes the good of other people, possibly at the cost of one's own good. But we also make moral judgements about our own private behaviours, and feel guilty if we transgress personal moral codes in thought alone. Perhaps we should define behaviour as moral if it conforms to some accepted standard of goodness learned through the process of socialisation. There is a complication here that the standard might be absolute or relative to the culture in which we have been brought up. Finally, if our behaviour is to be judged on moral grounds, then we must be free in choosing what we do, otherwise we could not be held responsible for it. There is an immediate conflict between the second and third factors here. If our behaviour is to be judged moral only if it conforms to certain standards, it is difficult to think of it as freely chosen.

3. Conscience: a definition

The second definition we need to resolve is 'conscience'. Here again there are three aspects to the definition.

- (1) Conscience could be a consciously experienced aspect of personality that guides our decisions in moral situations, and directs our behaviour. The implication is that we have voluntary choice or self control, and good behaviour is a matter of will power. This definition of conscience fits best with the third definition of moral behaviour – that it is freely chosen.
- (2) One powerful factor in wanting to behave well is that there is a clear link between some behaviours, and our emotional systems. Most of us are prevented from carrying out evil actions because of our abhorrence of those particular actions. If we do break our own moral codes, then we experience guilt that may prevent a similar action in the future. On the positive side, we also acquire, through socialisation, the motivation that makes us want to do good and socially desirable actions.
- (3) The third aspect of conscience is cognitive. We learn a body of concepts about what is acceptable and non-acceptable behaviour in our culture through our experience of reward

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and punishment, praise and blame from our parents, and from the approval or disapproval that we experience in social interactions.

So conscience is related to three aspects of development: Personality, emotional, and cognitive. But, as with the self-concepts, so we are faced with the same dilemma. Is there some part of the brain that actually *is* the conscience, which we experience directly, in the same way as we may be aware of the self-concept? Or is moral behaviour just a pattern of learned responses? Conscience is one kind of motivation because like motivation, it stimulates us into action, selects what behaviour is appropriate, and maintains the behaviour until we reach a successful outcome.

4. Moral Development defined by the various 'schools' of psychological theory

(a) Different approaches

The way that theorists define moral development is determined by the definition given for moral behaviour and conscience.

- (1) *Cognitive Psychologists* are interested in the cognitive aspect of this definition, and the way that we develop our understanding of right and wrong. **Piaget** and **Kohlberg** hence focus their study on *Moral Judgement*.
- (2) *Social psychologists* will show greater concern about how we bring our behaviour under *voluntary control*, rather than being controlled by the external authorities. **Piaget** and **Kohlberg** fit well into this group as well, because their stages of moral development move towards autonomy.
- (3) *Developmental Psychologists* are particularly interested in how we move from the stimulus driven state of the infant with involuntary responses to every strong environmental stimulus to voluntary control made possible mainly through language.
- (4) *Behavioural Psychologists* are also interested in behaviour control, but their theories preclude the idea of freedom and choice. They show how families and authority figures socialise children into acceptable behaviour by conditioning techniques. The expected change in these theories is from self-centred behaviour to socially acceptable conformity. There are many different theories concerned with the control of behaviour. The one idea that they have in common is that the interesting questions are concerned with how we come to **do** what is right. There is no evidence to show that people with advanced development in moral judgement actually live their morality and behave any better than less autonomous conformists.

(b) The emotional dimensions

Finally, there are theorists whose chief interest in moral issues is how we develop on the emotional side of moral judgement and behaviour. They argue strongly that it is the engagement of the emotions that actually creates the dynamism or the will power to do what we know to be right. Many emotions are involved in this aspect of moral development. We need the ability to feel sympathy or empathy with other people, and to imagine the consequences of our actions for them. Infants are ego centric in the literal sense of the word, and cannot put themselves in the position of other people. That capacity begins to develop through pretend play or role-play, imitating the actions of familiar people, and through identity with parents. **Piaget** extends this idea to show that children only understand true moral concepts as they play together and develop reciprocal relationships.

5. A working definition of Moral Development

Finally, then, a working definition of Moral Development that attempts to cover all the points above can be constructed. *Moral Development is learning to know right from wrong, developing the ability and desire to do right, and becoming free of external compulsion.*

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C. PIAGET'S THEORY OF MORAL DEVELOPMENT

1C. Piaget's Stages of Development

1. Piaget's pre-suppositions and research techniques

If you read **Fowler** you will have a fairly detailed picture of **Piaget's** stages of moral development. **Piaget's** own book is fascinating but difficult to read, and so I am giving a brief summary of his stages below. He also used two research techniques.

- (1) His first technique was to *feign ignorance*. He would ask children to explain to him how to play marbles, and then watch two of them playing. He would then question them about the possibility of using new rules.
- (2) His second technique was to tell them stories, often in pairs, with contrasting situations, and then ask them which was the right or wrong action in the situation.

2. Piaget's derived stages

PRE-MORAL	0 – 2 yrs	Rules play no part in life.
CONVENTIONAL HETERONOMY	3 - 5 yrs	Child imitates adult rules and believes he is conforming but Unintentionally flouts them.
SOCIAL CONVENTIONAL	6 –10 yrs	A transitional phase when children may co-operate socially and see that rules Are mutually agreed.
POST CONVENTIONAL	11 + yrs	Children are often fascinated by rules and obey them to the letter. They spend more time laying down the rules of a game than playing it. But they think that rules are mutually agreed.
AUTONOMY	14 + yrs	Young people begin to make autonomous judgements about right or wrong conduct rather than accept rules on the basis of authority.

3. PIAGET: A conflict between moral judgement and behaviour in children

As he presents his theory **Piaget** makes an important suggestion that has become central to discussions about moral development. He perceived a *conflict between moral judgement and moral behaviour*. In the early, heteronomous, stage children are subjected to their parents and must do as they are told. They show a corresponding respect for rules and believe that rules have absolute authority. **Piaget** noticed, however, that they broke them frequently and inadvertently. He thought that because the child was ego-centric, that child could take no viewpoint except his or her own. Hence, the rules seemed external and could not control his or her behaviour. A change is initiated by playing with peers because everyone is equal, and co-operation has to be negotiated not co-erced. This gives the child an escape from ego-centrism, and he or she begins to understand reciprocity. This leads to autonomous moral development such as could never arise in a parent-child relationship which is inevitably based on authority and external rules.

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4. YOUNISS; The development of reciprocity

Piaget's book does not explore the development of reciprocity in any great depth. However, **Youniss** has pursued his point in a study of peer-groups and friendship. **Youniss** was influenced by **Sullivan** (a Freudian), so he is interested in identification, and the effect of parenting on early development. His basic research model was to ask children in three age groups, 6-8 years old, 9-11 years old, and 12-14 years old to tell a story in which one child was kind to another child, an adult is kind to a child, and a child to an adult. He did the same thing for unkind actions, and then followed up with questions about the making and breaking of friendships. In their answers children showed that they saw their relationships with adults as based on authority, conformity, and obedience, whilst there was a sequence of development in their relations with other children. They saw friendship initially as just playing together nicely but without any continuous relationships with particular children (6-8 years). This progressed to an awareness that there was a need for friends to be equal, so friends helped each other when they were down (9-11 years). Finally, children develop an understanding that friends are trustworthy people with whom you share secrets, and who always help each other. It was only in the most mature adolescents that **Youniss** found the same understanding of adults as people in their own right who also have needs.

5. Summary

What have we found in this section? (1) Through peer group relations, children develop the ability to consider other people's points of view, and see that authority rests in consensus. They begin to realise that they are similar to their peers, so what they personally feel is probably how others feel. Later they go on to see that each individual is different, and has different needs and gifts. (2) So, we may conclude, child-child relationships lead to an autonomous morality, a respect and understanding of others, and the authority of consensus. (3) Child adult relationships, by contrast, lead to heteronomous morality based on rules and principles that exist outside the person in a fixed world order. Good behaviour consists of a conformity that produces a suitable reward.

B(2). KOHLBERG's STAGES OF MORAL DEVELOPMENT (CONTD.)

3B. Kohlberg, Freud, and the Super-Ego

1. Kohlberg's work with delinquent boys

Kohlberg's stages of moral development are an elaboration of **Piaget's**, and again, the highest level of development is autonomy. You will find a table of his stages spanning pages 178-179 of this unit. Here I would like to highlight a contrast between **Kohlberg** and **Freud**. **Freud's** view was that the strongest influence on moral behaviour in a person is their 'Super-Ego'. **Kohlberg** investigated this point in his research with delinquent boys. In their replies to his moral dilemmas they showed that they were *bad at planning actions because they could not control their impulsivity*; and they were deficient in imagining the consequences of their actions. They hence showed poor control over their emotional responses as they could not postpone immediate gratification of their wishes there and then for the sake of long term goals. In other words, *they showed weak Ego development*. Because of inconsistent training from their parents, they were not able to keep the drives of the Id for instant gratification under check in relation to the real world. The implication from this research is that, while the Super-Ego may make us feel guilty after we have broken a prohibition, it does not have the power to prevent a repetition of the action. That is the function of a strong Super-Ego or positive self concept.

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2. Kohlberg's seventh stage of development

In recent years **Kohlberg** has begun to develop a concept of a seventh stage of development, although he leaves its description imprecise and treats it metaphorically. This is possibly also a response to the way that **Fowler** used his theory in relation to the development of Stage 6, Universalising Faith. In this seventh stage, man goes beyond self and autonomous, rational principles of Stage 6 to an integration of moral principles into an understanding of the ultimate meaning of life, to a uniting with all creation. Stage 7, then, has a *Theistic perspective* which transcends the humanistic perspective of Stage 6. Examples of people exhibiting stage seven moral development are rare, but **Kohlberg** cites **Marcus Aurelius. Jacobs** seizes on this concept of Stage 7 development because of its potential in interpreting Christian Doctrine, and you will find a fuller discussion of it in **M.Jacobs**, 'Towards the fullness of Christ,' London: Darton, Longman, and Todd, 1988.

3. Gilligan's challenge to Kohlberg and Fowler

We cannot leave the discussion of moral development without looking at the challenge to **Kohlberg** offered by **Gilligan** as far back as 1982. **Gilligan** initially worked with him, but as she interviewed women, she began to discover that they *presented a different perspective on moral issues*. She claims that this is not exclusively a gender difference, but a different theme in moral thinking that women use more commonly than do men. In her research she frequently found that women gave answers that would be classified at Stage 3 by **Kohlberg's** categories. She examined their responses more closely and found that they showed *greater concern for relationships than for rules*, and thought more about the outcomes of actions than the background to the moral dilemmas. In short, these women also *emphasised responsibility above the duty which was often the concern of men*. **Gilligan's** research challenged **Fowler** to think further about the highest stage of moral development. Hence, in his work 'Becoming Adult, Becoming Christian,' (1984) he suggested that *moral maturity in both men and women entails a balance between responsibility and care, and a sense of rights and justice*.

D. CRITICISMS OF STAGE DEVELOPMENT THEORIES

1D. Criticisms of the pre-suppositions of Kohlberg's stage development theory

1. Two main factors in the reasoning of Kohlberg's critics

Anyone who attempts a theory to explain human behaviour becomes a legitimate target for criticism. **Kohlberg** is no exception. There are two main reasons in his case. (1) Moral development does not follow a pattern of stages, or it doesn't follow the route that **Kohlberg** in fact suggests. (2) **Kohlberg** selected as the highest point of moral development the *ability to act autonomously* on the basis of the principle of justice. This is a particularly Western ideal, and also is more strongly representative of the thinking of men rather than that of women.

2. Piaget: So: Humans can only understand moral obligation at Stages 5 and 6

Kohlberg's theory implies that humans are only able to understand moral obligation when we reach his stages five or six. Only then can we make autonomous decisions about behaviour. Before that we are not really acting freely, but in obedience to laws or conventions. To reach the advanced stages, we would have to pass through the conventional stages 3 and 4 in which we do right to conform to demands made on us by various authorities. We would also need to

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have escaped from the illogical reasoning of childhood and the Ego-centric outlook on life that dominates our early years according to **Piaget**.

3. Does moral thinking require de-centering of the individual?

Kohlberg argues that objective moral thinking requires de-centering on the part of the individual. The first move away from self is to recognise the needs of the group and to desire the approval of significant others. This will lead the child to conform to the conventions that he or she is taught. The next step is to move into objective thinking that transcends the personal need with the recognition that there are right and wrong ways to behave that can be based on reason.

4. Kohlberg's theory describes *three* different kinds of morality

His critics argue that **Kohlberg's** theory is actually describes *three different kinds* of morality.

- (1) The first is a kind of hedonism or emotivism where we do what gives us pleasure and avoid what gives us pain. We basically do what we and other people like.
- (2) The second stage is the positivist approach where moral obligations are the inventions of others who make the laws.
- (3) The third stage relates to the idea of Natural Law which implies that there are objective obligations irrespective of personal needs and likes which have universal application and are open to discovery by reason.

Most people would agree that adequate moral understanding requires that there is some objective obligation accepted by rational people. The disagreement comes concerning whether there can only be one rationally based moral code as described by **Kohlberg**. While behaviour would not generally be called 'moral' if it was based on social convention or personal wishes, it is not agreed that Natural law is the only source of moral understanding. Neither is it accepted that Hedonism and Conventional Morality are necessary or necessarily steps towards mature moral understanding.

2D. Re-formulations of Kohlberg's theory

1. Kohlberg's theory is concerned with justice reasoning, not moral development

Kohlberg, Levine, and Hower (1983) worked on a re-formulation of **Kohlberg's** original theory. This was done in the light of the accumulation of empirical research based on answers given to **Kohlberg's** dilemmas. They have had to concede that the theory is concerned with *justice reasoning* rather than with *moral development*. It seems that the distinctions between the stages are not clear cut in people's answers, so that all that can be said is that children are more likely than adults to justify their thinking in relation to their own feelings. Adults for their part are more likely to talk about social and political institutions. It is common to find that subjects give answers at two stages of development in the proportion of 2:1, so that it is difficult to assert that a subject is within one stage of development. Children usually answer with a mixture of level 2 and level 3 answers, while adults mix 3 and 4. In most societies adults usually stabilise at level 3, and have a belief that society depends on mutual interdependence, and that a person may have specific obligations according to his or her status or role.

2. What of duty based morality that promotes good relationships?

Kohlberg holds on to the idea of justice reasoning as the end point of development. For him a universally valid form of rational moral thought process exists, and it waits to be discovered even though in fact few if any of the individuals that have been interviewed have been found

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to be at stage five or six of development. One serious objection to this concept was proposed by **Gilligan** in (1982). Her empirical work with women showed that many of them would be classed at **Kohlberg's** stage 3 because they were answering the posed dilemmas from a completely different moral viewpoint using a principle based on the maintenance of relationships which involves the qualities of loyalty, caring, and responsibility. She argues that **Kohlberg's** system does not take account of morality that is based on duties that promote the goal of good relationships. Yet this is an equally valid base for making moral decisions and women may be showing advanced moral thinking which would be judged as post-conventional if evaluated by other criteria.

3. Shweder, Mahapatra, Miller: Post conventional thinking not the high point

Shweder, Mahapatra, and Miller (1987) argue that the reason why **Kohlberg** finds little post-conventional thinking may be that people reject the idea that this is the highest stage of moral development. They might agree that any moral code must have three features, the idea of natural law, and the principles of harm and justice. They may disagree about whether these can only grow out of a concept of natural rights, freedom, individualism, and a belief that morality is prior to society – all of which are central to **Kohlberg's** approach.

4. A comment on the general legal and social chemistry of moral codes

All rationally defensible moral codes would have to involve natural rights, natural duties, and natural goals, but they will differ in the amount of stress that they place on each. A goal based code would set a priority on promoting general welfare. Duty based codes focus attention on the moral nature of a particular action in its own right. Each action must conform to a code for proper conduct. The code takes precedence, and time is spent on interpreting and elaborating it. An action is judged right or wrong according to whether it conforms or not. A person's motivation is secondary to the rightness of the action. Individual rights must be subordinated to duties which are dictated by role relationships; wife/husband, host/guest. People will feel justified and righteous if they do their duty, and not for defending liberty or personal freedom of conscience.

5. Does the individual free contract into society as Kohlberg suggests?

There is nothing peculiarly rational about a rights based moral code. People could be equally rational and base their thinking on natural goals or natural duties. While **Kohlberg** places great emphasis on the value of the individual and individual differences, other societies exist that value the roles and the parts people are expected to play as teacher, pupil, parent, child. For **Kohlberg**, the individual has an intrinsic, equal moral value apart from anything associated with status, and a moral autonomy that is prior to the society in which he or she lives. In theory, society is formed when individuals freely enter a contract that they could just as freely leave. A just society would be one such as an individual would voluntarily join.

6. GILLIGAN & SHWEDER: Society exists prior to the individual

(a) Women and duty based morality should also be considered

An alternative view would be that society exists prior to the individual, and its main purpose is to shelter the vulnerable. The general experience is that the distribution of health, status, beauty, wealth and intelligence is unequal, making some people vulnerable to exploitation. The freedom to contract in or out of society would not promote the general good since this creates a kind of market economy in which either the vulnerable are exploited, or there are elaborate measures to prevent exploitation. A morality which recognises inequality and vulnerability would be modelled on the family which exists because of the weakness and interdependence

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of its members. It would be paternalistic and impose obligations on its members in relation to its roles and status. These relationships might be mutually dependent (e.g.: husband and wife) or asymmetrically dependent (e.g.: parent and child). The qualities valued by such a society would be the same as those that make a good family work – loyalty, deference, empathy, altruism, love, and protection of the weaker members. These are the qualities valued by women in **Gilligan's** research, but they are also the qualities that **Shweder et.al.** found valued in Indian Hindu society where a duty based morality predominated.

(b) An example: Indian Society: moral values acquired through family life

In Indian society, and probably therefore in most others, children are assisted with their acquisition of moral values through the context of family life. They see the emotional reaction of others to certain actions, they hear behaviour discussed, and they receive traditional stories and interpretations that hand on the conceptual inheritance of the generations to new members of the society. But, this view of **Shweder** conflicts sharply with that of **Piaget** and **Kohlberg** who argue instead that an understanding of moral obligation grows out of children's relationship with peers where they are equals, and can understand about the effects of their actions by the responses of their friends. These experiences teach them about rules and smooth interactions, and about equality and negotiating relationships. It is only through reciprocal relationships with friends that children can come to understand that moral behaviour consists of good actions freely undertaken for the good of other people. **Piaget** believed that good behaviour which was required by parents was only undertaken because parents were more powerful than children, and that controlled sanctions could be used to enforce compliance. Behaviour undertaken in obedience to a greater power could only be labelled conformity, not morality. **Shweder et.al.** argue that it is not only possible for adults to pass on moral values to children. They argue further that it is also possible to have a revealed natural law. This is because it is not irrational to have an idea of a superior being who has privileged access to truth that is then revealed to humans in the sacred texts. Indeed, many societies are built on such a premise, and would disagree with the way that **Kohlberg** locates their Divine Laws in the conventional level of development before a proper understanding of morality has been reached.

(c) TURIEL, NUCCI, SMETANA: conventions learnt, morals observed

An alternative view of moral thinking is proposed by **Turiel, Nucci, and Smetana** (1978-1983). They suggest that the three levels of moral development proposed by **Kohlberg** should be seen as three separate domains of moral thinking, each having a separate development by becoming more sophisticated and elaborated. They are *particularly concerned to make a distinction between conventional and moral behaviour*. Conventions are defined as consensus to facilitate social interaction. They tend to focus around roles and manners, and to be concerned with such issues as what to wear, what and how to eat, and how to address others, and so on. Although some boundaries may be blurred, children can usually distinguish the conventions from morals which they see as concerned with not harming others, preserving justice, and the rights and welfare of others. Conventions are learned through social transmission as people label behaviours as right or wrong to the children. Morals are learned through direct observation of the harm or injustice caused by certain actions. Children will intervene and draw attention to breaches of conduct that cause others pain, but they ignore violations of convention.

7. A distinction between morals and conventions?

(a) SMETANA (1983): The division between conventions and morals is blurred

Unfortunately the division between conventions and morals is not perfect. **Smetana** (1983) reports some domain mixes where children treat conventions as morals, and there are enough

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of these to throw some doubt on the assertion that the distinction is obvious, or is easily learnt.

(b) SHWEDER ET.AL.: Only N. America distinguishes morals and conventions

Shweder, Mahapatra, and Miller (1987) try to tease out these important questions in their study reported by **Kagan and Lamb** (1987). Theirs is a cross cultural study of adults and children in three communities in India and America. They found the cultures very different in their answers about morals and conventions. They found that the distinction between conventions and morals was only made in North America, and at that only by children over ten years of age, and adults. In Hindu societies, by contrast, morals and conventions were treated as equally serious, although older Indians did not expect conventions to apply in other societies. Older subjects in both countries gave answers that could be classed as 'post-conventional', but whereas in India these were based on natural duties, in North America the subjects used the **Kohlberg** base of natural rights. In India too, conventions were very serious, e.g.: the obligation to observe the correct funeral rites for a dead parent. Failure to do this would be harmful to another person if the souls of dead ancestors are included in the definition of 'person'. Since they found that the relationship between the thinking of adults and children in the same culture was closer than the relationship between children of both cultures, *the authors argued that children have been socialised by their parents into both the conventional and moral codes of their own group.*

8. Conclusion: Children do not construct moral principles by observing others

It cannot be said that children construct an understanding of objective and universal moral principles on the basis of their observations of the effects of their behaviour on others. They accept to varying degrees the moral codes they are taught. North American children are more likely to make a distinction between convention and morals as they get older, and Indian children are more likely to treat everything as a moral obligation as they get older.

9. TURIEL: Different results to Kohlberg's questions by re-formulation

Critics of **Piaget** and **Kohlberg** have worked on another problem. They have shown that it is possible to reformulate problems presented to children in such a way that they show thinking of a maturity well beyond their supposed stage. The way that **Piaget** posed his questions tended to dictate the nature of his theory, but he was frequently only showing that children did not understand the problem rather than that they had a different view of the world from adults. As testing techniques become more sophisticated, the distinction between stages becomes more and more blurred. Children can be shown to be 'pre-operational' for one concept, at the same time as being 'concretely operational' for another. **Turiel** and his co-workers therefore have different results from **Kohlberg** because they used a technique which allowed them to probe further into children's reasons for their answers. At first a child might say that it is wrong to cheat, "because you will be caught and punished," but if they are directly asked if it would be acceptable if you weren't caught, or if their father told them to do it, they still replied that it was wrong. Their initial answer was different, then, because they did not understand the usage of 'because,' and not as they did not understand about morality. They mean that they know that wrong things are punished because they are wrong. They are not intending to say by contrast that wrong things are wrong *because* they are punished. This problem of disentangling what children understand about the world from what they understand about language bedevils all attempts to investigate their thinking, as it does for adults as well.

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3D. Conclusion: The standing of KOHLBERG's Theory

So what can we now conclude about the standing of **Kohlberg's** theory?

- (1) Differences about moral thinking undoubtedly exist between individuals and between cultures. There is general agreement that some obligations are objective, and based in natural law which encompasses rights, duties, and goals for general welfare.
- (2) There is considerable doubt about whether moral obligation develops out of conventional obligation. In fact some societies make no distinction between the two, and some authors argue that where a distinction is made there are two separate lines of development.
- (3) There is serious challenge to **Kohlberg's** assumption that the highest level of moral development would be moral autonomy based on the recognition of natural law, which can be obtained by any rational person.
- (4) The assertion is made that there are alternatives to rights based moral autonomy which are equally mature and rational. These stress duty and the preservation of good relationships, and taking responsibility for the more vulnerable members of a social group who may not be able to handle freedom and autonomy. Such moralities may or may not also include an aspect of revealed religious truth as the basis for moral judgement.

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UNIT 12: WORSHIP & THE HUMAN FATHER FIGURE

A. INTRODUCTION

1A. Essential reading, Aims, and Activities

1. Essential Reading

Three more general texts that are good in this field of consideration are hereunder.

Meadow	M. &	Psychology of Religion, New York: Harper and Row,
Kahoe	R.	Chapters 7-13, 24-28.
Fowler	J.	Stages of Faith, San Francisco, Harper and Row, 1981, Part 5.
Wulff	D.	Psychology of Religion, New York: John Wiley and Sons, Chapters 6, 7, 8, 9.

2. Aims

This is the first of a group of three units that is centred around Symbolism. Unit 12 will revisit **Freud** and look at the unconscious aspects of personality in relation to religious images and symbols. **Freud**'s work is contrasted with **Jung**'s and since both were clinicians, their work leads to a consideration of the relationship between abnormal mental states and religious experiences.

3. Activity

Here are some questions to consider as you study this unit.

- (1) Why is the image of God as Father so strong in the Christian Faith, and in Judaism?
- (2) Is **Jung** correct in his argument that the Christian Trinity is an incomplete form of the perfect Mandala? Which is the missing aspect – a recognition that evil is divine or that God is feminine? Or neither, or both?
- (3) If the Christian Faith speaks to inadequate and sinful people, what evidence is there that they change for the better under its influence?
- (4) What is the difference between an epileptic fit, and insane hallucination, a drug induced ecstasy, and a religious experience?
- (5) Do adults carry a child within them who influences the nature of their Christian (or other) Faith and worship?

4. Intended Outcomes

By the end of this unit you will have been introduced to some of the concepts used by **Freud** and **Jung** to investigate the nature of Religious Experience and Faith. This unit will consider these issues below amongst others.

- (1) Conscious and unconscious images and symbols.
- (2) The relationship between unusual religious experience and insanity.
- (3) The origin of some of the titles given to God and the images that lie behind them.
- (4) The relationship between early parenting and experience of God.

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2A. Additional Books

1. General

- | | | |
|---------------|-------------|---|
| Brown | L.B. | Psychology and Religion, Harmondsworth: Penguin.
Part 2: Dimensionality and Orientation to Religion.
Siegman, Palinke, Stanley, Walters. |
| Faber | H. | Psychology of Religion, London: SCM, 1976. |
| Frankl | V. | Man's Search for Meaning, Pocket Books, 1973. |
| Jacobs | M. | Towards the fulness of Christ, London: Darton, Longman,
Todd, 1988. |
| Jung | C.G. | Collected Works, Volume 11: Psychology of Religion,
London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1963. |
| Jung | C.G. | Psychology of Western Religion, London: ARC. |
| Perry | C. | Listen to the Voice Within, A Jungian Approach to Pastoral
Care, London: S.P.C.K., 1991. |

2. Papers

- | | | |
|--------------------------------------|-------------|---|
| Brink | T.L. | Depression and Spiritual formation, Studies in Formative
Spirituality, Volume 14, 1993. Pages 381-394. |
| Dinesh Bhugra
(Ed.) | | Psychiatry and Religion: Context, Consensus and
Controversies, London: Routledge, 1997. |
| Heiminiak | D.A. | Neurology, Psychology and Extraordinary Religious
Experiences, Journal of Religion and Health, 23, /33-46, 1984. |
| Watson | P.J. | Religiosity, sin, and self esteem, Journal of Psychology and |
| Hood | R.W. | Theology, Volume 13 (part 2), pages 116-128. |
| Morris R.J. | | |

3. Influence of parenting on Religious Thinking

- | | | |
|-------------------------------|-----------|--|
| Beit-Hallahmi B. & | | The Psychology of Religious Behaviour, Belief, and |
| Argyle | M. | Experience, London: Routledge, 1997. Chapter 6. |
| Helfaer | P. | The Psychology of Religious Doubt, Boston: Beacon Press,
1972. |
| Hull | J. | Studies in Religion and Education, New York, Falmer Press,
1984. |
| Meissner | W. | Psychoanalysis and Religious experience, Yale University
Press, 1984. |
| Rizzuto | R. | The Birth of the Living God, University of Chicago Press,
1979. |

Extra Note: Whilst this unit is of great benefit to the Ordinand or for in service Pastoral reflection, it has nonetheless not been easy to compile. The authors hope that they have achieved an acceptable perspective as a starting point for reflection.

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B. WORSHIP AND THE HUMAN NEED FOR A FATHER FIGURE

1B. DILLISTONE: A Theory of three levels of experience

1. The theory stated

Dillistone whose work we have already encountered in unit 11, has three levels of experience in his definition of meaning. They move from unconscious to conscious, and then to meanings that transcend the immediate consciousness. At the unconscious level, as at all three levels, **Dillistone** divides between individual and corporate meanings, both of which are expressed in images. At the individual unconscious level are thought to be the repressed experiences and feelings that are actually kept out of consciousness because of the trauma that they originally caused. They may find their way out as images in dreams or through slips of the tongue, associations, projections onto others, and so on. Obviously we are dealing here with the theory of **Freud** about the unconscious and the way that the repressed material within it may appear in symbolic forms as images.

2. Dillistone's third level

Dillistone's other unconscious level seems to cover material derived from **Jung's** theory that there is a collective unconscious, deeper than the personal unconscious. This contains archetypal images that we all share and which find their symbolic expression not only in our dreams and fantasies but also in our myths, legends, sacred objects and deities. We shall later consider these two theories in more depth.

2B. A Freudian Perspective

1. The relationship between religious experience and disturbed personalities

There is, however, another issue that also needs to be introduced here. It was first raised by **Freud** and has concerned many religious and psychological authors since. In Unit 2 we considered **James** and his work. Some of the descriptions of religious experiences discussed by **James** presented very disturbed personalities. As it happens, this did not trouble **William James** because he considered that the physiological source of a religious experience does not affect its Spiritual significance. Nevertheless, many observers over subsequent years have been troubled that there is a continuing link between 'religion' and 'madness'. We will deal with this issue elsewhere, but nevertheless take time to relate it to the work about psychotic illness and the apparently determining effects of early and childhood experiences.

2. S. FREUD: writings and theories about Religion

Freud's writings about Religion provide a number of further challenges. The most detailed writings about his ideas that seem easily accessible are found in **Heije Faber**, *Psychology of Religion*, London: SCM, 1972. **Faber** reviews in detail **Freud's** publications, 'Totem and Taboo' (1913), 'The Future of an illusion' (1927), 'New Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis,' and 'Moses and Monotheism,' (both 1939).

'Totem and Taboo' may well have been written by **Freud** as an attempt to counteract **Jung** who had begun to look at myths as a source of illumination. **Freud** thought that Religion was a corporate expression of neurosis demonstrating man's pre-occupation with guilt that leads to taboos in primitive religion because of the difficulties encountered in repressing aggressive and social feelings. *Repression* is an infantile method of dealing with forbidden feelings. It runs parallel for **Freud** to an equally primitive belief in the power of thoughts and wishes,

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that is, magic. In **Freud's** clinical experience, only neurotics and children had such fantasies about the power of their own thoughts.

3. FABER: Freud's 'Totem and Taboo'

Faber considers that the main part of the book is the section on totem-ism which **Freud** links in a complicated way with the Oedipus complex. He totem animal with which the tribe sees itself as closely linked, is a symbol of the father of the tribe who is ceremonially killed and eaten in the totem feast. The argument is closely based on assumptions drawn from the theory of evolution. Social animals usually have one male that dominates the herd. He excludes all other males until himself eventually defeated and killed by a younger rival. **Freud** claims that in tribal history, as man evolved, there must have been a collective guilt about killing the father. A sexual taboo against taking his wives became instead the powerful incest taboo that prevented men from marrying within the tribe, in many traditions. Over time the actual killing of the father became ritualised into the killing of the totem animal. This is a symbol of the tribal god, but the ceremony does not eradicate the sense of guilt that clings to the historical memory. **But:** A Christian cannot accept fully this reasoning. For, given that all that **Freud** said is true and beyond dispute (which here on both counts it most certainly is not), *Christ's death removes guilt, and the ritual of the Last Supper would mean that there was no more totem feast necessary.* It would also show that there is an infantile pattern in the relationships with God, because every boy re-enacts the oedipal conflict and feels guilty about his aggressive feelings towards his father which are ritually cleansed through Christian Faith.

4. Limitations and effect of Freud's theory

Freud's theory, as is usual with him, is inadequate to explain the response of women to a father God. According to **Faber**, however, this book had very little effect on the religious community which did not take it seriously. About its only strong point is to note the relationship between some of the neurotic concerns that **Freud** was finding in people who came to his clinic, with purification and guilt. **Freud's** study shows, however, that there will always be difficulty in explaining where our sense of guilt comes from if it does not grow out of our identification with our parents.

5. S. FREUD: 'The future of an illusion'

If we can dismiss the first of **Freud's** books relatively easily here, his second book. 'The future of an illusion' was more disturbing in its content for Theologians. **Freud** here is not concerned to trace Christian or other religious faith back to some remote historical origin. Rather, he looks instead at the conflict that exists between the Id and the demands of culture. These impose an unacceptable morality and can only work if the dynamism of the Id is redirected or sublimated to producing ideas and art. *Culture them is a kind of wish fulfilment* that allows a person symbolic expression of his unacceptable desires. It creates a necessary illusion, and religion has an essential part to play in this. It helps a person to deal with the uncontrollable, natural disasters and pressures that make this life burdensome, and cause him or her to feel helpless and at the mercy forces outside of himself or herself. **Freud** then claims that *out of his or her fear the person creates a father God who is powerful enough to save him or her from disaster.* Here **Freud** is still thinking of religion as a carry over from the infantile dependence of childhood, but is presenting another reason for it.

6. A Reaction to 'The future of an illusion'

This theory touches a raw nerve. It suggests that religion rescues man from all the existential anxieties that otherwise perplex him. It helps him to answer the problem of suffering. **Freud**,

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however, for his part, believes that it is an illusory solution. Indeed, for **Freud** the *consequent religion makes people dishonest and intolerant. They fight wars because they have a fanatical belief in their own correctness.* **Freud** notes further that *belief that only God is good and powerful tends to undermine people's self esteem because they come to see themselves as weak and sinful.* Well, what are we to say? Let's start framing a response to **Freud** by examining those implications of **Freud's** claims here that have been investigated experimentally. I will now therefore deal with a selection of the research.

3B. Research on the implications of 'The future of an illusion'

1. Negative findings: DITTES: The religious person as inadequate

Dittes (1969, 1971) undertook questionnaire and other field-research. He derived a picture of the religious person as inadequate, lacking in self-reliance, and unpopular with peers. Whether their Faith so made them, or whether they took up the Faith as a result is not clear from **Dittes'** sampling and work. **Allport** (1968) suggested that religion offered security for those who were 'tormented by self doubt' (Allport 1968 /225). **Cox** (1977) studied the attraction of Oriental cults (e.g.: Hinduism. Moonies, etc.) to young people and found that they offered human friendship, warmth and affection for those people who felt deprived and rejected. **Dittes** suggests that this is one of the functions of Faith. The Christian Faith in particular is based on the saving act of God in Jesus Christ that redeems humankind from the helpless state of sin into which they had fallen. It is highly probable that the Faith will appeal to those who experience guilt, and despair of their abilities. **Dittes** quotes **Mark 2:17** where Jesus says, 'Those that are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick.' Does all this mean that **Freud** was basically right, and that religious people are the in-adequates who need to depend on a father figure?

2. WATSON et.al.: Assumptions of psychology versus Christian Doctrine

The assumptions of psychology about what constitutes a healthy personality are clashing here with the Doctrine of the Christian Faith – that Humankind is dependent on God. Now, if self-esteem is measured by psychologists in their usual ways, *then anyone who has Faith in God through the Salvation brought by Jesus Christ will inevitably come out as lacking in self esteem, and therefore unhealthy.* **Watson et.al.** (1985) in a complex experiment using several measures of religiosity and self esteem explored this point. **Watson** and his colleagues were interested in some of the paradoxical findings that on the one side Christians seemed to be neurotic, guilt ridden, and unbalanced, whilst upon the other secure, confident, and happy.

3. Positive Findings: WATSON et.al.

(a) Thrust of the research

Hadaway and **Roof** (1978) found that (Christian) religious people felt that life was more worthwhile. **Steintz** (1980) found that Christian elderly were better able to cope with infirmity and physical limitations and had a greater sense of well being. **Watson et. al.** suspected that the difference would relate to the intrinsic-extrinsic dimension of religious belief and behaviour first suggested by **Allport**. Now, for **Allport**, intrinsic Religion is *fully internalised* and based on self surrender to the service of God and others. Extrinsic religion, on the other hand, grows out of psychological need for personal security. **Watson et.al.** therefore used a measure which would assess whether subjects were *intrinsic, extrinsic, anti-religious, or indiscriminately pro religious* (this last meaning that they scored highly on both the intrinsic and the extrinsic dimensions. They also used an additional measure of self esteem that would take account of the Christian Doctrine of Salvation but look for confidence arising from trust in God.

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(b) Findings

Watson et.al. found that intrinsically religious people had the most positive self attitudes, particularly when this took into account their level of confidence in Christ. *The group that they found to have the least self esteem was the one that they had labelled 'indiscriminately religious'.* Now, if we take into account **Allport's** thesis that intrinsic Religion is mature Religion, and **Meadows and Kahoe's** model that suggests that people move from extrinsic to intrinsic religion, a conclusion can be formed. *Those who come initially to Church as guilty, inadequate, and self doubting, can grow into confident acceptance of themselves through the Redemption of Jesus Christ.*

4. Sorting perspectives and pre-suppositions

The implications of this are that **Freud** may be right in one sense. The Christian Faith (and for that matter other faiths) may well attract inadequate and dependent personalities. However Christians would argue that this does not necessarily mean that Humankind has created a father god to order to fulfil our needs. Rather, it just as easily means that Our Redeeming God acts in a way that speaks most appropriately to Human insecurities. There is probably no logical or empirical way of deciding between the two explanations. However, it seems important to be able to show that there are changes in self esteem subsequent to becoming religious if the religious answer were to predominate. **Aycock and Noakes** (1985) show that this would be difficult to demonstrate since they find that the concept of self esteem is resistant to change by religious belief or practice and more closely related factors such as being valued by (a) significant other(s) and being successful in life. Puzzlingly, they do not identify either of these things as being enabled by a personal relationship with God. .

5. Freud's presuppositions in his 'religious' writing

Freud's view of the Christian, Jewish, and other faiths is shapen by his *view of the unconscious*. In particular his concern was with the way that the material repressed in it could be the source of much that was evil and damaging to health. His investigation of religion started from his clinical finding that his neurotic patients had repressed guilt and ambiguous feelings of love and hate towards their fathers, and that many of them produced accounts of incestuous relationships. At first **Freud** believed in the truth of these accounts, but the outcry against his theory made him change his views. Instead he assumed that his patients were reporting fantasies that arose from the oedipal conflict that they were undergoing in early childhood. In treating their stories as wish-fulfilment, he may have set back the investigation of child abuse by half a century or so. Indeed, it is only in the last twenty years or so that we have come to realise that **Freud's** patients had probably been abused. Now: treating their accounts as fantasies led to the particular approach that **Freud** took to religion in 'Totemism and Taboo'. **Faber** suggests that **Freud's** theory achieves two things.

- (1) It draws attention to the relationship between primitive religion and some immature current attitudes to religion. Both centre on guilt and unresolved conflicting feelings of love and hate towards the father figure. There is an expectation that if the right religious rituals are performed, the guilt can be purged, and the father's anger neutralised so that he will now take care of his own.
- (2) **Freud's** friend and follower **Pfister** suggested a second factor that arises from **Freud's** theory, the problem or repressed sexuality. Many guilt feelings, he notes, are related to sex. **James** also showed in some of his accounts of religious experience that their source appears to be repressed sexuality that finds a symbolic release in Faith.

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6. The Old Testament

Freud's view, **Faber** claims, is closely based on the Old Testament. (N.B.: I would dispute this (AJGS)). **Dillistone** demonstrates that the Old Testament is centred on a father figure. Humankind, and Israel in particular, encounter Him as He intervenes in History to rescue them from disaster. Subsequently, God creates a Covenant relationship in which He promises protection, and humans promise trust and obedience. The predominant image in this type of Faith, therefore, is that of Fatherhood. But, points out **Dillistone**, *people are inclined to project their images of their own fathers onto their understanding of God, and aspects of their relationship with their fathers onto their relationship with God.*

4B. A Jungian perspective

1. FABER & DILLISTONE: a perspective on Christianity

Faber considers that there is another type of religion within Western civilisation. **Dillistone** makes a similar distinction and both sketch a religion based on the natural world and humankind's attempts to live in accord with nature and its rhythms. There is a great deal of insecurity in such a belief because the natural world can be both creative and life giving, but also destructive and death dealing. Hence the myths and theologies, and the rituals and prayers of this kind of religion aim at promoting harmony with an immanent divine. Both **Faber** and **Dillistone** consider that Christianity, certainly in some of its forms, has all of these elements within its growth. The history of Christian Theology shows how thinkers have tried to come to terms with all of these elements in the Christian tradition. Now, the point that is being raised by saying this is one that has been of contemporary interest in the role of women in the Christian Faith. The natural religion of which we have just been speaking has a strong feminine emphasis. It has frequently emerged in Western religion. It has also frequently been repressed.

2. JUNG as a developer of Freud's ideas

Jung was particularly interested in the conflicting ideas that he found in various of the world religions. He thought they were expressions of the same kinds of conflict that existed in humankind's sub-conscious. He took over from **Freud** the assumption that there is a tension between Humankind's conscious and unconscious life. But, while **Freud** thought that the unconscious processes needed to be brought into the light because of their potential for destruction if guilt and other destructive experiences were allowed to fester unrecognised, **Jung** had a more positive approach to the contents of the unconscious. **Jung** thought that the unconscious images had a dynamism and a creativity that needed to be incorporated into conscious understanding if an individual was to grow into a complete person.

3. JUNG: A parting of the way from Freud

Jung was initially a disciple of **Freud**, and regarded him as a father figure. However, he seems to have broken with **Freud** because of the latter's interpretation of the part played by the incest taboo in the development of religious faith. **Freud** made the Oedipus complex and its subsequent problem of incest central to the causation of both neurosis and religious faith. Indeed, for **Freud** the collective neurosis focused on a father figure, and he drew many parallels between neurotic and religious behaviour. **Freud** thought that the unconscious, infantile element in religion needed to be released and recognised in rational consciousness. **Jung** had a more positive approach. He felt that unconscious religious elements, including an incest/father figure theme as one amongst many equally important themes, ought to be brought into consciousness and used to balance out its otherwise one sided rationalism.

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4. JUNG: A psychological trajectory

Jung's writings have a mystical quality. This **Freud** despised. The mystical in **Jung's** writing arises from his delight in a study of everything that might throw light on the content of the unconscious. He pursued his own inner images, delved into dreams, explored religions and mythologies, and investigated legends and anthropology because he wanted to gain a greater understanding of his unconscious. **Jung** *believed it was important to bring out these symbolic images in order to be a complete person.* He called this process *Individuation*. He suggested that the self was always striving towards individuation. Dreams, for example, were a part of this process because they portray, albeit symbolically, truths about the self that that person has not yet discovered.

5. JUNG: an understanding of religion and Faith

Jung's understanding of religion and Faith grows out of the greater understanding of himself that he pursued in his study. His concept of Humankind is central to his religious understanding, because he thinks of each individual as a splinter of the infinite Deity. *Through Individuation, humankind not only realise their own life, but also allow part of the Divine life to struggle out of collective unconsciousness towards awareness.* For **Jung, Jesus Christ** and the **Buddha** represent the most complete embodiments of that Divine life into selfhood that the world has so far witnessed.

6. JUNG's THESIS: the Human collective consciousness

Jung's concept of the collective unconscious is unique. He thinks of it as a kind of shared memory that links all people. It derives from Humankind's primordial experiences. It contains a number of universal symbols that he calls archetypes. These archetypes are continually reappearing in people's accounts of their dreams. They also appear in myths and legends, in all forms of art, and in religious images and symbols. In the Twentieth Century they are also found in novels and dramas, films and television productions. The archetypes include *pairs of conflicting figures* like the great mother and the wise old man as divine images, good and evil, the animus/anima (male and female) demons and devils opposed by the strong hero saviour, and so on. In our dreams we may experience ourselves as opposites to our conscious life, male/female, etc.. (N.B.: I have never had this sort of dream experience – is this because I am a Christian? AJGS). **Jung** felt that such dreams were a productive source of information about aspects of the self that needed bringing into consciousness as part of the process of individuation.

7. JUNG: the function of Religion

Religion functions as a collective individuation. The archetypes are expressed through religion which crystallises out the image that people recognise and respond to from the collective unconscious. Humans tend to experience the Divine as mysterious and awesome. Why? Because it is not fully differentiated from our unconscious, and we feel threatened by its unknown qualities. **Jung's** ideas are closely related to those of **F. D. Schliermacher** and **Rudolph Otto**. They place stress on the Divine as the 'holy' or 'other' which people perceive as dangerous, and hence try to control by rituals. **Jung** argues that we would achieve a better understanding and be able to live with these dangerous mysteries if we had a better understanding of our own unconscious which we could gain from a study of dreams and mythologies.

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8. JUNG: a worked example: the Mandala

One recurrent theme that appears in dreams and myths is the number four. It is frequently represented in the image of a circle with four significant points. **Jung** considers that this image, also called a *mandala* is the *archetypal image of God within us*. The mandala is a uniting symbol that helps to reconcile the fractured parts of humankind's unconscious. If all the parts could be brought together, we would not only find ourselves, but also find God. *Psychotherapy, then, in Jung's theory must inevitably involve religious growth*. This is because in psycho-therapy the *person is confronted with the numinous*. But, the numinous comes as a quality within his or her unconscious, and as he or she strives to make sense of it the process of individuation can occur. **Jung** spent a great deal of time thinking about why most religions, including (interestingly) Buddhism (where there is not a necessary belief in God) have the mandala symbol when the Christian Faith has The Trinity. I dislike his attempt at an answer. It runs like this. **Jung** suggests that *because of the struggle between masculine and feminine religious traditions within the Church, certain aspects of the archetypal imagery have been repressed*.

- (1) For **Jung** the feminine aspect of God is there by implication in the Holy Spirit if we allow that the 'Spirit of the Lord' in the Old Testament is feminine. But can the Old Testament 'Spirit of The Lord' cannot be directly equated with the Holy Spirit in the New Testament. Recent discussions in Biblical Studies have concluded that *all* the persons of the Christian Trinity are from time to time referred to by 'Spirit of The Lord' as found in the Old Testament. However, there are other manifestations of the 'feminine' vis-à-vis God in the Old Testament. Wisdom (Sophia in Greek) is feminine and is personified in Proverbs 8. In Roman Catholic, Orthodox, and Anglo-Catholic Christian worship and tradition Mary mother of God (incarnate) is sometimes represented as being on equal terms with the Trinity in religious art, so completing a fourth aspect of the 'divine'.
- (2) The Christian Faith has a more problematic relationship with the concept of evil. Evil has an equal relationship with good in the archetypes of oriental religion(s). however, in Christianity and Judaism it is a lesser spirit and Satan is a fallen angel. Hence because nature worship has obvious occult and so satanic links, it has been shunned by the Christian Faith. For **Jung** the denial of the evil aspect of the unconscious has led to the distortion of the archetype of the mandala. Incidentally, many of the variant strains of Hindu religion and other Eastern religion do have myths about equal adversaries of good and evil. However, in the Christian Faith Jesus Christ is not depicted as defeating a god of evil of equal stature. Rather, He is represented as overcoming evil and so saving Humankind from sin.

9. JUNG: a further worked example: 'Answers to Job'

Jung works out his beliefs about good and evil in his latest book 'Answers to Job'. This is a complex book in which he seems to be coming to terms with opposing tendencies in his own thinking. **Jung** seems to have been alternately drawn towards the Paternal Theology of the Christian Doctrine of Salvation, and the more maternal theology that seems to have grown out of his increasing understanding of his own life, and the influences upon it from his interests in theosophy and natural theology. **Jung** in this book reviews the story of 'Job' which he considers to pre-figure the sufferings of Jesus Christ. According to **Jung** Job in 'Job' talks with God who shows a dark side to His nature which He cannot escape, and which is projected, unjustly, onto Job. **Jung** then seeks to demonstrate that the whole of the Old Testament can be interpreted as showing that God has a tendency to become Man. God then makes reparation to Job through Christ by choosing a sacrificial death. God's incarnation in Jesus Christ, then, according to **Jung** expresses one of the archetypes. It is the symbol of what happens to every man if he can release the divine spark in his unconscious and allow it into

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consciousness where the conflicting elements of good and evil, male and female can be reconciled.

5B. Some interim conclusions

1. Meaning in the non-verbal aspects of Religion

Freud, Jung and their followers have raised some challenging questions about the nature of symbolism in the Christian and others faiths, and they have enlarged our understanding of 'meaning'. In religions everywhere there have always been powerful images expressed as pictures, statues, sacred objects, and places. Religions have usually been observed by means of rhythmic music, dance, chant, and rituals that did not always possess any verbal or logical meaning at least as far as the worshippers understood. Indeed, for many years in the Christian Church in England both the Bible and the liturgy were in a language that the majority of the people did not know. Nevertheless the public worship seemed to appeal at a level of meaning that was deeper than words. Perhaps, then, the psycho-analysts have a point that there is a level of emotional meaning that is expressed in non-verbal symbols across many religions. The rhythms and sounds expressed may suggest that this is a level of being that we share at an unconscious level with all people. Was it in fact this that **Jung** was trying to express in articulating his idea of the collective unconscious?

2. The power of the verbal aspects of the Faith

Alongside the verbal aspects of the Faith there have always been testimonies, stories, and myths (I use this word in its technical and not popular sense) that have enshrined Humankind's understanding of ourselves vis-à-vis God, our place in His world, and our relationship with the natural world which we can see, and the Divine world which we cannot see. This Divine world could not be sensed, but nevertheless seemed filled with Holiness and mystery. It has impinged throughout history on human consciousness through events that consciousness did not fully understand. In Western Europe, in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries, philosophers and Theologians concentrated on the verbal expression of Divine mysteries and tended to elevate words as having symbolic power to express ultimate truths. *Psychologists have challenged what they perceive as an over evaluation of what words can do.* We will consider some of these problems when we look at language and meaning. What **Freud** and **Jung** have done is to draw attention to the levels of meaning that are not expressed in language, and hence challenged Christians to look again at the power of their non-verbal symbols.

C. RELIGION AND MADNESS

1C. HEIMINIAK (1984): The physiology of the visionary

1. Introduction

At the beginning of this unit it was suggested that we need to look at the concern which is felt about the persistent connection between Religion and Pathology. This connection has arisen so far in two particular ways. (1) Descriptions of religious experience are almost indistinguishable from descriptions some people give of a schizophrenic breakdown, epileptic seizures, drug induced changes of consciousness, and so on. (2) The second cause for concern is that when sociological measures are taken, religious people come out poorly on some scales like authoritarianism, racial prejudice (ethno-centrism) and other factors that generally devalue other people. This seems to be in conflict with the Christian principle of love, and

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was the finding that caused **Allport** to begin to make a distinction between ‘real’ Christians (intrinsic) and those who were in it only for selfish reasons (extrinsic).

2. HEIMINIAK: a Physiological observation

We begin with ‘religion and psycho-pathology’, and will let our thoughts here initially be guided by **Heimaniak**’s 1984 paper. **Heimaniak** clearly shows that the effects of temporal lobe epilepsy (electrical discharges in the area of the brain in front of the head) often include altered states of consciousness. These may include visions of God (?), Jesus Christ, the Virgin Mary, or angels. Patients experiencing fits may ‘hear God speak to them’, and some feel afterwards that they have been ‘called to a special mission’. They then make important decisions about their lives based on such experience. Other patients are less coherent, and although they see (sometimes bizarre) visions, their accompanying behaviour is disorganised, and they make strange claims such as, ‘All life comes from radioactivity in space,’ and ‘I am the Ark of God.’

3. HEIMINIAK: a comparison with select experiential phenomenon

The coherent experiences sound not dis-similar to *some* of the experiences described by the Saints, and by converts at some revival meetings quoted by **James**, especially some of the more bizarre and meaningless manifestations. These latter seem like the less coherent descriptions of temporal lobe epilepsy. **Heimaniak** – and psychology cannot pronounce on Spiritual matters – therefore takes the same line as **James**. If the subjects describe their experiences as religious, then that is what they are for them. If their subjects describe, for example, a fit in a non-religious way, then that is a non-religious experience.

4. CHRISTENSEN: observations on the conversion experience

Heimaniak then reviews the conversion experiences analysed by **Christensen**. **Christensen** has demonstrated that there are antecedent psychological factors that often precede a Christian or other conversion experience. He thinks that the conversion experience follows a period of psychological conflict in which the person is unsure of his or her identity, and/or has a low self concept, and/or may have psycho-sexual difficulties that lead to a state of acute confusion and guilt. Now, the best outcome for this sort of personal crisis is for the unconscious conflicts to be acknowledged and brought into the consciousness. Here an integration process can take place, and this is often what seems to happen in a conversion experience. And, just as emotional stress can trigger off an epileptic seizure, there is no reason why such stress should not also produce the bright lights, visions, and voices that are sometimes described as part of religious experience. The kind of sudden breakthrough to clarity that and understanding that is sometimes described when the testimony of a Christian conversion experience is being told is similar to the ‘sudden solution’ of problems experienced by creative people that we noted in unit 3.

5. HEIMINIAK: An overall perspective

Heimaniak continues by considering whether experiences that are described as pathological for some can be authentic religious experiences for others. He decides, wisely, that the *authenticity is described by the outcome*. Here he is in line with the Early Church Fathers who applied the same test to the Montanist prophecy movement. In the case of the psychologists their rubric is slightly different: *If it produces a new integration of the personality that is permanent, it is authentic*. If by contrast the integration breaks down over time, then it was a mistake to regard it as a revelation from God. **Heimaniak** concludes by arguing that no

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experience is totally authentic since there will always be a mixture of the genuine religion and self serving. Nevertheless such experience can become an occasion for growth.

2C. Some provisional conclusions

1. A general axiom

In Conclusion, I would like to suggest that the research of psychologists into abnormal mental states and clinical symptoms has given rise to some challenging ideas for Theologians to tackle.

2. Freud's challenge to the Christian Faith

Freud's theories often seem to extreme to present a challenge. This was certainly the way that Christians responded to his early suggestions about the origins of religious belief in God as a father figure. The empirical research shows that people are often attracted to Christian Faith at times of their deepest need. It also demonstrates that that Faith does answer their existential problems and calm their fears. Nevertheless, there is work for Theologians to do. **Freud's** question is whether man created God, if not in his own image, at least in the image of his father. This question needs to be answered.

3. Carl Jung's challenge to the Christian Faith

Jung's challenge to the Christian Faith is more subtle, and possibly more sweeping. In the first place (as we would not) he treats all religions equally as having insights for humankind's spiritual nature, and as the expression of our unconscious existence. Consequently, **Jung** challenges the Christian image of the Divine as only partial. For him it does not form the perfect Mandala (Jung's own concept anyway), and neglects the reality of the feminine and also the sometimes so called 'dark' side of the Divine Nature. The other challenge **Jung** presents is to the Orthodox interpretation of the Incarnation. **Jung** sees (Jesus) Christ as divine *because He is more fully human than others*. Hence, he was able to externalise or crystallise the Divine spark in humankind.

4. A closing perspective

Both **Freud** and **Jung** derived some parts of their theory from their clinical work with unbalanced people. They saw links between religion and madness that had been perceived before in Humankind's history. In Units 2 and 3 we set out to discover some at least provisional answers to the question, 'What is religious experience?' We close this unit by challenging ourselves to find a definition of religious experience that will distinguish it from normal states of consciousness caused by illness and pharmaceutical products, these latter being experiences that we certainly do not want to claim as religious.

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UNIT 13: LANGUAGE AND MEANING

A. INTRODUCTION

1A. Aims, Intended outcome, activities and concepts

1. Aims

A large part of this unit is concerned with the research into language acquisition and the development of meaning in a human person. Language and thought are closely intertwined, and so each exerts an influence on the other in development, and throughout life. Non-verbal thought comes first, and an understanding of the meaning of experience is a pre-requisite for acquiring the worlds to express it. Once language learning starts, words can help to shape and classify experiences, and so our perception of meaning and our thinking about experience is changed. Our mastery of the rules of language can also mean that we acquire ways of talking that actually have no meaning for us even though we may use them so skilfully that others think that by them we understand the same meanings as do they.

2. Questions to consider as you study this unit

- (1) In language development, meaning comes first and then the language is acquired to clothe the meaning through experience. What would be the equivalent in the development of religious language and meaning?
- (2) Children's understanding of figurative language and multiple layers of meaning comes very slowly. What sense can they be expected to make of symbolic religious language, myths, and parables? What would be the best way to lead them into it?
- (3) Ritualised interactions give children both emotional security and predictable language experience. This enables them to feel in control of situations. Do any of these needs carry over into the sacraments and other services of the Christian Faith? Is this one reason why so many people may be so very conservative in their attitude to exactly *how* things are done in Church?
- (4) How can we avoid the danger that religious language will be acquired and used without a full understanding of its meaning? What sorts of experience will help people to acquire the deeper layers of meaning encoded into language? Do non-verbal aspects of ritual have a direct appeal to emotions?
- (5) How could we investigate what children are learning from the teaching and worship that occurs in Sunday School and Church?

3. Intended outcomes

By the end of this unit you should have a good knowledge of the way language acquisition and thought are intertwined, and how children try to make sense of religious language and concepts. You will also have thought about the way that religious language can become a meaningless ritual used to avoid thinking about religious ideas as much as to illuminate them. You may have questions about symbols and language which, we hope, will be answered by the material in the final unit.

4. Concepts

Important concepts that are explored, defined, or contextualised in this unit are as follows: Symbol, Image, Figurative Language, Ritualised interactions, meaning, Language Acquisition Device (LAD).

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B. LANGUAGE AND MEANING

1B. CHOMSKY's THESIS: Language acquisition device theory

1. An interdisciplinary note

It would appear that Theologians and Philosophers are taking a while to catch up with the changes of thinking emerging from research in language development over the last twenty five years or so. Hence, in this unit we will be giving you a thorough grounding. It is to be hoped that many of you involved in this Master Degree programme will attempt some Theological work in this area, especially as the fruit of your ministry amongst younger people develops in your parishes.

2. Chomsky and Skinner (1959)

The revolution in our understanding of language learning came when **Chomsky** (1959) pointed out that *language learning is not by imitation*. The challenge came in a devastating attack on **B.F. Skinner** who thought that children learned language by imitating sections from their parents speech, which were re-inforced by praise and attention. **Chomsky** pointed out that if we could only say what we had heard others say before us, eternity was not long enough to give us time for the mastery of all the sentences we use, because every sentence is different.

3. LAD: Language Acquisition Device

(a) The phenomenon of initial human language learning

Every piece of language is generated afresh by the speaker or writer on the basis of a set of rules that we know for combining words to code meanings. We use the same set of rules to decode what a speaker says and extract his or her meaning. So, language is infinitely variable. What the child has to learn is the set of rules that makes it possible for him or her to take part in language interchanges. This actually makes it amazing that a child ever learns a language. The problem is not just to work out the words that people are saying. It is also to extract the rules that they are using to put them together so that the child can make up his or her own sentences. When psychologists first started to work on the problem they were acutely aware that people rarely talk in correctly formed sentences. Instead, they stop and start, change tack in the middle, leave things unsaid, fill in with gestures, and so on. It seemed impossible that any child, listening to the usual way that people converse, could extract a set of rules for coding and de-coding language. The fact that they do this between the ages of eighteen

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months and four years without ever becoming consciously aware of the rules that they are using is even more amazing.

(b) Chomsky's contribution and the theory of LAD

Chomsky was a linguist. He was not an empirical psychologist. However, **Chomsky's** suggestions were taken up and used in experiments by psychologists who followed him in thinking that the only explanation for language learning was that we were born with the ability to learn language. This he called a 'Language learning device' (LAD). LAD appeared to be the set of combinations of meanings we use to construct our sentences. Meanings were thought to exist as a sort of deep structure of pre-verbal level that could be clothed in a surface structure of words that in turn were combined in sentences that belong to any language. In support of this it was found that children in all the languages that were studied started to talk by using the same basic set of meanings, but those meanings expressed in the vocabulary and grammar of their own language. A typical set of meanings might be:

<i>Mary</i>	<i>eat</i>	<i>bread</i>
(Agent)	(action)	(object)
<i>John</i>	<i>ride</i>	<i>truck</i>
(Agent)	(action)	(location)

(c) LAD theory in the thinking of the 1960s and 1970s

In the 1960s and 1970s there was considerable support for LAD. It solved a number of problems if children were innately coded to learn language.

- (1) It would explain the incredible speed with which they gained mastery of a complex skill.
- (2) Physiologists were at the same time working with children who were brain damaged and adults who had suffered strokes. It became clear that there were areas of the left hemisphere of the brain that were specialised for different language functions. Hence a stroke patient might lose his or her ability to speak sentences, but could still understand them, or could read silently but not aloud etc.
- (3) Some brain damaged children showed specific deficits in particular parts of their language acquisition. That again indicated that separate parts of the brain had their own function for language learning.

4. Post-Chomsky longitudinal observation of language

The main thing that **Chomsky's** revolution brought about was a mass of research based on close, longitudinal observation of individual children learning language. At each stage of their development, psycho linguists worked out the grammar of the sentences that children produced using the same sort of techniques as Anthropologists use when they newly write down an hitherto unwritten language. It was clear that **Chomsky** was right on two points.

- (1) Children do not learn by imitating adult sentences. There is certainly some imitation while they are learning. But if you listen to interchanges between adults and pre-school children, it is the adults who do most of the imitating.
- (2) Children from their first use of single words produce their own sentences according to the rules that they understand at the time. We know that they are using rules because of the mistakes that they make when they over-generalise a rule that they have just acquired. The over-generalisation that we notice most often occurs (in English) when a child has just learned to put 'ed' at the end of a word to make it a past tense. But the child does not yet know about the exceptions. An example: A child who might have used 'went' correctly the week before but has just learnt the 'ed' 'rule' can now happily say, 'I goed to the shops,' or 'I wented to my granny's.'

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5. McNEIL: Children and the rule mastery of language

Another child, this time in **McNeil's** study of childrens' mastery of the extremely complex rules for forming negatives in English, produced, 'I can't do nothing with no strings.' In the same study **McNeil** demonstrated that children can only cope with the rule that they are currently mastering, that they do not imitate adults, and that it is a waste of time trying to teach children language. Here is a dialogue between parent and child. *Child:*

'Nobody don't like me.'

Mother: 'No. Say, 'Nobody likes me.'

Child: 'Nobody don't like me.'

After eight repetitions of the above exchange, this was the result:

Child (sigh): 'Oh, nobody don't likes me.'

It would have been more preferable and effective if the child's mother had shown greater concern to tell the child that someone did indeed like her, and it would have been a truer picture of what happens in the home when parents talk to children. It is usually found that parents rarely correct their children's use of language. But they do correct in accurate statements of fact. They are usually more concerned with what the child is trying to communicate than when or how the child says it. It is always thought to be ironic that the result of this process is children who speak grammatically correct sentences, but sometimes pay but scant attention to the truth.

2B. G. WELLS: 'The Meaning makers' and research at Bristol University

1. Introduction

The study of childrens' grammar has been very productive. We now have a fairly clear picture of how most children master language, and the most effective environment for language acquisition. I will start with research on the environment. The most recent and currently the best research on language acquisition comes from the University of Bristol team led by **Gordon Wells**. He and his team have published a stream of titles culminating in **G. Wells**, 'The Meaning Makers,' 1986.

2. WELLS: findings from previous research confirmed and developed

Dr. Wells' research confirmed and developed a number of previous findings.

- (1) (a) Parents do not deliberately teach language to their children. They surround their children with language and support their efforts to participate. The whole process seems to start at birth. Children are born with the need to make sense out of things. From birth they seem to make causal inference: i.e.: one event follows another event, and so the first event causes the second. Children, of course, have very few responses at birth. But those they do have, like sucking, turning their heads, waving their arms, have been used to investigate what they are thinking. Skilfully designed experiments have shown that they make the connection between waving an arm and the movement of the mobile above the cot, or turning their head and the appearance or disappearance of a display lights. Not only have they inferred causality from one event following another, but they have also inferred instrumentality - i.e.: it was something that they did that caused the movement or the light.
- (b) From the basis of this innate logical ability, children start to build up a picture of the world making links between regular events and their consequences, e.g.: sounds that mean that they are about to be bathed or fed. We have seen before, when we were examining the work of **Piaget** that for the first two years or so, children build up *action pictures* of their environment. **Piaget** called them *sensori motor schemes*, and these are based on what the babies can do with objects –which ones are suckable, throwable,

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bangable, and so on. Although they are not using words, **Wells** thinks of them as constructing stories about events, objects and people which make their world meaningful and predictable, and allow them to play their part in it. The first point to emphasise, then, is that *children's first understanding of meaning is non verbal, and that becomes one of the strands that will eventually come together to form a language.*

- (2) The second strand that will eventually compose language is *communication*. Children have ways of doing this pre-verbally as well, some of which are innate, and others learned. The most obvious one is *crying* which occurs naturally if they are shocked, distressed, hungry, or in pain. Another early signal is *eye contact*. Babies turn an unblinking gaze on their mothers when they are fed, and later learn to use eye contact in many valuable ways in interactions. We learned about one when we thought about emotional development. A baby will break off eye contact when he or she needs to terminate an interaction. Sensitive parents learn to read this signal and wait for the child to resume contact. Closely associated with eye contact is *smiling*, a response which most adults find reinforcing, and which children use (though not deliberately) to keep adults attached to them and close by them. *Facial expressions* also signal the baby's emotional state. From about the age of six months onward they join a growing repertoire of gestures to communicate various needs. Most parents are treated to the negative of refusal which is pretty effective when their babies don't want to be fed, picked up, bathed, put to bed, or whatever. They can also use *pointing* to obtain an object that they want, or draw attention to something interesting that they have noticed.
- (3) So, it seems, that babies have a non-verbal way of communicating and making sense out of the world. Now, the third strand that will develop into language has not connection with meaning at first. After a few months babies discover that they can make other noises besides crying, i.e.: cooing and babbling. These newer sounds seem to prepare the developing vocal organs and control systems to make the sequence of sounds that will be used in speech. As the baby hears the language around himself or herself, he or she will begin to focus selectively on the sounds and intonations that he or she regularly hear. Early in the babbling stage, he or she will have produced most of the sounds that the human voice can make. Later, children will come to babble in a way which resembles the language they will acquire, and good listeners would probably be able to distinguish a German baby's babble from that of an English or Philippino baby.

3. WELLS: three streams of language development

There are then three streams of language development that will become language. At about the age of twelve to eighteen months old many children have a working picture that makes sense out of their world, and a side variety of ways of communicating their meanings to their caretakers. Why then should they take the next step and learn language? Well, it seems to happen *because of the actions of their caretakers*. Now, we have noted already that *parents do not deliberately teach their children language*. But they do talk to them from the beginning. Mothers, keep up a running commentary while they are taking care of their babies, asking questions about their needs and interests, and supplying the answers. They follow the child's line of concentration and talk about what he or she is looking at, or bring it close to be handled. Every response that the child makes is interpreted as an attempt at communication, and the parent puts into words what he or she thinks it means. What then occurs is a series of interactions within which the child learns many of the essentials of language. These interactions range from 'proposing the topic' (by pointing, or by eye movement), taking turns, and the link between sound and meaning. In **Well's** words, 'They have started the long process of negotiating a shared meaning based on communication which will take the child into the talking club. At this stage, the mother (who is the usual language partner) takes responsibility for all parts of the communication: following the child's lead on the choice of

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topic, she then *speaks both roles*. For the child the important point is that mother understands the meaning of the situation, and that the sounds that mother makes have relevance.

4. WELLS's THESIS: meaning comes first

These observations all serve to confirm one of the most significant principles in language development: *Meaning comes first*. Children acquire the language to communicate the meanings that they have already formed by making sense out of the pattern and sequences of events in their environment.

5. Implications of WELLS's thesis

Once children have started to make the connection between sound and meaning, their parents or adult language tutors play an important part in the process. The whole thing revolves around communication. Children have *meanings* that they want to *communicate*. Mostly they want to tell things to their parents. Sometimes they use language *instrumentally* to obtain what they want. However, they usually have some effective way of doing this without language, and it is the communication of information that motivates language learning. Parents certainly want to communicate with their children. The resulting interactions have features that are ideal for children to learn language. The motivation for the parental behaviour is that of negotiating meaning, not, as we have stated before, deliberately to teach their children language.

3B. SNOW's THESIS: An analysis of 'Motherese'

1. Chomsky and McNeil challenged: Children do not need an LAD

Snow (1977) studied the kind of language that mothers use when talking to children. She called it 'Motherese,' although it is in fact the language that all adults adopt when talking to infants. Even children of seven years old adopt it when talking to younger children. Its characteristics include short, simple, correct sentences, simplified vocabulary, very clear enunciation, stressing the beginnings and ends of words, a sing-song intonation, and a great deal of repetition, including the adult imitating what the child says. Motherese seems to alert the child to the fact that this language is addressed to him or her, but it gives a correct model in which it is fairly easy to segment the words and hence to see the regular sequences. These observations have solved the **Chomsky/McNeil** problem. *Children do not need an LAD*. They have ways of making meaning that are independent of language, and parents who put meanings into simplified language which they can begin to connect with their meanings.

2. SNOW: Other factors that help children acquire language

In addition to her description of 'Motherese,' **Snow's** close observation of mothers in their homes showed up some other factors that were clearly helping children to acquire language. It has been found that the most productive language learning sessions occur when mothers play with their toddlers, sharing nursery rhymes and predictable games like peek-a-boo, and in particular, when they share books. The key factors are that the games and books are very familiar, so the children know what is coming and make predictions. Mothers, who know everything that their children know, can help them play their parts by saying the lines of the nursery rhymes up to the last word, and leaving a space for the child to respond. The nursery rhymes have actions too, which help to develop another important aspect of language, the control of behaviour. A child who knows the actions for Sunday School choruses, or 'Ring-a ring of roses,' has to exercise great self control to fall down at the right moment. Parents learn to vary their speed of saying the rhyme so that everyone reaches the end together.

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These constantly repeated episodes are called ritualised interactions. They play a central role in children's language acquisition and their emotional security.

3. Child and parent: the unequal language learning partnership

Household tasks, language learning, nursery rhymes, and book sharing create the environment for language learning. Most adults seem to be aware of their importance to infants, but there is one final aspect of negotiating meaning in these situations that needs exploring. *Children are very unequal partners in the process.* We have already seen that for young babies mother talks for both partners. When children first start to use sound to convey their meanings, in conjunction with their gestures, the sounds are difficult to decipher, and are often only partly like the target words. Later on, when they can string two or three words together they do not mark the verbs for tense. Indeed, their telegraphic speech is so ambiguous that parents find themselves having to check out their meaning. This they do in four ways.

4. Method 1: Ask a question expressing what they think the child meant

(a) Method 1

The first and commonest method is to *ask a question that expresses what they think the child meant.*

Child: Katy eat cake.
Parent: Did Grandma give you cake for tea yesterday?
Child: No, Non, Non. Katy eat cake.

(b) Analysis

The first point to note is that the child can understand more than he or she can produce. How is this explained? Usually by limitation within the child's short term memory capacity. The child knows all the words that his or her mother uses. It takes less capacity to receive and process that sentence than to put together the three words that she says. Her intended meaning, or non-verbally coded 'deep structure' as it is often called by Theologians, is more complex than the words he or she can produce. So the child tries again with the same three words.

Child: No, No, No, Katy eat cake.
Adult: Do you want some cake with your milk?
Child: Yes. Katy eat cake.

5. Methods 2 – 4: Expand, extend, or imitate

(a) Method 2

If adults do not use Method 1 when faced with a child's ambiguous utterances, then they do one of the following instead.

Expand what the child said by giving the correct grammatical version of it.

Child: John lorry.
Adult: Yes, John is playing with his lorry.

(b) Method 3

Extend what the child said. This involves first expanding the child's utterance, and then adding something to its meaning.

Child: Cat purr.
Adult: Yes, the cat's purring because he is pleased.

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(c) Method 4

Imitate by repeating a word that the parent thinks the child used, but repeating it with a question intonation.

6. Analysis of Methods 2 - 4

Apart from the imitation which only helps to model the pronunciation of certain words, all the methods of responding to children, though they are meant to negotiate a certain meaning, in fact give the child a correct model for expressing the intended meaning. Once again we see the main principles of language learning in operation. The child has a meaning to communicate, and expresses it according to his or her mastery of language up to that point. Adults carry on the interaction by going more than halfway to meet the child, and supporting his or her attempts at language. The more skilful children become, the less support they need and the negotiation of meaning moves into a more equal partnership.

C. C.M. PARKER: LANGUAGE LEARNING BY YOUNG CHILDREN

1C. Encoding language

1. Three factors determining how a child conveys a message

I want to take a closer look now at how a child develops in his or her ability to express and understand the meaning of words. As the child does so it brings him or her into a closer relationship to the pre-verbal concepts he or she has already formed using the sensori motor code. The first thing to note is the *complexity of the language system that the child has to master*. We humans do not only express our meanings in a number of different ways, but we often express several meanings simultaneously in the same speech act. If we analyse a discourse between two people, we find that the language chosen represents two things. There is the *particular message or information being communicated*, and the *social action intended by the speaker*. The social action represents the relationship that exists between the speaker and the hearer. This will vary depending on the role that the two of them are playing, their relative status to each other, and how well they know each other. The same message can be conveyed in very different ways that are determined by these three factors.

2. A worked example

In the following example, the speaker wants some milk. Now: What are the respective status, roles, and familiarity of the two participants?

*Give me some milk,
I want a glass of milk.
Will you give me a glass of milk?
I don't suppose you have any milk do you?
I wonder if I might have a glass of milk?
That milk looks lovely and cool!*

If you say these out loud, you can change their meaning. You can change their meaning even more by intonation variation. *This makes the point that another way that we encode information when we are talking is by intonation.*

3. Further data on encoding meaning in language: word order

Meaning in language, then is encoded through the *selection of words*, and also *the order in which we speak them*.

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He is president.

Is he president?

Also, the *grammatical markers we use for tense, person, negatives etc.* are important in this respect.

I read the book yesterday.

I will read the book tomorrow.

He reads everything on the book list.

I have not read this book before.

The intonation we use and the facial expressions and gestures we use alongside the words can convey the opposite meaning to the spoken words. We noted this in our study of emotions. But, these are only the simpler aspects of the coding of language. The real difficult starts when we look at our understanding of the meaning of words.

2C. Understanding the meaning of words

1. Two word types: Reference and Connotation

One simple thing that we can do is to divide word meanings into two types.

- (1) *Reference words.* Many words have *reference* to particular objects like 'tree', or to actions like 'eating', or to abstract concepts like 'truth'. These in turn are often defined by using other words, but they refer to something in particular. This is *denotation* and it is fairly easy to see that children who experience the related objects, events, peoples or concepts can see how the word denotes or refers to the meaning.
- (2) *Connotations.* Words also have connotations. These are the *emotional values* that become attached to them as we have more and more experiences of various words. So 'tree' can become the centre of a whole association of ideas which are personal and individual. They may include all the trees that we have ever climbed, planted, sat under, carved our names upon, photographed, sang about, read poems about etc.. Some words carry connotations that we all share because we have a common culture. Other connotations are intensely personal.

2. Multiple meanings

As if all this was not enough to have to learn about the meaning of words, children also have to struggle with the problem that *words can have multiple reference* (i.e.: more than one meaning). An example is 'plant'. Two words that have a completely different meaning may also sound the same: e.g.: 'stare' and 'stair', 'pair' and 'pear'. Further: Adults can make use of multiple reference and connotation to make jokes and talk cryptically, hoping that the children will not understand. Also: We use similes, metaphors, analogies, parables, allegories, and other forms of *symbolic* language to express meaning. These seem to be beyond the reach of direct reference to the real world that children are beginning to understand. But there is another aspect to multiple meaning that is found in the learning process of children.

3. LEWIS: How children unpack the meaning of words

(a) A general principle

Research has been conducted into how children unpack the meanings of words. What they are thinking can often be derived from their errors of speech as they gradually master syntax rules. First they discover that sounds have meanings. Then, having learnt their first words, they learn to associate the name with the object with which it seems to associate. 'Dog' in this instance would be the family pet's proper name rather than the designation of a type of animal. Now, it seems that within a week or two of acquiring a sound, they start to apply it to

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other things, in this instance things that share the characteristics of a dog. This is how their thinking can be glimpsed.

(b) LEWIS's Research: an example

As it happens, 'dog' was one of the first words learnt by children whom **Lewis** was observing in his 1957 research. One child progressed to generalise the label to furry things like a blanket, another to four legged things (e.g.: an horse), another to things generally that move (e.g.: a beetle). **Lewis** also tells the story of his son who extended his label for dog, 'goggie', to a cow, and then to an horse. Each time his father gave him a more appropriate label. Finally, they met a man walking his S.Bernard dog. They boy, having learnt about 'horse' labelled it 'ossie'. His father informed him with some reluctance that this was in fact a big dog. The child settled therefore upon an appropriate new label 'biggie goggie'.

(c) Analysis

In the foregoing dog examples the children had obviously selected furriness or four legs as a basis for generalisation. This would however be only a small part of what they would have learnt about dogs in their non-verbal concepts. They would probably have stored with the picture/image of the dog they knew information that this dog runs, barks, wags its tail, fetches sticks, licks children, possibly that it bites, it eats food from tins from a bowl on the floor. They would also have remembered other things they may have experienced with the family pet and other dogs. Form this very complex set of impressions they centralise onto something that is the meaning of 'dog'. We note then that *children, and for that matter adults, can have very rich concepts that are coded in images or actions.* From this a further principle follows. *Words are the symbols we use to represent and access experience.* Children, therefore, have a lot of learning to do before they can divide their experiences up into the same categories as everyone else is using, and learn to apply to them the correct label. So, a further learning principle can be derived. Learning language is not just a matter of speaking the right words in the right order. *It requires changing your pattern of concepts, arranging them and classifying them in a way that adults do,* and so applying to them the right words. Hence, *there is a constant interaction between thinking and language.*

(d) In summary

For children, then, non verbal thinking comes first so that when they acquire language they already have a set of meanings to relate to the words. Later the words start to change the concepts. The child can no longer treat all four footed furry things as equal because he or she has to learn different labels for some of them. This means that the child has to look more closely at them to discern the differences that dictate a label.

4. Children also coin their own names for people

Children often choose to use their own names for personal reference. Labels for family relationships are particularly tricky. Children are not going to acquire the concept 'sister' non-verbally. Initially, for example, a child may assume that 'sister' applies to the baby. It usually never occurs to that female child that the baby also has a sister – her! It is also puzzling at first when in time the same child discovers that 'Auntie' is a sister to either father or mother.

5. PARKER: an hierarchy of distinctions

This leads **C.M. Parker** to another point about thinking and language. Many objects, people, and animals have different labels for different functions, for they belong to several groups or classifications. We have just noted that a woman can be an aunt, sister, a mother, a teacher, a pianist, a wife, and so on. The family pet could be Shep, a dog, a collie, a mammal, an

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animal, a living thing and so on. All these labels put something or someone in a place in an hierarchy of concepts about living things. This is our way of organising our understanding of the world so that we know how to think about things and behave towards them. Having made a start at labelling a concept at a particular point in the hierarchy, children then gradually fill in the meanings by moving up and down that hierarchy when they have to make distinctions.

3C. WELLS's THESIS: Storying

1. WELLS 'The Meaning makers': a definition of 'storying'

Parker has just demonstrated to us that children build up complex concepts about the world by *making meaning out of their experiences*. They see patterns and regularities and so build up their own world picture, non-verbally at first. **Gordon Wells** in 'The meaning makers' calls this 'storying'. He believes that children start to construct stories from the moment that they are born. It is their way of making sense, making a mental model of the world. Then they can predict what is going to happen and behave appropriately within it. 'Making sense of an experience is hence to a very great extent being able to construct a plausible story about it,' (**Wells** 'The meaning Makers'/196).

2. Story making as learning

We start to build our understanding of the world by constructing mental stories so as to make meaning out of perceptual information. As children start to talk, they try to share their stories with other people, and in turn are open to influence from the stories that other people offer to them. These stories include explanations that parents give in answer to questions, stories that are read to them, real life stories they observe as people interact with them and each other, and what they see on television or in the film and video media. As they weave together all these stories they begin to draw conclusions about themselves, and their place and value in the world. We saw something of this when we studied self concept theories in Units 5 and 6. They begin to take on board the ideas, beliefs and attitudes that their family or cultural group think important, and the explanations that they use as to why things happen as they do.

3. WELLS: Story making and our perception of reality

'In this sense the reality that each one of us inhabits is to a very great extent a distillation of the stories that we have shared: not only the narratives that we have heard and told, read or seen enacted in drama or news on television, but also the anecdotes, explanations and conjectures that are drawn in everyday conversation, in our perpetual attempts to understand the world in which we live and our experiences in it.' (**G. Wells** 'The Making of Meaning,' page 196.)

4. WELLS: Story, society, fact, imagination, and history

Telling stories seems to be our most important means of gaining control over the world. All human societies tell stories and through oral traditions many of the public stories of past societies have been handed down to us as myth, legend, history, etc.. More recently, societies have recorded their stories as literature or sacred texts, although these are more likely to be an expression of an individual's story than the shared experience of a social group like the oral traditions. Both children and adults find it easier to assimilate new ideas if they are presented within a story. Only the most skilled thinkers can move on from a particular example of a story to make a general principle. Indeed, when faced with general principles, most of us try to make the meaning clear to ourselves by creating our own stories. Now, **Wells** makes little distinction between stories that are so-called factually based, e.g.: those of history or science,

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and the imaginative stories of literature, particularly fiction. He drew the principle that *Imagination cannot operate apart from a grounding in the real world.*

5. A comment on ‘storying’ and history

Even history, **Wells** notes, is not totally factual. Some of the history writers of the past have been extremely creative in the stories that they have handed on to us. Modern historians can make a good living at re-interpreting the past in the light of modern ways of deriving evidence, and a new set of prejudices.

4C. The development of childrens’ understanding of symbolic language use

1. FOWLES & GLANZ: Riddles and puns in the perception of 6-9 year olds

There have been several attempts to look at how and when children develop in their ability to perceive that there are different layers of meaning in language. **Fowles & Glanz** (1977) looked at the way children coped or did not cope with puns or riddles when they were aged between six and nine years. It was the younger children who produced the most amusing results. They would laugh at jokes because they were supposed to be funny. But when they were asked to retell those jokes or to say what was funny, it soon showed that they had completely missed the point. Here is a seven year old child’s reaction to a joke:

Adult: How do you keep your fish from smelling?
Cut off their noses!

The adult then explained it.

Child: Because, if you cut off their nose, and everything smells with their nose, they can’t smell, because they have no nose. It’s funny because I don’t really think that fish have noses.

Fowles & Glanz found that children were only just beginning to understand jokes that depend on double meanings at about the age of eight to nine years. Even then only the most able could understand jokes that depend on the fact that the same surface structure language can have two completely different deep structure meanings, e.g.: ‘What kind of animals can jump higher than an house?’ ‘Any animal. Houses can’t jump!’

2. PIAGET: Literal interpretation by children

Piaget did a similar investigation of children’s understanding of proverbs, and found that even when children claimed to understand proverbs, their interpretation was totally literal. (An example of a proverb is, ‘Make hay whilst the sun shines.’) The children did not have enough experience of life or language to understand the deeper meaning encoded in the proverb.

3. The main point at issue

I could find many more examples from research into language development that show that children misinterpret what they read and what is said to them, simply because of their inexperience with language. The main problem is that they think that they have understood and will agree if directly asked about their understanding. It is only when experimenters design investigations that require them to act in a way that *shows* whether they have understood or not that we find out the depth of their confusion. And what is here true of children is also true of adults when we get into the realms of multiple layers of meaning.

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5C. In Summary

1. What has this unit demonstrated so far?

What we have tried to show in this paper is *the division between the ability to use language consistently and the understanding of meaning*. On the one hand children make very rapid progress between the ages of one and a half and four years in mastering the rules for generating all the possible sentences they could use, and an extensive vocabulary of 2000 – 4000 words. This makes them sound like skilled language users. In many ways they are because they have learned to use their language effectively in a variety of situations. Also, they can now communicate their own meanings. As they become older they acquire the skill of reproducing the sort of language that they hear around them. It is a kind of imitation that takes place in school age children so that they can operate the rules of a mathematical formula and make it sound as if they understand. But when the teacher asks the right questions, their ‘understanding’ shows up as a meaningless ritual. I am sure that most of us know how to divide a fraction by turning it upside down and multiplying it. But can we explain what that means and why it happens in purely numerical terms? Similarly, children can take on the story telling formula and produce good imitations of religious stories and parables, but they may have only little knowledge of what they mean.

2. A growing understanding of meaning

The growth of understanding of meaning is a much slower process than the mastery of language structures. It starts as a non-verbal process because we have the innate need to make meaning out of experience. Gradually through interactions with adults, children find ways of bringing that meaning into relationship with language, the negotiation of meaning. It is a very literal meaning at first: one word, - one animal, object, event, person, action or idea Gradually as experience of the world grows, our stories about it become more complex, perhaps nearer to reality. Indeed, as we encounter more language in speech and writing, we have a fuller grasp of what words mean. Instead of being labels to refer to one aspect of the outside world, words become symbols recalling all the perceptions, emotions, shared experiences, conversations, and stories that have become entangled in the network of meaning pegged by the symbol. We learn that the same symbol can be the central pin of different interconnecting networks, and that our own personal tapestry of meaning, while it shares many features of other peoples’, is also individual, our own creation.

D. CHILDRENS’ UNDERSTANDING OF RELIGIOUS LANGUAGE

1D. MARY ELLISON: ‘Listening to children’

1. Introduction

This sub-unit is a short review of an interesting piece of observational research with a group of 9-11 year old English primary school children. They did not necessarily come from a committed Christian home. We have included this to stimulate your reflection on how boys and girls (and teenagers) may use religious language, and hence give you an opportunity to try to work out what the children understand by the language they use, and how they might have grown to that level of thinking. The research has been published by The Church of England General Synod Board of Education under the editorship of The Rt. Revd. Christopher Herbert Bishop of Saint Albans, and the authorship of **Mary Ellison**. Its title is, ‘Listening to children’. Teachers undertook this research in a primary school. They collected

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small groups of children together in quiet rooms with a tape recorder. They then left them alone to discuss questions that were posed at the beginning by their teacher.

2. A sample discussion

The first question discussed was, 'What do you think that God is like?'

- | | |
|---------------|--|
| <i>Joanna</i> | He's a human being just the same as us, only with more power. |
| <i>Susan:</i> | I think He's a human being, but kinder and more understanding, and I think He has – He's got as many eyes as we have – only – except – and He has the same amount of ears but ... er... em... He can hear everything we say and He can look at everything, and He's always about us. |
| <i>John:</i> | Well, other people believe in different gods. They worship them in different ways and they build statues of them and monuments to them, and paint them. |
| <i>Mandy:</i> | Well, when the people do build monuments and things of other gods, they are really making up their own god. They don't really exist – their gods they are talking about. And I wish that people would understand that there is a God. (children from Grafton County Primary School, page 6). |

3. A further sample: The Lord's Prayer

(a) God and the dead

Later the same group were asked to discuss key phrases from The Lord's Prayer. They were tackling quite big issues like the concept of God as Creator and Sustainer of life. Yet shortly afterwards they moved into questions like that showed the limitations of their thinking. 'How does God stay in the air?' is an example. Further, they were bothered by the problem of how people could be buried in the ground and yet be up in Heaven.

(b) Forgiveness

Their discussion of the phrase, 'Forgive us our trespasses,;' illustrates their level of moral thinking. At first they suggest that forgiveness is not fair. People should be punished. Then they start to modify this sample view by thinking that perhaps it depends on how bad the person has been, and the punishment ought to be fair. They even move on into thinking that some people are not responsible for their own wrong-doing. They then carried over the theme of fairness to the lines, 'Give us this day our daily bread.' It would be fair on an international level if everyone who is starving could be fed. In their discussion they show that they have quite extensive knowledge of conditions of poverty, famine, and sickness in various countries.

4. Conclusion

The authors conclude that while children do have limitations in their thinking skills about the matters of the Christian Faith, they also have an ability to explore profound religious ideas that should not be underestimated. In trying to make sense out of religion, they show a need to relate it to their daily lives. The most difficult problem for adults who want to teach children about the Christian Faith is to find answers to their profound questions at a level of concepts and questions they can understand. How is that best done? It is best done through enabling them into a personal relationship with God through Jesus Christ. Once a child has that, all else starts to fall into place.

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2D. Activity

1. A sample survey

You could collect your own small group of youngsters and leave them to discuss items from the Lord's Prayer in the same way as did **Ellison & Herbert**. If you can track down a copy of their book, you could compare the responses that you collected with their published protocol.

2. A cross referencing within this course

You might find it helpful to take a further look at the work of **Fowler** in Units 3 and 4, or the work on Moral development in Unit 11, and cross reference it to the work here.

3. Your writing

You could follow up this discussion as an essay. You could also make your own recordings of children talking, and write about them and how to meet their needs in Sunday School or Church.

We trust that you have enjoyed this course.