

PhD in Psychotherapy
Goldsmiths College
University of London
By

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Title:

Time: The Silent Guest at the Therapeutic Table

Research question:

Do philosophical and socio-cultural descriptions of time contribute to understanding the different experiences of time and its emergent qualities in psychotherapy, with particular reference to psychodynamic psychotherapy (Sigmund Freud) and Milan Systemic psychotherapy (Mara Selvini Palazzoli), and if so, in what ways?

Jeanne

Thank you for being always there.

'Bear'

So proud.

I declare that the work presented in this PhD thesis is the result of my personal and independent investigation. The content is original, and all sources drawn on are referenced in the Bibliography and or the Footnotes.

I have had numerous interesting and challenging conversations with colleagues, students, and friends.

Many patients, knowing of this endeavour, have shared openly their experience of my evolving ideas.

I gratefully recognise them all as appropriately as possible in the Acknowledgments.

Only in this sense is my work 'original'.

Signed and dated by the candidate:

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*All dwelling in one house are strange brothers three
as unlike as any three brothers could be,
yet try as you may to tell brother from brother,
you'll find that the trio resemble each other.
The first isn't there, though he'll come beyond doubt.
The second's departed, so he's not about.
The third and the smallest is right on the spot,
and manage without him the others could not.
Yet the third is a factor with which to be reckoned
because the first brother turns into the second.
You cannot stand back and observe number three,
for one of the others is all you will see.
So tell me, my child, are the three of them one?
Or are there but two? Or could there be none?
Just name them, and you will at once realise
That each rules a kingdom of infinite size.
They rule it together and are it as well.
In that, they're alike, so where do they dwell?*

(Ende, 1984: 138-139).

Abstract.

This thesis explores understandings of time in psychotherapy, philosophy, and anthropology, with particular reference to time in Sigmund Freud and Selvini-Palazzoli's work. From these findings I propose how a time framework has a bearing on psychotherapy.

My ethnographic approach is through textual research, case vignettes from my psychotherapy practice, transcript analysis from filmed interviews, and accounts of experiences of time in therapy from patients' self-reports. I state why I have not given significant space to time within the discipline of physics, finding this area of thought has a more abstract and mathematical approach not directly applicable to human nature or psychotherapy. However, I summarise some of Newton, Einstein, Hawking, and Barbour's contributions, since their ideas form a backdrop to Western thinking about the nature of mankind and our universe, and thus inform the philosophical sections.

The main therapeutic approaches are Freud and Palazzoli's conceptual frameworks (psychodynamic and systemic) and their different emphases on time in healing. This provides the reference point for the study. Then, taking the Greeks (Parmenides, Plato, Aristotle) and Augustine, followed by a more modern emphasis on phenomenology, (Husserl, Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty, Sartre, Camus, and Ricoeur, *inter alia*) the strengths and weaknesses of philosophical explorations of time are critically analysed in terms of psychotherapy.

An interview with a Romanian family bridges philosophical and anthropological perspectives. I explore the effects of conceptualising time, using qualitative research methods, and propose different kinds of socio-politico-historico-cultural time.

Anthropological scholarship more directly helps think about time in psychotherapy. I make detailed reference to two cultures, Balinese and Sora. I

then explore the nature of ritual, which provides fertile ground for conceptualising time in psychotherapy.

Finally, I evaluate these philosophical and anthropological contributions on time to psychodynamic and systemic psychotherapy, and consider implications for fast-changing temporal relationships in contemporary Western societies.

Preface.

Although I registered for my PhD in January 2007 at the age of 61, I have been collecting my material on time, consciously and not so consciously, for years and decades before. My psychotherapeutic practice, my publications, my teaching, my preoccupation with age and aging, have been deeply and explicitly temporally focused. I have been saving material of all kinds ‘in preparation’ even though often I was not aware what I was preparing or saving for.

My earliest ‘researches’ on families and time go back to when I was seven or eight years old as I ‘researched’ my family tree with my god-mother and heard stories of migration, loss, accident, and so on. She would no doubt be proud of what has emerged from those early days were she still alive. Even the asymmetry of that story in terms of maternal and paternal family sides latterly has become of particular interest, with the consequences over time of such imbalance.

A relatively peripatetic childhood and adolescence, multiple schools and boarding school experiences, no doubt all play a part in wanting to make sense of time, and of time and place. An adult life where I have lived and worked in Mali, France, and Zambia; settings where I have developed training programmes and much else on several continents and many more countries; my interest in language learning, - are all woven into this story. In these senses, this project is personal.

Wortham

22nd February 2013

Acknowledgements:

While I take full responsibility for all the work in this thesis, it would have been much the poorer without the knowledge and wisdom of the many people whom I wish to acknowledge and thank for their interest, ideas, and generosity of time.

Perhaps the formal start of this venture was during a walk across The Backs in Cambridge, discussing the philosophy of John Stuart Mill with my daughter, Bethan, and reflecting how I wished I had realised my dream of doing my PhD. The conversation that followed resulted eventually in applying to Goldsmiths College. I am also grateful to Bethan for her insightful comments as a philosopher for chapters 3 and 4 and the place of time in philosophical thinking. Dr Diane Waller as Head of Department of the erstwhile PACE had the faith to offer me a place, and during her time there, showed continuing interest in my progress. Dr Anna Traianou taught the course on Qualitative Research Methods with a focus and clarity that fed my enthusiasm. I produced a first draft of chapter 5 as an elective assignment at the end of the course. She generously gave me feedback and time to help me think how better to order my ideas.

Two members of Goldsmiths provided me with invaluable challenge, support, and guidance, as internal examiners for my Transfer of Registration viva. They were Professor Marjorie Mayo and Dr Victoria Goddard. They challenged me to focus on my task in hand, and the result is a much tighter structure. I hope I have done them justice.

Until she left the department, Maria Dumas, Research Administrator, was a supportive and helpful colleague who guided me unerringly in the academic administrative process and more, and was instrumental in helping me feel I was part of an institution, when as a part-time student, it is easy to feel disconnected.

Throughout the whole process, there have been many colleagues and friends who have shown real interest in my ideas, and made me feel that the approach I was taking had some originality. Among them are my long-time colleague and clinical supervisor Dr Christopher Dare, with whom I have had many conversations about Freud, psycho-analysis, psychotherapy, philosophy, and research, and whose wisdom deserves to show through in this thesis.

Many colleagues have made it possible for me to 'try out my ideas' in workshops, seminars, and conferences. While I cannot acknowledge their contributions to my thinking in detail, I wish to honour their names and their part in my story: Arve Rolandsen (Fauske) and early ideas about time and couples work; Dr Tamás Kurimay (Budapest) especially chapter 5 and our thinking on weak ties that sadly I did not have the time to pursue; Dr Noga Nabarro (Tel Aviv), Bernd Roedel (Stuttgart), Dr Ileana Radu, Marius Radu, Stefana Racorean and Mara Frentiu (Timisoara) all providing particular help with Romanian recent history; Dr Gianmarco Manfrida (Prato / Florence), Dr Iva Ursini (Milan), Valeria Pomini (Athens), Julia Huxter (London / Singapore), Dr Alison Macdonald (London), Dr Gary Robinson (Derby), and Cynthia Rogers (London) who has been a long time enthusiast for this project, who read an earlier draft of my thesis, and questioned my original placing of Freud and Palazzoli.

Many students have shown more than passing interest in these ideas, and many have contributed through conversation their perspectives from their socio-cultural, ethnic backgrounds. In particular I mention former MSc students from the Institute of Psychiatry who have contributed their thinking: Frank Aust, Dr Yuriko Morino, Luminata Henshaw, Yael Samuel, Eva Evangelopoulou, Iva Ruiceva, Suzanne Hutchison and Tope Demosu. I am grateful for opportunities to explore my thinking on this theme in the many seminars at the Institute of Psychiatry that I gave over the years.

Those who participated non-clinically as part of my ethnographic work have been generous with their time, and to my patients who contributed, often directly and

knowingly, and I owe a debt of gratitude for their generosity and interest. In particular I must mention ‘Jane’ whose story has become an integral and unique part of my thesis. I acknowledge ‘Caitlin and Peter’, ‘Dan’, ‘Judie’, ‘Charlene’ ‘Douglas’, ‘Jenny’, ‘Joy’ and ‘Judith’ for the case vignettes. I trust that were they ever to see this thesis, and some have expressed such an interest, they would recognise how they became part of my story as I was a part of theirs. Thank you.

From the different non-clinical interviews I thank the Smith family (London), the Mocan family (Timișoara), ‘Yael and Saul’ (Tel Aviv), and Andreea and Remus (Timișoara), often for giving more of their time in follow-up.

Zaro Weil’s enthusiasm for this project and our discussions about early chapters on hot afternoons at Perdiguier were a source of great encouragement.

Finally, and purposely, I have left to the end, two people who have become central to my learning, my struggles at times to become a scholar, and their belief in this project. They are my two supervisors who in their unique and different ways have repeatedly gone the extra mile - and then some! They are Dr Angela Hobart and Christopher Hauke. Thank you both for seeing me through with your rigour, wisdom, knowledge, encouragement and challenge in equal measure, humour, and genuine interest in these ideas, and for your unfailing patience at the seemingly endless repetition of my re-writes. Wherever I now stumble it will not be for want of encouraging me to stay focused and to have confidence in myself. Thank you.

Word usage.

In the interests of simplicity and readability, I have made certain decisions about word usage. I use some interchangeably to avoid wooden repetition of the same word or phrase. Throughout, I tend to refer to ‘psychodynamic’ approaches to therapy, since this covers a broader spectrum. When referring specifically to Freud’s ideas, I use ‘psycho-analysis’ and psychoanalysis interchangeably. I am aware that this describes theory and a model for practice.

When I refer to Systemic therapy, I have in mind Palazzoli’s thinking and model, while I use ‘systemic’ generically for a way of thinking and other similar approaches in the field. I acknowledge there is a specific difference between the words ‘the Unconscious’ and ‘unconscious’ in Freud’s work.

I use ‘psychotherapy’ and ‘therapy’ interchangeably. This has most to do with how sentences scan, and nothing to do with the debates I remember from the old Rugby Conferences over who could legitimately use terms such as ‘psycho-analysis’ or ‘psycho-analytic psychotherapy’. These are territorial disputes that hold no interest for me, just as they fail to do within the family and systemic therapy ‘debate’.

I have a personal preference for ‘patient’ rather than ‘client’, so that becomes my preferred description of someone in therapy. I frequently refer to ‘Western’ models of therapy and ways of describing the world. This is to remind the reader of my orientation, and that this, even rather global attribution, is to differentiate other cultural (oriental) world-views.

The ethnographic material comes from clinical vignettes and interviews I have conducted over the years in different contexts, so that rarely do I have to refer to the therapist in the third person. Where I do, I have sometimes used the form ‘s/he’ to reflect gender difference although I equally use ‘she or he’. While sensitive to our different perspectives arising from gender (and ethnicity, culture,

religious belief), I have endeavoured to avoid cumbersome formulae that owe more to anxious correctness than the flow of the narrative.

Finally, the following words are important in the discussion; 'instant', 'now', and 'moment'. At times these could be used almost interchangeably. However, there are differences. Plato (1997) speaks of 'the instant' and when I use this word, I have in mind a period of time that occupies (almost) no time at all. 'Now' is very much instant, and Barbour, among others, speaks of many 'nows', but they seem to occupy 'a bit more time', at least time enough to allow something with some kind of duration to occur. The 'moment' is perhaps a longer 'now' with more duration, or as Husserl (1991) might say, has 'thickness'. One may do something in a 'moment'.

Word Count, including footnotes - from the Foreword on: 98340

I have written my thesis so that footnotes add to my central ideas, or in some instances provide text in the original language. Footnotes are part of the word count and are primarily to add body and interest. The thesis is not dependent on them for its essential argument.

Word Count, excluding footnotes: 86106

Foreword: tempus fugit?

‘My memory is like a Mexican mural in which all times are simultaneous.’
(Isabel Allende, quoted in: Schacter, 1996: 32)

‘I need my memories. They are my documents.’
(Louise Bourgeois, *Imagine*. BBC1, 13 November 2007)

You are standing on the Greenwich Meridian, an arbitrary line running north-south, at the Greenwich Observatory. You have just synchronised your identical watch with your friend who is standing at Lands End, and through the marvels of the mobile phone network, at exactly 12.00 noon by your watches, you report to your friend that the sun is directly overhead. Your friend informs you the sun is high in the sky but by his estimation and according to his synchronised watch it will not be exactly overhead until 12.05 p.m. In a later conversation over a glass of wine you realise that at a synchronised clock time, the sun at its zenith in Greenwich is *earlier* than the sun at its zenith at Lands End. If time is to be measured by the trajectory of the sun, it is *later* at Lands End than its *earlier* identical position in the sky at the *same* clock time.

This simple scenario implies alternative aspects of time: different kinds of time, in the relative position of the sun in different geographical locations at something called ‘clock time’; ideas of simultaneity; methods of marking time and the ‘quicksilver’ nature of time. Certainties of time and place turn out to be relative.

For as long as I can remember, I have been preoccupied by questions of time. Mottoes from two schools capture this: *Ex spinas uvas* (‘From thorns to grapes’) implies the passage of time, from something in the past to the future, in a framework of change (in time) in the symbolism of thorns transformed. And *Dum tempus habemus, operemur bonum* (‘While we have time, let us do good’) is prescriptive in its ‘let us’, while ‘do’ implies ‘labour’ and ‘endeavour’, in a fleeting present ‘while’ within our short life-span.

Arising from my preoccupations, I am interested personally and as a psychotherapist in exploring meaning in the multiple time contexts of human existence – in what makes us tick! To do so, I call on philosophy and anthropology as my dual guides. If early Greek philosophy tends towards introspection and abstraction, anthropology invites us to look outwards to grapple with uncertainty, change, and how to live with the seemingly messy. To my knowledge, no-one has attempted to bring understandings from these disciplines together in the context of ‘time’ in psychodynamic and systemic psychotherapy.

My re-search is ambitious. I believe that its unique quality is the attempted polygamous union of psychotherapy, philosophy, and anthropology, before the ‘altar of time’. To help, I co-opt those competitive siblings, breadth and depth, in the hope of not sacrificing too much along the way. I have sought to follow the route of traditional scholarship, and scholarship should be about the joy of exploration and excitement of learning as sufficient justification, unhindered by hoping to achieve any ulterior goal.¹

Whatever the academic patina of this work, I am telling stories, mine and others’, for ‘(w)hatever form they take, stories are indeed for an eternity. ... (T)hey wind their way through our villages and in their telling and retelling, they link the past, present, and future’ (Stoller, 2009:173).

¹ I was saddened to see the title of a seminar in Goldsmiths College, University of London, on ‘How to market your PhD’. I am privileged that I do not have to think of this exploration as something to exploit, sell, or get a return on my investment – an ROI as business people call it.

Introduction.

“When will people see the book?” he asked eagerly when we had finished.
“In several months, Baba” I answered.
“You’ve told my story, my son, and I am grateful.”
“Thank you Baba.” I was very pleased with his praise.
“But to tell my story,” he said, “you have to tell your story as well. It takes two hands,” he said, using a well-known Songhay proverb, “to secure a friendship.”
“Or to tell a story,” I said.
(Stoller, 2009: 161)

The Study.

In what ways are time and space important in psychotherapy? Little attention has been given to different kinds of time, the subjective experiences of time, and the rhythms generated in treatment. This raises questions for me. What is ‘psychotherapeutic time’, if it exists? In what ways is it comparable to healing experiences and perceptions in other socio-cultural contexts? How far does time relate to different concepts of personhood? How may that help understand time in a Western context? Little emphasis has been given to the intentional use of time or how time is ‘played’ with in treatment.

An important quality of my research rests on an ethnographic approach. I am, in this respect, my own ethnographer. This comes from my clinical psychotherapy practice and filmed non-therapeutic interviews. Whereas in anthropological research, interest often focuses on *other* socio-cultural worlds, where the researcher remains an outsider, even if a participant observer (c.f., Barfield, 1997: 348), my ethnography entails constantly holding in mind my direct involvement in the process. Even so, this is ‘ethnography as itself a process of interpretation’ (ibid: 264). What my descriptions most certainly are not, are ‘behaviourist, statistical, and formalist-linguistic approaches to human society’ (ibid: 263). Throughout my ethnography, via case vignettes, people’s stories that I tell, I am

concerned with others' stories, just as (for a time at least) I become part of those others' stories. While there are many descriptions of ethnography (and ethnology), which change with time, I take as my working description: 'ethnography is the systematic description of a single contemporary culture, often through ethnographic fieldwork' (ibid: 156). My 'contemporary culture' is the culture of psychotherapy as it has evolved in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. My 'fieldwork', psychodynamic and systemic (Jenkins, 2006), is my therapeutic practice in the consulting room, often lasting years with some patients and briefly with others, and my teaching and working experience across three continents.

My research considers perceptions and experiences of time in therapy. I suggest that in psychodynamic and systemic approaches to psychotherapy, embedded in practice but not always acknowledged, time influences what is emphasised and thus the patient's experience of the rhythmic patterns of change and flux, and that in these approaches time is somehow different. I further suggest that in psychotherapy and all healing there are kinds of time that are different to the mundane, which have a bearing on length of treatment, length of sessions, time between sessions, and the qualities of experience of therapy.

I explore this elusive material as a Western psychotherapist. Its elusiveness invites an unorthodox approach and in this research I hope to go beyond the orthodoxies that often characterise psychotherapeutic description (Jenkins, 1985). I adapt my methodology to make it more relevant to my subject as Corbin suggests and, '(o)ne must remember that each research project is different, and that each person ... infuses the method with some aspect of the self and of the project' (Corbin, 2009: 37). The personal element in my approach is part of its uniqueness. An important aspect is to ground my findings in my psychotherapeutic practice and ethnographic interview material.

I draw on forty years' experience in the family and systemic therapy field for this research. This began with my introduction to R.D. Laing's ideas about working

directly with families (Laing, 1971a) and his explorations of the transactional nature of symptoms in intimate relationships. My data is my current and recent clinical / non-clinical work, where I have increasingly been exploring the nature of time.

In *The Unreality of Time*, McTaggart sets out to show that anything existent cannot ‘possess characteristics of being in time’ (McTaggart, 1927: 23).² Philosophy demonstrates that what is so often taken for granted is, conceivably, quite otherwise. Through philosophy and anthropology I explore preconceptions about time in the work of Freud and Palazzoli. Philosophy is in many ways the precursor to psychology and psychotherapy. Anthropology, by contrast, provides a multi-layered, socio-cultural contextual base, from which to measure the validity of philosophical constructs and test their relevance for psychodynamic and systemic psychotherapy.

I look to the intellectual disciplines of Western philosophy and anthropology to avoid becoming self-referential and to provide alternative reference points to Western psychology. My thesis is epistemological and empirical, derived from my philosophical and anthropological approaches, as a basis for examining direct experience embodied in the case studies. Despite the different approaches inherent in philosophy (the world of abstraction) and anthropology (the social world which is observed and participated in) both are crucial reference points. Research into psychology (psychotherapy) in relation to philosophy and anthropology has a history, since ‘the divorce of philosophy and psychology is a relatively recent affair’ (Honderich, 2005: 265) and from some philosophical perspectives, once we have ‘mapped these folk conceptions [of ourselves embodied in language and everyday patterns of thought and actions] we turn to psychologists, anthropologists, and others for an explanation’ (ibid: 266).

² Marinoff (2000) discusses the value of McTaggart’s views on time in therapy. I return to this in chapter 4.

An important aspect of time is memory in its various guises. Memory is a recurring theme in my three chosen disciplines, just as in fiction. Proust's quasi-autobiographical account of recall, of something seemingly totally forgotten, in *Du Côté de Chez Swann*, partly captures the essence of what I will be exploring in my research:

‘Suddenly, the memory returned. This taste, it was of the little piece of madeleine biscuit that on Sunday mornings at Combray (because that was the day when I did not go out before time to go to mass), when I would go to greet her in her bedroom, my aunt Léonie would give me after having dipped it in her tea or lime infusion. The sight of the little Madeleine biscuit reminded me of nothing before the moment of tasting it’ (Proust, 1954: 57. Personal translation).³

Perhaps conscious awareness, having minds and memory, are necessary qualities for us to have a sense of ‘time’. ‘They are conscious of being conscious’ (Hall, 1989: 134). Proust describes how the taste for him, more powerful than the sight of the madeleine biscuit, instantly evoked childhood memories. At that moment the past becomes present, the passage of time collapses, and its subjective nature is apparent. Hall suggests that Proust, similar to other writers, uses ‘time as a tool to pin down consciousness’ (ibid: 134).⁴

A tripartite structure.

Given the complexity and sources of ideas, a linear structure of introduction, hypothesis, literature review, research methodology, research interviews, findings, and conclusion, in the more traditional approach to social science research, is not appropriate.

³ ‘Et tout d’un coup le souvenir m’est apparu. Ce goût, c’était celui du petit morceau de madeleine que le dimanche matin à Combray (parce que ce jour-là je ne sortais pas avant l’heure de la messe), quand j’allais lui dire bonjour dans sa chambre, ma tante Léonie m’offrait après l’avoir trempé dans son infusion de thé ou de tilleul. La vue de la petite madeleine ne m’avait rien rappelé avant que je n’y eusse goûté;’ (Proust, 1954: 57).

⁴ Paul Ricoeur discusses Proust’s *A la Recherche du Temps Perdu* from a textual perspective. This passage is, he argues, much more than the event recorded. The narrator asks how he could understand the experience, and suggests that ‘the question holds within it the trap of an overly brief reply, which would simply be that of involuntary memory’ (Ricoeur, 1985: 130-52). The account is more complex, and my purpose in quoting the passage is to underscore the power of seemingly forgotten memory that, when re-evoked, annuls the time between the chronological event and the moment of its recovery.

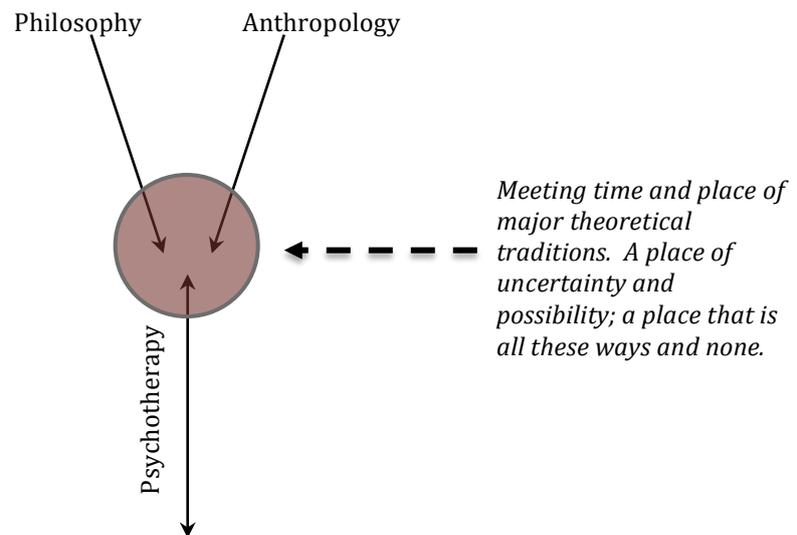


Figure I:1 Meeting of the three ways.

I visualise the structure and evolution of the thesis more as a ‘meeting of three ways’ (Figure I:1), like the meeting of the three roads from Delphi, Daulis, and Thebes (Sophocles, 1984). Depending on where one stands, it is ‘a place of divergence or convergence. So it’s a matter of which way you happen to be travelling, a widening of choice, or a narrowing. From the gods’ perspective all ways are the same and all roads will be travelled in the end. It’s only a matter of time’ (Vickers, 2007: 29-30).

A three-way meeting point can be uncertain territory, where unusual connections develop. It is a place for decision. Choosing one option precludes, at least temporarily, the alternative(s). Choice means re-ordering decisions, when the simultaneous gives way to the sequential, and time enters. Such a meeting point is all those ways and none, like a place that is almost a non-place (Augé, 1995).

Since we are living in an increasingly cross-cultural globalised society it is essential to understand how other cultures construct their worlds. There are many ways in which (the meaning / importance of) time can lead to serious misunderstandings (Hall, 1989; Levine, 2006). Personal consequences of such inter-cultural misunderstandings are highlighted in a story of the Hmong, a displaced people living as a community in America (Fadiman, 1998), and

emphasised by the impact of migration on refugees (Losi, 2006). Just as this is significant at a macro-cultural level, similarly it is at the micro intimate level of Western psychotherapy.

Ethical considerations:

A unique aspect of my work is access to my clinical case material that is informed by a range of therapeutic models (Jenkins, 1985, 1986a, 2006, 2008). Examples are taken from my current and recent clinical practice and public demonstration interviews. For this I draw on: contemporaneous written notes or filmed material of families / couples / individuals; filmed material of non-treatment families / couples made in the public domain; psychotherapeutic material I have made for public television. In all instances, with the exception of the Mocan family (chapter 5) who requested that their names be used, and public TV material, which meets the criteria of being 'in the public domain' (ESRC: 10), all identifying information, including names and personal background, has been changed or removed to ensure confidentiality. All clinical material has been anonymised, and consents for teaching and research were obtained from patients at the appropriate time in line with the Research Ethics Framework (ESRC), and the Code of Ethics and Practice (AFT, 2000), having explained 'the difference between research and therapy ... to all concerned, [ensuring] that the therapeutic process and therapist-client relationship are not adversely affected by any research involved' (AFT, 2000: para. 21). Throughout, I hold in mind the ethical and professional issues arising from the case material to ensure that patient confidentiality and my professional practice are not compromised (AFT, 2000).

The thesis.

In my thesis I reflect the chronological development of ideas discussed by relevant scholars when it is appropriate, but I also follow themes of convergence or divergence where they arise, so as not to lose the overall thread. Each of the three disciplines has its own tempo, and each must be presented in ways that respect their traditions. In particular, I draw heavily on case vignettes. These importantly are stories that reflect the lives of people in distress and in transition.

They are part of my ethnography, just as the author, I am also part of their ethnography, what Stoller says about ‘dialogical ethnographies ... in which the presence of the ethnographer ... was reflexively acknowledged’ (Stoller, 2009: 156). Just as the therapist often bridges different polarities in healing, so I attempt to bridge different disciplines and different ways of thinking, without losing what is unique and essential. And while each chapter explores different aspects of my research question, the final discussion is reserved for chapter 9. Thus, the broad remit of each chapter is as follows.

The primary aim in chapter 1 is to identify the topic of my dissertation, - the uniqueness of exploring time in psychodynamic and systemic models of psychotherapy in relation to philosophy and anthropology, - and to demonstrate its relevance. I quote from journalism and fiction to indicate a much wider field of enquiry than I can undertake. I also refer briefly to theoretical physics and time, to acknowledge its importance and provide a background to my research, but decided that this is too vast a subject to do it any justice within the length constraints of my thesis.

Chapter 2 illustrates similarities and differences of psychodynamic and systemic psychotherapy using Freud and Palazzoli’s ideas about time. Different phenomena of ‘no time’ as in the Unconscious, time compression in ‘the transference’, and the ‘time of the system’ (ts) are discussed. This lays the foundation for my subsequent inquiries.

In chapter 3 I examine ‘time’ from the early Greeks and St. Augustine, and different attempts to describe time and its ‘components’. The significance of the ‘instant’ or moment, the nature of ‘present’, and time as number, are analysed with preliminary thoughts about their relevance to change in psychotherapy.

In chapter 4 I mainly explore more recent developments in philosophy, influenced by phenomenological and existential thinking from the twentieth century on. Phenomenology appears to bring description closer to events as experienced,

while existentialism, broadly speaking, opens up reflections on meaning in human existence. Both aspects touch important elements in Western psychotherapy. A common experience in therapy of being simultaneously in two places or times is considered through philosophical lenses.

The body of chapter 5 is an ethnographic study based on an interview with a Romanian family. This chapter acts as a bridge between two scholarly disciplines, philosophy and anthropology. It emphasises the importance of history, politics, religious faith, gender, socio-cultural context; of different kinds of memory, transgenerational patterns (over time), and enduring belief systems. It identifies varieties of time, how articulating them offers a sense of coherence, and differentiates kinds of memory. It questions the place of philosophical concepts, and posits time's centrality in giving sense in human life.

Chapter 6 follows naturally from the Romanian family interview, to place Western time in a broader framework. The importance of a socio-cultural perspective is vividly exemplified in the work of the anthropologists I have selected. Anthropological descriptions are supported by the story of Saul and Yael, where I develop a socio-cultural story of time. The ethnography provides a canvas for the role and place of the healer or therapist. Memory and time are focused on more psychotherapeutically.

Taking time in two cultures, the Balinese and the Sora, chapter 7 demonstrates how different cultural 'models' can expand Western perceptions of time. Sora traditions exemplify time beyond the grave through dialogues with the dead. This contrasts with much Western (Freudian) thinking about loss and time, with a focus from present to past. I suggest that such socio-cultural examples expand how we work with time in psychotherapy.

Chapter 8 examines how the structures of ritual and rites of passage fit a psychotherapy framework. It draws together themes that have appeared throughout this thesis, such as rhythm, place of the body, time. In particular, I

explore the nature of the liminal being betwixt and between, aspects of ritual time, and their relevance to therapy.

In chapter 9, *Ending at the Beginning*, I draw together the material of my research and return to my question. Inevitably it is a mixture of clarity indicating where philosophy and anthropology add significantly to understanding time in psychodynamic and systemic psychotherapy models, and ambiguity from these scholarly contributions.

My findings raise other questions for the future of psychotherapy in an increasingly globalised world. The textual or visual internet is one such development in treatment. Already, my use of Skype for clients and supervisees in the UK and overseas, possibly leading to greater demands for immediate change or other kinds of time-compressing / time-collapsing phenomena, are symptomatic of Western, highly pressured, urbanised living. Thus, in the future, we may experience different kinds of immediacy of the 'moment' or 'instant', reflecting an acceleration of time disconnected from meaningful social contexts, leading to other kinds of malaise, potentially a world of increasing 'non places' (Augé, 1995).

Chapter 1.

Setting the scene.

‘The past isn’t dead and buried. In fact it isn’t even past.’
(William Faulkner, *Requiem for a Nun*, quoted by Barack Obama,
18th March 2008)

‘As far as we are concerned, events before the big bang can have no consequences, so they should not form part of a scientific model of the universe. We should therefore cut them out of the model and say that time had a beginning at the big bang’
(Hawking, 1990: 46).

Introduction and aims.

This chapter introduces the uniqueness of exploring and comparing the place of time in two models of psychotherapy by reference to selected philosophical and anthropological perspectives. The question that informs this is:

Do philosophical and socio-cultural descriptions of time contribute to understanding the different experiences of time and its emergent qualities in psychotherapy, with particular reference to psychodynamic psychotherapy (Sigmund Freud) and Milan Systemic psychotherapy (Mara Selvini Palazzoli), and if so, in what ways?

As an overview I touch here on the main areas of my thesis, pinpoint certain themes, and establish the style of my ethnography, which is derived primarily from clinical case vignettes and non-clinical material. The chapters that follow each have their specific focus in the overall context of this chapter.

Psychology developed from philosophical endeavours to understand the mind and explain how we know that we know. Psychotherapy evolved from both disciplines. Psychology has made time a subject of study:

‘Time is one of the continuing, compelling and universal experiences of our lives, ... All our perceptual, intellectual and emotional experiences are intertwined with time. We continually feel time passing but where does it

come from? We continually experience it but we cannot taste it, see it, smell it, hear it, or touch it. How, then, do we experience time? What do we use to experience it?' (Ornstein, 1969: 15).

Ornstein conducted a number of experiments to discover how we experience time, although '(t)here is no point of departure for a scientific analysis of time experience' (ibid: 17). He wanted to understand the 'mechanism or class of mechanisms which underlie time experience, particularly that of duration' (ibid: 19).

Reference to time is often made in the professional literature as an aspect of therapy practice, but with little critical examination of its nature. Little scholarly contribution drawing systematically on philosophy and anthropology has been made that takes time as the organising principle. Systemic clinicians Boscolo and Bertrando (1993) are an exception.⁵ Practitioners from different systemic approaches (de Shazer, 1985; Penn, 1985; Seikkula et al., 2003) focus on the future, and Tomm (1987a, b, 1988) describes different kinds of temporal circular questions. Mann (1973) and Molnos (1995) address the question differently, describing 'time-limited' therapy. Others consider time in analytic psychotherapy (Ellis, 2008; Fiorini and Canestri, 2009; Perelberg, 2007a, b). Green (2002) explores time in psychoanalysis. Bruner (1986) discusses our understanding of mind. Stern (1998) describes the development of the self, a cumulative process where past gains remain while new ones are added, and he examines the meaning of 'the present moment' in clinical work and everyday life (Stern, 2004). Cooper and Erickson (2006) explore the active manipulation of time distortion in hypnosis. Jenkins (2007) reflects on the 'fragmented time' of the Alzheimer's patient, or what psychoanalytically Green (2002) might describe as 'shattered time'.

⁵ *The Times of Time* (Boscolo and Bertrando, 1993) focuses entirely on the place of time in systemic psychotherapy. However, it is primarily a book for clinicians where the majority of chapters are case studies. References to philosophical and anthropological texts are not rigorously systematic.

Structure.

I begin with transcripts from a non-therapy family interview to indicate how a temporal focus changes the picture. I link these thoughts to a clinical account, which sets a context for considering how two different schools of therapy influence and are influenced by different understandings of time. Initial insights from philosophy and anthropology follow. Finally, I acknowledge the importance of physics in describing time and say why this is not given a significant role in my research.

In my Introduction I described a dual structure of convergence/divergence to my thesis, ‘where three ways meet’. The following example gives substance to my method and introduces my ethnography. This begins my exploration of the place of time in human relationships and, ultimately, in psychotherapy.

Case vignette: Smith family.

I interviewed the Smith family for a BBC TV programme ⁶ on families with adolescent children. They are, Chris and Nina, (both aged 42), Polly (14) and Rebecca (12). Chris works in personnel, and Nina is an NCT teacher. The parents have been married for nineteen years. See Figure 1:1.

⁶ Help Yourself series, BBC 1, 23 March 1992. The length of the whole interview was 19’ 20”.

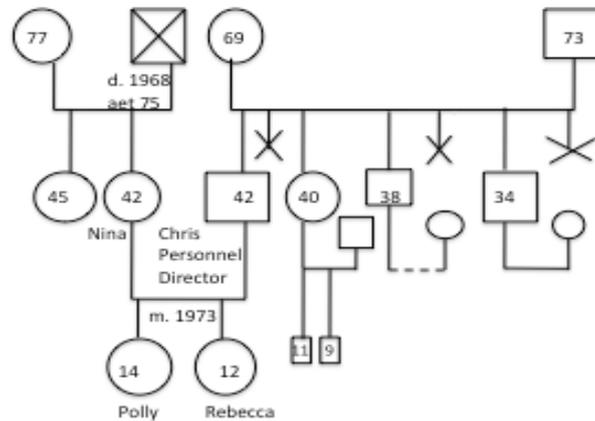


Figure 1:1. Smith family genogram.

A time framework alters this family’s experience. Rather than privileging gender, socio-cultural background, or life and work demands, a different perspective is achieved once time becomes an important factor.

We may think about time inter- and trans-generationally (Figure 1:1). The genogram structure, based on kinship charts in anthropology, was developed by Murray Bowen (Bowen, 1978), and later developed by other clinicians (Jenkins, 2006; Lieberman 1979a, b, c; McGoldrick and Gerson, 1989; Paul and Paul, 1982). It presents historical and contemporary time simultaneously, helping connect current and earlier patterns. The genogram can help identify discontinuities due to changing transgenerational circumstances, or the impact of religio-socio-political-economic events. We later consider inter- / trans-generational time for a Romanian family after the 1989 revolution (chapter 5).

The transcripts of the interview demonstrate the impact of time on intra-familial relationships, changing parental relationships and child-parent alliances over time, and the effects of the time lapse in sharing important information. They

demonstrate the time of the interview, (a facet of the ‘time of the system’, Palazzoli et al., 1978, chapter 2), the rhythm of interaction between family members, and with the interviewer. Even in a single encounter, the intersecting rhythms of spontaneous interpersonal connecting become apparent. Rhythm introduces pattern, a construct of the mind, with varying durations of sequencing. These are part of micro- and macro-socio-cultural contexts of time (Hall, 1989). I explore in later chapters, the varying rhythms of treatment over time.

The first excerpt is the start of the interview.

Excerpt 1.

- HJ “If one of the girls were going to have some kind of worry, of any kind, who would first notice it in the family?”
- Nina “Well, possibly me, because I’m with them more. I think Chris only sees them, to get a lot of time with them, at weekends. So I’d be picking things up on a day-by-day basis.”
- HJ “You’d be more likely to pick up. Do you have a sense who out of your daughters would be more likely to have worries about growing up, about adolescence, about school?”
- Nina “They’ve got very different personalities. So, in some ways I suppose, in some ways because Polly’s the quieter, and of course also a bit older, she’s the older one. Perhaps I’m more aware, I’m more tuned in to the fact that perhaps she’d have more worries that she’d want to talk about, ...”
- HJ “You’d be more tuned in to Polly because she’s the older one and quieter one?”
- Nina “Yes, but I think I’m aware of the danger that because she’s the older one, it doesn’t necessarily mean the younger one, who is more chatty, doesn’t have things she wants to say, and doesn’t have things she’s worried about.”
- HJ “If you, Polly, were going to show, ... let your mother know first, that you were worried about something, what would be a good way of letting her know you had something on your mind?”

Nina describes why she would be more likely to notice any worries, in terms of the time she spends with them compared to Chris. Her relationship is built on a continuous narrative day-to-day basis; Chris’ is more episodic. While gender and other aspects play an important part, I am particularly interested here in how family members construct their time worlds.

Of the two children, Nina tells us that Polly would be more likely to speak; “she’s the older one”. Time plays a part in terms of her age, as well as her quieter temperament. Nina highlights the difference in the two children and their different age related concerns.

The second excerpt, from the middle of the interview, introduces different elements, as they discuss worries and family relationships.

Excerpt 2.

- HJ “Who would Rebecca go to? What kinds of things would worry you? ... “Would you (*Rebecca*) have a different way of telling your mother or father you were worried?”
- Rebecca “Yes, I’d go to my mum. I wouldn’t mind if Polly were there because she’s older and she understands, because she’s been through it as well. ... So she might be embarrassed to speak in front of me, but I wouldn’t be embarrassed in front of her.”
- HJ “Yes, she’s the older one in the family. She started off as an only child, and you’ve always been one of two.”
- Rebecca “Yes.”
- HJ “What kinds of things might worry you, ‘cos you’re twelve?”
- Rebecca “Yes. Well, friends and school relationships, ...”
- Polly “But you know, as a rule, we’re pretty close to our parents, ...”
- Chris “On the other hand, sometimes you’ve wanted to create a bit more distance, haven’t you? Do you remember, I always used to want to walk you to the school bus, and you said: ‘Well, look. It’s not really the done thing for parents to walk their children to the bus any more?’”

Rebecca defines relationships in terms of ages – a way to mark moments in time and time passing – and different developmental stages. This is about her older sister (who comes before her, and therefore she, Rebecca, comes ‘after’) having been through such difficulties. I confirm her age (twelve) and therefore her ‘chronos time’. Chris introduces an interesting element about emotional distance defined through physical and emotional space (not walking together to the school bus) linked to age as developmental time of early adolescence.

Excerpt 2, continued.

- Nina “Yes, but that was interesting, because Polly spoke to me first, because she didn’t

want to hurt Chris, (*nervous laugh*) ...

- HJ "So she went through you?"
- Nina "Yes, she spoke about it, but I've forgotten, it was about a year on. It was just a convenient thing because they were going in the same direction, at the same time in the morning, and err, Polly came to me and said did I think Chris would mind."
- HJ "What do you think Polly worried about speaking to you first of all in saying 'Come on Dad, I'm a big girl now. I don't want to walk to the bus with you now'?"
- Chris "Perhaps just uncertainty about how I would react."
- HJ "Do you have any fantasies or ideas about how she thought you might have reacted, that she might not have known how to handle?"
- Chris "No, no. Just a certain natural nervousness. But then, ..."
- Nina "I just wondered whether you felt that his little girl didn't need him any more?"
- HJ "That's quite important. You're in the middle between being a little girl and a young woman, and he might feel that his, err ..., days were numbered, being a father who looks after you in that way. Do you think he might have felt a bit rejected?"
- Polly "Yes, that was what I was worried about. I didn't want to hurt his feelings by saying I was growing out of you in a way."

Nina discloses for the first time that Polly had spoken to her a year before about how to tell Chris. Fear of upsetting him delayed the conversation by a year. I emphasise another dilemma that, with time's passing, Chris' role as caretaking parent was changing, as were her needs for him. Nina confirms this: "I just wondered whether you felt that his little girl didn't need him any more?" This underlines the transformative nature of developmental changes over time. Polly is no longer a little girl as Chris enters middle age.

Philosophers wrestle with the question of time, and for this research it is important to examine whether philosophy can aid our better understanding of it in psychotherapy. It may be that the philosophical language of time refers to a different kind of time. As daughters, Polly and Rebecca share their present (or now) but Polly's is an older (later in her life) present/now, and Rebecca's is a younger (earlier in her life) present/now. Polly's present fourteen is Rebecca's present twelve. Polly came before / earlier than Rebecca, who came after / later;

Polly's twelfth birthday occurred two years before Rebecca's, whose fourteenth birthday will happen (two years) after Polly's. In the same vein, Chris and Nina are much later in their lives than their daughters, preceding them in a time sequence. How we conceptualise the nature of now, or the present, and its relation to the past and future, is important in terms of understanding change.

In her dilemma over telling her father of her embarrassment, Polly speaks to Nina earlier before eventually speaking to Chris. During this period there is a time (duration) when Nina knows Polly feels unable to speak to her father. During that period, there are different kinds of relationship. Nina's and Chris' experience of their daughter is different. When Chris realises how long Nina knew about Polly's difficulty before he does, this creates a re-evaluation for him of the nature of his relationship with Polly, possibly with Nina, and the Nina-Polly relationship. At this point I am describing time in linear, sequential terms, but this is not the only kind of time.

In the filmed programme discussion with the family it became clear that the interview had created a novel experience. They experienced a moment out of ordinary time similar to 'this queer creature, the instant ... being in no time at all' (Plato, 1997: 388) that I examine in chapter 3. Rebecca said: "... I think we said things that we wouldn't really say if we were just a family. We wouldn't go into such detail and it was quite good discussing it so we sort of knew each other's feelings". The shared belief that each member knew how the others felt was challenged in that moment.

The programme discussion embodies layers of time. The family and I discuss the interview with the programme presenter, which is filmed at a different time and studio, later to be edited.⁷ We are filmed in that discussion watching excerpts of the previously filmed family interview, as is the subsequent discussion about the

⁷ In bringing up film, and filming of film, other time dimensions are introduced. This highlights the complexity of any discussion of time. I reflect in more detail on this phenomenon in chapters 5 and 9.

interview. Multiple layers of time, memory, and emotion, are in play. Each layer affects and is recursively affected by the others. Temporal linearity and circularity are like the ripples and cross currents of a pebble thrown into a pond.

A further facet of time was introduced when a month after the interview, and before the programme was broadcast, Nina wrote on behalf of the family. She summed up: “I think it is really fascinating to see how it’s stimulated our thoughts about each other and clearly it was more powerful than we even realised at the time”. Does part of the ‘power’ lie in the creation of a different kind of time and space, where the unspoken and the not-(yet)-conscious become available? Her letter occupies another time, from a different place, in another medium. It brings another layer to the story.

Other themes are embedded in these excerpts. They include: the family’s ways of dealing with conflict, power, and gender when Rebecca describes Chris “having power over mummy, it’s bit sexist, because she’s a woman and he’s a man”. Parental and couple boundaries, relationship alliances and coalitions, are revealed. We would acquire different information by introducing a temporal socio-cultural perspective on the physical, psycho-sexual, educational development for the two girls, raised in a white middle class family in south London, whose parents are in early middle age, married for nineteen years, with three of their parents still alive.

First considerations: time in psychotherapy.

In the Smith family interview I discussed some changes in rhythm and pattern when viewing relationships through the lens of time. I now give a brief clinical example.

Case vignette: Susan.

Susan’s story is set in the context of childhood psycho-sexual trauma, its impact on her marriage, sexuality, and sense of self. She is recently married, in her mid 30s. When seen in couples therapy she had talked about her father sexually abusing her. Following careful preparation, she had a separate session with her

father. During that encounter Susan asked: “When was the last time you sexually abused me?” He replied immediately: “When you were thirteen”. She had no recall and asked him when and where that was. He described the exact time and place. Having collected her from a French school trip, he had stopped the car in a lay-by and assaulted her sexually. Susan had no recall and seemed confused. In the next session I reminded her that she had once said she could not let her husband, or any man, drive with her in the passenger seat. The ‘memory’ of that event was present without ‘knowing it’ or actively recalling what she was ‘remembering’ until that moment.

Different therapy models indicate how to work with such ‘material’. In psychodynamic practice, the therapist works with the patient in an exclusive relationship. As this developed and strengthened, Susan might begin to feel anxious or panicky as the therapist increasingly ‘gets alongside’ her.⁸ The therapist would look to link that feeling in the consulting room with other times and events when she had felt anxious or panicky, eventually making an interpretation that this related in some way to an important earlier relationship in her life, perhaps with her father (c.f., Malan, 1979). Ultimately the expectation would be that she (re-)discovered the event for herself.

In a systemic approach Susan was offered the opportunity to work directly with the person who abused her. Her encounter took place in therapy, in the present with the abusing parent. The therapist had a role in that meeting and in the subsequent session as a bridge between Susan’s two temporal and physical worlds. This was more like a guide than a psychological archaeologist exploring the unconscious (Faulks, 2006; Freud, 1915: Vol. XIV). There must be trust, and to that extent transference to the therapist as a safe person or ‘good object’ in Object Relations terms is paramount. But in systemic practice the emphasis is not on the patient experiencing the therapist and attributing to him and the psychotherapeutic environment the abusive experiences of her childhood that then need to be worked on, ultimately to dissolve the transference as an integral part of

⁸ The play on words is intentional.

healing in the way Freud suggests (Freud, 1917: Vol. XVI: Lecture XXVIII, 453-454).

The two approaches suggest different beliefs about time and change, the length of treatment, and frequency of sessions. I will suggest that in both models there is a re-inserted time of the therapy that is qualitatively different to time in everyday life. It may be the therapeutic transference with the therapist's conscious use of self, or implicitly held by the therapist to enable change. This leaves the question whether philosophical and anthropological perspectives add to our current understanding of time in psychotherapy. Psychodynamic and systemic approaches have many differences that it would be wrong to blur. Despite this, I take the position that it is more helpful to view difference as representing complementary views and not competing realities. Systemic therapists⁹ intervene mainly in what has been internalised by family members as their psychological make-up.

‘The site of action of family therapy interventions is thus the same as that of psychoanalytic psychotherapy but whereas psychoanalytic psychotherapy is directed towards the point at which the internal world is being externalised, family therapy is directed towards the point at which the external world is becoming internalised’ (Dare, 1981: 283).

I will now consider briefly the standpoints of Freud and Palazzoli in the context of Susan, and then introduce the basis of philosophical and anthropological approaches to this material.

Freud and Palazzoli.

Freud and Palazzoli speak of systems, intrapsychic or interpersonal. These systems have their own rhythms and time patterns. They are conceptualised differently. In relational terms, we might go so far as to suggest that individuals assume relational roles with each other that could be described in intrapsychic

⁹ Until the 1990s it was more usual to refer to ‘family therapy’, with the disadvantage that this emphasised a treatment population rather than a way of thinking and practising.

terms as the super-ego, ego, or id (c.f., Freud, 1923: Vol. XIX, *The Ego and the Id*).¹⁰

An important time debate in psychotherapy concerns treatment duration. Long-term and frequent contact is frequently the norm in psychoanalysis. This fits with beliefs about change and the importance of the therapeutic alliance. An alternative view is put forward for the Milan Systemic model that greater intensity can be achieved by less frequent sessions at longer intervals in between. This introduces questions about models of therapy, the nature of change, timing of sessions, and the spaces in between. It raises questions about a ‘different kind of time’ for change to occur, about boundaries, and the role of the therapist. Some of this was implicitly present in Susan’s story.

Philosophy: first thoughts.

By introducing philosophy as a major plank of my work, there is a risk of becoming lost in the abstract, and that describing time normatively does not touch the extreme experiences of many patients in acute distress. This is part of the challenge and unique aspect of my research.

In *Parmenides*, Plato (1997) proposes a dilemma whether the instant between two other things (motion and rest) is in time or out of time, and whether something can exist out of time. Perhaps the ‘instant’ is a different kind of time that enables change. These are quite abstract ideas.

Aristotle (1999) proposes a different perspective about time and number, and the place of before and after. For Susan it was not a question of before and after. She had no active recollection of the last time her father abused her and had no ‘number’ to hold onto.

¹⁰ Freud changed his ideas about the nature of the Unconscious and its structure during his career. I focus mainly on his views about time, which changed little in his career.

A well-known phenomenon in therapy is of sequential events (earlier, later) experienced simultaneously. Kant (2003), as do other philosophers, suggests that this is not possible. Sequencing may be a consequence of Western thinking not shared by other cultures and especially by patients locked into their personal worlds. There may be no narrative, only the present moment, or a present of past, a present of present and a present of future things (Augustine, 1961).

The task of psychotherapy would appear quite different to the philosophical project. Kant describes time as linear and this may partly coincide with Freud's ideas, but not with a therapeutic model of circular causality, nor with many cultural perspectives described by anthropologists. However, Kant says time does not exist independently but is of the mind: 'Time is nothing but the form of inner sense, that is, of the intuition of ourselves and of our inner state' (Kant, 2003: 77). Our Western culturally determined descriptions of mind as abstractions bounded by the brain influence our views about time. The Smith family members had a view about time and the timing of sharing information. In the interview they began to see some of the consequences of how they organised time.

Phenomenology in philosophy (Heidegger, 1962, 1985; Husserl, 1991) offers ideas that invite us to engage with the 'thinglyness' of the thing and the thickness of the present. Existentialists, close allies of phenomenologists, also challenge ideas about different qualities of time. Paul Ricoeur (1980, 2000) suggests ideas about time relating directly to psychotherapy. Sartre captures a little of the patient's despair and losing sense of time through the mouth of his main character, Roquentin, in *La Nausée*.

'Here is what I think happens: suddenly one feels that time is slipping away, that each instant leads to another, this one to another, and so on; that each instant destroys itself, that it isn't worth the trouble to try and hold onto it, etc. And then one attributes this property of time to events that seem to be *in* the instants; what belongs to the form, is attributed to what is in it. Briefly, this famous flowing of time, people talk a lot about it, but it is hardly there.' (Sartre, 1938: 84. Personal translation).¹¹

¹¹ 'Voilà, je pense ce qui se passe: brusquement on sent que le temps s'écoule, que chaque instant conduit à un autre instant, celui-ci à un autre et ainsi de suite; que chaque instant s'anéantit, que ce

If only the instant exists, we are without narrative, and philosophy may not add to our understanding of time. If there is only now, we need to consider psychotherapy and time anew, and embrace the episodic world of Strawson (2005) or Roquentin's despair. Whichever direction is chosen, the proposition that time does not exist (Barbour, 2000) has consequences for psychotherapy.

Anthropology: first thoughts.

It is a common misperception that we see the same as others, or share the same realities. Our models, our cultural lenses, influence our experience of the world. My reality is only that, my reality. This is central to anthropological scholarship.

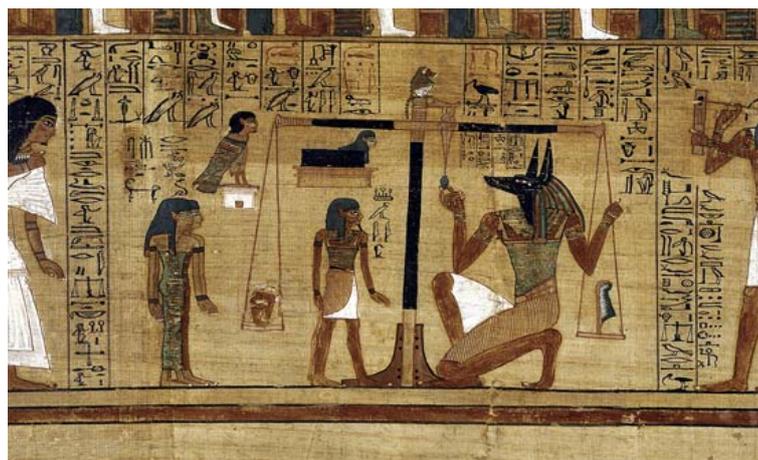


Plate 1:1. Jackal-headed god, Anubis, weighs a dead person's heart. The British Museum/Heritage-Images. <http://student.britannica.com/eb/art-100394>.

Egyptian painting (Plate 1:1) typically suggests a kind of timelessness. Feet and bodies are represented flat, sideways on, and lack perspective to Western eyes. Perspective in painting suggests distance in Western art. Distance represents space and time, but this image without formal perspective has no representational

n'est pas la peine d'essayer de le retenir, etc. Et alors on attribue cette propriété aux événements qui vous apparaissent *dans* les instants; ce qui appartient à la forme, on le reporte sur le contenu. En somme, ce fameux écoulement du temps, on en parle beaucoup, mais on ne le voit guère' (Sartre, 1938: 84).

distance or implied time. The jackal-headed god of embalming, Anubis ¹² weighs the hearts of the dead in preparation for the journey through the underworld. Embalming is a perfect example of human endeavour to preserve timelessly the corruptible body and eternal soul of the deceased. The absence of perspective ‘freezes’ time within this frame.

Against the background of this cultural ‘timeless’ image I reflect whether cultural perceptions of time can enhance understanding time in psychotherapy. A particular focus of my thesis will be isomorphic aspects of time in ritual, psychotherapy as ritual, and ritual in psychotherapy.

Emile Durkheim emphasises the social-collective nature of human experience which he terms ‘social time, ... and is itself a kind of social institution’ (Durkheim, 2001: 12). He describes kinds of time that may also relate to time qualities in therapy. If different kinds of time exist, we should consider how the intimate time of psychotherapy may differ from a more fluid social time. The rich variety of time and its place in traditional healing rituals may cross cultural boundaries for Western healing.

Hubert’s interest in time’s representation in religion and magic drew him to consider different qualities of time’s effects on participants in terms of ‘the theoretical separation of time and space ... reconciled with the infinitude and immutability of the “sacred”, in which rites and mythical events take place too’ (Hubert, 1999: 43). If time differs qualitatively in religious or magical contexts, we should consider whether, and if so how, this is true for psychotherapy. ‘The examination of any ritual will suffice to show that rites vary by reason of the circumstances of time’ (ibid: 45). If time is an essential aspect of healing, invested with rhythms that reflect the life of the culture, a heightened awareness may help the Western healer in her/his work. Nina reflected in her letter that something more powerful than they had realised at the time must have happened.

¹² Also called Anpu or Anup.

Perhaps in the moment of the interview their experiences of time were altered, and even were different for each family member.

An advantage of exploring cultural differences is the opportunity to see the familiar with new eyes, such as the account of Sinhalese exorcism and transition rites (chapter 8), ‘not only to mark change of identity but actively to transform one identity into another’ (Kapferer, 1983: 179). Psychotherapy is performative and transformative. Just as ‘exorcists are concerned to construct in ritual that which they aim to transform’ (ibid: 181), so in psychoanalysis the problematic situation is re-created in order to facilitate its ultimate transformation. The shaman or healer necessarily steps outside mundane structures and time.

Physics.

Physics is a complex subject and covers too wide a scope for my thesis. It essentially departs from my main focus, being more abstract and not involving human nature or psychotherapy. It provides the big picture. Nonetheless, there are aspects that coincide more directly with human experience with relevance to a discussion about therapy and time. I will therefore summarise four particular physicists, merely for their important contribution to the main philosophical and anthropological material that will follow as the body of my research: Newton, Einstein, Hawking, and Barbour.

Isaac Newton (1642-1727) described the fixed nature of time: ‘Absolute, true, and mathematical time, in and of itself and of its own nature, without reference to anything external, flows uniformly’.¹³ He describes an idealised view of mathematical motion, where motion brings change in position, and change is a measure of time. Newtonian mechanics offers a deterministic view of the world: ‘if you know the state of a system at some particular moment, you can, in principle, predict the state of the system at some arbitrary time in the future’

¹³ Cohen, I. B., and Whitman, A., (1999) *Isaac Newton – The Principia: A New Translation*. Berkeley. University of California Press. 408. In: Falk, D., (2009) *In Search of Time*. London. National Maritime Museum. 129.

(Falk, 2009: 136), which meant '(t)ime was completely separate from and independent of space' (Hawking, 1990: 18). In a Newtonian universe, time existed before anything else; 'the zero point of time is given no part to play' (Minkowski, 1923: 75). Experience of time described by people in distress appears to challenge Newtonian time. Time present and past are not the same for all of the Smith family members. In the consulting room, the extent that Susan's past is symbolically present that she is unable to name, was phenomenologically replayed in her inability to be a front seat car passenger with a male driver.

A problematic idea is that time flows and that it flows uniformly, unaffected by objects in its environment. What 'controls' rate of flow, and what is time in relation to? In the West at the start of the twentieth century, a three-dimensional world is reunited with time:

'That we have not been accustomed to regard the world in this sense as a four-dimensional continuum is due to the fact that in physics, before the advent of the theory of relativity, time played a different and more independent role, as compared with the space co-ordinates. It is for this reason that we have been in the habit of treating time as an independent continuum' (Einstein, 1961: 62).

Einstein's theories of special and general relativity challenge Newtonian time independent of external influence, although classical mechanics retains 'a considerable measure of "truth", since it supplies us with the actual motions of the heavenly bodies with a delicacy of detail little short of wonderful' (ibid: 16-17).

Our experience of time is Newtonian. It intuitively allows us to calculate a definite past if we have complete data about the present. However: 'Quantum physics tells us that no matter how thorough our observation of the present, the (unobserved) past, like the future, is indefinite and exists only as a spectrum of possibilities' (Hawking and Mlodinow. 2010: 82). The old certainties of reason and the Enlightenment no longer serve. 'We do not "see" time, just as we do not see space. What we perceive are *events* in time, and objects in space' (Falk, 2009: 131), for nobody has 'ever noticed a place except at a time, or a time except at a place' (Minkowski, 1923: 76). In a world of relativity each element provides a

reference point relative to the other, and the act of observing affects what is observed. '(T)he measurement of the time taken, like the measurement of the distance covered, depends on the observer doing the measuring' (Hawking and Mlodinow, 2010: 97).

Einstein asserted that the speed of light - 300,000 km per second - is unaffected by the speed or direction of the moving body from which it is measured: 'the speed of light is ... at a specific speed, c ' (Falk, 2009: 159). Therefore 'in order for the speed of light to be constant, *time and space must be relative* (ibid: 160). Events take place in a four-dimensional framework, three dimensions of space, plus time. Events cannot be separated in time and space. 'In space-time, time is no longer separate from the three dimensions of space ... the direction of time (varies) depending on the speed of the observer' (Hawking and Mlodinow, 2010: 99-100). I examine whether the experienced reality of this has relevance for psychotherapy.

The notion of simultaneity is of interest. Einstein gives the example of a train travelling at constant velocity in relation to the embankment:

'Events are simultaneous with reference to the embankment but not simultaneous with respect to the train, and *vice versa* (relativity of simultaneity). Every reference-body (co-ordinate system) has its own particular time; unless we are told the reference-body to which the statement of time refers, there is no meaning in a statement of the time of an event' (Einstein, 1961: 30-31).

What may be simultaneous for one person is not necessarily simultaneous for another. Events appear simultaneous from a particular frame of reference; my 'now' is not necessarily your 'now', (Barbour, 2000; Falk, 2004, 2009; Feynman, 1998; Priestley, 1964). The idea of different simultaneous 'nows' has relevance for psychotherapy. Apparently shared experience may be quite different where 'time' is not the same time, or kind of time, for everyone.

'(T)he discovery that the speed of light appeared the same to every observer, no matter how he was moving, led to the theory of relativity – and in that one had to abandon the idea that there was a unique absolute

time. ... Thus time became a more personal concept, relative to the observer who measured it' (Hawking, 1990: 143).

In astronomy we have a fascinating example of seeing now an event that occurred '600 million years after all matter was created in the Big Bang 13.7 billion years ago' (Connor, 2010b: 17), and to observe this galaxy, UDFy-38135539, which may already have disappeared or become part of other clusters. The Planck satellite has scanned the whole sky to create 'a relic map of the universe from the beginning of time' (Connor, 2010a: 7).

The psychological effects of trauma or intense experience may produce an 'afterglow' similar to the 'microwave background radiation' (ibid: 7) that remains long after the event in astronomical terms, or has even physically disappeared.¹⁴ If it is possible to map this strange truth, and the universe obeys the same laws, there can be little argument against such an isomorphic process at the personal level.

If my world and my time are not your world and time, how can we engage in any meaningful encounter in psychological treatment? What appears to take place simultaneously in the subjective worlds of patient and psychotherapist may be an illusion, and if so, the psychotherapist needs to be aware of and link these differently timed universes, and facilitate a rhythm that enables change.

A question that I will return to is how to differentiate past, present, and future. The second law of thermodynamics states that 'in any closed system disorder, or entropy, always increases with time' (Hawking, 1990: 144). This allows us to distinguish between past and future, 'giving a direction to time' (ibid: 145). Hawking describes three arrows of time; the *thermodynamic* arrow of time of increasing entropy; the *psychological* arrow of time of a remembered past, but not the future; the *cosmological* arrow of time, 'the direction in which the universe is expanding rather than contracting' (ibid: 145). The *cosmological* arrow

¹⁴ The recent revelation of the continuing pain felt by adults abused when they were young by Jimmy Savile, even after his death, is a sad example of this phenomenon.

introduces the notion that time has direction. Part of psychotherapy's task is for people to make sense of their worlds and relationships in time, and whether order is possible. Psychotherapy is negentropic (Bateson, 1970) against the time direction of the universe, inasmuch as it pays attention to the lived experience of events, for '(d)isorder increases with time because we measure time in the direction in which disorder increases' (Hawking, 1990: 147). Or, the therapeutic task may be to recognise the absurd and existential meaninglessness of the world (Camus, 1957; Sartre, 1938) and still live in good faith (Yalom, 1989, 2006).

These assertions assume time. Theoretical physicist Julian Barbour questions whether time exists. He suggests a perspective 'in which change is the measure of time, not time the measure of change' (Barbour, 2000: 2) ¹⁵ with possible implications for understanding change and time in psychotherapy. If change is the measure of time and the patient is trapped in trauma of the past devoid of change, can we say no time has passed or been measured?

Barbour goes further by asserting time does not exist. Because time does not measure change, time as understood (in the West at least) is no more. Barbour says the *Now* is not time: 'The now is what holds time together, ... since it makes past and future time a continuous whole; and it is a limit of time, in the sense that it is the beginning of one time and the end of another' (Aristotle, 1999: 112).

Barbour takes the example of a number of photographs each recording a different *Now* (Barbour, 2008). By stating that they represent two events half an hour apart, nothing is changed. We do not have to call it 'time'. All we can say is that one comes before the other. But, how can Barbour have a concept of 'before' without having a concept of what most people would consider to be time? We

¹⁵ Barbour's project is to create a theory, quantum gravity, which would bring about the end of time. He seeks to unify the theory of relativity where time is flexible and hard to grasp, and quantum mechanics, which, like Newtonian time, is regular and independent of the world. By successfully uniting these two theories to describe the universe, time would disappear from the equation. There will be many self-contained instants, what he calls a *Now*. Our psychological and physical perceptions of the world are different. This does not imply that we will no longer feel what we experience as the flow of time, but 'new timeless principles will explain why we *do* feel that time flows' (Barbour, 2000: 14).

may deduce something we later call time, *post hoc*. A *Now* has no duration or thickness, and nothing changes, so we cannot say that time has passed. A *Now* is an instant, experienced as unchanging; '(t)he instant is not in time – time is in the instant' (Barbour, 2000: 34). Because we have different experiences of *Nows*, our sense is that *time* is different. By changing the order of the photographs nothing is changed apart from order, since each image is self-contained just as 'yesterday' is unchanged.

Time is an abstraction constructed from the changes of things in Barbour's world. The *Nows* that we accumulate we call our past, but I suggest, this does not take account of human experience of meaning and emotion. What we call the past has different degrees of importance in Western psychotherapy, with varying emphasis for instigating change. I begin this exploration in chapter 2.

Reflections.

In this opening chapter I have set the scene for thinking how time as a key reference point changes our perspectives. We saw that time can be layered, is affected by contexts of place, and that there are different kinds of time. I used material from my work, in this case a non-clinical interview, which establishes my personal ethnographic approach to this research.

Physics is important to help understand the world we inhabit and its origins. Concepts of relativity, simultaneity, the now, and the origins of the universe, can inform how we think, see, and experience ourselves, despite their abstract nature. So, I shall hold these in mind.

A brief clinical example suggested that memory is an important aspect of time, and that remembering occurs in different ways, even when the person is not aware they are remembering (the clinical vignette of how Susan 'remembered' her sexual abuse). This allowed a mention of my two main thinkers, Freud and Palazzoli, before touching on philosophical and anthropological insights on time. In philosophy I indicated that time in the 'instant' or the 'now' may not be in time

as understood in everyday experience. We have yet to discover whether Plato's instant and the instant when therapeutic change occurs are similar, and whether the context bound cultural realities of anthropology, and the logical and rational descriptions of time from philosophy, can mesh in therapy.

Along the way we brushed up against a number of ideas and themes that are important for my research. In mentioning Stern's (1998) cumulative developmental model of the self where nothing is lost, only more is added, we have a constant 'thick present' (Husserl, 1991) in relation to a past and future. Husserl will speak of this in terms of 'retention' and 'protention' (chapter 4).

When speaking of narrative, diachronic, and episodic time, we have concepts that may aid in describing time and even traumatic time in therapy, as well as confusions of earlier/later, before/after, discussed in relation to the Smiths. All are as much part of philosophical discourse in their way (McTaggart, Merleau-Ponty, Ricoeur *inter alia*) as psychotherapy.

Multiple layers of time and memory that concerned Freud are the subject matter of philosophy (Heidegger, Ricoeur), as much as anthropological research (Geertz, Turner, Vitebsky). A potential tension exists between philosophical *linear* time (Hume, Kant, McTaggart), and anthropological explanations of time as *circular* such as the Balinese (Geertz, Howe) or the Sora (Vitebsky). In socio-cultural research we find reference to different kinds of time, especially in healing and ritual. This potentially has strong significance for this project.

Finally, I referred in this chapter to 'spaces in between', an important concept in anthropology (Gennep, Leach, Stoller, Turner), and an often-neglected time in therapy. Just as the spaces *between* notes are important in music (Levitin, 2008) so are the spaces (intervals) *between* therapy sessions, as well as *frequency* or *rhythm* of sessions.

I regard psychotherapy and its founding theories as fundamental to my thesis, and I believe there is much to be learned from philosophy and anthropology. Hence, as a foundation, I propose to introduce two frameworks that have influenced me the most, Freud and Palazzoli, and explore these for their relevance to the themes of time in psychotherapy. I invite philosophy and anthropology to challenge my professional roots and expand my thinking.

Chapter 2.

Finding Time: Sigmund Freud and Mara Selvini Palazzoli.

‘While Freud was certainly not *right* about everything, he *thought* provocatively about everything’
(Neu, 1991: 7).

‘Nothing takes place in a psycho-analytic treatment
but an interchange of words between the patient and the analyst. ...
Words were originally magic’
(Freud, 1915-1917: XV: 17).

Choice.

Freud and Palazzoli make frequent reference to time, possibly more so than many other psychotherapists, so that they are a natural choice for me. Freud has profoundly influenced psychotherapy and psychoanalytic therapy approaches in the West, and Palazzoli as had a great impact on the systemic therapy field. Both of these thinkers are important to my professional development in different ways (Jenkins, 1980, 2012). Freud was interested in philosophy and Palazzoli, who originally trained psychoanalytically, was influenced by the work of anthropologist Gregory Bateson, from whose ideas she established her systemic thinking. With respect to Freud, if André Green is right, ‘there is a predominant tendency in contemporary psychoanalysis to resolve Freud’s complex temporal model into the genetic viewpoint alone’ (Green, 2002: 7). This research may go some way to redressing that balance.

I have chosen to focus on Freud and not include Jung or other contemporaries of Freud (such as Ferenczi, Adler, Klein, Lacan, or Anna Freud), although time is important in all their work (Ellis, 2008). The reasons are twofold. I took the opportunity to explore Freud’s ideas in depth for my personal interest, and because his ideas and language have so permeated the consciousness of the Western world and beyond. And I chose not to research Jung’s important ideas

about the unconscious, symbol, simultaneity,¹⁶ nor any of the other important early thinkers in psychoanalysis to avoid diluting my material.

I chose Palazzoli because of her impact on the field of Systemic psychotherapy, which is an important part of my professional orientation. Her practice changed radically during her career. Her early work was as a psychoanalyst. She was later influenced by anthropologist Gregory Bateson's epistemology. Just as I have restricted my research to Freud, so I have avoided including much material from those who were not part of the original Milan team. Both scholars have had, and continue to exert, an important influence on my thinking and practice (Jenkins, 2012).

Aims.

This is the foundation chapter for my thesis representing my discipline of psychotherapy. It is the backdrop to what follows from philosophy and anthropology. Apart from two short examples from my practice, Freud and Palazzoli speak for themselves.

Some of Freud's references to time are explicit, such as: the timelessness of the id and the Unconscious (Freud, 1915: XIV); dreams as the 'the royal road to a knowledge of the unconscious' (Freud, 1910: XI: 33); the place of memory (Freud, 1901, VI) and therefore time; or distortions of time in the therapeutic transference (Freud, 1917, XVI). Palazzoli and her colleagues describe 'the time of the system' (Palazzoli et al., 1978); the place of time in clinical practice (Boscolo and Bertrando, 1993); experiments with the duration of intervals between sessions and duration of therapy (Palazzoli et al., 1978, Boscolo and Bertrando, 1996).

¹⁶ Jung was less preoccupied with the aetiology of past experience. Symptoms are not necessarily due to past events but may represent the clash of conflicting wishes in the present that are resolved in the symptom.

Clinical vignette.

The following incident from my practice draws attention to time considerations in psychotherapy and the ubiquity of time in healing even when not explicitly part of the therapist's focus.

I was surprised when Alex, a psychodynamic psychotherapist, phoned to ask if I would see him individually. Many years previously I had seen him and his wife for couples therapy. He was phoning with an unconventional request, to "make sense of my thirteen years of psycho-analysis".

During the first session I asked Alex to tell me about his decision to end analysis. He said his wife had come to feel that psychoanalysis was no longer helping him and was affecting their relationship. He agreed to end his analysis. In that September he told his analyst that he wished to terminate in December. He was told: "You can't do that. You need at least another five years because we haven't dealt with your anger yet". Although Alex was surprised at this, he continued with his plan and ended when he wanted to.

This example emphasises the therapist's position with regard to time and change. '(T)he therapist is required to coordinate his own time with that of the client, allowing space for new perspectives and avoiding getting stuck in one vision of the client's story' (Boscolo and Bertrando, 1996: 69). Alex felt the model of therapy was determining the process more than his needs.

In this partial account, a number of elements relating to time are evident. They include beliefs about the time (duration) necessary for effective treatment, and the speed of change in therapy, in this instance thirteen years plus another putative five years.¹⁷ Change is incremental and slow, while the frequency of sessions (up to five times a week) is intense. It means there are only short intervals between

¹⁷ Length of psychoanalytic treatment has increased over the years: 'Since the beginnings ... the length of treatment has grown increasingly longer; so much so that, far from taking advantage of our growing experience to reduce its length, the time required ... for an analysis with no foreseeable end has become a dissuasive reason for not undertaking it' (Green, 2002: 45).

sessions. In addition, the quality of relationship with the therapist is individual, long-term, exclusive, and private. Therapy often impacts on the patient's social domain but it is not necessarily focused on. And finally the therapist takes an expert position about what are the patient's needs.

These thoughts provide a basis from which to consider Freud and Palazzoli's descriptions of time.

Sigmund Freud (1856 – 1939).

An overview.

Freud addresses time in different ways and acknowledges that there is much that he does not fully understand. Most of his theories are time-embedded, and highlighting this aspect may achieve a different appreciation of his thinking (Green, 2002).

‘The division of the psychical into what is conscious and what is unconscious is the fundamental premiss of psycho-analysis’ (Freud, 1923: Vol. XIX: 13). In these few words Freud divides what is in time or timed from what is timeless and unchanging. He is interested in the location of the psychical in the Unconscious, while I focus on the place and nature of time in his thinking. However, while Freud ‘refers to notions of temporality which operate as pivotal to his psychoanalysis, ... he rarely theorises his concept of time (Ellis, 2008: 1).

Freud began his medical career as a neurologist. Some of his intuitions about brain function have been vindicated by twentieth century neuro-science. As Gerhardt (2004) maps out, effective brain functioning in the adult is significantly influenced by the social context of the child's development and we know now that the brain continues to develop throughout life and not only in-utero. Early experience plays an important part in brain development during a period of enormous growth. For example, the brain more than doubles its weight in the first year of life in healthy infants. There is a developmental argument in favour of the

unconscious. Early experiences are encoded non-verbally by the child, primarily in the right hemisphere, and remembered pre-linguistically.¹⁸

When a therapist attempts to help the patient recall, in language, in ‘an interchange of words’ (Freud, 1916: XV: 17) this requires access to *preverbal* memory, which is not laid down through language. ‘We cannot consciously recall any of it, yet it is not forgotten because it is built into our organism and informs our expectations and behaviour’ (Gerhardt, 2004: 15). Freud speaks of repression and resistance to remembering when the difficulty may more accurately reflect age-determined brain development and early human encoding of experience. What the patient cannot know consciously requires the therapist to ‘behave as ‘timelessly’ as the [patient’s] unconscious’ (Freud, 1918: Vol. XVII: 10). There can be no haste in psycho-analysis as Alex experienced, for ‘the slowness with which deep-going changes in the mind are accomplished – in the last resort, no doubt, the timelessness of our unconscious processes’ (Freud, 1913: Vol. XII: 130), determines the nature of treatment, its pace (time duration), and the nature of change. It is, however, sometimes forgotten that Freud undertook brief therapy: ‘His analyses frequently finished in less than a year, and some of them lasted considerably less. (His training analysis of Sándor Ferenczi ... lasted only six weeks)’ (Boscolo and Bertrando, 1996).¹⁹

Much of Freud’s psychology concerns sexuality, the Unconscious, neuroses, and instinctual drives. His goal was to develop a scientific theory of mind and an important innovation was identifying the longitudinal, temporal structure to our lives. Freud maintained that early events structure how we live and he was interested how children are different from adults. He has had a profound effect on

¹⁸ In brain and social development of the self, as new stages occur, the former ones remain: ‘All domains of relatedness remain active during development. The infant does not grow out of any of them; none of them atrophy, none become developmentally obsolete or get left behind. ... In fact, each successive organising subjective perspective requires the preceding one as a precursor’ (Stern, 1998: 31-32). In this sense time is held developmentally almost like an archaeological dig, where all layers exist simultaneously.

¹⁹ This is also born out by the correspondence of James and Alix Strachey, while Alix was in Berlin in 1924-5, giving a fascinating background to the socio-cultural context of Freud’s ideas and the role of the Stracheys, in *The Letters of James and Alix Strachey, 1924-1925* (Meisel and Kendrick (Eds.) 1986).

Western thought, our language, and our view of time, not least the idea that the seven-year old is still there in the adult such that the character of the ego is ‘a precipitate of abandoned object-cathexes ... that ... contains the history of those object-choices’ (Freud, 1923: Vol. XIX: 29). Unsatisfactory resolution of early relationships or experiences renders the person more likely to repeat similar relationships later in life as attempts to gain mastery over early painful experiences, for ‘the effects of the first identifications made in earliest childhood will be general and lasting’ (ibid: 31).

A temporal focus is clear in Freud’s understanding of symptom formation and is found in *Introductory Lectures to Psycho-analysis* (Freud, 1917: Vol. XVI) lecture XXIII. He describes an accidental experience (traumatic) that occurs which arouses feelings from an earlier time (he terms this Disposition due to Fixation of the Libido) where the concurrence of the two is causative of neurosis. He gives this in diagrammatic form, Figure 2.1 as a ‘genealogical tree’. In his temporal historical description he includes the possibility of phylogenetic explanation.

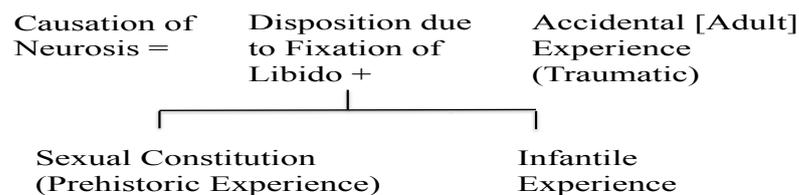


Figure 2.1. The Paths to Symptom-Formation. Lecture XXIII, 362.

If we accept that early childhood events continue to be re-worked in the present, our understanding of time will change. It was from this developmental perspective that Freud devised a view about primary and secondary process thinking (*The Interpretation of Dreams*, Freud, 1900: Vol. IV), which underpins much of his subsequent work. In *New Introductory Lectures*:

‘... we perceive with surprise an exception to the philosophical theorem that space and time are necessary forms of mental acts. There is nothing in the id that corresponds to the idea of time; there is no recognition of the passage of time, and ... no alteration in its mental processes is produced by the passage of time’ (Freud, 1933: Vol. XXII: 74).

When time and timing are important in duration of treatment and for the patient-therapist relationship Freud’s statement that a significant part of the psychical structure is unchanged by time raises challenging questions. Time is ‘introduced into the ego by the perceptual system; it can scarcely be doubted that the mode of operation of that system is what provides the origin of the idea of time’ (ibid: 76) suggesting that the ability to perceive and reflect, rather than react, is part of acquiring a sense of time, ‘between a need and an action ... a postponement in the form of the activity of thought’ (ibid: 76). Postponement, itself a measure of time, enables us to experience ‘time’. How we understand notions of ‘interval’, ‘postponement’, and whether they differ to time either side of the interval may be relevant.

There are descriptions in philosophy (chapter 3) and evidence from anthropological studies (chapter 8) that there is a point whether moments out of time exist in activities isomorphic to therapy. We will see whether these insights deepen our understanding of ‘no recognition of the passage of time’. There is also the phenomenon of unconscious memory (chapter 4) or unattributed ‘permanent traces’ (Freud: 1901: Vol. V: 538).

Given the volume of Freud’s output, I restrict myself to five areas. Source material consulted or quoted is given in the appropriate footnote. These are the *Unconscious* which is central to understanding Freud.²⁰ *Compulsion to repeat* structures other aspects of Freud’s thinking²¹ with its sense of returning to the

²⁰ Reference texts from among which I quote are: *The Interpretation of Dreams* [1900: IV]; *On Beginning the Treatment* [1913: XII]; *The Unconscious* [1915: XIV]; *From the History of an Infantile Neurosis* [1918: XVII]; *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* [1920: XVIII]; *The Ego and the Id* [1923: XIX] and; *New Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis* [1933: XXII].

²¹ We see how Freud begins from a biological base (Freud, 1933: XXII: 106) to then suggest psychological explanations and temporal repetition in relationships (Freud, 1920, XVIII, 18ff; 1923: XIX: 117-118; 1933: XXII: 143). This theme is explored in more detail later.

same logical point at different temporal points.²² *Dreams* which are central to Freud suggest another understanding of time,²³ while *Memory* includes ways of holding, controlling, managing, or changing the past.²⁴ Finally *Transference* constitutes a mainstay of psychoanalytic therapies in complex manifestations of time.²⁵

Time in psychoanalysis.

*The Unconscious (Ucs.).*²⁶

Freud was influenced by developments in archaeology and the physical explorations of archaic time in Europe of his day. He used these explorations metaphorically. ‘In the mind of each of us, it is civilization itself ... that destroys the traces of past experience, burying the personal life of instinct under the weight of its censorious denials and demands’ (Schorske, 1991: 9). We will re-consider ‘mind’ as immanent when discussing Bateson (1971). The psycho-analyst resembles the archaeologist recovering the buried (Unconscious) to see the light of day (Conscious). Perhaps the most relevant aspect of ‘mind’ in Freud’s work for our attempt to understand the nature of time is the Unconscious.

²² Reference texts from among which I quote are: *Remembering, Repeating and Working-Through* [1914: XII]; *The sense of symptoms*, lecture 17, and *Fixation to Traumas – the Unconscious*, lecture 18, [1917: XVI]; *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* [1920: XVIII]; *Remarks on the Theory and Practice of Dream-Interpretation* [1922: XIX]; *An Autobiographical Study* [1925: XX], and *Inhibitions, Symptoms and Anxiety* [1926: XX]; *Anxiety and Instinctual Life* lecture 32, [1933: XXII]; and *Moses, His People and Monotheist Religion* in *Moses and Monotheism: Three Essays* [1939: XXIII].

²³ Reference texts from among which I quote are: *The Interpretation of Dreams*, (Part 1) [1900: IV]; and *The Interpretation of Dreams*, (Part 2) [1900: V]; *Five Lectures on Psychoanalysis* [1910: XI]; *A Metapsychological Supplement to the Theory of Dreams* [1917: XIV]; *Revision of the Theory of Dreams*, lecture 29 [1933:XXII].

²⁴ Reference texts from among which I quote are: *The Interpretation of Dreams* [1901: V]; *The Psychopathology of Everyday Life* [1901: VI]; 14, *The Unconscious* [1915: XIV] and *Mourning and Melancholia* [1917: XIV]; *Parapraxes*, lectures 2-4, [1917: XVI]; *The Archaic Features and Infantilism of Dreams*, lecture 13, and *The Paths to the Formation of Symptoms*, lecture 23, [1917: XVI]. Freud considers temporal factors (*The Interpretation of Dreams* (Part II) [1901:V]; *Fragment of an Analysis of a Case of Hysteria* [1905: VII]; and *A metapsychological supplement to the theory of dreams* [1917: XIV].

²⁵ Reference texts from among which I quote are: *Fragment of an Analysis of a Case of Hysteria* [1905: VII]; *Five Lectures on Psycho-analysis* [1910: XI]; *Transference*, lecture 27, [1917: XVI]; and *An Outline of Psycho-Analysis* [1938: XXIII].

²⁶ ‘... “Unconscious” (spelled with a capital “U”) is used to denote a *system* that is part of the mental apparatus in the topographical frame of reference, and which is thought of as functioning according to certain specific laws. Its contents, as long as they remain in this system, always have the *quality* of unconsciousness (or lack the quality of consciousness)’ (Sandler et al., 1997: 65).

Mind is not located in a physical area of the brain with ‘special relations to particular parts of the body and to particular mental activities ... but to regions in the mental apparatus’ (Freud, 1915: Vol. XIV: 174-175). Simply put, ‘(p)sycho-analysis is seeking to bring to conscious recognition the things in mental life which are repressed’ (Freud, 1910: Vol. XI: 33). The concept of the Unconscious is fundamental to the theory of psycho-analysis.

‘In psycho-analysis there is no choice for us but to assert that mental processes are in themselves unconscious, and to liken the perception of them by means of consciousness to the perception of the external world by means of sense-organs. ... (P)sycho-analysis warns us not to equate perceptions by means of consciousness with the unconscious mental processes which are their object. Like the physical, the psychical is not necessarily in reality what it appears to us to be’ (Freud, 1915: Vol. XIV: 171).

I am not concerned here with whether, or how, material becomes conscious, nor the relationship between the system preconscious (*Pcs.*) and the conscious (*Cs.*), nor mechanisms of repression and resistance. In tune with future chapters I take a more phenomenological approach as proposed by Husserl (1991) and Heidegger (1985, 1993) (chapter 4), to elucidate time and the unconscious through a Freudian lens. ‘To have heard something and to have experienced something are in their psychological nature two quite different things, even though the content of both is the same’ (Freud, 1915: Vol. XIV: 176). However, it is important to be aware of how the word ‘unconscious’ is used; ‘The distinction between what is, from the point of view of description, unconscious, and the use of the term to refer to a specific *system* should always be kept in mind’ (Sandler et al., 1997: 65). As an adjective, unconscious includes what is in the Unconscious and Preconscious systems. Figure 2.1 helps distinguish the three systems.

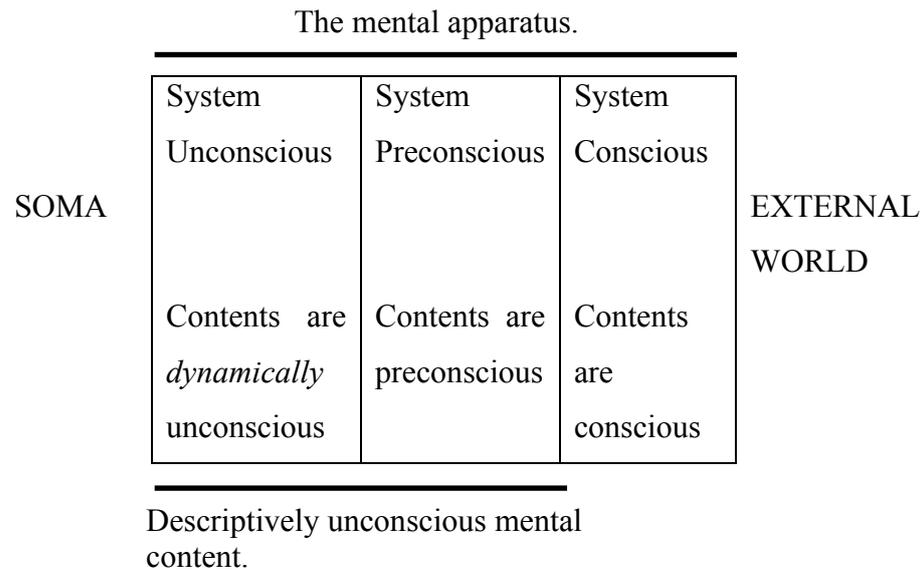


Figure 2.1. From Sandler et al., 1997: 66. The movement from left to right is from depth to surface and varying degree of accessibility.

The *Ucs.* functions at the level of primary psychical process without the ordering function of language: ‘In the *Ucs.* there are only contents, cathected with greater or lesser strength’ (Freud, 1915: Vol XIV: 186).²⁷ Freud is unequivocal about time in the Unconscious: ‘The processes of the system *Ucs.* are *timeless*; i.e., they are not ordered temporally, are not altered by the passage of time; they have no reference to time at all. Reference to time is bound up, ... with the work of the system *Cs*’ (ibid: 187). In an unconscious mind there is no acceptance of reality or time, for ‘unconscious mental processes are in themselves ‘timeless’. ... they are not ordered temporally, ... time does not change them in any way and ... the idea of time cannot be applied to them’ (Freud, 1920: XVIII: 28).

In dreams, which are ‘pure present’ (Green, 2002: 1), the unconscious mind accepts the hallucinated reality of a lump of cheese, rather than question its physical reality. Dream can be a hallucinated wish-fulfilment (in primary process) as a satisfaction of desire. A characteristic of the unconscious (primary process) is that time is not represented. We can dream of a self who is aged three

²⁷ Cathexis and cathected (from the German *Besetzung*) is never fully defined. It includes the idea of investissement (French) and energy, associated with instincts or psychological agencies; it is used metaphorically and as an analogy. (See: Laplanche and Pontalis, 1988: 62-65.)

in the present, and can bring together who one likes without reference to time. The timeless quality of the unconscious is reflected in that ‘... nothing that ever existed in the unconscious completely loses its influence on the personality’ (Klein, 1959: 262). There is a part that remains ever-present, even if not recognisably so, as Susan realised with regard to her father’s abuse (chapter 1). Thus, an adult can still be working (unconsciously) on early events, since past and present co-exist simultaneously: ‘Freud wishes us to struggle with this multifaceted vision of the simultaneity of the noncontemporaneous’ (Schorske, 1991: 9). This assumes a mind that processes segmentally, where each part functions autonomously. For example, an important part of our mind does not accept our mortality. In primary process thinking we cannot die, while in secondary process, despite our unconscious wish that it cannot be true, we know we are mortal (cf., Yalom, 2006). We have to find a way to live with both realities: ‘the fear of death is something that occurs between the ego and the super-ego’ (Freud, 1923: Vol. XIX: 58).²⁸

The preconscious (Pcs.) and conscious (Cs.).

Freud suggests changes in mind result from an internalization of the person’s world. Topographically, the boundary between the preconscious and the conscious is relatively diffuse, while the boundary caused by repression around the dynamic unconscious is clear. Mental processes in the preconscious and the conscious accord with the ‘reality principle’, and are qualitatively different to the unconscious and the ‘pleasure principle’ (Freud, 1923: Vol. XIX).

Space and time are manifested in a particular way. The (conscious) ego is structured on reality and subject to rules of the world and physical reality; ‘The ego develops from perceiving the instincts to controlling them’ (Freud, 1933: Vol. XXII: 76). It is ‘that portion of the id which was modified by the proximity and influence of the external world’ (ibid: 75). The super-ego responds to the demands of people who are important and on whom we depend. Conscious life is

²⁸ I am indebted to Dr Christopher Dare with whom I have had many conversations about Freud and his legacy, although the ordering of these ideas and any errors are entirely my own.

forever fleeting, so that we live in the moment; ‘an idea that is conscious now is no longer so a moment later’ (Freud, 1923: Vol. XIX: 14) even if it can be recalled another moment later. In that in-between ‘liminal moment’ (chapter 8), we do not know what that idea was, except ‘that it was *latent*, ... that it was *unconscious*’ (ibid: 14).

If time, negation, and doubt, do not exist in the Unconscious, how does this affect our understanding of Freud’s thinking about time? He outlines his ideas on time in *Dissection of the Personality*, beginning with the super-ego which arises from early influences as ‘the advocate of a striving towards perfection’ (Freud, 1933: Vol. XXII: 67). When raising children, parents ‘have forgotten the difficulties of their childhood and they are glad to be able now to identify themselves fully with their own parents who in the past laid such severe restrictions upon them’ (ibid: 67). He suggests a temporal story of unconscious trans-generational transmission, with super-ego contents perpetuated, like ‘the infection of habit, from generation to generation’ (Drabble, 2000: 208). The present is never *solely* the present for Freud. What has been lived, learned, or transmitted, is more than superficial phenomenology; ‘Mankind never lives entirely in the present. The past, the tradition of the race and of the people, lives in the ideologies of the super-ego, and yields only slowly to the influences of the present and to new changes’ (Freud, 1933: Vol. XXII: 67).

We are not speaking of consciously known ‘time’ but of beliefs and behaviours transmitted from generation to generation, as real as our DNA carrying information across centuries and as resistant to change. It is unconscious when it ‘is being activated *at the moment*, though *at the moment* we know nothing about it’ (ibid: 70). The unconscious system of the mind, (the system *Ucs.*) is more ‘a mental province ... than a quality of what is mental’ (ibid: 71).

Internal systems and archaic structures.

It is often confusing to know where Freud is in his thinking about the Unconscious. This is partly because he developed and changed his ideas. He describes a mental territory of the Systems *Ucs.*, *Pcs.*, and *Cs.*, and then three powerful forces that seem to struggle with each other; the ego, id, and super-ego.

²⁹ He emphasises conflicts between these opposing forces, between the real-external and the psychical-internal. A partial description of the ego, super-ego, and id, may be helpful.

Ego, super-ego, and id.

The ego 'is a specially differentiated part of the id' (Freud, 1923: Vol. XIX: 38) that represents external reality, while the super-ego represents the internal world of the id. What has been created over time in the id and remains there, the ego takes over and is re-experienced in terms of itself as an individual: 'Owing to the way in which the ego ideal ³⁰ is formed, it has the most abundant links with the phylogenetic acquisition of each individual – his archaic heritage' (Freud, 1923: Vol. XIX: 36). Freud describes this temporally, from the basic instinctual to 'what is highest in the human mind by our scale of values' (ibid: 36). The ego's ability to internalise and retain fixes time. For example, 'when the ego is supported by the internalised good object, it is more able to master anxiety and preserve life' (Klein, 1958: 239) by holding something good and constant. ³¹

The ego forms its super-ego from the id in a seemingly timeless sequence 'of former egos ... bringing them to resurrection' (ibid: 38). The task of psychoanalysis is 'to enable the ego to achieve a progressive conquest of the id' (ibid: 56), 'the dark, inaccessible part of our personality' (Freud, 1933: Vol. XXII: 73). A partial ego function is conscience; 'no vicissitudes can be experienced or

²⁹ Freud's views about the ego, id, and super-ego, also changed over his career.

³⁰ Also: 'super-ego'.

³¹ The super-ego, from which comes the ego and the foundation of which is 'the early introjection of the good or bad breast' (Klein, 1958: 239) can become over severe, and attack, humiliate, or threaten, the ego. The id exists trans-generationally. It can be inherited, bequeathed from generation to generation as in it are 'residues of the existences of countless egos' (Freud, 1923: Vol. XIX: 38).

undergone by the id, except by way of the ego' (Freud, 1923: Vol. XIX: 38), as representative of the external world of the id.

The id proves the exception to philosophical thought that space and time are integral to all mental activity.³² 'There is nothing in the id that corresponds to the idea of time; there is no recognition of the passage of time, and ... no alteration in its mental processes is produced by the passage of time' (Freud, 1933: Vol. XXII: 74). The task of psycho-analysis is to confront 'the unalterability by time of the repressed' (ibid: 74) and to neutralise the id's psychic energy that allows the patient to experience archaic material as though it were still recent.

'(A)fter the passage of decades they [memory etc.,] behave as though they had just occurred. They can only be recognised as belonging to the past, can only lose their importance and be deprived of their cathexis of energy, when they have been made conscious by the work of analysis, and it is on this that the therapeutic effect of analytic treatment rests to no small extent' (Freud, 1933: Vol. XXII: 74).

The id is driven by the pleasure principle, neither more nor less. This dark inaccessible part of our personalities neither recognises nor is affected by the passage of time 'except by way of the ego'. While parts of the ego and super-ego are unconscious, they do not possess the id's 'same primitive and irrational characteristics' (ibid: 75).

Compulsion to repeat.

A problematic aspect of psychotherapy is patients who repeat the same problem, often without conscious awareness. It is as if, phenomenologically, time has become fixed in an endless loop returning to 'the same logical point' (Howe, 1981) at different, often regular moments in a temporal sequence. '(I)f a compulsion to repeat *does* operate in the mind, we should be glad to know something about it, to learn what function it corresponds to, under what conditions it can emerge' (Freud, 1920: Vol. XVIII: 23). Freud returns to

³² This is despite other arguments to the contrary in philosophy, for example, (cf. McTaggart, 1927, chapter 4), or theoretical physics, (Barbour, 2000, 2008), discussed in chapter 1.

repetition and the compulsion to repeat in many of his works, describing it in different ways.

Freud suggests that instincts represent ‘an impulsion’ toward re-establishing a situation that has been upset by external influence and that ‘this essentially conservative character of instincts is exemplified by the phenomena of the *compulsion to repeat*’ (Freud, 1925: Vol. XX: 57). This results from the simultaneous and mutually conflictual action of Eros and the death instinct.³³ Freud paints a picture of the ego protecting itself from dangerous instinctual impulses by means of repression so that the repressed is banished from the realm of the ego and becomes subject to laws of the Unconscious. When the danger has passed and the ego no longer needs to protect itself, the impulse becomes free to ‘run its course under an automatic influence – or as I should prefer to say, under the influence of the compulsion to repeat’ (Freud, 1926: Vol. XX: 153). I will consider ‘compulsion to repeat’ from a time perspective rather than hypothesised opposing internal forces.

There is a relational dynamic in Freud’s understanding of repetition over generations where ‘the attempted solution’ (Watzlawick et al, 1974) becomes part of the problem:

‘Thus a man who has spent his childhood in an excessive and to-day forgotten attachment to his mother, may spend his whole life looking for a wife on whom he can make himself dependent and by whom he can arrange to be nourished and supported. A girl who was made the object of a sexual seduction in her early childhood may direct her later sexual life so as constantly to provoke similar attacks’ (Freud, 1939. Vol. XXIII: 75-76).

Freud suggests this is a way to understand neurosis and character formation, how pattern and repetition in adulthood develop from and perpetuate early experiences. It is a temporal perspective to human relationships. This becomes the search for a resolution to an existential dilemma that in an endless repetitive ‘more of the

³³ Thanatos, although Freud does not use this word in his writing (Laplanche and Pontalis, 1988: 447).

same' is doomed to fail. Melanie Klein emphasises 'the influence of early attitudes throughout life (and) the fact that the relation to early figures keeps reappearing and problems that remain unresolved in infancy or early childhood are revived though in modified form' (Klein, 1959: 258). This phenomenon of unresolved problems reappearing 'in modified form' makes it more difficult to identify the original problem, where the problem or symptom is a compromise (Freud, 1917: Vol. XVI).

The patient's inability to escape is 'in the end ... his way of remembering' (Freud, 1914: Vol. XII: 150). In the therapeutic transference such patterns often replicate the patient's previous experience (Malan, 1979). There is an elegance in this way of 'remembering' without consciously 'knowing' what is being remembered. 'The patient cannot remember the whole of what is repressed in him, and what he cannot remember may be precisely the essential part of it' (Freud, 1920: Vol. XVIII: 18). We should consider why it is important to remember through repetition and the function of therapeutic transference.

When the patient is unable to acknowledge the accuracy of the therapist's interpretation he 'is obliged to *repeat* the repressed material as a contemporary experience instead of, ... *remembering* it as something belonging to the past' (ibid: 18). This is an important time distinction. The patient remembers a past event as contemporary, unable to differentiate timeframes. The analyst endeavours to bring as much as possible into conscious memory so as to minimise repetition. 'Resistance' is a struggle between the conscious – the coherent ego – and the Unconscious – the repressed part of the ego. These repetitions are doomed to fail in the form they present when '(l)oss of love and failure leave behind them a permanent injury to self-regard in the form of a narcissistic scar' (ibid: 20), to be re-enacted endlessly in the 'now'.³⁴

³⁴ Freud distinguishes between active repetition of the same experience, and the passive 'perpetual recurrence of the same thing' (ibid: 22).

In order to understand compulsion to repeat we link ‘the symptom to the system’ (Papp, 1983). Freud suggests that ‘(t)he task is then simply to discover, in respect to a senseless idea and a pointless action, the past situation in which the idea was justified and the action served a purpose’ (Freud, 1917: Vol. XVI: 270). Hence the importance of the past to understand current behaviour. Obsessional patients ‘have a tendency to repeat, to make their performances rhythmical and to keep them isolated from other actions’ (ibid: 270). Obsessional behaviour incorporates its particular rhythms and timing in washing, checking, counting, or repeating. For some, ‘the same reactions are perpetually being repeated uncorrected, to their own detriment’ (Freud, 1933: Vol. XXII: 106) while others can be deeply destructive. ‘What earlier state of things does an instinct want to restore?’ (ibid: 107). Compulsion to repeat may also represent attempted restoration rather than overcoming.

Compulsion to repeat is significant in treating ‘trauma’. ‘These patients regularly repeat the traumatic situation in their dreams; ... It is as though these patients had not finished with the traumatic situation, as though they were still faced by it as an immediate task which has not been dealt with’ (Freud, 1917: Vol. XVI: 274-275). The individual is (trans)fixed in a present-past without release. In Freud’s formulation of such mental processes he describes an ‘economic’ view having ‘purpose’.³⁵ ‘Indeed the term ‘traumatic’ has no other sense than an economic one. We apply it to an experience which within a short period of time presents the mind with an increase of stimulus too powerful to be dealt with or worked off in the normal way’ (ibid: 275). This is a Western utilitarian approach. An Eastern way would explain this by spirits entering or a curse being laid.

Dreams and memory.

Although *The Interpretation of Dreams* dates from 1900 I have left Freud’s ideas about dreams until now because it is often highly speculative. I have found this less useful when considering time, despite its importance for Freud and the

³⁵ Freud also describes instincts as ‘economic’, that is, having a ‘purpose’ such as to obtain pleasure (c.f., Freud, 1917: Vol. XVI: 356).

Unconscious, and how humans encode information at different stages of neurological maturation.

In *The Interpretation of Dreams* we see the importance of the Unconscious and of not accepting what appears at face value, ‘the fundamental distinction between the manifest content of dreams and the latent dream-thoughts’ (Freud, 1933: Vol. XXII: 8). Freud describes overcoming resistances associated with forgetting, ‘when ... concealed purposive ideas assume control of the current ideas, and ... superficial associations are only substitutes by displacement for suppressed deeper ones’ (Freud, 1900: Vol. V: 531). Dreams are psychical acts having a future wish-seeking fulfilment motive, unrecognisable due to psychical censorship: ‘(T)he scene of action of dreams is different from that of waking ideational life’ (ibid: 536).

The different elements or ‘systems’ of dreams ‘stand in a regular spatial relation to one another’ (ibid: 537) similar to the sequence of lenses in a telescope, where ‘in a given psychical process the excitation passes through the systems in a particular *temporal* sequence’ (ibid: 537).³⁶ Psychical processes move from perceptual to motor phenomena and ‘memory traces’ are left in the psychical apparatus. Dreams are ways to remember past events or situations (sometimes without ‘remembering’ the memory) and as part of the royal road to the Unconscious they can signal anxieties about the future. Yet, for all their immediacy and seeming reality, dreams occupy a different kind of time.

Freud describes a structure of the perceptual (*Pcpt.*) system and different mnemonic (*Mnem.*) systems. There is a system that has no memory trace while other *Mnem.* systems hold different permanent traces where ‘(t)he first of these *Mnem.* systems will naturally contain the record of association in respect to *simultaneity in time*’ (Freud, 1900: Vol. V: 539). The *Pcpt.* system is without memory but ‘provides our consciousness with the whole multiplicity of sensory qualities’ (ibid: 539).

³⁶ Freud terms these ‘ ψ -systems’.

Memory implies time, sequence, order, and the Unconscious (*Ucs.*) offers memory and time without conscious (*Cs.*) knowledge or recall.

Dreams can have a powerful visceral quality and often recall early infantile experience that is highly visual, affective, sensory, and necessarily pre-language.

³⁷ Freud describes ‘regressions – that is thoughts transformed into images’ (Freud, 1900: Vol. V: 544), or ‘the process of transforming the thoughts into pictures’ (Freud, 1933: Vol. XXII: 20). Dreams are important, for ‘the influence of memories, mostly from childhood, which have been suppressed or have remained unconscious’ (Freud, 1900: Vol. V: 545). Like hallucinations, they only lose their inchoate characteristic ‘in the process of being reported’ (ibid: 546). Most early childhood memories are visual, so it is strange that Freud emphasises the importance of repression, regression, and censorship, when there may be a simpler explanation:

‘If we now bear in mind how great a part is played in the dream-thoughts by infantile experiences or by phantasies based upon them, ... we cannot dismiss the probability that in dreams too the transformation of thoughts into visual images may be in part the result of the attraction which memories couched in visual form ... bring to bear upon thoughts cut off from consciousness’ (ibid: 546).

This helps explain Freud’s difficulties in translating pre-verbal material into adult, cognitive, verbal expression, typical in an educated Western context. Verbal communication is highly valued: ‘Nothing takes place in a psycho-analytic treatment but an interchange of words between the patient and the analyst’ (Freud, 1916: Vol. XV: 17). Freud realised this ‘language problem’: ‘what characterises the waking state is the fact that the thought-activity takes place in *concepts* and not in *images*. Now dreams think essentially in images’ (Freud, 1900: Vol. IV: 49), suggesting different kinds of psychological space and time. ³⁸ From a

³⁷ Anthropologist Gregory Bateson makes reference to dreams, and acknowledges that in dreaming there is no negation, as Freud suggests that in the id is no negation. Bateson writes: ‘within dream or fantasy the dreamer does not operate with the concept ‘untrue’. He operates with allsorts of statements but with a curious inability to achieve metastatements’ (Bateson, 1955: 158).

³⁸ Christopher Hauke argues that in film it is often the language of images that remains most powerfully in the memory. It is a non- or pre-verbal representation that does not rely on spoken language for its effect (Hauke, 2013). Similarly, the pre-verbal child may recall vividly an event

temporal perspective Freud observes: ‘... a dream might be described as *a substitute for an infantile scene modified by being transferred on to a recent experience*’ (Freud, 1900: Vol. V: 546). Dreaming allows temporal and spatial transpositions of early experience to be disguised and attributed to other, later experience.

Freud also claimed a much greater temporal memory and vista through dreams: ‘(W)e are promised a picture of a phylogenetic childhood – a picture of the development of the human race’ (ibid: 548). He believed dream analysis might provide access to evolutionary origins of our human archaic heritage on ‘the royal road to ... the unconscious’ (Freud, 1910: Vol. XI: 33).

Transference.

Transference links with our thinking about compulsion to repeat: ‘(T)ransference is only a piece of repetition, and ... repetition is a transference of the forgotten past not only on to the doctor but also on to the other aspects of the current situation’ (Freud, 1914: Vol. XII: 151). This is a clear statement of a relationship between a past that is not remembered and the effect on relationships in the present. Transference is central to the theory and practice of psychoanalytic therapies with implications for understanding experiences of time. Its ‘range of use and span of meaning continues to represent a central aspect of the ... therapeutic process in particular, and of the psychoanalytic psychology of interpersonal relationships in general’ (Sandler et al., 1997: 101).

Freud first speaks of transference in *The Psychotherapy of Hysteria* when the patient transfers onto the therapist (physician) ideas that arise from treatment. The following is one of his earliest descriptions:

‘What happened before was this. The content of the wish had appeared first of all in the patient’s consciousness without any memories of the surrounding circumstances which would have assigned it to a past time. The wish which was present then, ... linked to my person, with which the

or period, but the channel of memory is more likely to be image or picture, or linked to other senses as in Proust’s madeleine biscuit.

patient was legitimately concerned; and as a result of this *mésalliance* – which I describe as a ‘false connection’ - the same affect was provoked which had forced the patient long before to repudiate this forbidden wish’ (Freud, 1895: Vol. II: 303).

The pertinent elements are a wish appearing in the patient’s consciousness, without memory of its origins, attributing thoughts and affect from a previous period onto the physician in the present, making thereby a ‘false connection’ in a professional relationship. David Malan describes this phenomenon in terms of the ‘triangle of the person’ (Malan, 1979: 80) ³⁹ such that the transference from the patient to the therapist in the present relates to or echoes current or recent past difficulties, that ultimately refer to an early and important relationship, usually parental. He also terms this ‘a triangle of time’ (ibid: 80). My focus is not on how to work with and through the transference in analytic practice, but to describe what occurs in treatment and the nature of this kind of time.

Transference is a natural phenomenon and is important in facilitating healing; ‘It is everywhere the true vehicle of therapeutic influence; and the less its presence is suspected, the more powerfully it operates’ (Freud, 1910: Vol. XI: 51). Transference in clinical practice raises interesting questions about time and potential temporal confusion. Transferences ‘are new editions or facsimiles of the impulses and phantasies which are aroused and made conscious during the progress of the analysis; but they have this peculiarity, ... that they replace some earlier person by the person of the physician’ (Freud, 1905: Vol. VII: 116).

Resolving the transference is integral to psycho-analysis. Unlike other approaches that preserve the transference relationship, ‘in analysis it is itself subjected to treatment and is dissected in all the shapes in which it appears. At the end of an analytic treatment the transference must itself be cleared away’ (Freud, 1917: Vol. XVI: 453), putting an end to ‘new editions of the old conflicts’ (ibid: 454). The consequence of working with the transference, of ‘constantly

³⁹ Malan attributes these ideas to Karl Menninger (1958) *The Theory of Psychoanalytic Technique*. New York. Basic Books.

resolving the transference' (ibid: 453) and its continuing dissection, ultimately to clear it away, is that the therapist often works simultaneously in different temporal frames. The past is as if it were contemporaneous, and simultaneously the contemporary is often re-enactment of an unresolved past.

Time in the transference is relational and interpersonal. It takes what is happening to the patient in therapy, in relation to the patient's current or recent experiences in the context of early life experiences, against a 'canvas' of the therapist's history. Western therapy takes place in a private, exclusive, professional relationship, and assumes many of the qualities peculiar to both people. By peculiar qualities I mean their histories, culture, gender, ethnicity, and even physical characteristics.⁴⁰

From this perspective, we see how time permeates Freud's work. Additionally, there is the time or length of psycho-analytic treatment. Freud speaks of this in various places, but the basis for effective treatment is the relationship between the analyst and patient which requires time for trust to be created and for the therapist to understand what lies behind the presented problem(s). There are two conditions for the patient to be helped: 'First, the patient must, through preparation, himself have reached the neighbourhood of what he has repressed, and secondly, he must have formed a sufficient attachment (transference) to the physician for his emotional relationship to him to make a fresh flight impossible' (Freud, 1910: Vol. XI: 226).

I will summarise. If we take Freud's views on time, what does he contribute? He offers a model of the person returning to an archaic state, the world of the Unconscious, and pre-civilised conscience. He proposes a model for compressing

⁴⁰ While much emphasis in the analytic world is on the individual and the importance of early life experiences, the relational is important: 'the phenomena in which the psychiatrist is preponderantly interested, namely the changes whereby an individual comes to expect his world to be structured in one way rather than another. These are the phenomena which underlie 'transference' – the expectation on the patient's part that the relationship with the therapist will contain the same sorts of contexts of learning that the patient has previously met with in dealing with his parents' (Bateson, 1960: 220).

time, past, present and future, which co-exist within the same ‘picture’ or image. He suggests that in dreaming we return to a world free of responsibility, free of constraint, a timeless world of the Unconscious, a hallucinated world. If we leave aside his complicated and complex structures of the mind of opposing forces, resistance, repression, and censorship, of the Unconscious, Preconscious and Conscious, and the relational structure of the id, ego and super-ego, he maps a Western mind of great complexity multi-layered in different time-frames.

Mara Selvini Palazzoli (1911-1999).

Invitation to circularity.

Mara Selvini Palazzoli, psychiatrist and psychotherapist, was an innovator and leader in the field of family therapy in the latter part of the twentieth century until her death in 1999. Her work and that of her colleagues had an impact on how we think about mental health, how we formulate recalcitrant problems, ways to treat psychotic behaviours and many other problems encountered in psychotherapy.⁴¹ The main texts consulted of which she was an author include: Palazzoli, (1974) *Self-Starvation: From the Intrapsychic to the Transpersonal Approach to Anorexia Nervosa*; Palazzoli et al., (1978) *Paradox and Counterparadox: A New Model in the Therapy of the Family in Schizophrenic Transaction*; Palazzoli, et al., (1986) *The Hidden Games of Organizations*; Palazzoli, et al., (1989) *Family Games: General Models of Psychotic Processes in the Family*. Important articles of which Palazzoli was an author include: Palazzoli, et al., (1977) *Family rituals: a powerful tool in Family Therapy*; Palazzoli, et al., (1980) *Hypothesising-circularity-neutrality: three guidelines for the conductor of the session*.

Palazzoli’s early work was individually focused, psychoanalytic, specialising in treating anorexia nervosa. She later moved to a family systems based approach. In her subsequent work (Milan Systemic therapy) she suggests that time plays an important part in understanding change. This includes time between sessions.

⁴¹ The work I describe here originated in Milan (hence the epithet the Milan Group) at the Institute for Family Study, Milan, a non profit organization. The four clinician-researchers were: Drs. Mara Selvini Palazzoli, Gianfranco Cecchin, Giuliana Prata, and Luigi Boscolo. All were psychiatrists who had undergone psycho-analytic training.

She introduces her ideas about ‘the time of the system’ (the ‘ts’), part of which entails the ability to observe sequences of interaction that repeat or return to the ‘same logical point’ (Howe, 1981), discussed in chapter 7.

Many researcher-clinicians have built on her ideas, including from among her original collaborators: Boscolo, and Bertrando, (1993) *The Times of Time*; Boscolo and Bertrando (1996) *Systemic Therapy with Individuals*; Boscolo, et al., (1987) *Milan systemic Family Therapy*, and a seminal paper by Cecchin (1987), *Hypothesising, circularity, and neutrality revisited: an invitation to curiosity*. Others from different cultures espoused, worked with, and developed, these ideas, notably: Tom Andersen (1987, 1990) in Norway, David Campbell, (Campbell et al., 1994, Campbell and Draper, 1985, Campbell, Draper, and Huffington (1989), Campbell and Groenbaek, 2006) in the UK, and Karl Tomm (1987a, b, 1988) in Canada.

In *Self-Starvation* (Palazzoli, 1974) Palazzoli describes her professional journey from the original Italian publication (1963) when working psychodynamically, to the revised 1974 English version and her growing interest in family therapy and the family of the anorexic patient. She sums up the change in focus: ‘(I)f we take a transpersonal view of the family, *all forms of mental illness must be considered logical adaptations to a deviant and illogical transpersonal system*’ (Palazzoli, 1974: 193). A disturbed person only behaves ‘differently from a so-called normal person because he is reacting to a *different* situation’ (ibid: 193). Psychotic behaviour makes sense once the psychotic situation is included in the description. These ideas owe much to Gregory Bateson’s work on communication and theories about schizophrenia and mental illness (Bateson, 1960, 1969, 1971; Bateson et al., 1956).⁴²

⁴² The film *Family Life* (Ken Loach, 1972) reflects this view, influenced by R. D. Laing (1965), who like Palazzoli was influenced by Bateson’s work.

Time of the system: the 'ts'.

Time is an important theme in Palazzoli's work. '(An) aspect of interpersonal communication that has not received enough attention is time (*T*). As with *X* (content), *Y* (relationship), and *N* (field), it is possible to qualify every communication differently according to the value of time (*T*) within which the other variables occur' (Palazzoli, 1986). Time and timing of symptoms are important, linking onset to events in the family and to age (time) appropriate socio-culturally disrupted expectations. '(W)e must map the time sequences and focus on them as closely as possible. ... All time sequences relative to the symptom, ... are of paramount interest to us' (Palazzoli et al., 1989: 212).

Sebastian Kraemer ⁴³ proposes three questions when considering clinical problems, to which I have added a fourth. All have temporal implications. They are: "*Why now?*" Why at this time even if the problems are longstanding is this now a problem? "*Why worry?*" Why should people be worried depending whether this is a normal life difficulty being treated as a serious problem or a serious problem that could lead to more serious consequences? "*What for?*" What function or role does the problem play in stabilising the situation and what might be the concerns about potential change or improvement? My fourth question is "*What next?*" What are future implications and what needs to be different in the future? These questions originate from thinking in the Milan model.

Palazzoli's clinical application of the 'time of the system' originates in Bateson's work, most clearly described in *The Cybernetics of Self*. Bateson points out a system characteristic that the behaviour of any part of / person in a system is partially prescribed by its previous behaviour which underlies temporal characteristics of all human systems.

'Message material ... must pass around the total circuit, and the *time* required for the message material to return to the place from which it started is a basic characteristic of the whole system. The behaviour of the governor (or any other part of the circuit) is thus in some degree

⁴³ Personal communication 1984.

determined, not only by its immediate past, but by what it did at a time which precedes the present by the interval necessary for the message to complete the circuit. There is thus a sort of determinative *memory* in even the simplest cybernetic circuit' (Bateson, 1971: 287).

Bateson maintained that human beings in any system will be controlled to some extent by information in that system and will have to 'adapt his own actions to its time characteristics and to the effects of his own past action' (ibid: 287). From this he argues that the mental characteristics of the system are *immanent* in the whole, not located in any single part. This reflects his non-Western thinking about mind, pattern, communication, and relationships (Bateson, 1936), discussed in chapters 6 and 8.

Palazzoli was aware of different experiences of time and place by her anorexic patients. '(T)his space-time experience is one of the fundamental aspects of individual existence, of our particular life-style' (Palazzoli, 1974: 140). Her insight was how patients' experience of time changes as they begin to recover as 'the patient (attempts) a reconstruction of her past experience of space and time' (ibid: 140-141) she discovers a new relationship with her present and a different expected future. One patient reports: "Now I live in time, and make the best of it. I used to be crushed by it, by my efforts *to be ready* for anything. Now I am ready, precisely because I don't have to be" (ibid: 142). This reflects the changing time of the patient (her 'time of the system') as she recovered.

Palazzoli describes the 'time of the system', or 'ts':

'Every system, ... is not only characterised by a ps, or nodal point, which is peculiar to the system, but also by its own "time". By its very nature a system consists of an interaction, and this means that a sequential process of action and reaction has to take place before we are able to describe any state of the system *or any change of state*' (Palazzoli et al., 1978: 14).

There are important implications for therapy and understanding the time of change. For 'a sequential process of action and reaction' to occur a certain period of time elapses, and in effective therapy an understanding of the 'ts' is integral to the process. Whereas Freud would have spoken of resistance, Palazzoli suggests

where there are rigid homeostatic systems ‘the ts necessary for change is far greater than in flexible morphogenetic systems’ (ibid: 14-15). When it comes to new ideas or challenging the family’s interactional rhythms a longer period of time is often necessary for the system (patient) to (re-)organise and incorporate changes in relating. The team discovered that without leaving sufficient time between sessions there was not enough time for initial improvements to take root or for family members to react to (the perceived threat of) change. Only with sufficient time can the therapist experience the ‘system’s’ habitual (by its ‘rules’) ways of dealing with the threat of change, which then enables the therapist to devise further interventions to provoke change. This ‘leads to the hypothesis that, contrary to common practice, the intensity of therapy is not in direct relation to the frequency and total number of sessions’ (ibid: 180).

Ts, families, and couples.

The ‘ts’ is not solely the patient’s. Each individual, couple, or family, has its ‘ts’. Equally there is the therapist’s ‘ts’, the system of therapy ‘ts’, and the socio-cultural context in which the therapist works. All have their own synchrony. A simple example from my clinical practice will demonstrate this.

Case vignette: time of the couple.

Towards what I perceived to be the ending of treatment, I gave a couple a particular ritual of forgiveness (ritual, chapter 8) that they should jointly undertake outside the city away from their everyday context. At each of the next three sessions I inquired if they had found an opportunity to do this. Each time I inquired they agreed the ritual was important and explained why they had not had time. At the fourth subsequent session they reported successful completion of the ritual. They described in great detail how they had performed it, spending the whole afternoon in the process, the emotional ordeal it entailed, and the effects it had provoked. They said that *now* they felt ready to end therapy.

On reflection, I realised that my ‘ts’ as therapist thinking that now was right to end and their ‘couple ts’ were different. No harm was done, and what they had written

down as part of the ritual to be carried out together had continued to exert its influence over the weeks, waiting to be performed when their ‘ts’ was right for ending.

How we understand causality, whether linear or circular, and how we construe the world has significant implications for relationships. This is discussed in *Paradox and Counterparadox*. When human behaviour is understood as circular and systemic ‘any punctuation in the sense of before and after, cause and effect, can only be arbitrary’ (Palazzoli et al., 1978: 40). Rather than attribute internal motivations or intrapsychic phenomena, behaviour is described in terms of ‘moves’ and ‘games’ in the service of maintaining the dysfunctional stability of the system. This is where it is helpful to hold in mind the four ‘why/what’ questions. A common difficulty for family members is ‘the mistaken epistemology of the linear model’ (ibid: 41) of direct cause and effect that any one person can dominate or determine how others shall be. Palazzoli argued that the old causal-mechanistic model of Western science should be replaced by a systemic orientation. I quote at length:

‘With this new orientation, the therapist should be able to see the members of the family as elements in a circuit of interaction. None of the members of the circuit have unidirectional power over the whole, although the behaviour of any one of the members of the family inevitably influences the behaviour of others. At the same time it is epistemologically incorrect to consider the behaviour of one individual as the *cause* of the behaviour of the others. This is because every member influences the others, but is in turn influenced by them. The individual acts upon the system, but is at the same time influenced by the communications he receives from it’ (ibid: 5).

It is ‘epistemologically incorrect’ in a systemic framework to think of one person unilaterally causing another to act in a certain way.⁴⁴ This approach changes our

⁴⁴ This understanding led to misunderstanding, since it suggests that the individual does not have responsibility. A statement that ‘*The power is only in the rules of the game* which cannot be changed by the people involved in it’ (Palazzoli et al., 1978: 6) is almost a direct quotation from the work of Bateson. It avoids the question of abuse of power in human relationships such as domestic violence or child abuse.

It seems to me that part of the difficulty is confusing a conceptual level of description in order to understand the process and pattern, with what are appropriate actions in human relationships. This is to some extent a ‘political’ question. It is also about differentiating professional roles in mental

thinking about time and questions a dualistic world-view. If causality is circular but time's arrow has a linear direction, Palazzoli's model requires a different understanding of time.

In Milan Systemic therapy the therapist focuses on relationships as a countermove to patients' attempts to control relationships where they perceive they have lost control and where attempts to control represent the epistemological error. Symptoms are seen in the context of particular relationships (the ps) at a particular time (ts). Distress results in a positive feedback loop that *increases* the behaviour *preceding* the distress. 'Such positive feedback would provide a verification that it was really that particular behaviour which brought about the discomfort, and might increase the discomfort to some threshold level at which change would become possible' (Bateson, 1971: 298). In this model the patient's activities become attempted solutions to problems that 'resist' resolution, and become 'the problem' (Watzlawick et al., 1974). In Bateson's words,

'the possible existence of such a positive feedback loop, which will cause a runaway in the direction of increasing discomfort ... is not included in conventional theories of learning. But a tendency to verify the unpleasant by seeking repeated experience of it is a common human trait. It is perhaps what Freud called the 'death instinct'' (Bateson, 1971: 299).⁴⁵

This reflects a different understanding of behaviours (symptoms) not reliant on repression or internal forces but on stuck, repeated relational problem-solving moves within a social relational context.

The Palazzoli model introduces a time framework, the time of repetition, - that partially reflects Freud's compulsion to repeat, - of pattern and rhythm, and from careful observation over time, of predictability of action and response. In Palazzoli's model this is the 'time of the system'. Freud identified this, yet his

health work. Haley makes the point: 'What therapists have in common is independent of a particular profession. ... A therapist must find a way to follow the rules of his clinical profession and also be a therapist, and at times the two are incompatible' (Haley, 1980: 273). Goldner (Goldner et al., 1990) and her colleagues address the problem of drawing on apparently incompatible models in their work with domestic violence.

⁴⁵ And also 'the compulsion to repeat'.

medical model and socio-cultural context did not 'allow' him to consider such a relational intervention.

'No one who has any experience of the rifts which so often divide a family will, if he is an analyst, be surprised to find that the patient's closest relatives sometimes betray less interest in his recovering than in remaining as he is. When, as so often, the neurosis is related to conflicts between members of a family, the healthy party will not hesitate long in choosing between his own interest and the sick party's recovery' (Freud, 1917: Vol. XVI, 459).⁴⁶

One of the difficulties is how to describe communication and relational being. Freud emphasises language and words in psycho-analysis. Palazzoli suggests that 'we are imprisoned by the absolute incompatibility between the two primary systems in which the human being lives: the living system, dynamic and circular, and the symbolic system (language), descriptive, static, and linear' (Palazzoli et al., 1978: 52). We are constrained to use one means (language) to describe another (behavioural) 'to use a dichotomization to describe a transaction, to use a dichotomization to introduce a series of dichotomizations' (ibid: 52), in terms of 'before' and 'after', of 'cause' and 'effect'. This easily results in dualistic thinking. In a circular model it is possible to escape this dichotomization and see these as complementary aspects.

Paradoxical communication.

The Milan group identified a pattern in the lives of families with a schizophrenic member that they describe as paradoxical, like poker players constrained to win come what may but who only observe the actions of the other members 'while remaining restrained by the shared and unspoken prohibition against placing the cards on the table once and for all' (Palazzoli et al., 1978: 35). It is a game where

⁴⁶ We have here an example of how theory informs behaviour. In the same passage, Freud writes: 'Psycho-analytic treatment may be compared with a surgical operation and may similarly claim to be carried out under arrangements that will be most favourable for its success. ... Ask yourselves how many of these operations would turn out successfully if they had to take place in the presence of all the members of the patient's family, who would stick their noses into the field of the operation and exclaim aloud at every incision' (ibid: 459). It is precisely the reactions of family members, their beliefs about the patient's behaviours, the patient's responses to family members' views and relationships, which becomes the field of observation and location of systemic treatment.

each participant has to believe he is winning but must keep this secret from the others.⁴⁷ ‘It is an absurd game, whose players are determined to prevail while remaining within a game whose principal rule precisely forbids either prevailing or, reciprocally, succumbing’ (Ibid: 35). This game without end is timeless. Transactions are circular and symmetrical. Each move is met by a countermove. Threats of withdrawing exacerbate the circular process, so the only way to leave is to become ‘different, alienated, estranged,’(ibid: 36) although physically present. This is

‘the genius of the schizophrenic – who has become a master of the acrobatic leap from one logical level to another, who changes the logical level while signalling that he is not really changing it, who, like a Christ, has made the ultimate, supreme leap from the class of *doing* to the class of all classes, that of *being*’ (ibid: 36).

When the nature of *being* remains indeterminate, when relationships are not and cannot be defined, the game becomes paradoxical. The therapist who engages with this class of communication must understand phenomenologically the kinds of redundancy that the family employs as a first step to introducing therapeutic paradoxes (counter-paradoxes) that will ultimately break the timeless circular game.

The team realised they had to take account of the ‘ts’ of the family, and that to interrupt the family’s rhythm longer intervals between sessions were needed. This allowed the therapists to observe more accurately feedback from the previous session ‘proceeding by layers, almost in a circular manner, from the outermost points toward the central nodal point, action upon which can trigger the greatest transformation’ (ibid: 49). The more stuck the family, the longer the interval between sessions (Boscolo et al., 1987).⁴⁸ The focus is to understand and defeat

⁴⁷ ‘Game’ has nothing to do with fun, relaxation, enjoyment. Relationships as games can be abusive and dangerous. They may be lethal. War is a ‘game’ which has rules that are often broken. Eric Berne (1968) uses the idea of ‘game’ in Transactional Analysis. Every ‘game’ has its duration, rhythm, and pattern and rules for extending duration by injury or extra time.

⁴⁸ This is counter-intuitive. In a rational world, the more stuck, the more serious the situation, the more frequent should be the therapeutic sessions. To do this would be to join the patient’s game, where the patient ‘has’ to defeat the therapy. There is a paradoxical feel to the ‘message’ given by the therapist that so serious is the problem, a longer interval between sessions is called for.

the game, not the individual or the family, and time is always part of any 'game'. As Boscolo comments, 'I like to use time interventions because I think that one of the sources of "pathology" in families is the rigid ideas about time people impose on their relationships' (Boscolo et al., 1987: 250).

Circular questions.

An important therapeutic interviewing technique based on their systemic epistemology was 'circular questioning'. *Hypothesising, circularity, neutrality: three guidelines for the conductor of the session*, (Palazzoli et al., 1980) describes the therapist's stance outlined in *Paradox and Counterparadox* (Palazzoli et al., 1978). Many clinicians have taken these ideas further (Andersen, 1987, 1990; Anderson and Goolishian, 1992; Campbell and different colleagues, 1985, 1989, 2006; Hoffman, 1985, 1990; Penn, 1985; Tomm, 1978a, b, 1988) among others.

Circular questioning intends as much to *introduce* information into the human system as to *elicit* information (Tomm, 1987a, b, 1988). Questions are relational, involving the perceptions of one or more persons with respect to at least one other. Explicitly or implicitly they explore the nature of relationships between those present or absent, within different timeframes (past, present, future) actual or hypothetical. Circular questioning addresses behaviours, beliefs, experience, feelings, or emotions. In every instance time contexts are central. For example, depending on the context of the patient, circular questions might include:

- "Who would be most likely to notice if Anne were beginning to feel depressed again?"
- "How long would Anne have to be depressed before someone noticed?"
- "Who would care for your mother if she again began to feel it was her fault that Anne was struggling?"
- "When Johnny gets angry, how would you like your mother to support your father in being the kind of father he would like to be?"
- "If Jane got better too quickly, who do you think would be most likely to be upset?"

- “How does your mother show your father that she needs his support?”
“How do you think your father feels when your mother tries to support him?”
- “Who will first notice that there is some kind of improvement in the family?”
- “If you had not moved from the city, how do you think that family relationships might have been different?”, then naming each family member in turn.

These questions inquire about timed events, often containing or challenging assumptions about family relationships. Members are invited to comment on others’ views or feelings, thus putting them into other people’s shoes, forcing them to take a view from that person’s or that relational perspective. This ‘introduces information’ for everyone about beliefs, fears, hopes, the unspoken, in the family. Such questioning is equally effective when seeing couples or patients individually (Jenkins, 2006; Jenkins and Asen, 1992).

In *The Times of Time*, Boscolo and Bertrando, (1993) take time as a thread in systemic psychotherapy. They suggest three relevant ‘time domains’: *Phenomenological time* when an individual observes himself, called this ‘because phenomenologists have been most interested in defining time in this way’ (Boscolo and Bertrando, 1993: 43). *Sociological time* is ‘the time of interactive systems’ (ibid: 43). *Anthropological time*, the time ‘based on the general assent of the individuals and human groups that make up a culture’ (ibid: 43). Sociological and anthropological time as described seems a weak distinction, but I later develop the concept of multi-layered time in the Durkheim tradition (chapter 5).

Boscolo and Bertrando develop the early ideas of the ‘ts’. They quote Zerubavel’s four time perspectives:

‘One fundamental parameter of situations and events is their *sequential structure*, which tells us in what order they take place. A second major

parameter, their *duration*, tells us how long they last. A third parameter, their *temporal location*, tells us when they take place, whereas a fourth parameter, their *rate of occurrence*, tells us how often they do' (Zerubavel, 1981: 1).⁴⁹

Over half their chapters are devoted to clinical examples. They usefully highlight the danger of diagnosis as 'a label which is by definition timeless' (ibid: 15). Diagnosis freezes the present, begins to fix the future, and narrows options for change.⁵⁰ In systemic thinking, the future can greatly influence the outcome of the present and it has been a focus for clinical innovation (de Shazer, 1991; Penn, 1985; Seikkula and Olson, (2003).

Let us consider these four time elements in Alex's case vignette in this chapter. We had sequential structure of future time to deal with anger; duration was reflected in the thirteen years of analysis and the proposed five more years; this should take place now as temporal location before ending; and the rate of occurrence should be as previously. The analyst's response to the decision to end therapy illustrates how 'the therapist's idea of the time needed for successfully ending therapy may have a very important pragmatic effect in promoting, accelerating, or slowing down change' (Boscolo and Bertrando, 1996: 59).

Comparing the 'time' of Freud and Palazzoli.

Freud and Palazzoli's views about time differ markedly. In the broadest terms Freud centres on the individual and the intrapsychic world. The Unconscious is timeless. Events from the past are replayed, often unrecognisably. Early experiences are re-enacted (endlessly) in adult relationships and may be transposed onto the relationship with the analyst in a phenomenon termed transference. The therapist needs to be sensitive to how peculiarities in the patient

⁴⁹ Zerubavel, E., (1981) *Hidden Rhythms. Schedules and Calendars in Social Life*. Chicago. University of Chicago Press. Cited in Boscolo and Bertando, (1993: 54).

⁵⁰ 'He is depressed' defines the person as he is, as an embodiment of depression, rather than showing more or less depressed behaviour in different circumstances. See also Palazzoli et al., 1978.

may reactivate her/his own early experiences that we term counter-transference.⁵¹ A common characteristic portrays an internal and internalised world, a mental structure characterised by the ego, id, and super-ego as opposing forces in a mental layering of the Unconscious, Preconscious, and Conscious.

A dominant theme involves chronology of an infant-past held timelessly in the mental structure of the (chronological) adult. Stern (1998: 19) refers to ‘developmental theorists working backwards in time’ where normal developmental stages are later used ‘to explain ontogeny of pathogenic forms’ (ibid: 20). Such emphasis on long-term aetiology is mirrored in psychoanalysis by (increasingly, [Green, 2002]) long-term therapy with brief intervals between sessions delving ‘archaeologically’ into not-known-as-remembered (unconscious) history in order to achieve developmental change. The analyst becomes a uniquely important figure for the patient and simultaneously endeavours to reveal as little personal detail as possible, to avoid contaminating the site of activity.⁵²

The Milan Systemic model differs in significant aspects, although the team carried some of their ‘psycho-analytic history’ in their stance of neutrality (Palazzoli et al., 1980) by not revealing personal details to the patient and being agnostic about how the patient should respond. They often had recourse to conceptualising psychoanalytically behind the one-way screen, but drew on their systemic Batesonian approach for designing and delivering interventions.⁵³

⁵¹ In counter-transference, ‘counter’ may be understood as ‘in opposition’ or ‘in parallel’ (Sandler et al., 1992).

⁵² This stance can have a paradoxical Alice in Wonderland feel to it. Not to reveal, to withhold as much as possible, to minimize personal or other information about the therapist in the consulting room (unlike Freud’s room) reveals as much about the therapist as it hides.

⁵³ At an international family therapy conference in Budapest, c1990, we arranged a lunch-time dialogue session with two of the original Milan team, Luigi Boscolo and Gianfranco Cecchin, at the outpatient department of the ‘Lipot’ psychiatric hospital where I was running a three year training programme. Our guests claimed that establishing a close personal rapport with the patient was not central to their work, unlike the approach of Salvador Minuchin, (1974). However, listening to how they discussed their work and observing their practice, it is clear that their effectiveness was due to their powerful presence with their patients. What we say we do or do not do is not necessarily an accurate reflection of practice.

Systemic time is primarily located externally in the social sphere while acknowledging the internal intrapsychic space. The sense of internalised time is more inter- and intra-generational time of family beliefs that may affect change in the contemporary family system. Palazzoli's emphasis on time echoes Freud's 'time of the system' but of different systems. The system for Palazzoli is the immediate family or larger social group (Palazzoli et al., 1986) over intergenerational time. The times that Palazzoli emphasises are duration of treatment (Boscolo and Bertrando, 1993; Palazzoli et al., 1978) and a view of brief therapy (ten or so sessions) over an extended period (one to two years).⁵⁴

The belief that each family has its own time or rhythm (Boscolo et al., 1987; Boscolo and Bertrando, 1993) is a theme throughout their work, even to putting the family in charge of knowing when will be the right time to change, and supporting them if now was not the right time. Of course, timing in psychodynamic psychotherapy is important, and Casement (1985) reminds us that a 'correct' interpretation delivered at the wrong moment (not the patient's 'ts' for change) will not be effective. The Milan team realization that longer intervals between sessions are often more effective seems counter-intuitive. It locates tension and responsibility for change in the family system rather than the therapist.

Unlike much psycho-analytic practice, an active time dimension introduced by the Milan school is made specific by asking questions about the future, derived from the patient or the therapist as expected or feared, (Penn, 1985; Tomm, 1987a, b, 1988). One advantage about a future orientation, however difficult, is that as it has not happened no one can be blamed.

These ideas reflect different notions of time, neither being right or wrong. When they are not set up in opposition (as has historically not been the case) they generate a unique bin-ocular vision. They provide the foundation from which to examine a number of philosophical and anthropological descriptions of time.

⁵⁴ Long term, brief therapy.

Chapter 3.

Epistemologies of time: philosophical perspectives.

The Ancients.

‘If the future and the past do exist, I want to know where they are’
(Augustine, 1961: 267).

Aims.

I begin this chapter on philosophical perspectives on time with a caveat. ‘To most people who have been educated in philosophy the idea of anything psychical which is not also conscious is so inconceivable that it seems to them absurd and refutable simply by logic’ (Freud, 1923: Vol: XIX: 13). Because an idea or feeling is not consciously known does not preclude its reality, but such a view suggests possible difficulties for us in the philosophical world.

I examine time from chosen philosophical views, a very different world to anthropology and psychotherapy. It is a world often of abstraction and reason, which has its critics among philosophers (Midgley, 2005). I explore whether philosophical approaches can enhance our understanding of time and change in psychotherapy. If it seems I am plundering ideas from outside my field, in a sense this is true, but I have no hesitation to inquire how scholarship from other disciplines can enhance my professional world.

I have chosen certain Western philosophers who have attended to time to help me explore psychotherapeutic time. Being such a large field I have to be selective. I have chosen three philosophers from ancient Greece: Parmenides, Plato, and Aristotle, and then St Augustine, in this chapter. In chapter 4, I mainly take philosophers from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, being at least partially

contemporary with Freud and Palazzoli. These include Edmund Husserl, Martin Heidegger, J.M.E. McTaggart, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, and Paul Ricoeur.

In this chapter I consider Parmenides' understanding of our ability to self-reflect, and whether it is meaningful to think of past or future. I examine the 'instant', or 'moment' in Plato's *Parmenides* and *Timaeus*, and Aristotle's ideas about the now and the relationship between time as number and change. These are relevant, but it is not yet clear whether they add to notions of time in psychotherapy. I address Augustine's question about what time is, when it is 'known' but cannot be articulated, and whether this usefully adds to my quest. All this may be problematic, since in therapy we often start from abnormal states of mind to understand the 'normal'⁵⁵ while philosophy begins with and usually remains with the 'normal'.

Language is important. I have used certain words in the preceding paragraph that can be interchangeable but also have specific connotations. They are: instant, moment, now, present. Some writers favour one above the others. 'Moment' is perhaps the most ambiguous. It means 'instant' as a specific point in time, seemingly without duration. Or 'moment' has duration, albeit short, involving more of a sense of beginning and end. We might be 'in the moment', even in the 'now', but to describe now or instant is to accept that that moment is already past and no longer 'now'. This links with the phenomenon of change, and even how models of psychotherapy locate the site and nature of change differently. For some thinkers 'now' has more shape and thickness:

'The central idea about different moments of change is this: During these moments a "real experience" emerges, somewhat unexpectedly. This experience happens between two (or more) people. It is about their relationship. It occurs in a very short period of time that is experienced as *now*. That *now* is a present moment with duration in which a micro-drama, an emotional story, about their relationship unfolds. ... The moment enters a special form of consciousness and is encoded in memory. And importantly, it rewrites the past' (Stern, 2004: 22).

⁵⁵ This is not always the case: see Carter et al. (1989a), Lewis et al. (1976), Walsh (1982).

Stern suggests that change occurs in a step-wise, non-linear form, which is just outside or beyond the ordinary and everyday.

The two case vignettes of Caitlin and Peter, and Dan, provide a psychotherapeutic thread to ground the material clinically and contextualise some of these philosophical thoughts. Discussion of their relevance to time in psychotherapy comes at the end of the chapter.

Case vignette: Caitlin and Peter.

Caitlin and Peter were seen in therapy for eight months. They had been in an emotionally fraught relationship for eighteen months.

In one session, they described an incident that seemed characteristic of their relationship. The previous week they were outside a theatre and Caitlin 'lost' Peter. She had left him five minutes earlier to collect their tickets. He was not there on her return, and he had turned off his phone. When she eventually found him she could not contain her rage at him for abandoning her.

It became apparent in therapy that Caitlin's feelings of abandonment were unbearably 'real' in a horrible past-intruding-on-the-present experience. Her sense of what had been then and what was now had become confused. She described how, in that moment, she began to relive her history of an emotionally absent mother and physically abandoning father as she searched for Peter. It was a sense of primitive, emotional loss, compounded by the memory of her mother's gruesome death while drunk in a fire six years earlier.

At that moment outside the theatre, her sense of self-being collapsed as her past flooded her present. Her impotent rage, fear of losing Peter, and fragile sense of self-worth, were like a terrified child's, as he now embodied everyone who had ever let her down. She described how her presentness had reverted to an earlier present. In that instant of panic she had felt again like an abandoned child. Caught in her 'time warp', she could not step outside this fugue moment and

‘mentalise’ her then-as-now-self.⁵⁶ Such moments of intense experience often result in a serious reduction in ‘the ability to check and evaluate one’s own mental states’ (Asen and Fonagy, 2012: 353) with increased likelihood of attributing negative feelings to others. In this process all sense of time (*chronos*) can disappear.

Although focusing here on Caitlin, it emerged how Peter’s old scripts complemented hers. They included never feeling good enough, feeling criticised or always in the wrong, and fearful of the intimacy he craved. His obsessional preoccupation with his artistic life and need for affirmation reinforced Caitlin’s repeated sense of exclusion, loss, and invisibility.

There is a delicate balance in such a situation. The therapist has to navigate these confusing and conflicting processes, ever aware of past-present confusions and present-future anxieties. If his focus stays only on the present-moment he will not engage them (Jenkins, 2005), and if he focuses only on the couple’s re-activated pasts, he risks becoming a prisoner of their fears like them (Jenkins, 2006).

There were other time considerations for therapy. These included the bounded time of the sessions that never seemed long enough; the time of their short relationship which had stalled, never progressing beyond an initial ‘falling in love’ addictive romantic stage of sexual abandonment in the other (Fishbane, 2007) that returned endlessly to ‘the same logical point’ (Howe, 1981);⁵⁷ and the child-like age (time) at which they experienced themselves when distressed. Inside and outside shifting realities of time and place in their relationship became part of their endless struggle to relate safely enough to each other (Jenkins, 2006). Often, ‘relationships are a cure, and that’s the problem’⁵⁸ in attempting to resolve

⁵⁶ ‘Mentalising’ refers to an ability to self reflect, to see others as other, the self as then and now, with a sense narrative. Seeing oneself from the outside and the other from the inside is part of this. (Eia Asen and Peter Fonagy: *Mentalising Families and Couples*, workshop, Institute of Family Therapy, London, 1st December 2011.)

⁵⁷ It is perhaps no coincidence that the French phrase for the moment of sexual ecstasy is ‘la petite mort’. Death may be seen when time (as we know it) ends or is eternal.

⁵⁸ Christopher Dare, personal communication, 2009.

earlier problems or heal past hurts. Caitlin's subjective experience of not-being is acute. Nothing is real and all is too real. Neither state feels survivable in that instant of abandonment. In their therapy it was difficult to create a safe enough relationship that would survive their anxieties about change, just as they repeatedly shied away in their relationship from an intimacy that would have enabled this by always seeking sexual intimacy that 'anaesthetised' past and current hurts and blocked self-reflection.

After serious difficulties or temporary estrangement their pattern of re-connecting was passionate, 'perfect' sexual intercourse, with the intention *then* of talking about their relationship, their needs, and their future. In their desperate search for intimacy they sought the momentary solace of a 'petite mort' of orgasmic losing self in the other. While complaining in individual sessions that they never resolved anything, Peter was unable to ensure that they spoke *before* love-making so that their sexual union could *then* become a celebration of what they could share, rather than avoidance of self-reflecting emotional intimacy and vulnerability.

Conversation requires and takes time. It has a 'thickness'. Orgasmic climax transported them out of time lost in a moment of the paradoxical 'petite mort' of fleeting eternity. Their *out-of-time* ecstasy interrupted the possibility of *in-time* intimacy. To reverse the phenomenological order of what came before and what came after held the key to facing their dilemmas about intimacy. If we think strictly in temporal terms for Caitlin, we see the crystallization of her past into her present, which blocks her. In order to live in the present and with hope it is her future potential that needed to crystallise into her present.

Holding these ideas, I turn to concepts of time from the early period of Western philosophy.

Parmenides.

Parmenides' influence in twenty-first century Western thought is far-reaching. He challenges his contemporaries' understanding about how we think, and his ideas permeate to the present time.

‘Parmenides’s ideas have had so powerful a grip on the evolution of scientific ideas ... Indeed, admiring or appreciating the ideas of both ‘classical’ and ‘modern’ physics is ... almost the same thing as appreciating the influence of Parmenidean ideas’ (Popper, 1965: 147).

Parmenides of Elea, (515-440 BC) was known as *Oulidades Physikos* or healer philosopher (Geldard, 2007) thus reflecting the historical relationship of philosophy and healing. Both disciplines share an interest in the human mind, knowing, and the ability to reflect (Asen and Fonagy, 2012). Parmenides' poem *On Nature*⁵⁹ is divided into two, *The Way of Truth* and *The Way of Opinion* sometimes translated as *The Way of Illusion*. It provides an early example of, ‘the consciousness of the ‘knowing animal’ ’ (Tallis, 2007: 2), and awareness of truths that originate beyond immediate experience. This is similar to psychotherapy.

‘Presocratic philosophy in the fifth and sixth centuries BCE marked a crucial step in the long transformation of human beings from stimulus-driven sentient beasts to enquiry-driven persons. ... The ‘Parmenidean moment’ was key to this step’ (ibid: 11).

Parmenides attempted to understand the nature of change and invariance, how we know, and how we know that we know. Without knowing that we know, lacking awareness of self as self and other as other, there is only the immediate moment. Not knowing that we know does not preclude memory but it precludes the ability to articulate that memory and give it explicit meaning. A sense of self in different places implies a sense of time, or some way to identify difference, even if only as a sequence of *Nows* (Barbour, 2000).

There appears to be no past or future in *The Way of Truth*. Things either are or they are not, and if they are not it is impossible to conceive of them: ‘Never must you come to think that Nothingness can be’ (Geldard, 2007: 25). Parmenides

⁵⁹ Only some hundred lines or fragments remain.

questions the existence of being and time. He asserts that now exists without past or future. And if there is only One and no ‘coming-to-be’, there is only infinite eternity without beginning or end. Appealing to reason Parmenides describes an endless now without past or future, the absurd in contemporary existentialism (Camus, 1957; Sartre, 1938, 1945; Stevens, 1997) with no clearer conclusion to the nature of our universe than contemporary science (Barbour, 2000; Falk, 2004, 2009; Hawking, 1990, Hawking and Mlodinow, 2010). *The Way of Truth* therefore reflects the uncompromising world as it is:

‘Nor can Being be divided, since it is all One.
Nor can it be dissolved, to become a lesser thing,
But all things are full of Being and continuous.
For Being holds Being close in powerful bonds,
Without beginning or ending, because Becoming
And Extinction have been driven far away.
True conviction has sent them far away’ (Geldard, 2007: 26).

Only ‘what is, is’, and ‘nothingness cannot exist’. According to reason all is immutable, and change is impossible, unlike the world of seeming, change, and flux of *The Way of Opinion*. This world leads to the delusion that ‘the world order (*diakosmos*) of change’ (Popper, 1965: 149) exists. It is not to be trusted, but results in false understanding of ‘the unfounded conventional claims of knowledge: the claim that we know from our senses that this world of change does exist’ (ibid: 149).

In the history of thought, an important element for some scholars is the relationship of reason/logic and sense/subjective, but Parmenides dismisses the subjective as untrustworthy. Being is continuous, indivisible, without beginning or ending.

‘Only one account of the Way remains: Being Is!
Along this path are many signs: Being is uncreated,
Eternal, Whole, of only one substance, unmoved
And without end ...

Nor can we say it Was or it Will Be,
Because It Is Now, Whole, One, Continuous.

For Nothingness has no words or cohering thought.

Nor can It come to be in some future time.
Thus, coming-to-be and dying are unheard of' (Geldard, 2007: 25).

Time implies beginning and ending in human experience, but such human subjectivity is untrustworthy. If Parmenides is correct, we are left with uncertainty about how to deal with subjective experience, even if of a now devoid of past or future.

Part of Parmenides' contribution is to question how we know the world. He proposes reason as the basis for knowledge: 'His proofs are by *reductio ad absurdum*' (Popper, 1965: 160). There is 'a theoretical world of reality behind the phenomenal world of experience' (Ibid: 160). Behind this world of experience and appearance possibly lies the unchanging world of what is, which means we should mistrust *The Way of Opinion* and accept only unchanging timeless time. Appealing to 'let highest Reason judge' (Geldard, 2007: 24) Parmenides dismisses the illusory world of subjective experience.

Caitlin struggled with feeling she did not have a stable sense of self-being. She desperately wanted her life and relationships to be different, yet change terrified her. How could she change and still remain who she was if she had no sense of self? She lived her life mainly in a changing world of feeling and subjectivity, the not-to-be-trusted *Way of Opinion/Illusion*, fleeing her personal *Way of Truth*, the pain of 'what is, is' and believing that nothingness *can* exist and is too awful to contemplate. Parmenides seems to offer either-or; the world is one way and not the other. Time exists or does not exist when a perspective that embraced both-and in different measure would reflect the greater complexity of Caitlin's world.

Parmenides raises an important issue therapeutically. He explores the problem of change and how a thing can change and still be itself. If change is possible, it must occur presumably in a context of time and space; 'How can a thing change without losing its identity? If it remains the same, then it does not change; yet if it does not remain the same, then it is no longer that thing that has changed'

(Popper, 1973: 113). The popular French aphorism, ‘plus ça change, plus c’est la même chose’ conceals a Parmenidean truth. Change and time are central to psychotherapy as is ‘the intuition that beneath the surface of ever-changing appearance there is an immutable, unalterable, undifferentiated reality, an intuition which was undeniably Parmenidean, [that] has been hugely influential’ (Tallis, 2007: 16). Or, possibly, change occurs out of time, requiring a different order of description. If so, we must ask how that can be.

Plato.

Parmenides influenced Plato who confronted these same questions about time in *Parmenides* and *Timaeus*. Both were written in his later period.⁶⁰ Before outlining the main arguments in these texts as they relate to time, I describe an incident in therapy with Dan. One difference to Caitlin’s experience is that this occurs *in* the session. In both instances events relate to their history and memory, but my recounting of them is different. Caitlin’s recounts an earlier event, while Dan’s is my contemporaneous account. Apart from the events, these are simple examples of kinds of memory, auto-noetic and semantic (Tulving, 2005) that I discuss in chapter 5.

Case vignette: Dan’s rage.

I saw Dan and his wife in couple therapy. He also saw a male therapist in individual therapy. In the previous session Dan described how well a weekend camping in the New Forest with his adult son from his first marriage had gone. Now, he seemed despondent about himself as son, husband, and father, and his rage took over. Instead of articulating it symbolically in words, he began to roar, punching the small table beside him until it half collapsed under his assault. Still shouting, he picked up a pot-plant, banged it on the half-destroyed table, shook it at me, and got up to leave. I quietly said: “Please sit down, Dan”. After a pause he sat down, angry, but now crying. Then came the story of all the men who had let him down; absent father, sexually abusing male teacher, his male therapist, me,

⁶⁰ There is some question as to whether the *Timaeus* belongs to the middle period. The general consensus seems to favour his later period with *Timaeus* following *Parmenides*.

- among others, all those he wanted to annihilate. At that moment, the invisible boundary between the symbolic therapeutic relationship where he could talk out his despair and the urge to act out his rage at all men who disappoint hung in the balance.

He railed against me like a helpless child flailing at adults who are uncomprehending of his elemental needs for comfort and affirmation, and *simultaneously* as someone who is aware of himself as an adult in the present. Unlike the experience of patients who lose all sense of where they are spatially or temporally as Caitlin reported, he remained conscious of his adult physical presence *and* overwhelmed by his primitive ‘narcissistic’ hurt. This moment is not simply Plato’s instant out of time that we will consider. It is more complex embodying thickness and depth (Husserl, 1991, discussed in chapter 4).

Parmenides.

The main protagonists are Parmenides, a young Socrates and an Aristotle. How much represents Plato’s own views in this and the other dialogues is open to question but we may assume that it is mainly through Parmenides that Plato speaks. Early in the debate the proposition concerns the nature of ‘forms’:

‘ “And so all the characters that are what they are in relation to each other have their being in relation to themselves but not in relation to things that belong to us. ... These things that belong to us, although they have the same names as the forms, are in their turn what they are in relation to themselves but not in relation to the forms; and all the things named in this way are *of* themselves but not *of* the forms.” ’ (Plato, 1997: 367-368.)

Discussion of the nature of forms, patterns of forms, the property of different levels of understanding, and relationships between parts and wholes, runs throughout the discourse: ‘ “...(F)orms are what they are *of* themselves and in relation to themselves, and things that belong to us are, in the same way, what they are in relation to themselves” ’ (ibid: 368). Our relationships are not with abstract concepts, mastery or slavery for instance, but with the person who is master or slave. Parmenides questions the nature of philosophy. The philosopher’s place is to hypothesise the consequence if the thing is, and the

consequence if the same thing is not, for to achieve a full view of the truth, a philosopher must ‘hypothesise as being or as not being’ (ibid: 370).

The example of time arises from this debate about like and unlike. Its nature, existence, and measurement, are not in question here. Time, being older than, or younger than, or the same age as, are the subject matter in regard to likeness, unlikeness and ‘equality of time’ (ibid: 375). The first attempt in this dialogue to define an understanding of time follows a debate about the nature of older and younger.

‘ “Now, don’t you think that ‘was’ and ‘has come to be’ and ‘was coming to be’ signify partaking of time past?” - “By all means.” - “And again that ‘will be’ and ‘will come to be’ and ‘will be coming to be’ signify partaking of time hereafter? - “Yes.” - “And that ‘is’ and ‘comes to be’ signify partaking of time now present?” - “Of course.” - “Therefore, if the one partakes of no time at all, it is not the case that it has at one time come to be, was coming to be, or was; or has now come to be, comes to be, or is; or will hereafter come to be, will be coming to be, or will be.” - “Very true.” - “Could something partake of being except in one of those ways?” - “It couldn’t.” ’ (ibid. p. 375.)

Plato does not explore the relationships between these three aspects of time. While it could be possible to partake ‘of no time at all’, there are only three ways of being in time - past, future, or present. ‘To be’ in any sense means to be in one of these time perspectives, for partaking of no time at all is not to exist.

In the example Dan, even in his rage, participates in time, remains conscious of where he is. However desperate he feels, he is able to remain at least partly present. However, it seems likely that qualitatively, Caitlin ceases to know herself existing consciously at moments of acute distress, as when she experienced abandonment by Peter.

Parmenides observes that logically there must be a state where time ceases, (Caitlin/Peter), or at least there is a different kind of time, (Dan).

‘ “The instant seems to signify something such that changing occurs from it to each of two states. For a thing doesn’t change from rest while rest continues, or from motion while motion continues. Rather, this queer

creature, the instant, lurks between motion and rest – being in no time at all – and to it and from it the moving thing changes to resting and the resting thing changes to moving. ... But in changing, it changes at an instant, and when it changes, it would be in no time at all, and just then it would be neither in motion nor at rest” ’ (ibid: 388).

This is an attempt to understand ‘the now’, or ‘instant’ in and out of time that, constantly in flux, is forever in the moment, time without length: ‘(w)hen it is present it has no duration’ (Augustine, 1961: 266). Parmenides questions the nature of time and whether one can partake of it. He concludes that by being, we necessarily partake of time. ‘ “But is *to be* simply partaking of being with time present, just as *was* is communion with being together with time past, and, in turn *will be* is communion with being with time future?” ... “So the one partakes of time, if it in fact partakes of being” ’ (Plato, 1997: 384). This does not resolve the nature of ‘being’, and hence time, a preoccupation of twentieth century existentialist philosophers (Sartre, 1943, 1944, 1945).

Plato’s *Parmenides* implies the indissolubility of being and time, leaving the nature of ‘the instant’ unresolved. I suggest that the ‘instant’ offers an overlooked way of conceptualising those fleeting moments where change occurs in psychotherapy, at the moment of being ‘in no time at all’ while *simultaneously* ‘the one partakes of time’.

These two contentions seem mutually exclusive. They may be so in Parmenides’ *The Way of Truth*, but maybe they can co-exist in the untrustworthy subjective state of *The Way of Opinion*. If so, we face different levels of experience and different kinds of time. This instant (now) may be the *sine qua non* for change as a disjunctive moment ‘in no time at all’ which is necessary to uncouple the what-is-known-before from an unknown-hereafter in a particular kind of instant (time). I suggest this invisible instant has been neglected in understanding what happens to time and change in psychotherapy.

If we return to Dan's outburst, it occurs as if in that moment there is no past or future (Parmenides, Geldard, 2007). He is incandescent, breaking the table. Yet simultaneously he remains adult, present, and angry at his powerlessness. It is hard to distinguish in that instant how much Dan is in and out of time. It becomes clear that this eruption out of 'normal time' in the session, provided a different kind of instant to reflect on and confront later on at the collision of his two painful times: then and now. He oscillates *between* these times and *is* in both. Caitlin and Peter, by contrast, actively seek escape from a time of duration into the timeless ecstasy of sexual climax.

The 'now' in the context of becoming older is relevant to understanding time. The now is everywhere and nowhere, intangible and present, vital and ignored. In the following lengthy quotation, Parmenides grapples with this:

“But it *is* older, isn't it, whenever, in coming to be, it is at the now time, between *was* and *will be*? For as it proceeds from the past to the future, it certainly won't jump over the now.” - “No, it won't.” - “Doesn't it stop coming to be older when it encounters the now? It doesn't come to be, but is then already older when it encounters the now? ... For if it were going forward, it could never be grasped by the now. A thing going forward is able to lay hold of both the now and the later – releasing the now and reaching for the later, while coming to be between the two, the later and the now.” - “True.” - “But if nothing that comes to be can sidestep the now, whenever a thing *is* at this point, it always stops its coming-to-be and then is whatever it may have come to be.” - “Apparently.” - “So, too, the one: whenever in coming to be older, it encounters the now, it stops its coming-to-be and is then older.” ... “Yet the now is always present to the one throughout its being; for the one is always now, whenever it is.” ’ (Plato: 384-385).

The nature of *was*, *is*, and *will be* is not questioned, although Dan's was-and-now are temporarily simultaneous despite a clear sequencing of events in the room. From Plato's preoccupation with complementary opposites emerges the idea that there is only now. This has consequences for psychotherapy. Freud emphasises the importance of history and its influence in the present, while much systemic thinking emphasises the present (the now) with less emphasis on the past. Plato suggests that there is only the present now, as much as the now 'always present to the one throughout its being' is a now that once was in the future, or will be in the

past. This accords with Barbour (2000), for the reality only of *Now*, nearly two and a half millennia after Plato.

Plato's *Parmenides* introduces number. This links 'earlier', 'later', and chronology:

‘ “Now, shall we say in connection with number that things that are more or things that are less come to be and have come to be earlier? ... So of all the things that have number the one has come to be first. ... But that which has come to be first, I take it, has come to be earlier, and the others later; and things that have come to be later are younger than what has come to be earlier. ...” ’ (ibid: 385).

This is not 'number' such as planetary revolutions by which to measure interval and time. We saw aspects of this when noting respective ages, and therefore relationships, in the Smith family (chapter 1). The relevance for psychotherapy rests where the patient becomes confused in a narrative sense of before and after, flow and direction. The question of narrative or episodic time, (Strawson, 2005) or existential disconnection from the world (Sartre, 1938, 1945) will demand further consideration. Only then may we attempt any conclusions about philosophy and time in psychotherapy.

Timaeus.

In *Timaeus*, Plato reiterates ideas about time discussed in *Parmenides*. *Timaeus* is a discourse rather than a dialogue and Timaeus, who is probably 'a dramatic invention of Plato's' (Cooper, 1997: 1224), speaks alone. He presents what may be Plato's creation story. 'According to that story, a divine craftsman or demiurge imposed order and beauty upon a pre-existing chaos to fashion our world in the likeness of an eternal model' (Zeyl, 2000: xiii).

Plato introduces number and time through *Timaeus*. For my purposes it is less important whether Plato believed this literally than his idea that the universe had a beginning. 'The widespread acceptance of Big Bang cosmology has given new

life to the question of what, if anything, caused the Big Bang to occur – thus giving room to the idea that the universe might have been created’ (ibid xiii). Plato says of the god creator; ‘And so he began to think of making a moving image of eternity: ... would make an eternal image, moving according to number, of eternity remaining in unity. This number, of course, is what we now call “time” ’ (Plato, 1997: 1241). Time is the number of revolutions of the sun and moon and other heavenly bodies around the earth. They represent duration, rhythm, pattern, interval, order, sequence, and simultaneity, *inter alia*.

Time’s slippery quality is not so easily pinned down. Days and nights, months and years, are parts of time, while ‘*was* and *will be* are forms of time that have come to be’ (ibid: 1241). When we say *was* and *is* and *will be*, ‘according to the true account only *is* is appropriately said of (time)’ (ibid: 1241) since *was* and *will be* refer to the becoming that passes in time because they are motions. Plato describes approximations of eternity since the Living Thing’s nature that created the universe is eternal, but anything created by that which is eternal is by definition not fully eternal, and so is limited by what we call time, while what is changeless cannot become older or younger. We perceive time that seems eternal and is like number and ‘what has come to be *is* what has come to be, that what is coming to be *is* what is coming to be, and also that what will come to be *is* what will come to be, and that what is not *is* what is not’ (ibid: 1241). Plato concedes that this does not accurately describe these phenomena.

This vision of time is bound up with a Western static cosmological understanding of the universe. The sun, moon, and five other stars ⁶¹ were created for the ‘coming to be of time’, which ‘came to be in order to set limits and to stand guard over the numbers of time’ (ibid: 1242) followed by a description of the path of the stars. The important element is that these celestial bodies ‘were to cooperate in

⁶¹ The two stars mentioned are the Dawnbearer, the Morning Star or Venus, and Hermes or Mercury.

producing time' (ibid: 1242) each star completing its allotted journey to produce days, months, and years. Time is the movement of all these bodies. It is possible,

'to discern that the perfect number of time brings to completion the perfect year at that moment when the relative speeds of all eight periods have been completed together and measured by the circle of the Same that moves uniformly, have achieved their consummation' (ibid: 1243).

This suggests *purpose* and *intent* in movement of the stars. Plato proposes that before the coming to be of time, 'the universe had already been made to resemble in various respects the model in whose likeness the god was making it' (ibid: 1243). He describes the existence of the universe 'within the real Living Thing' (ibid: 1243) and this agrees with some current thought in theoretical physics about the origins of the universe (Barbour, 2000; Falk, 2009; Hawking, 1990). Plato implies pre-existence in a mind *before* existence in the universe. Hawking (1990) suggests something similar that we treat the Big Bang as the *de facto* beginning of time for all practical purposes, since we cannot know anything that precedes it.

The ability to distinguish periods of time and the cycles of the sun 'has led to the invention of number, and has given us the idea of time and opened the path to inquiry into the nature of the universe' (Ibid: 1249-1250). What follows this work of Intellect (*nous*) is an explanation of how things have come about by Necessity in the universe. The question of time is not explicitly addressed again.

Number is important for understanding time in *Parmenides* and *Timaeus*. In *Timaeus* Plato suggests ways to understand time and proposes ideas about emerging and coming to be. These are relevant to psychotherapy. Process is important in the sense of coming to be from what either was not, or was coming to be something other, or is coming to be something other in the future.

With this in mind, I turn to Aristotle's discussion of number, time, and the now in relation to future and past.

Aristotle.

In *Physics*, Aristotle states that the question is ‘first, whether or not (time) is a real entity and, second, what its nature is’ (Aristotle, 1999: 102). Roark (2011: 176) suggests that ‘Aristotle’s view on the nature of time can be expressed ... as distance is to space, so time is to motion’, making time a measure if motion represents change, although this will not in itself help with how to measure time in relation to change. We may say that change is slow or fast, but time is not changed by the pace of change. The dilemma is:

‘Some of it has happened and does not exist, and some of it is in the future and does not yet exist; these constitute both the infinite stretch of all time and the time that is with us at any moment; but it would appear to be impossible for anything which consists of things that do not exist to exist itself’ (Aristotle, 1999: 102-103).

Because it is either no more or yet to come, Aristotle concludes that we are left only with now, but ‘(t)he now is not a part of time, because a part measures the whole and the whole must consist of its parts; time, however, does not seem to consist of nows’ (ibid: 103). Although time seems not to consist of nows, and thus does not exist in time, the ‘now’ appears to divide past from future. This would be similar to Plato’s instant. The now makes past and future continuous. It ‘is what holds time together, ... and it is a limit of time, in the sense that it is the beginning of one time and the end of another’ (ibid: 112) which, being future and past, describe different kinds of time. The now represents a defined point in time when something did or did not, will or will not happen.

Aristotle explores the nature of now in terms of sequencing and simultaneity. Different nows cannot be simultaneous, except where ‘one might contain another as a longer stretch of time contains a shorter stretch’ (ibid: 103). For a later now to exist, an earlier one must have ceased to exist. Aristotle concludes: ‘... the now is a limit, and a finite time can be grasped’ (ibid: 103) although he proposes that a state may exist where ‘nows’ can temporarily be simultaneous, and not earlier or later. ‘(T)o be one and the same now’ (ibid: 103) then ‘nothing would

be either earlier or later than anything else' (ibid: 103). All times would exist simultaneously in the present.

We see the problem of how to define time when using 'time' to describe 'time': 'Time, however, is not defined in terms of time: it is not defined as being such-and-such an amount of time, or as being such-and-such a kind of time. So it is easy to see that time is not change' (ibid: 104). Aristotle introduces here the idea of 'such-and-such a kind of time'. We should hold in mind the possibility that there is a 'such-and-such a kind of time', or different kinds of time with possible relevance to time in psychotherapy.

While time is not change, Aristotle suggests that time is an aspect of change, and that change follows the nature of 'magnitude'. Since magnitude is continuous, so is change, 'and because change is continuous, time is too' (ibid: 105). In order to measure change or magnitude, we need a concept of before and after, of earlier and later, so that 'what is before and after is a change' (ibid: 105) and from this we know time in terms of the limits of before (earlier) and after (later). Descriptions of before and after is what we call time 'when we have received an impression of the before and after in a process of change' (ibid: 105). What comes between the before and after, between the earlier now and the later now, we call time. Time becomes the awareness of *alteration* between the different nows we describe when we say time has passed. This describes change but 'time is not change, ... it does not exist without change. So ... we had better start with this fact and try to see better what aspect of change time is' (ibid: 105). Aristotle seems to imply something of the tensions of time and change, a focus that was important in the work of Palazzoli and her team (chapter 2).

If we have only a single now, neither time nor change can be measured, since there is no limit between one part and another. In this formulation 'this is what time is: a number of change in respect of before and after', so that 'now determines time, in respect of before and after' (ibid: 106). Continuing further on, time 'is measured by change and change is measured by time (and this is because

the quantity of the change of the time is measured by a change determined in time)' (ibid: 116) which becomes circular in argumentation. It suggests a self-reinforcing loop of time → change → time, but does not help understand how change is measured in relation to time. The relevance is psychotherapy's concern with intra- and inter-personal change and how psychodynamic and systemic therapy understand time and change differently. Giving such importance to time may mean we alter how we conceptualise therapy.

Despite this, time remains intangible. We may measure it in terms of speed, magnitude, distance, number, many kinds of metaphor, yet its essence remains elusive. Is the now of Aristotle the same *Now* of Julian Barbour? ⁶² Aristotle foresees Barbour's argument that time does not exist by two and a half thousand years. He compares the now to an object that moves through different places but remains unchanged.

'And a now follows a moving object, just as time follows change; for it is the moving object that enables us to know before and after in change, but the now exists in so far as the before and after are numerable. So in the case of before and after too, whatever it is that the now is is the same, (since it is what is before and after in change), but what it is to be the now is different (since the now exists in so far as the before and after are numerable). ... So in a sense the now is always the same, and in a sense it is not, because the same goes for a moving object' (Aristotle, 1999: 107).

Without now there would be no time and without time, no now, and although continuous, time is distinguished by the now. Yet, Aristotle suggests, the now is not a part of time, just as the division of a movement is not part of the movement. It 'is an end and a beginning of time, but not of the same time' (ibid: 113). It marks the boundary between past and future and is qualitatively different from before and after.

Aristotle introduces the idea of recurrence, which is manifest in rhythm and pattern. Recurrence describes another kind of time, a time that returns to the same point, such as harvest to harvest, but at different temporal points. Recurrence is

⁶² Barbour does not reference Aristotle in *The End of Time*, yet the overlap of ideas is remarkable.

important in psychotherapy as it suggests degrees of stability / no-change and the predictability of pattern. Where such recurrence is identified as part of problem maintaining behaviour (Watzlawick et al., 1974) the therapist (or shaman) devises interventions intended to provoke change. Such phenomena of recurrence may be thought of in Freud's terms of compulsion to repeat or Palazzoli's concept of the time of the system.

One of Aristotle's struggles was how to conceive two nows occurring simultaneously. The Planck satellite (chapter 1) provides images of 'the afterglow of creation' of energy emitted some 13.69 billions years ago (Connor, 2010; Morison, 2010). Aristotle may have been more prescient than he could have imagined. It is possible for events from such different times to be seen simultaneously. It is not an uncommon phenomenon for patients in psychotherapy to experience events from different chronological times simultaneously, as did Caitlin and Dan in different ways. What seems to happen is patients 'amalgamate the later now into a unit with the earlier now and eliminate all the time in between' (Aristotle, 1999: 104-105). In treatment the most extreme example of this would be trauma. Aristotle's description captures the sense of time being compressed. The Planck satellite example describes two different times simultaneously observed externally and not dependent on the observer's state of mind, while clinical experience suggests the simultaneous presence of two different times, or kinds of time, experienced internally arising from the patient's state of mind.

Aristotle argues that past and future do not exist. Augustine argues similarly. Past and future do not exist, but do not exist in different ways. Something from the past existed and ceased existing, while something in the future has not yet existed. The past had potential, and has crystallised in one outcome; the future still has potential and has yet to crystallise. If Caitlin, Peter, or Dan, said they wanted to undo the past, (which partially characterised Caitlin's struggle to free

herself from her history) it would be absurd,⁶³ and to the extent they attempted this, they would become caught in an endless loop of repetition (Freud, 1925: Vol. XX). Attempting to change the past is a category mistake. The best may be a new relationship with the facts of the past. Ultimately, therapeutic change needs to focus from present to future.

Analysing future time clinically as a measure of potential is helpful. The past is over and has crystallised and the future is yet to crystallise. The now in the present is the moment when crystallization happens, and a choice is made. Caitlin repeatedly re-crystallised her past, while eventually Dan was able to crystallise a different potential future.

Augustine.

Seven hundred years after Plato and Aristotle, Augustine explores the nature of time in book XI of *Confessions* (Augustine, 1961). Unlike his Greek predecessors, he writes from a position of faith. He seeks to understand God and his will, and the nature of creation as a follower of Christ. Like Plato in *Timaeus* this is a creation story. He grapples with the nature of eternity, time, and what preceded time, to account for the existence of time, matter, and God. Before anything existed,

‘there must have been some material thing created before heaven and earth, something which, by its motion in time, could lend itself as a mouthpiece through which those words could be spoken in time. But there was no material thing before heaven and earth; or, if there was, you must certainly have created it by an utterance outside time’ (Augustine, 1961: 258).

This is a fundamental existential question.⁶⁴ How could matter be created unless there were some force or being ‘outside time’ that could bring it into being? It is not the theological argument that is important here, except for eternity that is ever

⁶³ Not the ‘absurd’ of the existentialists, in full consciousness of one’s situation and knowing one’s destiny. ‘Toute la joie silencieuse de Sisyphe est là. Son destin lui appartient’ (Camus, 1942:165).

⁶⁴ Existential philosophers (Camus, 1942, 1957; Sartre, 1938, 1943, 1945, 1948) take this a stage further, discussed in chapter 4 where I explore what is required to live in the present and confront the ‘absurd’ of future death without despair.

still, and time that is never still. My focus is future, present, and past; duration; the changing nature of the present; measuring time; and time's existence outside the instant, concepts most relevant to psychotherapy.

Augustine asks: 'What, then, is time? I know well enough what it is, provided that nobody asks me; but if I am asked what it is and try to explain, I am baffled' (Augustine, 1961: 264). However: 'All the same I can confidently say that I know that if nothing passed, there would be no past time; if nothing were going to happen, there would be no future time; and if nothing *were*, there would be no present time' (ibid: 264).

Augustine considers Aristotle's dilemma of the past that has gone and is no longer and the future that is not yet. Neither exists, but similar to Aristotle, they are two kinds of potential not existing. If the future has potential to crystallise, it possesses the potential *not* to crystallise, or not to crystallise one way rather than another.⁶⁵ This leaves the present. If that did not move to become the past and were always present, it would 'not be in time but eternity' (ibid: 264) and if future and past exist 'I want to know where they are' (ibid: 267). If the present is by virtue of moving to become the past, we cannot really say that the present is 'when the reason why it *is* is that it is *not to be*' (ibid: 264). We are confronted with the temporary nature of time in the present, the same present that represents the initial and every encounter in psychotherapy. Augustine suggests that past, present, and future do not exist as three distinct times:

'It might be correct to say that there are three times, a present of past things, a present of present things, and a present of future things. Some such different times do exist in the mind, but nowhere else that I can see. The present of past things is the memory; the present of present things is direct perception; and the present of future things is expectation' (ibid: 269).

⁶⁵ In our understanding of time and the future we can believe that the future has the potential *not* to be. In Western thought we believe that the universe is not pre-determined and that we can influence how we crystallise the future. This is a fundamental tenet of psychotherapy. Many Muslims believe otherwise; that our every moment is predestined by Allah.

The human mind articulates these three times but time does not exist anywhere else.

If Augustine is right, time is a peculiarly human phenomenon and a consequence of our minds and evolved brains. Augustine describes alternative ways to understand past, present, and future. He suggests that we conjure up memories of the past in the present, and we consider anticipated events in the present. The future does not have an existence until it becomes present, when it is no longer future. Similarly, the past does not exist except when remembered consciously, or unconsciously, through behaviour, attitude, or distressing symptoms. Memory and remembering, phenomena of the past in the present, were discussed in Freud's ideas. They are important themes in the following chapters. The present is in part memory and consequence of past actions and anticipation of future ones.

How do we measure time? 'It must be measured while it is in process of passing. It cannot be measured after it has passed, because nothing then exists to be measured' (Augustine, 1961: 269). Time arises from what does not exist, for the future is passing through the present which 'has no duration, and moving into what no longer exists' (ibid: 269). We measure the movement of bodies, such as the sun, by which we determine time as the difference between day and night. It is the circuit of the sun re-appearing in the east by which a day is measured. Were the sun to complete its circuit, its recurrence, in half the time, it would still be a day, but of shorter duration. 'It is clear, then, that the movement of a body is not the same as the means by which we measure the duration of its movement' (ibid: 273). This suggests that time 'is an extension of the mind itself' (ibid: 274) since through the agency of mind we remember 'the past', and envisage 'the future', in a present that 'has no extent' (ibid: 275).

Augustine's formulation of the mind is similar to our contemporary understanding of the brain because 'everything which happens leaves an impression on it, and this impression remains after the thing itself has ceased to be. It is the impression that I measure, since it is still present, not the thing itself, ... as it passes and then

moves into the past' (ibid: 276). We measure the impression not time via the medium of the mind (brain, neural pathways), which expects (future), perceives (present), and remembers (past). A long future becomes a long expectation of the future; a long past becomes a long remembrance of the past; these activities occur in the present.

Reflections.

Psychotherapists work in the interstices of the seemingly rational-cognitive, and the emotional, subjective worlds of experience where time, memory, and recall are fluid, transient, or beyond language. The Parmenidean search for invariance and certainty that 'highest Reason judge' (Geldard, 2007: 24) echoes a Western twenty-first century search for rational reassurance. Parmenides is perhaps the originator of this project.

Do we find an echo in Freud's ideas about the timelessness of the unconscious, and Western man's search for certainty? How congruent are the ideas of these philosophers with Freud's belief in the importance of history in his archaeological, evolutionary model of the past influencing the present? Freud believed that early experiences once laid down and left alone do not change. He partially echoes Parmenides' assertion that change cannot be 'Because It Is Now, Whole, One, Continuous' (Geldard, 2007: 25) or at least not without analysis. Parmenides remains part of the intellectual heritage of Western philosophy and civilization, and his mistrust of 'the way of illusion' challenges the basis for understanding the patient's world of subjectivity and experience.

Returning to Caitlin and Peter, we see that underlying their feelings that nothing promised could be trusted and the other would disappoint, was a sense that nothing could change. Everything past was now and seemingly timeless for Caitlin. While struggling in a world of the present she responded to others as if they were, or were like, those who had failed her in her childhood. Like a child in an adult's body it was as if her time had stalled. The incident outside the theatre was isomorphic of her repeated experience. Her history of broken personal

relationships, a failed marriage, and unfulfilled promise in her professional life, meant she craved and distrusted intimacy in equal measure. She functioned significantly below her professional potential, where she was perceived to be unpredictable and difficult. She seemed to re-create situations where others would abandon her. It was as if by precipitating the worst she might in some measure retain control. Tragically, she lost what she craved.

Where was Caitlin in that instant, if we consider the specific moment of abandonment outside the theatre? She was physically present on the pavement, but she seemed to be in 'no time at all', emotionally and cognitively unreachable by Peter or herself. Rather than being reassured by Peter's return, she became more enraged. Once lost in that instant, Caitlin had no personal resources, and Peter's reassurance inflamed her more. She cannot survive her crystallised past, cannot be in the present (outside the theatre), and cannot envisage a differently crystallised future. This example resembles that instant which is neither motion nor rest in Plato's *Parmenides*. I return to this theme later.

Aristotle echoes Plato with respect to now not being part of time. This is similar to Caitlin's experience of abandonment that precipitates her into an un-boundaried now. That there is no past is not her experience, except that what is past and what is present are fused. The past overwhelms her present. We shall see effects of such 'retention' in a 'thick present' (Husserl, 1991) in chapter 4. Events long past become contemporaneous, re-enacted in present events like a compulsion to repeat. Nothing is earlier or later; neither before nor after. This may seem inexplicable in a philosophical logical, rational, deductive world that does not account for Caitlin's experience. Was she simultaneously in two different nows, or had she left the now outside the theatre to be in a different, dissociated, and frightening earlier emotional, psychological now? Can physical and psycho-emotional realities disconnect, so that different nows co-exist?

Variation and change have been identified as important aspects of time. We should hold in mind Caitlin's experience of neither variation nor change, where

she incorporates the contradiction between the present and her emotional reality. Childhood events are distressingly re-experienced in her adult present without variation or change. Her re-activated past-in-the-present feels worse than events at the time. In a future case vignette, Jane will describe a similar experience of a re-lived trauma that is more terrifying than the abuse at the time. Caitlin's experience of the present collapsing into her past is to 'amalgamate the later now into a unit with the earlier now and eliminate all the time in between' (Aristotle, 1999: 104-105). Any distinction between different nows is lost 'when the mind seems to remain in a single, undifferentiated condition' (ibid: 105).

It is evident that the philosopher's and the patient's time differ. In the therapeutic moment, the patient finds that emotional distance from the past event is far closer than any chronological distance. It is as unchanging as *The Way of Truth* and ever vulnerable to reactivation in the immediate now. This abusive and chaotic past is, as Freud asserts, always present unconsciously and liable to be reactivated as powerfully as the memories evoked by Proust's madeleine biscuit. It is an unbearable present when re-connected by an experience isomorphic with her early history. For Caitlin, potential is in the past-present. It feels like a potential that is forever crystallising unlike in healthy functioning of a present-future potential yet to crystallise.

Phenomenological processes of 'transference' in Western psychodynamic psychotherapy, and reactivated elements of lived pasts in the present, are used explicitly in treatment, following Freud's discovery of its power. Psychotherapeutic approaches vary in the importance they give to these present-past-time phenomena. Greater credence is beginning to be given to this phenomenon in the systemic field.

Augustine's three kinds of present are useful. Plato and Aristotle argue that future and past do not exist, yet we live and organise our Western lives by these timeframes. Augustine's formulation of the present-of-past-things, the present-of-present-things, and the present-of-future-things eases some of those difficulties. It

helps to understand Caitlin's experience. Her past only exists in her present-of-past-things, and what she fears about possible future relationships only exists in her present-of-future-things. These become her present-of-present-things. It seems that she is left with a now-of-all-things.

Caitlin's story raises many issues including; inside and outside 'realities'; intrapersonal (intrapsychic) and interpersonal (relational) time; the nature of memory; the subjective reordering of time and narrative; the place of meaning of self and other. Arising from these are encoding and accessing belief systems and their relationship to behaviour(s) and events; the quasi-trance-like state where the individual loses her/himself and is neither 'in' nor 'out' of time (Hall, 1989). More attention needs to be given to Palazzoli's 'time of the system', the interweaving of timeframes, and their relation to change. This will raise questions about socio-cultural contexts for healing, and the private context of Western psychotherapy.

I now turn to selected Western philosophers mainly from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries to explore how they might add to understanding time in therapy.

Chapter 4.

Epistemologies of time: some nineteenth and twentieth century philosophical perspectives:

‘Whatever has the air of a paradox, and is contrary to the first and most unprejudic’d notions of mankind is often greedily embrac’d by philosophers, as shewing the superiority of their science, which cou’d discover opinions so remote from vulgar conception’
(Hume, 1978: 26).

‘Il n’y a qu’un problème philosophique vraiment sérieux: c’est le suicide. Juger que la vie vaut ou ne vaut pas la peine d’être vécue, c’est répondre à la question fondamentale de la philosophie’
Camus, 1942: 15.⁶⁶

‘Le passé est un ancien avenir et un présent récent, le présent un passé prochain et un avenir récent, l’avenir enfin un présent et même un passé à venir’
(Merleau-Ponty, (1945: 484).⁶⁷

Chapter structure.

Marinoff argues an active role for philosophy: ‘Philosophy was originally a way of life, not an academic discipline – a subject to be not only studied but applied’ (Marinoff, 2000: 8).⁶⁸ This statement supports the inclusion of a philosophical element in my thesis. However, the coherence evident in the previous chapter is not easily achievable here.

After considerable reflection, I realised that Descartes (2000), Hume (1978), and Kant (2003), particularly the latter two, have little to say about time within a psychological framework. As the Enlightenment where ‘there is no truth or reality accessible independently of a conceptual scheme’ (Honderich, 2005: 254)

⁶⁶ ‘There is only one philosophical problem of real importance: suicide. To be of the opinion that life is worth or is not worth living, is to answer philosophy’s basic question’

⁶⁷ ‘The past is a former future and a recent present, the present an immediate past and recent future; the future ultimately a present and even a past yet to come’.

⁶⁸ Yalom’s fictional account (2006) of the last year of a group therapy group mixes the philosophy of Schopenhauer with the dynamics of change, and the ending of life.

pre-dates depth-psychology, it contributes only marginally to temporal perspectives in psychotherapy. Hence, I make only cursory reference to the ideas of this period. Psychotherapy and post-modernism may partly represent a reaction to the Enlightenment emphasis on reason and rationality, (Hendel, 1955; Tambiah, 1990).

I have thus made a leap, glancing only cursorily toward the Enlightenment, from Augustine to the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. A more contemporary emphasis on phenomenological existential approaches to a philosophy of time begins with Husserl and Heidegger and ends with contemporary philosophers Ricoeur and Galen Strawson. This seems more in tune with clinical practice.

Aims.

My aim is to consider certain philosophers who were broadly contemporaneous with Freud and Palazzoli and have made a study of time, and to ground these ideas in therapeutic practice with clinical examples. Jane's experiences are described in most detail, drawing on contemporaneous clinical notes, her account of being in therapy and her experiences of time. Her story of time in ritual is taken up again in chapter 8. I describe other case vignettes briefly in relation to phenomenological ideas rather than to specific therapeutic models. Only in chapter 9 do I draw the many strands together and return to my original question.

Case vignette: Jane.

The following account is characterised by dissociation and time fragmentation. I present material taken from interviews with Jane ⁶⁹ about her experiences during and in-between sessions to illustrate, often disturbing, experiences of time. Later, I take an example from therapy to underscore how fragmented elements of her story were drawn into the beginnings of a narrative, to focus on her potential to crystallise her future and be less defined by her crystallised past.

⁶⁹ The name Jane is an agreed pseudonym.

I saw Jane in therapy for over eight years. Semi-structured research interviews with her took place two and a half years after therapy ended. She describes some of her experiences of time in and between her sessions.⁷⁰

Jane is a woman of extraordinary courage and integrity. Both parents had regularly abused her sexually and physically from infancy. Assaults continued during therapy into her early fifties. Her parents, aged sixty-eight, received thirty-year prison sentences for their crimes. Her mother later died in prison.

Jane's first memory of abuse is aged between three and four, when after sexually abusing her, her father slit their cat's throat to warn her of the consequences of telling. That traumatic experience, along with innumerable others, became her past-ever-present. In adolescence, her father made her pregnant three times. Her mother performed two abortions and she miscarried the third child following severe beatings. She suffered broken bones, stabbings, imprisonments, and repeated paternal vaginal and anal rape. The police discovered her parents kept detailed written and photographic records of her abuse spanning almost fifty years. During therapy she sometimes arrived with fresh injuries inflicted by either parent or after occasions when her father had tried to rape her. Abuse was historical and contemporaneous; trauma was past and current.

As part of therapy with her ever-present fear of the threatened consequences of telling, Jane would either be led to re-visit and articulate the appalling abuse to which she had been subjected over decades. Sometimes a sound, movement, or word, would re-connect her without warning with those events. In these instances she would find herself thrust back in time, re-experiencing her trauma *now*. She would dissociate, not to a safe emotional or psychological space, but to her terror.

⁷⁰ Contemporaneous notes were made at meetings with Jane on 23rd July 2010, 18th February and 15th April, 2011. They took place in a different room (place) and time of day from where we met for therapy. This was to disconnect as much as possible from the overwhelming feelings she frequently experienced during therapy.

Her ability to split off, a strategy that in daily life allowed her to function adequately, would break down. I agree with Kalsched's definition of dissociation.

'Dissociation is a trick the psyche plays on itself. It allows life to go on by dividing up the unbearable experience and distributing it to different compartments of the mind and body, especially the "unconscious" aspects of the mind and body. This means that the normally unified elements of consciousness (i.e., cognitive awareness, affect, sensation, imagery) are not allowed to integrate' (Kalsched, 1996: 13).

This citation reflects a Western view of 'mind' and differs from descriptions we will encounter in other socio-cultural contexts. It describes a breaking apart and compartmentalising of the intrapsychic structure to protect the integrity of the individual, often at considerable cost. It is not a static state of affairs:

'Experience itself becomes discontinuous. Mental imagery may be split from affect, or both affect and image may be dissociated from conscious knowledge. Flashbacks of sensation seemingly disconnected from a behavioural context occur. The memory of one's life has holes in it – a full narrative history cannot be told by the person whose life has been interrupted by trauma' (ibid: 13).

The discontinuous effect on memory when events are experienced episodically, and the sensation of fragmentation or disintegration fractures time, or seems to freeze the moment. This often leaves the individual with a profound sense of hopelessness and powerlessness. Time changes utterly at that moment. Jane's description of being in the therapy room, - her recurrent nightmares, intrusive recollections, and many other symptoms, along with her dissociative states, - meet the criteria for Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (DSM-IV, [309.81] 2000: 463-468). My concern in understanding her trauma is about the impact of time distortions, 'the memory of one's life (*that*) has holes in it', where 'a full narrative history cannot be told'.

*My opening question was:*⁷¹

HJ. "What were some of your experiences of being in the therapy room, especially with regard to your experiences of time? You remember that I sometimes said that bringing you back into the present, when you seemed to disappear, was a bit like pulling you back in at the end of a rope."

⁷¹ 23rd July 2010.

Jane. “There were times when I wasn’t in the room. It was a bit like watching T.V. and it goes from one camera to another, it was seamless, it would slide. I was never aware of the transition, this was before we did BMW,⁷² and I would suddenly become aware of what was going on, and suddenly I was in a different place; the sights and smells from a different place and time. There was never any thought, ‘how can this be possible’. I couldn’t think this isn’t possible because I was with Hugh, or that I was now a lot larger than then. ... It was like being in a dream but still awake, it was terrifying because of the scary things that were happening. It was a re-enactment of what used to happen. Somehow it seemed to be worse than it had been in the first place; it seemed more frightening than it had been at the time. I would end up where I had been before, a moment that was leading up to a bad bit that I knew was going to happen, when before, in the real time, I didn’t know beforehand exactly what was going to happen.”

“It was like reading a book that you have read before and only part remember. At that moment, I could see the future and that made it seem worse than it had been. I was not aware of you⁷³ in the scenario while experiencing the terror. I was completely oblivious of that.”

We discussed whether Jane ever confused me the therapist with her abusing parents. There had been a period of helping her gather evidence that eventually provided grounds for police action. The ‘problem’ had been that as therapist I acted like her parents. They had ‘gathered evidence’ to justify their extreme physical and sexual abuse. Therapeutically, I gathered evidence to ensure her ultimate physical and emotional safety, but the process was similar. This sometimes made it difficult to distinguish between *now* in therapy, of being told

⁷² BMW is a simple three-part ritual I created for her to help deal with moments of panic and dissociation that involves Breathing (B), a personal mantra (M), and writing down (W). I discuss this in chapter 8.

⁷³ Myself, the therapist.

then why she deserved to be punished (abused), the *now* of the continuing abuse by both parents, and whether *now* what was happening in therapy became like another *earlier* event of being abused. She said that in the sessions:

“I would eventually be aware that the therapist was talking to me. Sometimes it would feel like it was hours and hours, because I could be aware of being in a different place, and yet complete scenarios would be replayed. The whole thing would unfold and the whole thing would be re-enacted, and it would seem at the same time it was real time.”

We see three important elements; her subjective experiences of time distorting; re-enactment of previous trauma; memory of past historical events. We discussed an incident during one of the early sessions of therapy when, unable to put her story into words, and not yet comprehending the extent of her abuse, I asked her to represent her family using felt tip pens on paper:

“I got the pen in my hand. I couldn’t hold it properly (*she was holding the pen like an infant, grasped in her fist*). I’d obviously got the task. It was like my brain was refusing to work out what to do. Then I thought, I know what I can do, but I couldn’t get my hand to do anything. It was like my brain was saying, ‘I won’t think about that, we’ll think about something totally different’. It seemed like it was years, absolutely ages. I’d got the pen in my hand; it wasn’t going to play the game. I was running through all the scenarios of what happened in the past, and trying not to let myself go there. I was trying to keep hold of where I was. What you asked me to do was pulling my brain back to where I didn’t want to go.”

It took five or six minutes to make a single mark. I began to understand and experience how the past-in-the-present imprisoned her. Or more accurately, how she was paralysed in her disorientation between re-experiencing her past and being present in the room.

As we consider further philosophical time perspectives, it may be helpful to note some of the issues that Jane raises. She describes her experience when she

“wasn’t in the room” or present-now time. Time and place would ‘slide’. Her sensory landscape changed in terms of sights and smells that belonged to another place and time. All this seemed normal. She did not question how it was possible to be physically in the room *now*, yet exist *simultaneously* outside it in an *earlier* time. Her experience of *sequential time* changed. This was further affected by knowing what would happen next in this *future-of-her-now-present-past* in the temporary disintegration of the chronological *present* of therapy. She knew in her chronological *past* that what would happen would be terrifying, but its exact nature was unknown. In therapy, when *present-in-the-past*, she already knew the precise *‘future’* that awaited her. She also experienced sessions as often lasting ‘hours and hours’. At those moments she was ‘in a different place’ that became her ‘real time’.

With these ideas in mind I give a brief historical context before examining nineteenth and twentieth century philosophers.

René Descartes.

René Descartes (1596-1650) is often referred to as the ‘father’ of modern philosophy. He endeavoured to examine everything as clearly as possible ‘in the natural light of reason’ (Descartes, 2000: 41). This is different to Jane’s phenomenological experience. We cannot trust our senses, for ‘I understand only by the faculty of judging, which is in my mind’ (ibid: 29). It is the senses, or overwhelming feelings that Jane ‘understands’, when she cannot think or locate herself temporally or spatially. ‘I am, I exist; that is certain. ... As long as I think’ (ibid: 25). Descartes can be certain of his existence because he is certain of one thing: he is thinking. His project does not fit easily with psychotherapy as a metaphysicist who attempts to understand the world from an *a priori* position, relying on ‘no predictive power or connection with the facts of experience’ (Hampshire, 1956: 67).

David Hume.

In *A Treatise of Human Nature*⁷⁴ Hume's (1711-1776) references to time appear mainly in Part II of Book I. All ideas 'are deriv'd from simple impressions' (Hume, 1978: 4) which affect experience of time. Impressions are different to memory, the main purpose of which 'is not to preserve the simple ideas, but their order and position' (ibid: 9) which we may also call time. It might seem Hume is more relevant to us than Descartes as he is an empiricist looking to experience unlike Descartes' concentration on *a priori* and reason.

Jane often experienced jumbled 'order and position' in her memory that she found distressing, so that her sense of time became *dis-ordered*. To have a sense of time, it is important to apprehend events that can be compared with parts of separable time.⁷⁵ There is idiosyncratic ordering and sequencing in Jane's account, but timeframes are no longer differentiable. Her experience of time contradicts Hume's statement that 'each of its parts succeeds another, and that none of them, ... can ever be co-existent. For ... every moment must be distinct from, and posterior or anterior to another. ... (T)ime, as it exists, must be compos'd of indivisible moments' (Hume, 1978: 31). In Jane's world different times co-exist with, interfere, and interrupt, each other. Hume is sensitive to this in certain situations: 'A man ... strongly occupy'd with one thought, is insensible of time; ... (where) the same duration appears longer or shorter to his imagination' (ibid: 35). This partially accounts for changing experiences of duration but not for simultaneous experience of different periods.

⁷⁴ *A Treatise of Human Nature*, published in 1739, is David Hume's major work, completed in France when he was twenty-eight. His task, as the full title indicates, was 'an Attempt to introduce the experimental Method of Reasoning into MORAL SUBJECTS', or as he says of his philosophy 'which pretends only to explain the nature and causes of our perceptions, or impressions and ideas' (Hume: 1978:64).

⁷⁵ Clearly this statement is heavily culturally determined, and a strongly Western point of view. I will discuss the importance of socio-cultural contexts in experiencing time in chapters 6-8. Hall, (1989) introduces the idea of time as Monochronic (M-time) and Polychronic (P-time), the latter describing an ability to live simultaneously in different timeframes and the former being segmented and sequential. 'Monochronic time seals off one or two people from the group and intensifies relationships with one other person or, at most, two or three people' (Hall, 1989: 48).

The elusiveness of time and its quality is captured in his analogy with music. If time ‘must be compos’d of indivisible moments’, it also has different parts that are distinguishable and different, while not existing in parts: ‘Five notes play’d on a flute give us the impression and idea of time; tho’ time be not a sixth impression, which presents itself to the hearing or any other of the senses’ (ibid: 36). The five-note sequence is a whole experience. Time is not a separate ‘sixth impression’ but is a quality of the five notes.

Hume was an empiricist looking at human nature as a whole system of ethics, art, and religion. Anomalous experiences in detail would distract him from his main enterprise for an overarching theory of society. He was not concerned with human nature on a granular scale. So, while the Age of Reason may introduce new concepts of time we do not find in Hume, even with the importance he accords to impressions, a way to understand time experienced by someone under great emotional pressure, a time beyond ‘everyday’ experience. Jane’s emotional arousal destroys her ability to stay in the present. Her terror is partly her inability to distinguish *now* ‘parts of time’ from *past* ‘parts of time’.⁷⁶

Immanuel Kant.

Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) believed reason would lead to analytic *a priori* truths that all rational people would agree on of the world as it exists and appears.⁷⁷ Thus, when all else is removed, we are left with two aspects serving ‘as principles of *a priori* knowledge, namely space and time’ (Kant, 2003: 67). We can no more intuit time externally than we can intuit space internally, i.e., time is inner and space is outer. He questions their existence and whether they would exist without being intuited ‘(o)r are space and time such that they belong only to the form of

⁷⁶ I am indebted to Bethan Livesey for her insights into the place of Descartes and Hume. Personal communication 2013.

⁷⁷ Two concepts that Kant uses are important: *a priori* and *a posteriori*. By the former he means that which is known in and of itself through pure reason independent of the senses. This is unlike empirical knowledge that has its sources *a posteriori*, comes from experience (Kant, 2003: see 42-43), and prefigures the phenomenology of Husserl and Heidegger. ‘*A priori* literally means “prior to experience”. Such knowledge is said by Kant to be “necessary”, while Husserl calls it “essential” ’ (Dostal, 1993: 144).

intuition, and therefore to the subjective constitution of our mind, apart from which they could not be ascribed to anything whatsoever?' (ibid: 68).

Kant uses the analogy of a line that is necessarily one-dimensional, 'and we reason from the properties of this line to all the properties of time, with this one exception, that while the parts of the line are simultaneous the parts of time are always successive' (ibid: 77). If we take this and imagine crumpling a section of the line of linear points into a 'ball', the sequence is now squeezed and concentrated into a single *spatial* point that represents a *temporal* point. The intensity of time points crushed together provides an image of pressure and loss of temporal differentiation, where everything folds into an overwhelming moment. This representation resembles Jane's description of emotional overloading, manifested in her physical distress. Amplifying this analogy, her therapy is akin to un-crumpling the ball and re-extending the line to help gain control over her frightening re-experiences of trauma.⁷⁸

Kant attempts to bridge the worlds of reason and experience. He introduces the idea that '(t)ime is not something which exists of itself, or which inheres in things as an objective determination' (ibid: 76). It 'is nothing but the form of inner sense, ... of our inner state' (ibid: 77) where the mind plays an important part and subjective experience is relevant. This echoes Aristotle who 'wondered whether or not there would be time if there were not mind' (Aristotle, 1999: 115). Kant's proposition that time only exists in 'intuition' without objective reality is belied by Jane. She re-experienced the sensations of her abuse as more real than the original event.

⁷⁸ I am grateful to Christopher Hauke who, as a result of my analogy, introduced me to David Bohm, a quantum physicist, who considers ideas of enfolding and unfolding of the universe and the 'unbroken wholeness of the totality of existence' in what he terms the implicate order. '(In the implicate order the totality of existence is enfolded within each region of space (and time). So, whatever part, element, or aspect we may abstract in thought, this still enfolds the whole ...' (Bohm, 1983: 172). On a completely different scale, this seems comparable with what I am attempting to convey.

Against this brief background, I focus on the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, beginning with the phenomenology of Husserl and Heidegger. I give a brief description of phenomenology followed by a case vignette to anchor the discussion. This marks a step from *a priori* to *a posteriori*. We begin with what is experienced directly. In the psychoanalytic world of the mind we are perhaps inheritors of the Enlightenment, while in systemic approaches we engage more directly with phenomenological legacies.

Phenomenology.

Phenomenology is ‘primarily a theory of knowledge ... (which) distinguishes sharply between perceptual properties on the one hand, and abstract properties on the other’ (Honderich, 2005: 695).⁷⁹ The distinction between what is experienced and conceptualised, - Jane’s different phenomenological experience to an observer’s experience - suggests an avenue for understanding kinds of time in therapy.

Phenomenological approaches seek to describe what is experienced. ‘Because phenomenology “brackets”, or suspends belief in, all metaphysical constructs in order to focus solely on what shows up *as* it presents itself in our experience, its findings are supposed to be apodictic, beyond all possible doubt’ (Dostal, 1993: 141). An existential view suggests ‘phenomenologists reinstate the world in its diversity and deny the transcendent power of reason. ... To think is to relearn how to see’ (Camus, 1942: 43).⁸⁰ In the phenomenological tradition, Merleau-Ponty states that ‘psychology and physiology are not parallel activities, but two ways of understanding behaviour. The first is concrete, the second abstract’ (Merleau-

⁷⁹ Levinas suggests a stage beyond phenomenology: ‘En posant le présent comme la maîtrise de l’existant sur l’exister et en cherchant le passage de l’exister à l’existant, nous nous trouvons dans un plan de recherches que l’on ne peut plus qualifier d’expérience. Et si la phénoménologie n’est qu’une méthode d’expérience radicale, nous nous trouverons au delà de la phénoménologie’ (Levinas, 1983: 34). (‘By placing the present as superior to the ‘existant’ over the existing, and in seeking the way from existing to the ‘existant’, we find ourselves on a seeking level that one can no longer call experience. And if phenomenology is nothing other than a radical method of experience, we will discover ourselves beyond phenomenology’.)

⁸⁰ ‘les phénoménologues restituent le monde dans sa diversité et nient le pouvoir transcendant de la raison. ... Penser, c’est réapprendre à voir, ...’

Ponty, 1945:32).⁸¹ He continues that phenomenologically ‘what is tangible is what one grasps *with* the senses’.⁸²

Every therapeutic encounter must include the phenomenological meeting of patient and therapist *before* and as *part* of theory. Just as phenomenologists are concerned ‘with what is experientially real rather than abstractly true’ (Stevens, 1997: 151) so psychotherapy addresses the patient’s ‘experientially real’; ‘feeling is this vital communication with the world which makes it present to us like a familiar space of our lives’⁸³ (Merleau-Ponty, 1945: 79). In his words, ‘le champ phénoménal is an area for psychological and philosophical reflection’ (ibid: 80). I introduce Judie’s experience through this ‘lens’.

Case vignette: Judie.

Judie’s story lends itself to phenomenological description. This centres specifically on a psychotic episode where attempts to protect her from loosening her grasp on mundane realities were ineffective.

Despite a professional qualification, a wide range of friends, and loving but emotionally troubled husband, the constant ‘voice in her head’ left Judie feeling unwanted and unsatisfactory.⁸⁴ Anti-depressant medication could not assuage this. At age 32 she suffered a psychotic breakdown. She had strongly internalised as core to her being her mother’s statement that she should never have been born. In effect she did not have the right to exist. Her older sister who had died at a few months was the child who should have survived. Judie could never replace her sister, or equal her younger brother. She ‘never got things right’. In some intangible way *she was not right* in her entire being, as if she were

⁸¹ ‘La psychologie et la physiologie ne sont donc plus deux sciences parallèles, mais deux déterminations du comportement, la première concrète, la seconde abstraite’ (Merleau-Ponty, 1945: 32).

⁸² ‘Le sensible est ce qu’on saisit *avec* les sens’ (ibid: 33).

⁸³ ‘Le sentir est cette communication vitale avec le monde qui nous le rend présent comme lieu familier de notre vie’ (ibid: 79). ‘Sentir’ has both the meaning ‘to feel’ and to ‘smell’, and has the same root as ‘le sens’ – sense (in French, touch, judgement, opinion, feeling).

⁸⁴ This is ‘voice’ in the sense of story she told herself from her mother, not an auditory hallucination.

existentially illegitimate. Her psychotic episode was a *de facto* state of not existing, experienced by her as being outside place and time.

Judie could no longer live as an adult while believing she was somehow wrong and unlovable. She wanted to start a family, the act of an adult, but felt unformed, waiting permission to enter the world. The stress of living in two *temporal* worlds was intolerable. Not welcomed into the world by her mother, she existed in a liminal state⁸⁵ unstably on the threshold of the legitimate world. Even her Christian faith, believing in a loving heavenly father could not fill her existential void. Her earthly father had worked away from home during the week for much of her childhood, leaving her feeling bereft of his love and support. She could not bear to reflect on her situation or confront these ‘demons’ for fear of alienating her mother and jeopardising any possibility of the maternal love and acceptance she craved.

An existential-phenomenological perspective captures part of Judie’s struggle to become: ‘Existentialism conceives of persons as being always in the process of ‘becoming’. Its focus is on awareness of the human condition and what arises from the human capacity to reflect on their own experience of being a person’ (Stevens, 1997: 152). In an existential sense, understanding existence precedes essence. ‘(W)hat [Christian and atheistic existentialism] have in common is quite simply the fact that they are of the view that existence comes before essence, or if you like, that we must start from the subjective’ (Sartre, 1945: 26).⁸⁶ Each individual must take responsibility for their life. This requires a sense of self which Judie lacked.

Judie experienced a deep abandonment that had turned to despair. Her psychosis became a step towards personal responsibility, independent of maternal approval.

⁸⁵ ‘Liminal’ has the sense of being betwixt and between, neither in a previous state and not yet in a future one. We will consider this in relation to time and ritual in chapter 8.

⁸⁶ ‘Ce qu’ils ont en commun, c’est simplement le fait qu’ils estiment que l’existence précède l’essence, ou, si vous voulez, qu’il faut partir de la subjectivité’ (Sartre, 1996: 26).

⁸⁷ ‘Each person must ask himself: am I the person who has the right to act such that humanity takes account of my actions?’ (ibid: 36). ⁸⁸ The person who is unable to become self-reflective risks remaining fixed in an earlier emotional temporal period while chronological time and the demands of adulthood accrue. Therapeutically, it is important that time the past and its meanings, are not crystallised forever, and that the future can encompass potential for change. ‘(P)henomenologically, it may be a misconception to regard the past as immutable and indeterminate. For although it cannot be regained, it can be reconceptualised in the present and seen as something other than it appeared to be at the time’ (Stevens, 1997: 185). It is important the patient no longer defines herself by (the sum of) their past experiences. We explore these ideas in more depth.

Edmund Husserl.

Edmund Husserl (1859-1938) presents certain challenges, partly because his work on time (first published in 1928) is a collection of lectures reflecting his evolving ideas between 1893 and 1917. He questions the nature of time and intentionality phenomenologically. ⁸⁹ Both concepts are important in this context. ⁹⁰ I focus on lived-inner phenomenological time.

⁸⁷ I realise that my position is close to, and influenced by, the work of R.D. Laing (1965, 1971a, b) whose thinking challenged the medical establishment, especially in his existential analysis of madness that illness may be the product of seeing things too clearly.

⁸⁸ ‘Et chaque homme doit se dire: suis-je bien celui qui a le droit d’agir de telle sorte que l’humanité se règle sur mes actes? Et s’il ne se dit pas cela, c’est qu’il se masque l’angoisse’ (ibid: 36).

The abandonment (‘délaissement’) that Sartre speaks of is not one of despair. Reality resides in action, and there lies individual responsibility. ‘La doctrine que je vous présente est justement à l’opposé du quiétisme, puisqu’elle déclare: il n’y de réalité que dans l’action; elle va plus loin d’ailleurs, puisqu’elle ajoute: l’homme n’est rien d’autre que son projet, il n’existe que dans la mesure où il se réalise, il n’est donc rien d’autre que l’ensemble de ses actes, rien d’autre que sa vie’ (ibid: 51). If we accept that the only reality is action, that each person is only his own ‘project’ and the sum of those actions, this pushes the responsibility onto the shoulders of the individual, a strongly Western view of ‘man in the world’.

⁸⁹ Echoing Augustine’s statement about time, Husserl writes: ‘Naturally, we all know what time is; it is the most familiar thing of all. But as soon as we attempt to give an account of time-consciousness, to put objective time and subjective time-consciousness into the proper relationship and to reach an understanding of how temporal objectivity – and therefore any individual objectivity whatever – can become constituted in the subjective consciousness of time, we get entangled in the most peculiar difficulties, contradictions, and confusions’ (Husserl, 1991: 3).

Husserl was influenced by his fellow compatriot, the philosopher Franz Brentano (1838-1917), ‘whose work was inspired by the philosophy of Aristotle, whom he regarded as a ‘man for all times’ ’ (Honderich, 2005: 106).

Husserl set out to begin without presuppositions. ‘(A)s a prelude to constructing this “phenomenological philosophy”, he undertook a very careful series of investigations into cognitive processes of all kinds ... including a notable account of the “psychology of internal time-consciousness” ’ (Gell, 1992: 221). Husserl understands subjective time and ‘time-consciousness’ to permeate every aspect of our lives (memory, duration, expectation of the future). ‘Intentionality’ gives a model for conscious life since ‘(c)onsciousness is always consciousness of something; if one chooses to speak of consciousness in terms of “acts”, then every act of consciousness must be said to “intend” an object’ (Brough, 1991: xviii).

Phenomenology and phenomenological analysis of time-consciousness propose a way to understand kinds of time in psychotherapy. It describes

‘the given naïve and scientific consciousness of time according to its *sense* (time is taken by us to be what? temporal relationships present themselves as what? and what sorts of relationships are meaningfully intended in the sense of belonging to the representation of time, to the intuition of time?): therefore the phenomenological task is to analyse the meaning, the “material”, the “content” of the representation of time – specifically, as far as its essential types are concerned and naturally not with respect to each individual case that might be cited’ (Husserl, 1991: 194).⁹¹

Husserl suggests an experiential, intentional, engagement with what time is, at the level of typology and not its specifics. Judie’s time-consciousness in its *sensing*, her temporal relationship with her mother and what was phenomenologically ‘intended’, were different to her professional qualifications and other achievements. Phenomenological apprehension of time is unconcerned with objective time that along with objective space and the world of things Husserl terms ‘transcendencies’. Phenomenological analysis does not tell us about

⁹⁰ I have chosen *not* to give attention to his, and subsequently Heidegger’s, more abstract concepts in relation to time. For example, I will not address Husserl’s idea that the ego, as he terms it, is the source of time, whether time as a primordial source, or of the ‘standing and perduring primal now’ (quoted in Dostal, 1993: 148 ff) being not *in* time, but that which temporalizes.

⁹¹ I take ‘essential types’ in this context to mean the main kinds or classes of time.

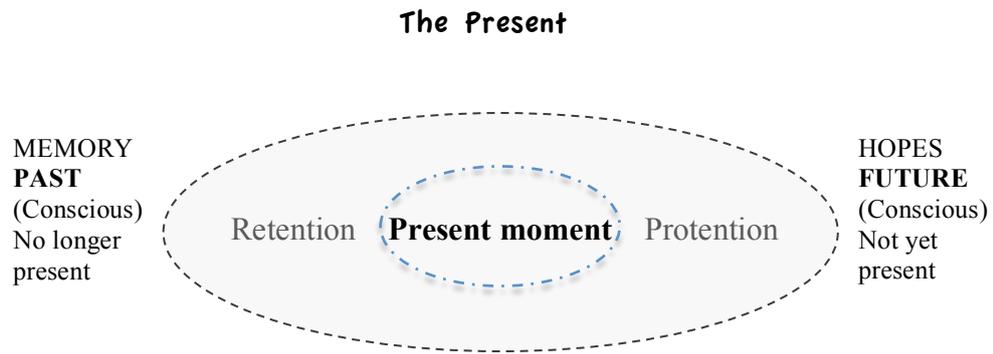
objective time, just as objective time teaches us nothing about Judie's phenomenological sensing.⁹²

The relationship between what is 'sensed' and what is apprehended phenomenologically, with 'something temporal that is perceived', points to different co-existing time. What Jane sensed in therapy differs from 'objective time'. Her 'phenomenological datum' affects her 'relation to objective time' in the room. 'Sensed time' is more real and visceral as 'objective time' recedes.

Husserl's present differs from Plato's non-dimensional instant 'being in no time at all', and Aristotle and Augustine's past and future that do not exist (chapter 3). We discussed then a present that has a crystallised past and crystallising potential future. Husserl's present encompasses something similar. The Husserlian present is "thick" with substance. '(W)e might say that the present is "thick" to the extent that, *within* the present, we find both the past and the future; that is we find all three dimensions of time. ... Every present moment carries these two aspects as essential to its being what it is *as* present' (Dostal, 1993: 146-7).⁹³ Husserl invented a terminology for the present. Every moment contains 'retentive' (past) and 'protentive' (future) elements (Figure 4.1).

⁹² Husserl describes a subtle relationship: 'If we give the name "sensed" to a phenomenological datum that by means of apprehension makes us conscious of something objective as given "in person", which is then said to be objectively perceived, we must likewise distinguish between something temporal that is "sensed" and something temporal that is perceived. The latter refers to objective time' (ibid: 7).

⁹³ Clifford Geertz was interested in the existentialists and Husserl. He speaks of 'thick description' in particular (Geertz, 1973: 3-30) in his attempt at an interpretive theory of culture.



Husserl: time flows ineluctably towards the future.

Figure 4.1. Retentive and protentive aspects are constitutive elements of the present. They create a ‘thick’ present.

*Retention, present moment, and protention, constitute every instant. ‘Retention’ differs from active memory which requires conscious recall, and unlike expectation, the not-yet-present of ‘protention’ is not held consciously. This tripartite present incorporates ‘no longer’, and ‘not yet’.*⁹⁴

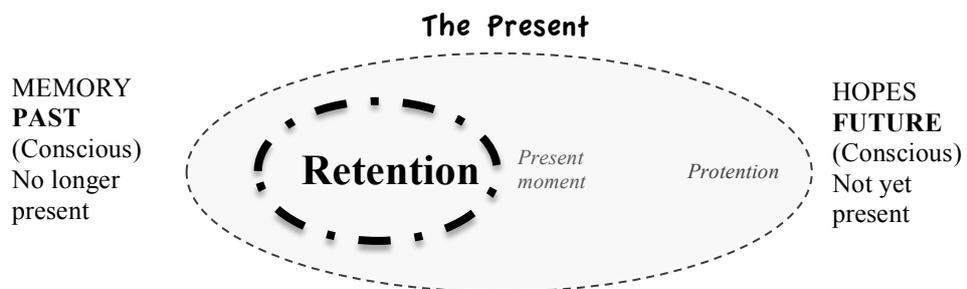
In Jane and Judie’s accounts, we see that the present-of-the-present-moment recedes and retention, the present-of-the-past-moment, overwhelms their struggle to stay ‘present’. The present-of-the-future, ‘protention’, the as yet un-trodden future where potential hope might crystallise, is swamped by the present-of-the-past. This flooded moment has duration, beginning and end, even if phenomenologically it feels never-ending.

Husserl suggests a simple experiment: Look at a piece of chalk, close one’s eyes, and re-open them. While the actions are divided in time, with a phenomenological time separation, ‘there is no division as far as the object is concerned: it is the same. In the object there is duration; in the phenomenon alteration’ (Husserl, 1991: 8). Jane experiences phenomenological change (alteration) of where, when, and how she is. Judie’s mother remains a timeless fixed object, and although there is duration each time she ‘looks at her mother’,

⁹⁴ This is reminiscent of Augustine’s thinking that there is only the present, that there are three kinds of present (chapter 3).

she feels timelessly illegitimate and hopeless, in an absence of phenomenological change (alteration).

Husserl’s ‘thick’ present supports experience of the past remaining painfully present. He takes the example of a note lingering that is ‘continuously held in consciousness’ which ‘remains present’.⁹⁵ Being present in the past, ‘(t)he moment shades off and changes continuously, and according to the degree of change, [it] is more or less present’ (ibid: 18). Present and past moments are a simultaneous ‘present moment of experience’. The ‘past’ has a ‘present’ that is held in the present and is forever receding. Husserl calls this ‘shading off’ into a further and further past. By contrast, Jane and Judie experience a past-remaining-present without ‘shading off’. Their present-of-the-past remains immediate and constant, a time that does not heal (Hall, 1989). This partially supports simultaneity of time, since a past event that endures ‘is present now and present constantly, and present together with the new moment “past” - past and present at once’ (Husserl, 1991: 19). If we reconsider this visually the present and protentive (future) recede, while ‘retention’ overwhelms (Figure 4.2).



Husserl: time flows ineluctably towards the future.

Figure 4.2. The “thick” present, where ‘retention’ dominates.

Husserl suggests that the remembered event is not the event as experienced in the earlier time-point. ‘Retention’ becomes a now that exists, although ‘(e)very

⁹⁵ Once again there is an echo in Augustine’s present of past things; present of present things; and present of future things.

actually present now of consciousness, however, is subject to the law of modification. It changes into retention of retention and does so continuously' (ibid: 31). Each receding now modifies previous nows in retention so that,

'(w)hen a temporal object has elapsed, when the actual duration is finished, the consciousness of the now-past objects by no means expires with the object, although it now no longer functions as perceptual consciousness, or said better perhaps, as impressional consciousness' (ibid: 31-32).

Jane's experience of 'modification' was frightening intensification, the opposite of 'shading off'. 'Shading off' means past events have not become fixed and toxic. 'A present [event] can indeed "remind" one of a past [event], exemplify it, pictorialise it; but that already presupposes another representation of the past' (ibid: 33). To the extent that Jane experienced her relived trauma as worse than the original event, present recall became not only 'another representation of the past' but an exacerbation of it.

The author's memory of waking up in the same room and the re-evocation of visiting aunt Léonie in *Du Côté de Chez Swann*, or Caitlin's infantile rage of abandonment (chapter 3) reflect different kinds of unbidden memory. The experience of the moment is identifiable but qualitatively different from the primary 'retention'. Freud suggests that deeply painful events remain even when apparently forgotten, as we saw for Susan who did not 'remember' the last occasion her father abused her (chapter 1). This is 'retention' manifested in different ways.

I turn now to Heidegger, one of Husserl's pupils.

Martin Heidegger.

Martin Heidegger (1889-1976) sets out to chart time in *Being and Time*, although the final part on time was never completed. A significant difficulty understanding Heidegger is his dense language, his particular use of German, and his frequent invention of words. Words matter to Heidegger as much as meaning: 'The stale

language of traditional philosophy – ‘consciousness’, ‘ego’, ‘thing’, and so on – is ill-suited to this new territory’ (Inwood, 1999: 2). I am therefore necessarily selective in my choice of material.⁹⁶

Heidegger’s endeavour to elucidate the nature of Dasein or being⁹⁷ provides a contextual marker for psychotherapy:

‘time has a distinctive function to play in distinguishing the kinds of being, and ... traditional realms of being are distinguished according to temporal, supratemporal, and extratemporal being. ... (T)he history of the concept of time, that is, the history of the discovery of time, is the history of the question of the being of entities’ (Heidegger, 1992: 140-141).

He emphasises a ‘phased structure’ that is ‘temporalised’, to understand the primary character of Dasein as ‘to-be’ (ibid: 163) and as ‘life’ (ibid: 165). Temporalization characterises phases of knowing.

Heidegger was interested in what it means ‘to be’, not as *a* being, but Being itself. His ideas influenced the work of German psychiatrist Ludwig Binswanger and Swiss psychoanalyst Medard Boss, both of whom developed an existential understanding of mental illness (Scott, 1992).⁹⁸ He describes understanding Being as: ‘... the darkest of all’ (Heidegger, 1962: 23) for each one is a finite Being, knowing our finiteness faced with a horizon that we cannot transcend at the moment of death. The existential position of the absurd is to live well when confronted by the inevitability of a time when our being is no more (Camus, 1942; Sartre, 1944, 1948). However, the abstruse nature of Heidegger’s work

⁹⁶ Although a Western philosopher, Heidegger was influenced by ideas from the East, especially Japan. In looking at his sources (May, 1996) it is clear that Heidegger was influenced by oriental thought, and the significance of language. In an interview with Tezuka Tomio, Heidegger explains that ‘what is most essential about human existence is concentrated in language, and that he therefore tries to understand human existence and its workings on the basis of instances where language comes forth purely and with forceful energy’ (Tezuka, 1996: 60). Heidegger saw that to truly understand, ‘East and West must engage in dialogue at this deep level. It is useless to do interviews that merely deal with one superficial phenomenon after another’ (ibid: 62). Graham Parkes describes ‘the Daoist themes to be found in *Sein und Zeit*’ (Parkes, 1996: 79) and Heidegger was familiar with Lao Tse and Zen texts.

⁹⁷ Inwood (1999) describes how Dasein, Da-sein, and Dassein (42-44), and ‘being’ (26-33), are multi-layered in Heidegger’s thinking.

⁹⁸ We find the early roots of an existential approach to mental illness later in the work of Ronald Laing (1965, 1971a, b) in the UK, and Thomas Szasz (1972) in the US.

compounds the difficulty of grasping his ideas about time. A preliminary comment on the fundamentally grounded nature of his approach gives substance to his thinking.

Heidegger wishes to ‘describe some equipment without any philosophical theory’ (Heidegger, 1993: 159). An example is found in *The Origin of the Work of Art*⁹⁹ of Van Gogh’s *Leather Clogs* (Plate 4.1). The shoes’ purpose determines the materials in their manufacture and their form, which describes ‘what we already know’ (ibid: 159). They only become what they are meant to be, the less aware the owner is of them as they are worn. ‘The peasant woman wears her shoes in the field. ... It is in the process of the use of equipment that we must actually encounter the character of equipment’ (ibid, 159).

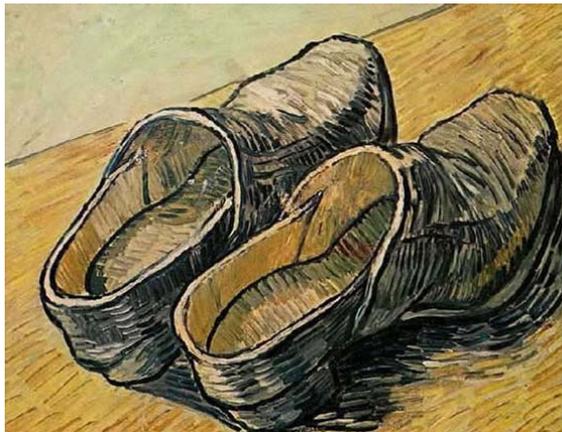


Plate 4.1. *Leather Clogs*, Vincent Van Gogh, 1888. Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam.

Heidegger explores the being of the clogs in depth.

‘From the dark opening of the worn insides of the shoes the toilsome tread of the worker stares forth. In the stiffly rugged heaviness of the shoes there is the accumulated tenacity of her slow trudge ... This equipment belongs to the *earth*, and it is protected in the *world* of the peasant woman. From out of this protected belonging the equipment itself rises to its resting-within-itself’ (ibid: 159-160).

⁹⁹ The ideas in this essay were first described in a public lecture, Freiburg, 13th November 1935.

Heidegger reflects on the nature of the art representing these shoes in its own sense of embodiment. He attempts to reach the essence of the thingly-ness of the very being of equipment, art, and in *Dasein* the being of being human, a fundamental ‘suchness’, which in essence is a Buddhist concept. ‘The artwork opens up in its own way the Being of beings. This opening up, i.e., this revealing, i.e., the truth of beings, happens in the work. In the artwork, the truth of beings has set itself to work. ... What is truth itself that it sometimes propitiates as art? What is this setting-itself-to work?’ (Heidegger, 1993: 165).

All entities have a kinetic structure and at ‘various points in his career Heidegger called this kinetic structure of disclosure the ‘time-character’ of being or the ‘truth’ of being or the ‘clearing’ of being’ (Sheehan, 1992: 30) for ‘(m)atter and form and their distinction have a deeper origin. ... (T)he thing’s thingly character’ (Heidegger, 1993: 161) that seeks always ‘things’ general essence’ (ibid: 162). It is necessary ‘to grasp the essence of the thing’ (ibid: 163), ultimately to reach the point ‘when we think the Being of beings’ (ibid: 165). His interest in the essential nature of being, the ‘thingly character of the thing, the equipmental nature of the equipment, the workly character of the work’ (ibid: 157) reflects attempts to grasp phenomena.¹⁰⁰

In a series of lectures in 1925¹⁰¹ Heidegger describes intentionality as ‘a structure of lived experiences as such’ (Heidegger, 1992: 29). Every lived experience is directed towards something so that perception whether or not correct or existing ‘is in itself intentional’ (ibid: 31). It is important to understand that perception is intentional and that when remembering it is the matter itself that is remembered. If a boat trip is remembered, ‘I do not remember the representation but the boat trip itself’ (ibid: 35). Jane remembers the abuse but emotion overwhelms the

¹⁰⁰ His statement that: ‘The greatness of the discovery of phenomenology ... is the *discovery of the very possibility of doing research in philosophy*’ (Heidegger, 1992: 135-136) summarises an important part of his wish to establish a scientific and verifiable basis for philosophy, as Freud wished for psycho-analysis.

¹⁰¹ Published in English (1992) as *History of the Concept of Time*.

distinction between representation and event. She experiences this as worse than the abuse at the time.

Taking temporality as his basis in *Being and Time*, Heidegger set out to describe the existential-ontological constitution of *Dasein*.

‘Hence the ecstatic projection of Being must be made possible by some primordial way in which ecstatic temporality temporalises. How is this mode of the temporalising of temporality to be interpreted? Is there a way which leads from primordial *time* to the meaning of *Being*? Does *time* manifest itself in the horizon of *being*?’ (Heidegger, 1962: 488).¹⁰²

Much of his description appears static, without a sense of change. He suggests a metaphor of time as horizon, like approaching the cliff edge that we never really comprehend.

‘The horizon of temporality as a whole determines that *whereupon* (*woraufhin*) factually existing entities are essentially *disclosed*. ... (A) potentiality-for-Being is in each case projected in the horizon of the future, one’s ‘Being-already’ is disclosed in the horizon of having been, and that with which one concerns oneself is discovered in the horizon of the Present’ (Heidegger, 1962: 416).

His preoccupation with Being means time *per se* is lost and unlike Van Gogh’s leather clogs, we never grasp what time is, although we are concerned with ‘the presence of something which is present’ (Kockelmans, 1992: 160). According to Heidegger, all entities are disclosed on the spectrum of a temporal horizon. The horizon of the present is conceptually useful. In therapy, patients often live on the horizon of the present pulled back to the horizon of their past and, if not strictly in Heidegger’s terms, they struggle to retain a sense of temporal unity. In moments of stress their feelings may resemble being at the edge of an existential-ontological abyss of past horizons (like an unchanging retention-of-retention) or horizons of future being.

Heidegger challenges us to experience phenomenologically the thingly-ness of matter and the Being of being. In the peasant’s clogs the viewer is confronted not

¹⁰² ‘The future, running ahead to death, is the primary ‘ecstasis’. (The root meaning of ‘ecstasis’, like that of ‘existence’, is ‘stepping forth’.)’ (Honderich, 2005: 373).

only by the thingly-ness of the clogs and the purpose for which they were made, but their history in their condition, their presentness in their owner's world, and their potentiality (their protentive-ness) for future use, known by their state of repair and the anticipated work they still have to accomplish for their owner.

Phenomenological presentness entails memory and future horizon. Heidegger's 'Horizontal' concept is potentially useful for boundaries of time and being. The therapist who engages directly with her patient enters into a similar phenomenological temporal relationship in which implications of time and being are embedded. Past, present, and future, *temporalise* time differently to everyday awareness in the *now*, and we understand that patients in distress often 'temporalise' their worlds out of synchrony with the temporal experience of the quotidian world.

Merleau-Ponty.

I include Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1907-61) in the phenomenological tradition, because he builds on Husserl and Heidegger, and for his key role in existentialist thought.¹⁰³

Time is born from one's relationship with things. I begin with Merleau-Ponty's *now*, since therapy deals with many kinds of *now*. He suggests it is a mistake to define time as a succession of *nows* ('une succession de maintenant'). Like Husserl, Merleau-Ponty explores the concept of the thick instant and as moment succeeds moment 'layers of time ... thicken', ('la couche du temps ... s'épaissit') (Merleau-Ponty, 2011: 478) in retention of retention. In consciousness of the past, and rather than time accumulating a number of retentions (event A becoming Ai, Aii, etcetera), it is a particular temporal context, (such as before the war, after the volcano erupted) that locates time: 'ce n'est pas le passé lui-même que j'atteins'. 'When I recover the tangible origin of memory [souvenir] ... I reunite lost time [temps perdu] which, from that particular moment to my present, the

¹⁰³ Merleau-Ponty was a 'co-founder with Sartre of existential philosophy ... [developing] a description of the world as the field of experience in which I find myself' (Honderich, 2005: 588).

chain of retentions and the dovetailing of successive horizons, creates a continuous thread' (ibid: 480).¹⁰⁴ Merleau-Ponty does not propose three discrete time elements as an accumulation of retentions (or protentions). '(T)he new present *is* the passage from a future to the present and from the former present to the past' (ibid: 481)¹⁰⁵ in a single movement. Time moments do not exist successively. They are differentiated from each other ('ils *se différencient* l'un de l'autre') in mutual relationship, resulting in a single phenomenological flow 'since in time, to be and to pass are synonymous, and in becoming past, the event does not cease to be' (ibid: 482).¹⁰⁶ Each person is in time and not a spectator.

This brings us ultimately to a realization that different time dimensions are inseparable. Being in the present is to be from forever and to be forever, so that 'the "synthesis" of time is a synthesis of transition, it is the movement of a life that unfurls, and there is no other way of accomplishing it than to live this life; there is no specific time place, it is time that proceeds and itself begins again' (ibid: 485).¹⁰⁷ The important thing is to understand what is in us and in the world. This depends on a particular point of view at the time and on the subject who observes, 'it is through my appearance in the world that matter has meaning' (ibid: 493).¹⁰⁸

In psychotherapy we often observe that the patient no longer experiences a safe relationship with those around ('avec d'autrui') nor authentically with themselves. Merleau-Ponty emphasises the place of experience unencumbered by outside understandings. This is often hard in therapy. Patients' pasts, - Husserl's

¹⁰⁴ 'Quand ... je retrouve l'origine concrète du souvenir, ... c'est que je rejoins le temps perdu, c'est que, depuis le moment considéré jusqu'à mon présent, la chaîne des retentions et l'emboîtement des horizons successifs assure un passage continu' (Merleau-Ponty, 1945: 480).

¹⁰⁵ '... le présent nouveau *est* le passage d'un futur au présent, et de l'ancien présent au passé ...' (ibid: 481).

¹⁰⁶ '... puisque dans le temps être et passer sont synonymes, en devenant passé, l'événement ne cesse pas d'être' (ibid: 482).

¹⁰⁷ '... la <<synthèse>> du temps est une synthèse de transition, c'est le mouvement d'une vie qui se déploie, et il n'y a pas de lieu du temps, c'est le temps qui se porte et se relance lui-même' (ibid: 485).

¹⁰⁸ '... c'est par mon surgissement dans le monde que l'étoffe a un sens' (ibid: 493).

retentions / retentions of retentions, - become like a piling up ¹⁰⁹ that bears down without differentiation, or that feels incoherent without a sense of flow, continuity, or safe thickening of the past, and the difficulty of facing a future that seemingly never changes. Merleau-Ponty's ideas challenge how one may live grounded in the present, unencumbered by the past, envisaging a different kind of future, and thereby remaining present in the flow of life.

Paul Ricoeur.

Because Ricoeur strongly emphasises narrative, I begin with Jane's story from a narrative perspective.

Case vignette: Jane's 'Roll of Honour'.

Despite holding down a job, much of Jane's world was fragmented, episodic, and liable to fall apart at any moment. We came to a point when I felt she might begin to integrate some of these 'bits and pieces' in a tangible way that could become a touchstone in the future. She began to identify her achievements under what she called her *Roll of Honour*, subsequently changing the title to *Role of Honour*, Figure 4.3. ¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁹ Merleau-Ponty uses 'entassement' which also means 'congestion'.

¹¹⁰ Jane playfully named it her 'role' in the sense that she had a 'role of honour' as well as it being a 'roll of honour'. She typed her hand written 'role of honour' and brought it to the next session.

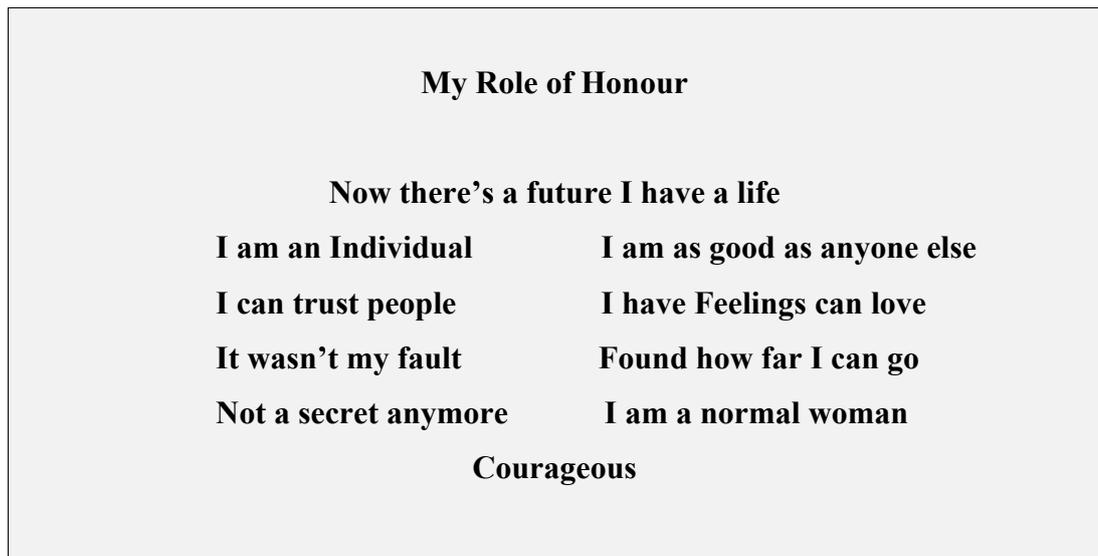


Figure 4.3. Dated 11th May 2000. 'Bits and pieces' united in one.

These statements created the beginnings of a different narrative. They include a new sense of identity and responsibility, sense of self in relation to others, overcoming terror about speaking of her abuse, freedom to experience positive feelings, and feeling normal.

The most important statement declares her changed relationship to time: 'Now there's a future I have a life'. The possibility of a future offers hope freed from guilt, and a changing relationship to her past, no longer defined by it. This statement and the *Roll of Honour* were often recalled during subsequent difficult moments in therapy. It became part of her new narrative, a new plot where her 'bits and pieces' (Ricoeur, 1984: 74) could be joined together. I consider Ricoeur in the light of Jane's story.

Paul Ricoeur (1913-2005) belongs to the phenomenological existential tradition.

¹¹¹ My sources are *Narrative Time* (1980), *Time and Narrative* (1984, 1985, 1988), and *La Mémoire, l'Histoire, l'Oubli*, (2000).¹¹² Such a large body of material forces hard choices.

¹¹¹ He refers extensively to the Ancients whom we have considered (Parmenides, Plato, Aristotle and Augustine), the Enlightenment (Hume and Kant), and the phenomenology of Husserl and Heidegger.

¹¹² Published in English as *Memory, History, Forgetting* (2006).

Ricoeur (1984) analyses Augustine's (1961) exploration of time, and Aristotle's concept of plot (1996). Like the poet or playwright, therapists mentalise (Asen and Fonagy, 2012) to make sense of the patient's story from the inside: 'By envisaging things very vividly in this way, as if one were actually present at the events themselves, one can find out what is appropriate, and inconsistencies are least likely to be overlooked' (Aristotle, 1996: 27). The main emphasises for Ricoeur are plot, time, narrativity, and temporality, paying attention to connections. 'By plot I mean the intelligible whole that governs a succession of events in any story' (Ricoeur, 1980: 171) or 'the imitation of the action (by 'plot' here I mean the organisation of events)' (Aristotle, 1996: 11).

Ricoeur refers to the intersection between events where the plot turns into the story as 'the crossing point of temporality and narrativity'. He explores links between time and narrative as essentially a human experience, transcending culture at their convergence. '*(T)ime becomes human to the extent that it is articulated through a narrative mode, and narrative attains its full meaning when it becomes a condition of temporal existence*' (Ricoeur, 1984: 52). Where we consider psychotherapy as narrative time will be at the centre of therapy in the patient's untold story:

'The patient who talks to a psychoanalyst presents bits and pieces of lived stories, ... of "primitive scenes" ... We may rightfully say of such analytic sessions that their goal ... is for the analyst to draw from these bits and pieces a narrative that will be ... more intelligible. ... (This) assures the continuity between the ... inchoate story and the actual story we assume responsibility for' (ibid: 74).

There are a number of layers. Stories can be inchoate and not consciously known, suggesting a different kind of time and experience. "(P)rimitive scenes" are historical, reflecting the importance of the past in much Western psychotherapy. The therapist like a writer or composer draws together 'bits and pieces' from the past in their episodic nature to create a 'plot' with narrative coherence. Ricoeur describes linear time 'from untold and repressed stories in the direction of actual

stories' (ibid: 74) from a past towards a present. Jane's roll of honour from the past, in the present, towards a different future is one example.

Ricoeur suggests a reciprocal relationship between narrativity and temporality: 'Indeed I take temporality to be that structure of existence that reaches language in narrativity and narrativity to be the language structure that has temporality as its ultimate referent' (Ricoeur, 1980: 169). Relevant to narrative, Sartre reflects on temporality:

'Temporality is obviously an organised structure and its three "supposed" time elements, past, present, future, should not be seen as a collection of "data", out of which we make a total – for example like a series of "nows" of which some are not yet, others are no longer – but as moments structured from an original synthesis' (Sartre, 1943: 145).¹¹³

In this 'original synthesis' time is 'thick' (Husserl, 1991). Each part incorporates or presupposes the other(s) unlike the present of past, present, and future (Augustine, 1961) which Sartre terms paradoxical, (the past that is no more; the future that is not yet; the present that does not exist, like a dot that has no size).¹¹⁴ Sartre suggests, like Husserl (1991) and Merleau-Ponty (1945), that temporality is not an accumulation of separate instants. The only way to study temporality 'is to approach it as an entirety which defines its component structures and gives meaning' (Sartre, 1943: 145)¹¹⁵. Ricoeur on narrativity has a strong affinity with Husserl, Merleau-Ponty, and Sartre.

Narrative time emphasises connectedness, which is implicit in Western psychotherapies. '*(T)ime becomes human to the extent that it is articulated through a narrative mode*' (Ricoeur, 1984: 52) but like therapy different narrative

¹¹³ 'La temporalité est évidemment une structure organisée et ces trois prétendus "éléments" du temps: passé, présent, avenir, ne doivent pas être envisagés comme une collection de "data" dont il faut faire la somme – par exemple une série infinie de "maintenant" dont les uns ne sont pas encore, dont les autres ne sont plus – mais comme des moments structurés d'une synthèse originelle' (Sartre, 1943: 145).

Sartre considers this phenomenological description 'comme un travail provisoire'.

¹¹⁴ 'Sinon nous rencontrerons d'abord ce paradoxe: le passé n'est plus, l'avenir n'est pas encore, quant au présent instantané, chacun sait bien qu'il n'est pas du tout, il est la limite d'une division infinie, comme le point sans dimension' (Sartre, 1943: 145).

¹¹⁵ '... c'est de l'aborder comme une totalité qui domine ses structures secondaires et qui leur confère leur signification' (Sartre, 1943: 145).

styles articulate beginnings and endings differently. Ricoeur argues the importance in philosophy of understanding the ‘structural reciprocity of temporality and narrativity’. Time is too often seen as ‘a linear succession of instants’ (Ricoeur, 1980: 170), with philosophers looking ‘to cosmology and physics to supply the meaning of time or ... try(ing) to specify the inner experience of time without any reference to narrative activity’ (ibid: 169-170).

Narrative can occur ‘within an uncriticised temporal framework’ just as therapy may be practised without reference ‘to narrative activity’ or time. However, an explicit temporal framework changes our focus. Ricoeur’s time has depth, like the ‘Heideggerian concept of within-time-ness’ (ibid: 175), or the ‘thick’ present of Husserl’s (1991) time-consciousness. Time is grounded phenomenologically in experience just as Jane’s *Roll of Honour* was rooted phenomenologically in experience, ultimately allowing her to countenance a future no longer defined by her past. Her temporal experience was increasingly liberated from a timeless ‘inner experience of time without any reference to narrative activity’ as she struggled to stay in the ‘now’, without an unchanging Husserlian ‘retention of retentions’ that never shades off, a ‘now’ that is ‘structural from an original synthesis’ (Sartre, 1943: 145).

Ricoeur describes two kinds of ‘now’; the ‘absolute instant’ and ‘(t)he existential now ... which is a “making-present”, inseparable from awaiting and retaining’ (Ricoeur, 1980: 173). Jane and Judie struggled to make-present and stay-present, and when unable to, they collapse into a thick past ‘now’, leaving Jane terrified and Judie ultimately psychotic. In saying ‘now’ we make the present a phenomenological activity not an abstract now without connection. Phenomenologically, ‘now’ clock-time remains linked to diurnal rhythms. ‘(W)hen the machines used to measure time are cut off from this primary reference to natural measures, saying “now” is turned into a form of the abstract representation of time’ (ibid: 174) just as individuals bereft of a Heideggerian sense of Being, without a sense of making-present, become distanced from feeling existentially authentic.

Narrative, stories, and time, involve memory. Ricoeur was concerned with memory as ‘passive’ experience of events returning unbidden into consciousness, or as an act of conscious recall. I set the scene for some of his ideas with a brief clinical account of ‘mémoire’, ‘souvenir’, and ‘rappel’, to support his thinking.

Case vignette: Charlene.

The experience described here provides another un-remembered memory, or memory (mémoire) without memory (souvenir) or recall (rappel).

Charlene experienced a debilitating fear of harming others. This had significant social consequences with obsessional protectiveness of her young daughter and family. It became evident that efforts to control her environment and avoid harming anyone were traceable to an incident in a swimming pool when she was six or seven. She had slid down a waterslide and hit a boy swimming across under water making his nose bleed, and eliciting angry responses from adults. Linking this with her fear of damaging others, allowed her to experiment taking normal risks in everyday activities without the crippling anxiety of harming others. Until that recall in therapy, she had no conscious memory of the event. Her ‘memory’ had been endless enactments of strategies to avoid harming others.

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¹¹⁶ Jane had a similar experience of memory without ‘remembering’. On one occasion, her parents had smashed her car windscreen. She had it replaced, and as the young man began to clear the glass from the car, Jane recounted she had become distressed and shouted at the young man to get out.

We explored the meaning of her car as a personal safe space and the effect on her of the young man entering it to clear it up. She began to see it as a personal invasion, and how this had re-evoked her experiences of rape and violation. As she made the connection she began to see she had memory (mémoire) of her abuse without conscious memory (souvenir), or recall (rappel) of how this (isomorphic) experience reactivated her ‘forgotten’ terrors. She began to relax. This incident did not mean that she was “going mad”.

Jane had developed ways to deal with the past when it became unbearably present, by suppressing recall of her abuse to protect herself from her fear of “going mad”. Memory in the guise of dissociated reliving of events would come unbidden into therapy so that rather than actively recalling past events, she would re-enact them, regressed to the age when she first endured them.

In this account, we see a replaying in adult life of a single childhood ‘trauma’. ‘Mémoire’, without ‘souvenir’ or ‘rappel’, plays a powerful role repeating without remembering (Freud, 1917, XVI: 270-271). Her repetition was timeless, repeated without change or recall. Memory, forgetting, or unconscious forgetting that protects the individual from painful recall, are different elements of time. Ricoeur (1980: 180) suggests that a ‘plot establishes human action not only within time, ... but within memory. Memory, accordingly, *repeats* the course of events according to an order that is the counterpart of time as “stretching-along” between a beginning and an end’. An anonymous reviewer of *La Mémoire, l’Histoire, l’Oubli* (Ricoeur, 2000) writes:

‘... a distinction between memory, *mneme*, which is at the level of feeling, or pathos, since memory appears passively without the subject willing it – is, to put it simply, memory of the kind “Proust’s madeleine biscuit” - and *anamnesis*, memory, which is in the sense of active work, is seeking recall and recollection. To put it simply again, it is the kind of memory of psycho-analytic work.’ (BBF, 2001: 1).¹¹⁷

The distinction between *mneme* and *anamnesis*, ‘the simple presence of memory and the effort of recall’ (Vigier, 2001: 2)¹¹⁸ is important for understanding time. Ricoeur’s review of the philosophy of memory, history, and forgetting, from Plato to Heidegger, begins with the phenomenology of memory:

‘By submitting to the primacy of the question “what?”, phenomenology of memory finds itself confronted from the start by a formidable aporia,¹¹⁹ which everyday language guarantees: the presence in which the representation of the past seems to consist looks very much like an image’ (Ricoeur, 2000: 5).¹²⁰

¹¹⁷... une distinction entre la mémoire, *mneme*, qui est de l’ordre de l’affect, du pathos, puisque le souvenir y apparaît de manière passive sans que le sujet le veuille – c’est pour aller vite, la mémoire type “*madeleine de Proust*” - , et la mémoire *anamnesis*, qui est de l’ordre du travail, de la quête, du rappel et de la recollection. C’est pour aller vite encore, la mémoire type du travail en analyse’ (BBF, 2001: 1). We see here where language changes the nuances, since in French there are two words for memory: souvenir and mémoire.

¹¹⁸ ‘la simple présence du souvenir et l’effort de rappel’ emphasises active memory and active recalling.

¹¹⁹ ‘Aporia, ... is the cognitive perplexity posed by a group of individually plausible but collectively inconsistent propositions. ... To overcome aporetic inconsistency, we must give up at least one of the theses involved in the inconsistency. There will always be different alternatives here and logic as such can enforce no resolution’ (Honderich, 2005: 43).

¹²⁰ ‘En se soumettant au primat de la question “quoi?”, la phénoménologie de la mémoire se voit confrontée d’entrée de jeu à une redoutable aporie que le langage ordinaire cautionne : la présence en laquelle semble consister la représentation du passé paraît bien être celle d’une image’ (Ricoeur, 2000: 5).

Although memory refers to past events, blurred time boundaries is a familiar phenomenon in clinical practice. In philosophical description, ‘temporal distance, of the depth of the past’ (ibid: 6) (‘distance temporelle, de profondeur du temps passé’) differs from a past so lacking depth that it becomes an intrusive present, facing us with the Platonic presence of the absent in memory.¹²¹ In Aristotelian terms, Ricoeur differentiates memory as recall, - ‘recall consists of active seeking’ (ibid: 22), - and memory as simply present that ‘confronts the simple evocation of a memory coming to mind’ (ibid: 24).¹²² We are often clinically concerned with memory that is not easily accessible (*mneme*) and is beyond conscious awareness requiring active recall (*anamnesis*). It is as if the absent creates a time gap for ‘with memory, the absent carries the temporal indicator of what went before’ (ibid: 24)¹²³. However we represent the past, - by oral tradition, written word, monuments, - we make sense of the present through evoking memory (*mémoire*, *souvenir*, or *rappel*): ‘(W)e do not have any other resource as regards the past than memory (*mémoire*) itself. To memory (*mémoire*) is attached ambition, a pretention, ... to be faithful to the past. ... to indicate the character of the past from which we declare memory (*souvenir*)’ (ibid: 26).¹²⁴

If memory is our primary access to the past, we need to understand linguistically and culturally different kinds of memory. ‘In this sense, we should distinguish linguistically between memory [*mémoire*] as focused and memory [*souvenir*] as the thing envisaged. We speak of memory and memories. Speaking radically of

¹²¹ Ricoeur refers to Aristotle’s *Theaetetus* in respect of ‘la présence de l’absent’, (Ricoeur, 2000: 23) and as ‘une ligne entre la simple présence du souvenir et l’acte de rappel’, (‘a boundary between simple presence of memory and the specific act of recall’).

¹²² ‘le rappel consiste en une recherche active.’ / ‘fait face à la simple évocation d’un souvenir venant à l’esprit.’

¹²³ ‘(a)vec le souvenir, l’absent porte la marque temporelle de l’antérieur.’

¹²⁴ ‘Nous n’avons pas d’autre ressource, concernant la référence au passé, que la mémoire elle-même. À la mémoire est attachée une ambition, une prétention, celle d’être fidèle au passé. ... elle est notre seule et unique ressource pour signifier le caractère passé de ce dont nous déclarons nous souvenir’ (ibid: 26). We see in the French, the distinction between ‘*mémoire*’ and ‘*souvenir*’.

what is dealt with here, it is a phenomenon of memory [souvenir]' (ibid: 27).¹²⁵ By 'a phenomenology of memory' Ricoeur implies memory of past *things*, of the 'what', or 'whom', or 'how', a past distinct from and not influenced by the present. In chapter 5 we consider the lived phenomenology of different kinds of memory.

Ricoeur's interest in psychotherapy and narrative reflects therapy that seeks connections between seemingly disparate elements to become a new healing narrative. Jane's *Roll of Honour* is an example of the importance of a new future-oriented narrative plot to help confront her 'memory'. Charlene developed a new narrative about her fear of harming others, and Judie began to change the critical narrative that she carried in her head.

Ricoeur's analysis of Aristotelian plot (Aristotle, 1996) supports this understanding. His attention to Augustine and the shift from a cosmological to a personal understanding of time fits with the private world of psychotherapy. His analysis of multi-layered memory (*mémoire, souvenir, rappel*) suggests a language for the presence of the absent in the not-remembered memory.

Time's unreality: narrative's challenge.

Since considering Julian Barbour's argument against the existence of time in chapter 1, (Barbour, 2000, 2008), the philosophical premise has predicated its existence. We have considered the instant or time out of time, and the instant having thickness. As a counterpoint to this, I turn to two other philosophers.

¹²⁵ 'En ce sens, il faudrait distinguer dans le langage entre la mémoire comme visée et le souvenir comme chose visée. On dit la mémoire et les souvenirs. À parler radicalement de ce dont il est traité ici, c'est une phénoménologie du souvenir.'

J.M.E. McTaggart.

McTaggart (1927) proposes two kinds of time. They are:

- The *A* series that describes an event or experience as Past, Present, or Future. None is permanent, and a moment cannot be in more than one simultaneously.
- The *B* series is relational, with two states: Earlier and Later. These relationships are fixed.

Events are either simultaneous or sequential and we can see them in terms of both series. Only the present can be perceived directly while other events are known either through memory (the past), or inference / expectation (the future) (*A* series). The past, present, or future, are constructs of our minds and exist in human consciousness but this does not make them real: ‘no fact about anything can change, unless it is a fact about its place in the *A* series. Whatever other qualities it has, it has always. But what is future will not always be future, and what was past was not always past’ (McTaggart, 1927: 28). Thus, the only reality of time is earlier / later, (*B* series).

Unlike time defined by change or number, nothing changes in the *B* series because ‘the *B* series depends on permanent relations, no moment could ever cease to be, nor could it become another moment’ (ibid: 26). The only possible change is from farthest future, through to the present, to farthest past, while the event remains unchanged.¹²⁶

‘Every event must be one or the other, but no event can be more than one. If I say that any event is past, that implies that it is neither present nor future, and is so with the others. And this exclusiveness is essential to change, and therefore to time. For the only change we can get is from future to present, and from present to past’ (ibid: 32).

As we lack a verb that encompasses all three times, we can only describe each one separately. ‘The central idea of the *A* series is that there is a unique and ever-changing absolute present, relative to which every other element of the series is either absolutely past or absolutely future’ (Roark, 2011: 14). We have seen in

¹²⁶ McTaggart gives the example of Queen Anne’s death that never changes.

clinical vignettes how patients experience simultaneity of present-past and present-future, while lacking a now-present. The *B* series fixes the position of earlier or later events in relation to each other, but ‘without an *A* series there is no time’ (McTaggart, 1927: 27). However, McTaggart argues that attributions of past, present, or future, the *A* series, are ‘only a constant illusion of our minds, and the real nature of time contains only the distinctions of the *B* series’ (ibid: 25) and yet without this ‘illusion’ there cannot be time.

If we think of Judie and her psychotic breakdown (this chapter) who could not shake off her mother’s belief that she did not have the right to exist, she experienced no past, present, or possible future - except one of dread. Earlier and later melded into an intolerable un-survivable present. In McTaggart’s terms it is hardly too much to suggest that Judie had no sense of *A* series, and in her existential feeling of illegitimacy, little deep experience of before / after, or earlier / later in her sense of being.

Anthropologist Alfred Gell suggests that the *A* series is concerned with ‘tense’, ‘since past, present and future are the three basic tenses’ (Gell, 1992: 166) and that the *B* series is more concerned with time in an unequivocal manner. *B* series relationships remain static. The present in the *A* series is in constant flux to remain the same (present) where ‘the subject has every reason to feel that time is passing, because of the workload involved in continually updating beliefs’ (ibid: 173). Remaining ‘present’ requires continuous cognitive activity. Time may be an ‘illusion of our minds’ philosophically, but subjective realities as lived realities are the locus of healing ‘in continually updating beliefs’ in ever-changing relationships to present, past, and future.

If the past cannot be changed in McTaggart’s *B* series, Husserl’s model allows the past to be constantly changing in our consciousness as a by-product of human intentionality. Husserl gives depth to McTaggart’s model, but this does not account for retention of retention (of retention) *not* ‘shading off’ of sight but remaining painfully present. There may be an increasingly distant past in the *A*

series and the fixed relationship of the *B* series, but for Jane the cruel present of on-going parental abuse constantly compounded the ever-present reality of a past that never ‘shaded off’.

I now make reference to Galen Strawson’s argument against narrativity, beginning with a brief case vignette.

Case vignette: Douglas.

Douglas is in his mid forties and successful in business. He describes growing up in a family with little spontaneous affection or active interest in his activities. When he was twenty-three his father was shot at point blank range in an underground car park. It was an ‘execution’ with a high profile court case but no conviction. Douglas works long hours, is separated from his wife and children while maintaining regular contact, has a ‘girl-friend’ with whom he does not live, has a one bedroom flat furnished with few material possessions where he feels most secure. He has intermittent contact with friends. These relationships do not overlap.

Douglas wrote of himself: “Life is very episodic, looking forward to the next event but not being able to plan very far ahead. ... I don’t like my remoteness, have struggled to explain it and understand it and the lack of emotions I have been left with”. Of his social and family life he writes of “some personal contentedness” but “not being happy about many of these characteristics”. He only feels at ease or real in the immediate now of activity. He strongly identified with Meursault, Camus’ central character in *L’Étranger* (1957) who lives in a seemingly timeless world devoid of emotional significance or connection, with no before or after.

Galen Strawson.

Strawson considers some of these points. He questions the received truth that human beings ‘typically see or live or experience their lives as a narrative or story

of some sort' (Strawson, 2005: 63).¹²⁷ He proposes that humans 'experience their being in time' in different ways, and that 'non-Narrative' people lead fulfilled lives.¹²⁸ Strawson terms 'Diachronic' for long-term continuity of Narrativity, and 'Episodic' for a person lacking a sense of distant past or long-term future,¹²⁹ similar to Douglas writing "Life is very episodic, ... not being able to plan very far ahead".

Strawson's argument whether our experience of time is episodic or diachronic questions time as a reality. While he is correct that retelling stories lays down and reinforces particular neural pathways his argument might be different if he took account of the work of narrative therapists such as Michael White and David Epston (1990) who emphasise 're-storying' to facilitate psychological change that would create new neural pathways.

Jane's experience from her earliest years was to be told she was 'shit' like the dog. She was repeatedly threatened that revealing her abuse would result in her throat being cut like her cat's. Her parents' ultimate thirty-year prison sentence could not simply erase this lifelong narrative. She had painstakingly to connect multiple discontinuous elements of her life, her 'flashbacks of sensation (that were) seemingly disconnected from a behavioural context' (Kalsched, 1996: 13) of her life with its many 'holes in it'.

Douglas' experience was less tangible. Growing up in a family with little emotional connection, and compounded by his father's murder, seemed to provide him with little sense of narrative continuity. Work relocations and years of

¹²⁷ Strawson argues elsewhere from, I believe, a phenomenological standpoint, that 'anything that exists in space-time – is entirely *physical*' (Strawson, 2013: 28).

¹²⁸ There is an unexplained sub-text in Strawson's essay challenging the basis of psychotherapy. He singles out psychotherapy as potentially destructive if it imposes either narrative model, but does not make explicit what prompts this, especially as this paper is *not* about psychotherapy.

¹²⁹ The ground-breaking book, *Families of the Slums*, (Minuchin et al., 1967), charts the experiences of children lacking a sense of continuity in their lives, who do not connect events over time and cannot recall them, nor see the consequences of behaviours on others. This study describes the consequences of the limited extent to which these children can engage in social activity to prepare them for adult life.

international work travel probably helped mask the episodic and disjointed nature of his private world.

Strawson merits consideration. He argues that psychotherapy does not have to be a narrative project nor that disparate events need be linked in a narrative manner: ‘The key explanatory linkings in psychotherapy are often piecemeal in nature, as are many key impacts of experience. Ideally, one acquires an assorted basketful of understandings, not a narrative – an almost inevitably falsifying narrative’ (Strawson, 2005: 83). Although his argument is weakened by the lack of alternative and more specifically by a notion of time, his ideas of *descriptive* and *normative* narrative, and *episodic* or *diachronic* time, suggest useful perspectives for psychotherapy.

Reflections.

This philosophical enquiry generates a range of insights. One of the difficulties is that with the exception of Ricoeur and to some extent Heidegger, the philosophical time perspectives I have researched relate predominantly to the everyday normal, or do not easily account for chaotic lived experience. In its attempt to understand the world philosophy does not set out to describe the effects of trauma or stress on experiences of time, and generally does not examine the phenomenon of a co-existing past and present.

Descartes (2000) implied that knowledge of our existence is predicated on the fact that thought exists and that the confines of our thought suggest that time would not exist without human consciousness. Without consciousness there is no number, no ‘self’ to record rhythm or meaning. If, as Kant suggests, philosophy can help describe everyday experience *a priori* of time, the contrast of stressful experience highlights the need for other tools to describe *those* kinds of time. Kant accepts that while *a priori* there is an argument for time’s existence, subjective experience affects awareness of duration. His idea that in the inner space of the mind time varies, changes, and is subjective, tentatively takes us closer to time experienced in therapy.

The introduction of phenomenology and intentionality by Husserl beginning with the world as it is without prior theory, made it possible to start with the person in their Being and realities. Husserl describes an instant that is more than Plato's instant 'being in no time at all' or Barbour's equal-value-now. Husserl's 'thick instant' gives body and substance to time, and Heidegger's exploration of Dasein and being in time introduced the 'horizontal' of an existential-ontological understanding.

Ricoeur draws on many traditions to remind us that the phenomenological 'now' must remain existentially connected. In psychotherapy it must be rooted in experience drawn from 'how it is' and not from 'how it should be'. Ricoeur (2000) introduces subtleties for memory (*mémoire, souvenir, rappel*) that suggest how we may formulate the not (consciously) remembered memory, memory that is present, and active recall.

The roots of modern Western philosophy from the eighteenth century lie in a reductionist understanding of mind that is rationalist and not linked to a deity. The phenomenology of starting from the observed in its thingly-ness parallels a move from external explanation stretching back to Plato, to man as he is in the present.

Strawson challenged belief in the primacy of narrative continuity, yet Jane's fragmented, traumatised, episodic world gave her no peace. It would have been unethical *not* to help her develop a different narrative. When unable to think, echoing Descartes, she felt she did not exist as if she were outside time and place. Certainly her sense of being out-of-time gives credence to McTaggart's argument for time's unreality. For her nonetheless this was a state of terror.

I turn next to the world of experience in different socio-cultural contexts and ultimately examine ritual for what we can learn about temporality in psychotherapy. I begin with an in-depth case study, partly to bridge philosophical

and social anthropological scholarship, and partly for a contemporary ethnographic voice to my research.

Chapter 5.

A family's multiple constructs of time.

‘The word of the Lord came to me again: “What do you mean by repeating this proverb concerning the land of Israel, ‘The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children’s teeth are set on edge’? As I live, says the Lord God, this proverb shall no more be used by you in Israel.” ’
(Ezekiel. 18: 1-2.)

‘(F)or practitioners concerned with individuals, not aggregates, research can never be generalizable ... Research can only function as a heuristic; it can suggest possibilities but never dictate action.’
(Donmoyer, 2000: 51)

Aims.

The main aims of this chapter are to describe a piece of qualitative research on time with a Romanian family and emphasise socio-cultural perspectives in understanding human relationships. I contrast this with philosophical scholarship on time and provide a ‘bridge’ to examine time anthropologically. The focus is to show how a heightened awareness of multiple interweaving timeframes enhances an appreciation of people’s lived experience.

Introduction.

General background.

In presenting the following interview material, I analyse different kinds of time and how changing temporal perspectives influence people’s lives. In the previous two chapters we considered certain philosophical ways to structure time, some of which do not reflect patients’ temporal experiences, nor Freud and Palazzoli’s thinking. Even supported with brief clinical vignettes, philosophical discussion sometimes tended towards the abstract and rational. This chapter, where I analyse the lived stories of a Romanian family, acts as a bridge between philosophy and the more direct cultural history and worlds of chapters 6, 7, and 8, and their respective contributions to conceptualising time in psychotherapy.

The data comes from a semi-structured interview on time with the Mocan family in an international conference plenary session.¹³⁰ It is a public research interview to gather information, and in a sense to introduce information (Tomm, 1987a, b, 1988). It is mainly ethnographically oriented to provide a systematic description of a family's particular culture (Barfield, 1997). As the interviewer, I am part of the process since we do not 'separate who we are as persons from the research analysis that we do' (Corbin, 2009: 40). A brief socio-political note provides some background.

A socio-political note.

The Romanian revolution that overthrew the Ceausescu regime began on 15th December 1989 in Timișoara and coalesced around Laszlo Tökes, a pastor of Hungarian origin. The conference in November 2006 at Western University of Timișoara took place seventeen years later. A number of the conference participants had been junior doctors treating the wounded in 1989 and there is now a generation with no personal memory of that era. The bridge over the Bega where students were gunned down, the Romanian Orthodox cathedral where retreating civilians were shot against its closed doors, and the Calea Martirilor (Martyr's Street) where many were killed, are within a mile of the university.

The interview is based on family members' experiences of change and stability before and after 1989. Tanasoiu argues that while there seem to be changes in Romania, underlying myths mean that stabilising processes inhibit any 'change of change' (Hoffman, 1985). Tanasoiu (2005: 116) identifies the following key myths underpinning Romanian society; 'Unity', the Saviour, the Conspiracy Theory and, the Golden Age'. These myths define Romanian society over

¹³⁰ Second International Conference in Family Therapy and Systemic Practice: *Continuities and Discontinuities in a Time of Change*, 23-25 November 2006, Timisoara, Romania. Dr Ileana Radu and I were conference Co-Chairs.

When planning this conference and choice of themes for the family interview, I had in mind the nature of time to identify ways of experiencing and how to describe time. My focus on continuities and discontinuities, time and change, fitted with family members' expectations for the interview.

centuries. Tanasoiu draws on three well-known folk legends ¹³¹ that reinforce those ‘political myths (*which*) are perpetuated from one period to another although new faces and details are used to fill in the script’ (ibid: 112).

The Tismaneanu Report (2006):

This report, commissioned by President Traian Băsescu, gives background to life in Romania under communism (1945-89). It highlights the ‘ideology at the core of the régime, emphasising that it exercised control by manipulating and indoctrinating the Romanian people’ (Tanasoiu, 2007: 63). Tanasiou quotes Gheorghio-Dej, the party’s first general secretary: ‘ “The Ministry of Education is more important than the Ministry of Security, since it concerns the cultural destruction of the enemy, prepares future comrades, and educates the working classes” ’ (ibid: 65). It confirms the Mocan family’s account:

‘Since the sins of the parents were passed on to the children, students with an “unhealthy” background were given only limited access to higher education, “unhealthy” authors were removed from the curriculum, and “dangerous elements” among the teachers were removed. The status of teachers, professors, and academics was reduced to that of ordinary workers. The Party’s monopoly over cultural life was achieved through “disinfection of the printed word”, censorship and, under Ceausescu’s leadership, a “mini-cultural revolution” that confined cultural output to serving the leader’s cult of personality’ (Tanasiou, 2007: 65).

Time, continuity, the importance of legacies, and the danger of old beliefs, are evident. Communist party leaders’ timeframe spanned future generations to achieve the marginalization and eradication of those from an ‘unhealthy background’ (Iliesiu, 2005). ¹³² The continuing influence of Party members in Romania is evident. ¹³³

¹³¹ The three mythical stories, with their symbolic power, are: “Traian and Dochia”, “Mesterul Manole” (The Craftsman Manole) and “Miorita” (The Lamb). These are the Romanian myths of the origins of the nation; the building of the Curtea de Arges, the Romanian Orthodox monastery that later became the official church of the princes of Vallachia; and a story that vindicates inaction and communion with nature in the face of threats to survival. (See, Tanasoiu, 2005: 117-124).

¹³² The Report’s publication and presentation in the Romanian parliament demonstrated how many people retained a vested interest in its denigration and, if possible, the suppression of history. It provides an example of the importance of time, the manipulation of memory, and attempts to re-edit the past, which was denied, disputed or ‘re-defined’. During its presentation there were outright abuse and insults. One member described his activities of the 1960s as ‘simply youthful

The passage of time allows other ‘stories’ to emerge and the myth that this was a people’s revolution is now questioned. Some involved in the revolution now ask whether this was not a coup d’état. ‘Within a year, it was beyond doubt that one faction had simply removed another faction, probably in direct contact with Moscow, where Gorbachev had realised the Ceausescu’s system would implode. The institutions that had run the country remained intact, albeit with another name’ (Vulliamy, 2009: 30).¹³⁴

The family interview in a research context.

Time is the generic category for analysing my data. The three subcategories are: *past*, *present*, and *future*. Either side of the *present* are variations of past and future: earlier than/later than; nearer to/further from; before and after (McTaggart, 1927). I discuss this data and the time categories that I develop from this.

The interview was open-ended so I could develop ideas generated by family members. It was a unique opportunity to explore important themes *in situ* in Romania at a particular period in its post-communist history. The interview data could be interrogated in a number of ways including, gender, authority, decision-making; internal migration, or communication patterns. Time was my choice. My aim was to highlight the potential importance of ‘time’ in any consideration of socio-historical-cultural life, the ‘patterns that connect’ (Bateson, 1973) in a familial-social grouping with a shared history, and to explore experiences of

mistakes’ (Tanasoiu, 2007: 67). During the communist regime, up to 3,000,000 people were executed. There was mass removal of families from their homes, deportation, and confiscation of property with migration to the towns into blocks of flats, thereby breaking communities. Party control was extended to the Romanian Orthodox church, while churches with adherence outside the country - Roman Catholic and Greek Orthodox churches, - were banned or the hierarchy removed. A system of infiltration into every part of working and domestic life meant that no one could be sure whether they were being informed on (Tanasoiu, 2007). This established a culture of fear and distrust. The legacy and extent of the continuing influence of the Securitate remains to the present day, as I see in my work in Timișoara (Anonymous personal communication). Anna Funder captures this in her interviews with former members of the Stasi in the GDR and their victims, highlighting the long-term effects on both aspects of totalitarian regimes (Funder, 2004).

¹³³ Taking coffee in the lunch break in Timișoara (2012) a colleague indicated a smartly dressed middle aged man walking past, saying: “He was my interrogator”. ‘Time has passed’, yet in many ways ‘time stands still’.

¹³⁴ This is a repeating theme of communist struggle in Romania (Deletant, 1998).

continuities and discontinuities of time over time in pre- and post-1989 Romania.

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All methods of inquiry have their limitations and research will often bias towards discovering what it 'measures'. Sometimes the most important information to be discovered may not come from formal, generalisable findings.

'Even statistically significant findings from studies with huge, randomly selected samples cannot be applied directly to particular individuals in particular situations; skilled clinicians will always be required to determine whether a research generalization applies to a particular individual, whether the generalization needs to be adjusted to accommodate individual idiosyncrasy, or whether it needs to be abandoned entirely with certain individuals in certain settings' (Donmoyer, 2000: 51).

Interview context.

The family interview addressed the conference theme, *Continuities and Discontinuities in a Time of Change* (Jenkins, 2007, 2008). The family describe changes for their families of origin, themselves individually, as a family together, and in the context of historical and political events. Their Baptist Christian belief is historically and socially relevant because of the different, sometimes compromised, role of the Romanian Orthodox Church between 1945 and 1989 (Tanasoiu, 2005).

¹³⁵ Secondly, it was also to demonstrate interviewing skills and enable family members to articulate their lived experiences in ways not necessarily considered previously. This was similar to the Smith family in chapter 1.

Case study: the Mocan family.

The immediate family are shown in Figure 5.1.

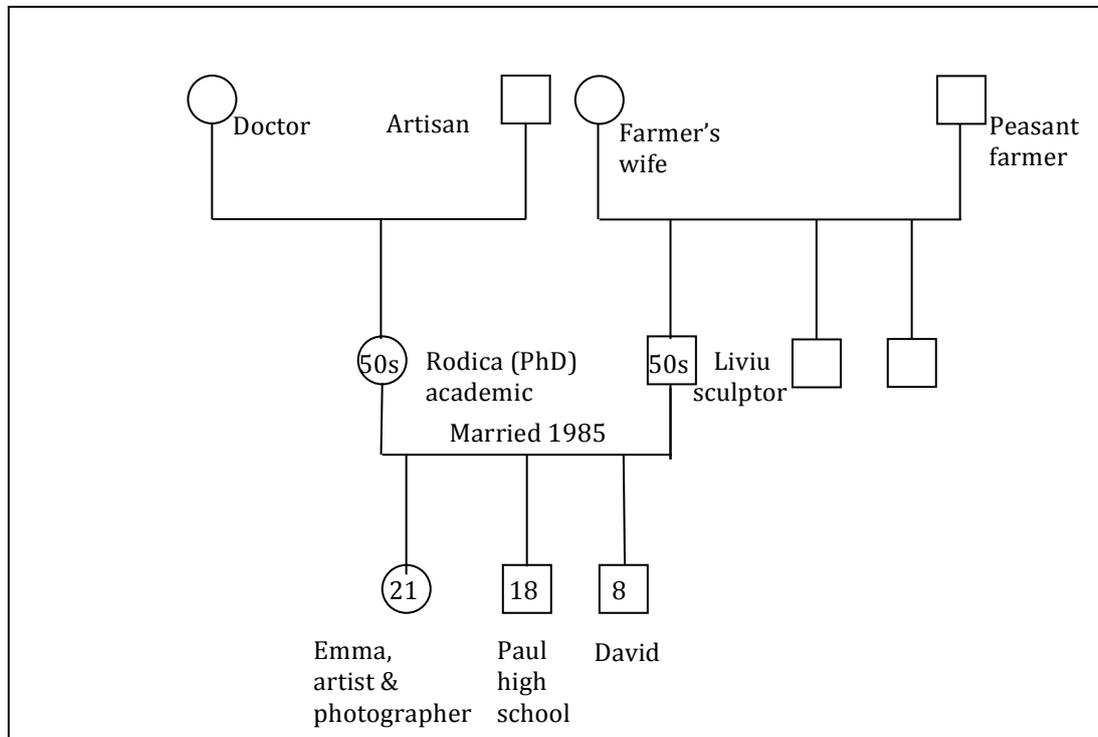


Figure 5.1. Mocan family genogram. Genograms describe current structure, structures over time, highlighting continuities and discontinuities in those patterns.

The family ¹³⁶ is composed of: Liviu, sculptor, Rodica a professor at the University of Cluj, and their three children. An example of Liviu's work appears below (Plate 5.1). This picks up a recurring theme of the seed, the paradox of life out of death, redemption, irresistible force and irreversible change, cycles of the seasons, and time / timelessness.

¹³⁶All family members requested that their real names be used for publication in *Terapia Sistematica* (Jenkins, 2008) and this research.



Plate 4.1. Liviu Mocan: The Seed.¹³⁷

In the interview I explore different kinds of time. I address remembered, or auto-noetic episodic time (Tulving, 2005), its importance in the present, and the place of family members' beliefs for understanding their future 'now'.

'Narrative, as autobiography, describes the way in which people articulate how the past is related to the present... . Time is placed into a personal history, where the past is given meaning in the present. ... This chronicling of a life, or part of a life, often starts from a point of "how it all happened" or "how I came to be where I am today" ' (Coffey and Atkinson, 1996: 68).

Coffey and Atkinson are at variance with the argument favouring the episodic, proposed by Strawson (2005) in chapter 4. Family members recall lived or reported stories. They 'articulate how the past is relevant to the present'; family culture over time (duration); the continuing effects of the 1989 Revolution (past in the present); family continuity and discontinuity over three generations (past to present) and; intimations for the children's generation (present to future, in the context of the past). Family shared faith values are reiterated in their changing world (past, present and future). Finally, a new value of *open-mindedness* (past and present) is recognised.

¹³⁷ Liviu Mocan's website address: www.liviumocan.com. The image of dying as a necessary stage before new life, as in the seed that dies in the ground before regeneration, is at the core of the Christian message. It is similar in this respect to Buddhist and Hindu beliefs.

Research and the place of the investigator.

Timing of the study.

The time interval between gathering material and its analysis becomes a factor. This study becomes an observation in the ‘now’ of the family interview in a ‘now’ that has become ‘then’. I observe the DVD of the interview in a different contextual ‘present’ or ‘now’ in London than the time of the interview a year earlier in Timișoara. ‘Now’ becomes ‘now-then’ and re-contextualises the original event.

Vigouroux discusses temporality for ‘language is experienced differently in the here-and-now of an interaction than in the there-and-then of the transcription activity’ (Vigouroux, 2007: 85). Differences of interpretation may ‘be interpreted as conflicts of temporalities’ (ibid: 86) and contribute to alternative understandings of data. The ‘there-and-then’ in the film is no longer the ‘here-and-now’ of the moment as I observe myself now seeing myself interviewing on film then.¹³⁸ Time is differently expressed according to the culture and meanings of the words used. Schefflen (1978) makes a similar point about understanding an event as a video sequence is re-contextualised by increasing the number of before and after excerpts. Such multiple before and after moments are in effect accumulations of episodic time (Strawson, 2005) different to the future-present-past flow the *A* series and *B* series, recalling McTaggart’s (1927) argument.

Although it is impossible to approach data empty minded, it is possible and useful to suspend (dis)belief. I adopted a ‘not knowing’ relationship to my material (Anderson, and Goolishian, 1992; Hoffman, 1990, 1992) and am agnostic about any specific theory of time, although experience of time affects all human relationships and societal structures (Hall, 1989; Levine, 2006; Priestley, 1964). My years of working in the Sahel in Mali, the Savoie in France, and Lusaka in Zambia, in such different socio-political contexts, teach me that ‘absolute beliefs’ are contextual and ‘(w)e routinely recognise that in most things we can never

¹³⁸ This text will be read in yet another ‘now’, further re-contextualising all that I say.

know anything for sure. But this does not mean that we know nothing' (Hammersley, 1995: 62).

Methodology.

I transcribed the one-hour interview using the left hand page. I read through the material on completion recording the main categories of description used by family members and then coded the material for time-related and other significant categories on the right hand pages (Appendix 1). This helped organise the data and identify discrepancies of understanding and experience. I repeatedly interrogated the text and refined my categories step-by-step. I typed out sequences that encapsulated family members' main themes, using this to review the material until I came to what I felt to be saturation point.¹³⁹

Interviewing influences, or 'contaminates', subjects' views. The cycle of influence is recursive as the interviewer simultaneously influences and is influenced (Hammersley, 2002) *vide* the Stimulus, Response, Reinforcement (SRR) communication model (Watzlawick et al, 1967). Since it is impossible *not* to communicate, my interest in 'time' communicates its importance because a question, however 'open', reveals intentionality (Husserl, 1991).

My different cultural background and history 'sends messages'. It does not invalidate the material, but increases the likelihood of a richer and 'thicker' description (Geertz, 1973). An interviewing style that elicits or challenges implicitly held views may help develop new explanations as the interviewer disturbs the family's culture. Culture is not some esoteric quality possessed by some and not by others. '(C)ulture is simply a convenient term to describe the sum of *learned* knowledge and skills – including religion and language – that

¹³⁹ The main categories were:

- Past – Memory
- Present
- Future – for selves / others
- Gendered stories – over time
- Change / Choice
- Legacies – past / future
- Faith
- Open-mindedness
- Freedom / danger
- Uncertainty

distinguishes one community from another and which, ... passes on in a recognizable form from generation to generation' (Lewis, 1996: 16-17). It is fluid and dynamic: 'I take culture to be those webs, and the analysis of it to be therefore not an experimental science in search of a law but an interpretive one in search of meaning' (Geertz, 1973: 5). In qualitative research, meaning is privileged, 'those webs' or the 'glue' that Kets de Vries (1995) describes. This family's culture is explored through a qualitative lens of time and change, so as to achieve 'an in-depth understanding of people's experiences, perspectives and histories in the context of their personal circumstances or settings' (Spencer et al., 2003: 5).

I chose a qualitative approach, (Coffey and Atkinson, 1996; Morse et al, 2009; Strauss and Corbin, 1998) to draw out different levels of meaning for family members. In contradistinction to the argument against narrativity (Strawson, 2005) I look for connection and follow the narrative chronology while analysing the content of family members' comments. Coffey and Atkinson (1996: 55) quote Denzin in support of this approach: 'A narrative relates events in a temporal, causal sequence. Every narrative describes a sequence of events that have happened. Hence narratives are temporal productions' (Denzin, 1989: 37).¹⁴⁰ This fits with my interest in time and how to connect the 'bits and pieces' (Ricoeur, 1984: 74), the plot that becomes 'the intelligible whole that governs a succession of events in any story' (Ricoeur, 1980: 171) discussed in chapter 4.

It felt natural to move between statements and behaviours and identify categories first as a way to create a framework for accessing beliefs. I have been guided in this by MacDonald (1999) from her experience that following Strauss and Corbin too closely 'may not be the most appropriate for the dataset' (MacDonald, 1999: 32) so as to find a more appropriate 'less restrictive approach to organising the categories' (ibid, 32). I analyse 'beliefs'¹⁴¹ and meanings in this way, and inquire about possible transgenerational transmission.

¹⁴⁰ Denzin, N. K., (1989) *Interpretive Interactionism*. Newbury Park, CA. Sage.

¹⁴¹ I am aware of the many facets of 'belief', and in different cultures. Needham (1972) discusses this in *Belief, Language, and Experience* (cf., 35-37) and interestingly 'a man's assertion that he believes is ultimately a reference to an inner state' (ibid: 74). See also Hobart (2003: 73).

I emphasise in the interview that I *am* an outsider, bringing an outsider's particular perspective¹⁴². It underlines the importance of self-reflexive awareness (Lynch, 2000) whether as psychotherapist (Jenkins, 2004, 2005, 2006; Rober, 1999; Roberts, 2005; Yalom, 1989, 2001) or researcher (Corbin, 2009). It supports the observation that our task is 'an interpretive one in search of meaning' (Geertz, 1973: 5) in relation to cultures.

The interview: narrative text and process.

This part is divided into three time categories: past, present, and future.

*Past.*¹⁴³

Rodica introduces a past timeframe within five minutes of the interview beginning:

Excerpt 1.

Rodica "May I say something, what David should have said to introduce his dad? When David was two, my husband had an exhibition at the art museum."
David *(Inaudible – Liviu laughs)*
Rodica "... and while he was in the exhibition I had a walk with him in the park. And we have that huge, umm, monument of Matthew Corvin, the king. ... And he put his arms around the boot, and he said: "This is what my daddy made". And for me that was the first time I realised he knows what his father's job is, to make this kind of sculptures. So this is probably the way he should have introduced his father."

Until this point, family members have introduced each other in the present. Rodica introduces a specific past moment relating to the personal in terms of parenting and the professional regarding Liviu's work. This is contextualised by historical time, represented by the bronze statue of King Matthew Corvin.¹⁴⁴

A few minutes later, following my questions about the Revolution,

Excerpt 2.

¹⁴² I am and will always be an outsider, while occupying a place on the boundary in relation to central Europe. I have worked regularly in Czechoslovakia (before the political split), Hungary, Yugoslavia (Croatia now), Poland, and Romania since 1987. In addition, I have worked and taught regularly for many years in Western Europe, Scandinavia, and South East Asia.

¹⁴³ In the interests of clarity, I have edited the excerpts where possible in the body of the text. Full transcripts of each excerpt used with right hand margin notes are in Appendix 1.

¹⁴⁴ 'Matthew' refers to Romania's Christian heritage.

HJ “... And one thing maybe for Paul and Emma and David, what do you think the coming down of the Ceausescu regime in December 1989, what do you think it means for your mum and dad?”

I invite Paul and Emma to share their view about its meaning for their parents.

Excerpt 3.

Paul “I was pretty small. I was two years old when that happened, but I still remember the revolution, there were gunshots outside. ... That from that moment on we gain the freedom to speak, and to write and to express ourselves and of religion, and I think that was the best part of it, the freedoms we’ve gained.”

HJ “What do you think it meant for your mum and your dad, because it may mean a different thing? What do you think that changed for them in the last seventeen years?”

Paul “I think they had to decide whether to change their way of thinking and basically start a new life, because their whole life style changed at that moment, and so I’m glad that my parents were open-minded. ... So I think that’s the best thing about them, that they became open-minded, and after that we travelled a lot and we had a good time.”

This sequence introduces a number of past-related concepts, beginning with a particular event. The sequence describing the gunshots is a personal memory. A particular kind of freedom is a new category at a particular time that brings its uncertainties. I ask Paul again to become an observer to think about this from his parents’ viewpoint and introduce another past time concept, duration. He describes it in terms of choices. The issue was whether they would be ‘open-minded’ with consequences for changing ways of thinking. He describes time as duration, marked by travelling a lot.

Excerpt 4.

Emma “I think this ‘open-mindedness’, *(makes quotation marks in the air with her hands)* you can read a lot of this after the communism, ... because I have no idea how my parents were before. I was four as well. ... So, I know a lot of parents that are our parents’ age still have problems with adapting themselves and raising their children, ... It was great for us that our parents were going away all the time, and especially the travelling Paul was talking about. I think it had a lot to save my parents’ relationship, ...”

Emma re-introduces the important quality of ‘open-mindedness’. Her answer refers to political time before her birth. She compares her parents to other adults

who had more difficulty in adapting to the post-communist regime that she anchors to her personal past: “I was four”. Change in the political past created difficulty in adapting personally to the new present. Freedom to travel newly possible post-revolution, was a consequence. Political change impacted on personal time by saving her parents’ relationship.

Paul and Emma are asked to reflect on events in terms of political events. Each in their different ways relates the question to personal events and consequences. Does this reflect the fact as the first post-Ceausescu generation that they were too young to experience the Ceausescu régime and uprising at first hand, and so have no ‘episodic’ memory of events? Liviu takes up the conversation almost immediately, and introduces complexity of past time.

Excerpt 5.

Liviu “My parents were farmers, but very intelligent and people that believed in God. They were very open-minded. So, they worked a lot as farmers, and bought a piece of land, and another piece of land for us three children. ... So, when my parents had some land, after many years of hard work, the communists came, and took everything, everything. So in that moment they were absolutely poor again, as they started. ... Then God gave them a very good thought, they said, very remarkable, they said, ‘From now on we cannot offer our children land,’ - that was the biggest value in the countryside, when you have land, you have a life. Because they said, ‘We cannot offer any more land to our children, we’ll move to the city and we will give them education’.”

And he continues:

Excerpt 6.

Liviu “... It was not simple for the communists. In order to take the land from my parents. My father was a fighter, so he kept fighting for that. ... But my father was one of the last ones in the village that accepted. Only when they twisted his arm so badly (*makes gesture*) then he said: “OK. No way”. But they could do that because they had not only an open mind, but they had God that they believed in, they, they trust in. So, they could fight with people because they had a, ..”

HJ “Truly, a belief system, ...”

Liviu “Yeah, and that became dangerous for any centralising political policy. Right, yeah.”

Liviu starts from his personal viewpoint. He identifies three qualities; intelligence, faith in God, and open-mindedness, referring in effect to different time perspectives. The event that changes daily life is the arrival of the communists but the higher authority context of a personal faith ‘trumps’ the political time of communist party power. There are two significant belief system contexts, belief in God and the communist party.

Belief in God is the ultimate defining context. It refers to time (duration) while “having a very good thought” refers to time (a moment). This introduces a time context that communism cannot control the freedom to abandon the land for education, which no-one can confiscate. It is the freedom to confront and accept the existential absurd (Camus, 1943; Sartre, 1943, 1948, 1945). It describes the power of a personal Christian faith in *spiritual time*, as Jesus (Matthew 10. v. 28) enjoins his followers: ‘And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul; rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell’. This undermined communist *political time*.

The communist party confiscated all property. Land ownership symbolises a relationship to time, history, and culture. Confiscation aims to uproot people from cultural-historical time. While this action is in *political time past*, it is a subcategory of a longer *historical time*. The decision (from God) to move to the town represents a ‘second order change’ (Hoffman, 1985) and places Liviu’s family ultimately beyond political control. Within this historical-political timeframe an event is reframed within eternal (timeless) *spiritual time* and theologians term ‘sacred time’ (Duncan, 1999).

Rodica sets the scene with a different story of her past. Liviu’s is a story of *discontinuities*, while hers reflects *continuity* of expectations for education and learning as more enduring than political power.

Excerpt 7.

HJ “It’s different for you? ... Was yours different?”

Rodica “Yes, very different. I grew up in the city, although my parents also came from poor backgrounds, but my mother is a medical doctor. Errm, I got the same idea, but a bit different than his parents. ... Errm, it was always clear that after you finish high school, you go to university. ... At that time when we grew up, we lived in a Christian family, and we had not much choice in terms of education. There was not much to choose, because a lot of the jobs were closed, either for what it was called ‘unhealthy social origin’, or just because you had Christian beliefs you could not go in a certain direction. ... And I knew I could never be able to study history, law, umm, what else was forbidden? And of course police, and because we were in a Christian family ...”

Liviu “Become a professor, ..”

Rodica “... and we were practising Christians, we were not recommended to go to any profession that would make us school teachers, because they were getting rid of the school teachers that they had. ... So I ended up like many of the people of my generation, to go to polytechnic school. To my surprise I liked it, and I discovered I had some technical abilities. ... And after that, the revolution came. And following my husband in the States for one year that he did there as a student, I had the chance of studying something else, and getting into a completely new field. And, er, that job took me to a university position now, and I discovered that I enjoy learning, - that I have to study all the time, as a job, and that I start to like it. And it’s probably part of the legacy that I had. And I look at my mother sometimes, and I think that she could have gone much farther if she had lived in the times I lived, because she was much more serious and much more thorough. ... And probably I was able to take the legacy a bit further.”

She starts with the personal past and the maternal importance of maintaining fidelity to the gendered family script. However, she describes the consequences of Christian faith (*spiritual time*) intersecting with the communist party (*political time*). Choices of education for Christians were not barred *per se* but the removal of opportunities for certain jobs effectively closed the doors (Tanasiou, 2007). Her option was a polytechnic education to study engineering, but on graduation the Revolution had happened.

The resulting changes (*political time*) meant new travel choices (*personal time*). To enjoy studying is “probably part of the legacy” of temporal continuities from her mother. Political changes - discontinuities - afforded her opportunities that were unavailable to the previous generation. Despite external changes Rodica attributes an important level of continuity to her mother’s “values and scripts”. While events may change, fundamental beliefs and patterns survive from the past to the present. The continuities theme continues in personal choice:

Excerpt 8.

Rodica “I was a student at that time and my husband was not a student. He was a stone carpenter, a ‘cioplitor in piatra’, umm. But my mother, she’s a medical doctor and my father never went to college. They are an unusual couple, very unusual, especially for their generation. And actually, he confessed that this was the only reason he looked at me, when he found out that my mother has a degree and my father doesn’t. Because, otherwise, in the culture we grew up in, it was almost unacceptable.”

This is an example of breaking time honoured social patterns while remaining true to personal legacies.

Present.

The present holds the past as a context and provides a bridge to a future that can crystallise differently to the past. It is a gateway to the possibility of change. The political past defined each person’s position while the post-communist present implies potential for choice. At the same time it creates unexpected dilemmas.

Excerpt 9.

Rodica “What I am saying is that it’s much more difficult now to keep a firm belief, umm, to present your value system than it was during the communist times. At that time it was dangerous, at that time, if you said it in the wrong setting it could have been dangerous, you could lose your job, ... But now, ...”

HJ “At least it was clear.”

Rodica “It was clear. White was white, black was black. ... Right now, I find it more difficult to talk about my faith than at that time. At least at that time I could say: ‘Well, I’m brave if I do it!’ Now I’m ridiculous if I do it. ... Just one phrase before I pass the microphone, (*pause*). I’m at the point of seeing these two, (*Emma and Paul*) somewhat satisfied with the past, at least some of our values, the main ones. I’m more worried if they will be able to pass them on!”

Paul “I think that mum is pretty much right, because in the communist regime everybody had something they wanted to say, but they never had the courage because what it would mean to get arrested. ... But nowadays you can say whatever you want because today nobody cares. ... And that time was like, ‘I’m saying that, I’m being a brave person, I’m being arrested. Everybody knows I risk a lot by saying that’. Today you don’t risk anything. They just get to mock you.”

The changing (*political*) past-present contextualises the (*personal*) present situation. The problem of holding a firm belief is juxtaposed with a repressive

past political system that provided certainty so that, paradoxically, current freedoms make “it more difficult to talk about my faith than at that time”. Under repression it was easier to define what and why you believed. Freedom has brought challenges and uncertainty about boundaries and personal values. With neither past repressive certainties nor a certain future this may be thought of as a ‘betwixt and between’ period with a ‘liminal’ sense of timelessness (Turner, 1967, 1982) discussed in chapter 8.

This is one way to understand the confusing nature of the family’s descriptions of their unsettling political and personal worlds. Eight minutes later Rodica describes certain consequences of change: “... I think change is differently for everyone, and change from communism to this system has been very difficult for everyone”. She now describes this from her gendered viewpoint.

Excerpt 10.

Rodica “... But as a woman, I think I am part of a generation that is going to disappear. ... Umm, look at us carefully because we are an endangered species! We inherited (*Liviu chuckles*) a mentality of being housewives, erm, submissive wives, do all the chores in the house, washing, cleaning, shopping, - am I right? ... umm, ...”

.....

“Ummm, definitely doing preserves in the fall; canning for winter. Everybody understands me, and then, after the revolution, all of a sudden there was this opening for a lot of careers. And there were a lot of things we could do, that we could not do before, and very *graciously*, our husbands *allowed*, and I stress the word ALLOWED us to develop a career. ... And I think that we are a generation that is going to disappear, because we juggle, and we still try to do all of this. ... but it’s been a few years since I don’t do preserves any more. ... And sometimes the environment makes me feel guilty for not doing any of this. ... But, there are other things, and I don’t do and feel guilty about them.”

Emma (*Laughs*) “I don’t know if I’ll ever be a lot of a career woman. ...”

Rodica reflects on the past from her present perspective and women’s changing roles, as members of “an endangered species”. This focuses attention on changing gendered narratives. She refers to her gendered inheritance, a legacy institutionalised by political and cultural male supremacy. The catalyst for change was post-1989 but the message is ambivalent for, “our husbands ... ALLOWED us ...”. She introduces a future perspective and whether the political moment,

15th December 1989, represents a first order change without underlying systemic change of relationship patterns, or whether it was ‘second order’ (Hoffman, 1985). If the latter, this would mean there could be no return ‘in time’ to previous structures. W. B. Yeats captures the meaning of such change: ‘Now and in time to be, / Wherever green is worn, / Are changed, changed utterly: / A terrible beauty is born.’ (Yeats, 1994:154). Yeats describes the irreversibility of change that cannot return to the *status quo ante*. The Tismaneanu Report 2006 (Tanasiou, 2007) marks a step for change in political time, and the moment between ‘before’ and ‘after’ represents a potentially discontinuous transformative instant.

Future: transition or transformation.

Rodica describes a personal present in transition to an uncertain personal future. As her life and opportunities change the wider socio-political context changes at a different tempo. When Emma looks to the future she wonders whether the future she aspires to will be similar in values to her mother’s and grand-mothers’ generations.

The following excerpts primarily address the future where political time seems less important than personal time. Emma and Paul are more active in the interview, in a period that involves them. Historical time is what happened to other people while present and future are the preoccupation of today’s generation.

Excerpt 11.

Emma “I think that you cannot change the world. I personally don’t think I can change the world, but at least what you can do is change the people that are very close to me, and maybe one day, when I’ll have my own family I’ll get to share with them some of the values that my parents shared with me. So, I’m not hoping for a new world, I’m just hoping for having a family like mine, if I can say that.”

The past and the world cannot be changed, although one’s relationship to it can. Emma wants to carry forward legacies from her family that celebrate future continuity. In like manner, Paul relates the importance of carrying certain family

values to the next generation. However, as to the likely shape of the political future, Emma is uncertain.

Excerpt 12.

Emma “I have no idea what the future brings us, at least politically speaking, because maybe as my parents lived years ago, what they will tell their children, I mean twenty years ago, maybe my parents thought it will still be communism.”

HJ “But you’ll be talking, one way or another, about how your parents lived through the end of communism and the beginning of a different kind of society in Romania. ... If you had a child now, you could tell your child something of that story. I wonder what that story would be for you?”

Paul “I don’t know. Probably a thing that I would try to pass on, ... I think that’s the first thing I’ve learnt from my parents is to talk, to communicate. ... And being able to share things with your family, with my parents means a lot because I know a lot of my friends don’t have this at home.”

Expectations in the past were clear. The consequences of political disobedience included internal deportation or death, so that in the past the future was known. It would be as the present was and the past had been, but present and future are now less certain. While there is certainty about personal values to hand on political future time seems less certain and discontinuity more likely.

Excerpt 13.

HJ *(To Emma)* “... I don’t know how it felt for your mother when she was telling us this, but behind what I was hearing, although she talked about endangered species, I was also hearing a kind of story about survival over, errm, not just the communist period, but before that. ... It was almost as though passing the microphone *(makes as if to pass the microphone)* she’s passing the baton to you. ... Because it’s going to be different from how it was for her, how it was for her mother, how it was for her grandmother. That is what was coming into my mind when I was hearing the story.”

Emma “I don’t think it’s going to be that hard for me, because as I look at my grandmothers and their way of keeping the house, I think that as my generation comes in, ... I think, ..”

HJ *(To Emma)* “Maybe, as you see for you or your mother, ... you can inherit a different kind of freedom and choice without feeling guilty. Maybe that’s a kind of chain you won’t have to carry around any more. And, of course, it’s men traditionally who often make women feel guilty. So that is also going to change in relationships between men and women, husbands and wives.

Emma “And I thought that every woman is supposed to be a loving, caring wife and mother, and it’s maybe why we marry and have children, to find our

identities. So, like I was telling you, I don't think I'm going to be a very high career woman because I think that somewhere we each find ourselves in our gender about families. And so, about the guilt you were saying, it comes along the way I see things. It's the same society, there's nothing wrong."

HJ "Yes, I think ... But actually, you have a choice, and maybe that is the really important thing. And maybe, your mother said, I'm sure there were not the same choices for your mother, and certainly not for her mother, and most certainly not for her mother before her."

This exchange touches on a social and political in-between stage. The old structures have not yet ended and new ones are yet to be established. The interview draws attention to transitions where future survival may require different skills, and change will involve discontinuity with the gendered pasts of mother, grandmother, and great-grandmother. Emma is confident that the future will not be difficult.

Analytical categories.

My overall category was 'time', mindfully observed from the outside, following the conference theme of continuities and discontinuities in a time of change. My framework was predictable and unpredictable life events, described by Carter and McGoldrick (1989), and the uncertainties of each transitional or transformational moment.

As I re-worked the text I further conceptualised my defined times and the concept of a '*personal lived time*', past, present, or future, and '*political time*' emerged. This highlighted the importance of '*before and after*' temporal moments, in this instance the 1989 revolution.¹⁴⁵ Such formulations echo the fluid and dynamic *A*-series and the static *B*-series of time (McTaggart, 1927) in chapter 4. Family members introduced the theme of 'legacies' relating to '*personal time*' and the legacies of communist rule in '*political time*'. Since all meaning occurs in context, I chose *historical time* as a higher level of terrestrial time abstraction.¹⁴⁶ Different kinds of 'personal time' were articulated by the four adults as¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁵ The communist era had a *duration* 1945-1989, so that communist rule was a legacy of decisions made by the allies after WWII, and the division of geographical spoils.

¹⁴⁶ I am indebted to Dr Tamás Kurimay, Budapest, for this helpful observation.

¹⁴⁷ David's different position and role are outlined in Appendix 2.

- family member *individual time*.
- *time of the dyadic, triadic, and four-person relationships*: experienced variously as spouse, parent, sibling or individual.¹⁴⁸
- *present time of the nuclear family* and,
- *transgenerational times past of the families of origin*.

These times are an embodied expression of time as reality; time lived, remembered, feared, celebrated, or enjoyed. From my transcript analysis an interweaving of different kinds of time began to emerge:

- *Spiritual time*. This may be thought of as cosmic, describing moments in family members' lives where experiences God intervening, either in an instant that changed the course of events or of duration supporting each family through persecutory times. This is a perception, of eternity. In some cultures this may be linked to fate or destiny
- *The wider historical time*. It is outside Romania which scarcely influenced the population during the Ceausescu years but had increasing impact in subsequent change
- *Political time*. The time of the State, infiltrating and affecting work, faith, culture, and home lives
- *Gendered time*. Intimating changing gendered perceptions by others, linking personal time with changes over political time
- *Personal time*. Personal and therefore gendered, experienced subjectively in each person's life, family, faith, and community.

The material emphasised the inter-linked nature of personal and political times, and the dynamic tension of different pasts and presents. A parallel linguistic

¹⁴⁸ For four people (two parents and the two older children) there are 32 different relational possibilities. Taken from the perspectives of each of the four family members, there are: 4 individuals; 12 dyads; 12 triads; 4 'quatrads'. For five members, this produces 70 possible configurations. Such is the complexity of systems.

model, Coordinated Management of Meaning (CMM), provided a framework for this structure, like nested concepts similar to Russian dolls (Plate 5.2). In the CMM model

‘(1) social actors organise meaning both temporally and hierarchically; and (2) all social structures entail ways of managing consciousness of various elements of those structures. The content and organisation of structure are by no means “necessary”; they emerge from conjoint action and are always in the process of emergence’ (Cronen and Pearce, 1985: 71).

Meanings are embedded. Each level becomes the context of and context for other levels. Cronen and Pearce identify five levels of communication: speech act, episode, relationship, life scripting, and family myth, moving from the smallest specific to the broadest category.



Plate 5.2. Nesting Russian dolls.

I have organised the interview time material to make sense of different temporal realities in Figure 5.2. The limitation of this static figure is it fixes relationships, whereas realities are fluid and dynamic.

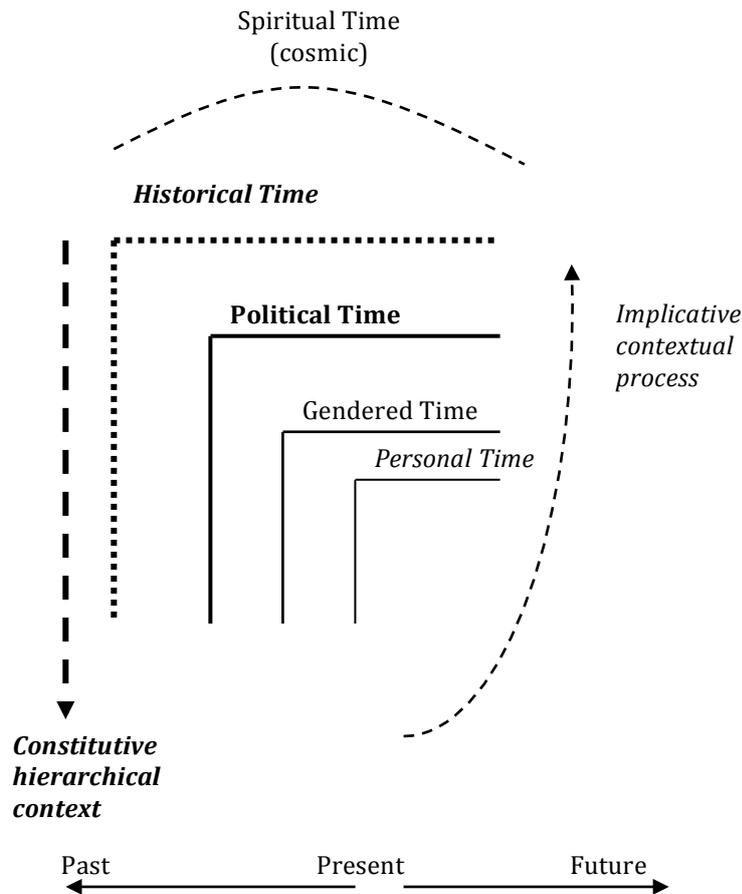


Figure 5. 2. ‘Russian dolls’: CMM asymmetrical nesting of times.

Figure 5.2 is a hierarchical construct, presented as different levels of abstraction. The location of ‘spiritual time’ this way reflects a Western viewpoint.¹⁴⁹ Although time is my framework alternative categories are equally possible. For instance, Kleinman (1981: 28) discusses levels of *reality* in terms of patients, healers, and culture. This still brings us back to time since realities are located in time. A person’s realities affect their experience of time just as culture and time are intertwined.

The different thickness of the arrowed lines in Figure 5.2 represents the quality of influence. The top-down arrow represents greater immediate direct influence over events while the down-up arrow represents influence in a subtler and less

¹⁴⁹ An Eastern view of the spiritual as transcendental, as ‘transcending or being beyond the grasp of human experience, reason or belief’ (OED) would have to be represented as all encompassing.

definable way. 'Spiritual time' is intentionally set apart from either arrow's influence, to reflect its numinous quality.

Discussion.

Frameworks.

The dominant element in the family interview presented is time in its continuities and discontinuities. Place is important for understanding human behaviour and the forced displacement of populations was a powerful way to control society. In this case 'before and after' or 'earlier than' / 'later than' were significant in structuring experience. The brutal reality of state power in Romanian communism as described by the family, was challenged by the intangible power of 'spiritual time' eternally outside 'terrestrial' time. This constituted a real threat to 'political' time (Deletant, 1998; Tanasiou, 2007).

The 'levels' in Figure 5.2 represent different 'durations'. The duration of individual life in personal time is transitory compared to political and historical time. The over-arching context of eternity makes all else temporary, and for persecution even to be survivable.

Emotional states.

The effects of the changes described by the Mocan family are complex with interweaving different emotional states in this time narrative. In Figure 5.3, taking a certainty / uncertainty dichotomy as an example, I give an example to underline ways that family members perceive events. Following the collapse of old structures, many familiar reference points, even oppressive, disappeared, and left members uncertain.

uncertainty about how to understand or respond. The importance of ‘the instant’ in psychotherapy may be, as I have suggested, as a fleeting out-of-time space where change can occur. We considered the instant between rest and motion ‘being in no time at all’ (Plato, 1997: 388). That ‘instant’ of the pause, laughter, sudden tears, unexpected facial expression, interrupts the ‘motion’ of before and after the ‘instant’. The pause (instant) clearly has duration, yet experientially it stands qualitatively outside its ‘before and after’. Laughter impacts differently on the experience of time. It can stop the flow of time in a conversation, or change the affective moment and facilitate unpredictable shifts in relationships. People can be brought together in laughter or through the expression of any strong emotion, experiencing an instantaneous change of affect, or be distanced by its inappropriateness. The sudden connectedness that laughter creates in therapy is often the touchstone that, in the instant, creates enough of a sense of safety to then confront painful or taboo-like issues. In these instances and instants, the ‘flow of time’ is interrupted.

An alternative understanding of time.

I suggested a hierarchical time framework in Figure 5.2. In Figure 5.4 I suggest an alternative view of the relationship between these time constructs, again placing ‘spiritual / cosmic time’ on the outside from my Western perspective.

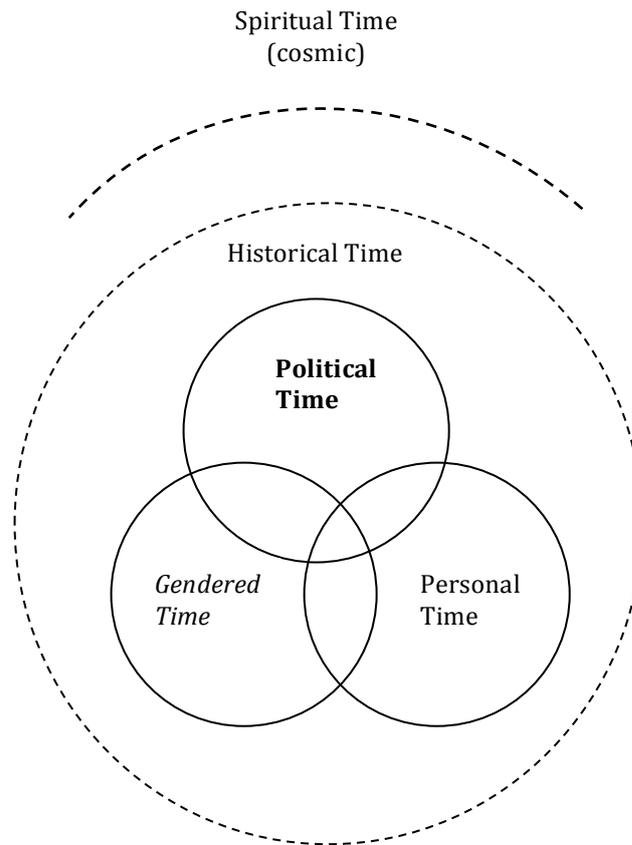


Figure 5.4. Interweaving of different time experiences.

Each solid circle represents a time perspective with degrees of overlap. The particular time perspectives - gendered, personal, or political - influence the meaning and experience of events. Spiritual time appears somewhat paradoxical, since it can be perceived as 'eternal' (timeless) but exacting immediacy in people's lives that makes it 'close'. Juxtaposing different qualities of time (personal, terrestrial or spiritual) frames understanding how time can be experienced where change is sought in spiritual experience, ritual, or psychotherapy. The circles are 'dynamic'. The greater the overlap, or the larger one circle is in relation to the others, greater will be the cross-identification imposed or voluntary, or greater the engulfment of other aspects by one perspective.

Time and memory.

The interview encompasses different kinds of memory of events experienced directly or reported by others. This brings the discussion to recall and time, bearing in mind our philosophical discussion in chapter 4 of memory (Ricoeur, 2000) and the Unconscious (chapter 2).

Memory, imagination, and free association, (chapter 2, Freud) are ways to access time past, as the family discusses. However, memory may help anticipate the future. Tali Sharot (2011, 2012a, b) argues this point from an evolutionary neuroscientific perspective. Memory may not be solely a way to recall and fix time; ‘the core function of the memory system could ... be to imagine the future – to enable us to prepare for what is yet to come. ... It is designed to flexibly construct future scenarios in our minds’ (Sharot, 2011: 42). This suggests a dynamic relationship between past and present, with memory as more than simple archival record. Sharot’s research takes her further. She suggests that memory, and how we remember, is strongly affected by emotion, (Sharot and Phelps, 2004). Although she does not make the claim this may help explain the power of remembering highly charged traumatic emotional material, discussed about Caitlin’s reaction to Peter’s temporary absence (chapter 3) and Jane’s deeply traumatised dissociative states (chapter 4). Sharot suggests ‘emotion may enhance recollective experience without necessarily enhancing memory for contextual information’ (Sharot and Yonelinas, 2008: 540). Effective recall memory can happen only when *not* overwhelmed by emotion and the person can reflect cognitively *about* what is re-membered. The less one can reflect on their past or anticipate their future the more a person is likely to be confined to their present, and defined helplessly by their past(s).

By defining experiences as ‘before’ and ‘after’ 1989 the Revolution is a context-marker for the present. Memory differs depending on one’s place in pre-revolution politics. And memory is fallible. ‘Memories may have nothing to do with the accuracy of the recollection itself but [be] due to other factors entirely. It could be that *the act of recall* itself brings with it a feeling of certainty’ (Hauke,

2005: 143). Tulving summarises his understanding of memory. ‘As far as we know, members of no other species possess quite the same ability to experience again now, in a different situation and perhaps in a different form, happenings from the past, and know that the experience refers to an event that occurred in another time and in another place’ (Tulving, 1983: 1.¹⁵² In: Tulving, 2005: 6). Memory is subjective and ‘memory’ of events that did not occur, or denial of events that did, are possible.

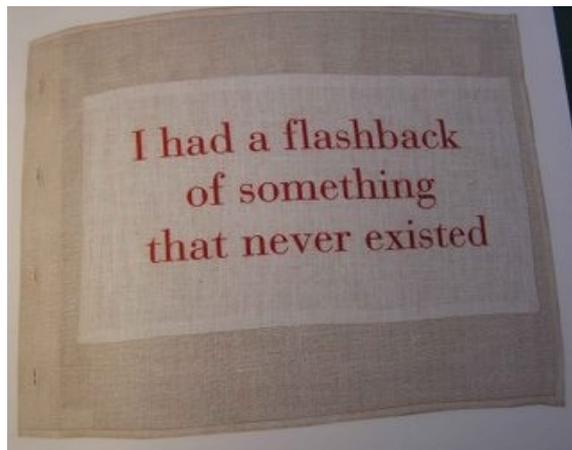


Plate 5.3. Louise Bourgeois. b. 1991. Flashback.

For family members up to 1989, there are different kinds of memory; memory as lived and as reported history. Tulving distinguishes *autonoetic episodic* (lived) memory from *semantic* (reported) memory. ‘Autonoesis refers to the kind of conscious awareness that characterises conscious recollection of personal happenings’ (Tulving, 2005: 15) unlike semantic memory, knowing about things past. Episodic memory is oriented to physical time, since ‘only episodic memory allows people to consciously re-experience past events’ (ibid: 16), unlike semantic memory when ‘the time in which remembered events occur is different. We can call it subjective time. It is related to but not identical with physical time’ (ibid: 16).¹⁵³

¹⁵² Tulving, E., (1983) *Elements of Episodic Memory*. Oxford. Clarendon Press.

¹⁵³ Tulving argues that the uniquely human possession of *episodic* memory and consciousness, *autonoesis*, allow us to remember events in which we participated in measurable time and place, to envisage future time, and engage in ‘mental time travel’.

As family members describe their memories, they employ two kinds of memory: the memory of ‘semantic time’ which is not time-anchored, and ‘episodic memory’ which is time-experienced. Eight-year old David knows the Revolution was in 1989, but his is semantic memory.

‘Semantic memory allows the individual to *know* at Time 2, something about what happened at an earlier time, Time 1, but it does not allow the individual to *remember* what happened. Semantic memory also allows an individual to construct possible future worlds, but since it is lacking in auto-noetic capability, it would not allow the individual to mentally travel into his own personal future’ (Tulving, 2005: 18).

Memory is often fixed in a public context. By noting a place, duration, or event, plaques, tablets, and gravestones, ‘fix time’ as public memory, as do books, sculpture, and paintings.¹⁵⁴ Written text solidifies and objectifies time as instant or duration in relation to a particular past. The plaque on pastor Laszlo Tökes’ church in Timișoara is a memory time marker (Plate 5.4).



Plate 5.4. Plaque commemorating the time and place of the peaceful start of the revolution, 15 December 1989, Timisoara. Photo: Dr. Tamás Kurimay.

¹⁵⁴ Stained glass windows in churches publically ‘fix’ events, originally for an illiterate population, to make real the religious stories, and reinforce the place and position of the church.

The manipulation of memory in the form of history is evidenced in a personal conversation in Prague in 1987. An eighteen-year old student explained to me how school history books portrayed the events of 1968 and the arrival of the Russians. There was no invasion since it was a “people’s liberation”. Her parents had a different (autonoetic episodic) memory to her official semantic memory via the (textual) record where ‘text’ froze time in her history book. The different ways humans remember and tell stories about their pasts (lived, or recounted authoritatively by others) and about their presents or futures, is important in psychotherapy.

If we return to Jane’s experiences (chapter 4) and extend these ideas, the personal time of her (autonoetic) memory concerns lived time but has become boundary-less in re-experiencing her abuse. Her time exists in an interaction with the lived physical time of her past, now beyond her control. It is as if there is a confusion of ‘autonoetic episodic’ re-lived re-remembering with simultaneous ‘semantic’ memory knowing, as if she were there in the moment again, and not there but knowing *about* what was done to her. She cannot escape her subjective time, re-locate it in her physical episodic lived past, and remain grounded in her physical present.

Reflections.

Knowing different kinds of memory can be confusing. Memory can only be recalled or known in a present that itself is forever elusive. Although the present exists in its ‘presentness’ (Heidegger, 1962), it must become part of the immediate past before it can be noticed, reported, and remembered (Jenkins, 2005; Stern, 2004). There appears to be a collapse of temporal boundaries in trauma that forestalls the ability to stay in the physical present, when emotion (Sharot and Yonelinas, 2008) is like a branding iron that sears event(s) more deeply. This may partly be why it is often important therapeutically to find ways to *name* abusive events and *locate* them to specific times, places, and sensations, so that the patient moves from a subjective, almost pre-linguistic knowing

relationship to her story, to a relationship with its lived or episodic memory, thereby losing its power.

One notable area for the Mocans is their sense of inter- and trans-generational time. Liviu and Rodica give a glimpse into their family histories and socio-economic origins, the similarity of shared Christian faith, parental marital choices, and gender expectations in negotiating the realities of greater gender freedom post-1989. Members offer different insights into personal history as *autonoetic episodic*, and *semantic* memory. Changes of ‘script’ are proposed. Unlike her mother, a professional career is not Emma’s priority. If time is important in this non-therapy context and can so clearly be elicited, it is reasonable to suppose there may be value therapeutically in such a perspective. Just as the Mocans have to manage their pasts, so do patients in therapy.

Experience of time can only be understood in contexts of culture and place. If experience of the nature of time is altered by place, how time is mediated in Western psychotherapy may differ to other kinds of time. Patients’ time(s) in treatment may not be the same as others’ in their personal lives, and the therapist needs to adjust his/her ‘time’ to the patient’s.

Reported in therapy, a husband had ended a two-year affair and the couple now struggled to recover their marriage. The husband’s belief that they must now ‘move on’ because enough time has passed for them to rebuild their relationship without continuing reference to the past, disregarded his wife’s need for time to process, re-visit, be re-assured, and ask again and again how this could have happened. While it may be true that “You cannot change your past, but you can change your relationship to it” their different pasts had to be acknowledged for an agreed new starting point to be found. Their pasts were different. The affair was known to him and secret from her, and the impact on both was further complicated by their respective family histories. The *time* each needed to heal was different as were the *kinds* of healing time. We hear an echo of these *different times* in the Smith family (chapter 1).

In our considerations of time philosophically, we faced questions about the non-ethical nature of narrative in therapy (Strawson, 2005). Liviu Mocan's sculpture of the seed suggests continuity, but only from the discontinuity of the seed dying for the plant to live. Ricoeur (1980, 1984, 1985, 1988) argues for narrative as temporal production, each element being part of the other. The Mocans described the difficulty of negotiating when old ways had changed but new patterns had yet to be established, in a phase of uncertainty and potential chaos in the 'liminal' (Turner, 1967, 1969) that I discuss in chapter 8.

In microcosm, therapy can be a place and time when what seemed evident and certain are no longer and what will be is still unclear, as a moment betwixt and between that is neither fully past nor yet future. The Mocans described something of their confusing emotional continuities and discontinuities and the impact on their functioning. This contrasts with certain philosophical descriptions that seemed to take little or no account of emotional arousal and the subjective. Sharot's work (Sharot, 2011, 2012a, b; Sharot and Yonelinas, 2008) in the neurosciences redresses the balance in the role of emotion in memory.

A significant part of the interview analysis was concerned with memory. Tulving (2005) suggests different kinds of memory that complement Ricoeur (2000), 'mémoire', 'souvenir' and 'rappel'. The difference between memory of a lived experience and memory known through others provides a possible framework for understanding time, and even for time confusions such as Jane's.

I suggest there is value in thinking about kinds of time. For the Mocans in their political, social, and spiritual contexts, to have an awareness of which kind of time it is, helps understand specific dilemmas. This was in the context of before and after, earlier and later, as well as past, present, and future (McTaggart, 1927). An additional kind of 'time' was introduced in this chapter. This was the time of 'text' on plaques or gravestones which publically fix time. There seems to be a difference when what is known orally is written down. I will suggest that text in

word or symbol offers a powerful tool in therapy to fix events or situations, as well as providing a medium for healing and change, with some parallels to religious symbolism and shamanism in other cultures.

Chapter 6.

Epistemologies of time, culture, and memory: anthropological perspectives.

‘When we focus too narrowly upon the parts, we fail to see the necessary characteristics of the whole, and are then tempted to ascribe the phenomena which result from the wholeness to some supernatural entity.’
(Bateson, 1987a: 52)

‘An anthropologist sets himself to understand a culture which is not his own. He has succeeded when he understands everything the natives say, do and believe. But does he always know that he has understood?’
(Hollis, 1970: 221)

Aims.

Through an anthropological socio-cultural perspective I consider whether insights about temporal realities from different cultures can enrich our understanding of time more generally in therapy, before considering time in two cultures (chapter 7) and ritual and time (chapter 8), referencing and contrasting philosophical insights from chapters 3 and 4.

To maintain my clinical focus, I describe a moment in therapy where patient and therapist are revealed to inhabit different temporal historico-cultural realities. From my ethnography, I draw on a filmed interview with a Jewish couple in Tel Aviv who share different cultural and gendered experiences of time, rhythm, and memory. I make reference to the Mocan family (chapter 5).

Introduction.

Unlike philosophy, the discipline of anthropology invites us to grapple with human uncertainty, change, societal difference, and accept the messy subjective as part of the research territory. In this I avoid listing or comparing facts. ‘Anyone can produce a new fact; the thing is to produce a new idea’ (Evans-Pritchard, 1976: 243). I only touch on some of the mainstream thinkers in (social)

anthropology in chronological order, drawing in part on writers who synthesise movements in the field, such as Bateson (1958, 1973, 1980), Durkheim (2001), Lévi-Strauss (1969), Lewis (1996), Mauss (1990), Peacock (1975), Rappaport, (1999), Tambiah (1990), and Turner (1967) in order to underscore the importance of culture and context in the development of my ideas.

Context and ‘culture’ as foundational perspectives for understanding human activity shape meanings given to time and place. Hammershoi’s painting (Plate 6.1) exemplifies this. There are no furniture, ornaments, or obvious reference points, giving few clues about culture, country, or time. This could conceivably be rooms with doors in one of many contexts of time and place.



Plate 6.1. Vilhelm Hammershoi (1864-1916), *White Doors*.

Philosophy required specific kinds of logic and propositional thinking. In contrast, the psychotherapist must connect disconnected ‘chunks’ of temporal, cultural information, find lost linkages or ones not previously made (chapter 4, Ricoeur, 1980, 2000; Strawson, 2005). It is often in the a-temporal reverie of seemingly disconnected information that healing associations occur. It is the psychotherapist’s ability to connect disparate perspectives through the timeless processes of the system *UCs* ((Freud, 1915: Vol XIV) that can become a way to meaning.

Music provides a metaphor. In music rhythm, like the literary plot (Aristotle, 1996) holds the work together. Similarly, social time has rhythms. What is rhythmic and harmonious for one society may be discordant for another (Hall, 1989; Levine, 2006). The pauses or spaces in music, ‘instants’ out of musical note time are part of rhythm (Levitin, 2006). Similarly, duration, intervals, and instants, are part of the patterns of psychotherapy.¹⁵⁵ Time marked by the metronome (Plate 6.2) measures the tempo (time) or beat. Unlike the lineal, constant, pre-set beat of the metronome, musical rhythm is cyclical. Whether we measure ‘the beat’ or ‘the intervals between’ each note, depends on how one punctuates the description. The metronome measures time externally while the ‘beat’ by which cultures live is more an internal rhythm beyond conscious time.



Plate 6.2. The metronome.

Written communication is usually linear. One word follows the next and page follows page, *vide* this thesis. Music is diachronic made of single (synchronic) notes that sequentially create melody. Synchronic notes that repeat their pattern over time, become ‘cyclical’ as they enfold on themselves. In Western musical notation instruments are scored separately and may play the same or different notes to other instruments. Two or more simultaneous melodies, even with different rhythms brought together create harmony or disharmony, so that the overall result is ‘more than the sum of its parts’ (von Bertalanffy, 1968).

¹⁵⁵ Henri Hubert, writing in 1905 (Hubert, 1999), discusses the place of rhythm in time.

Musical themes interweave creating patterns, and patterns within patterns over time, returning to the same or complementary phrasing. What is diachronic for each instrument horizontally left to right (an *A*-series), is synchronic vertically (a *B*-series) (McTaggart, 1927) on the music score. Music reflects historico-socio-cultural rhythms. The rhythms of Beethoven's Symphony No. 5 and contemporary Afro-Caribbean rap reflect different histories and legacies.¹⁵⁶ Awareness of the impact of discordant times on the patient, or between patient and healer, is important. In the following clinical vignette, we see a discordant vertical historical timeframe (*B* series) arising from the legacy of a complementary slave/slave-owner historical 'fit' (cf. Dell, 1982).

Case vignette: Joy.

Joy's auto-noetic and semantic memory (Tulving, 2005) discussed in chapter 5 brings her past starkly into the present. It illustrates how the sometimes presentness of history influences the present-moment without immediate awareness.

Joy was a black female Jamaican patient in her late forties. After about eight sessions I was finding it increasingly hard to remain meaningfully connected. We seemed to have reached an always present but unacknowledged unspoken impasse. After an uncomfortable silence I decided to comment on how I was feeling. I asked whether there was something that I had not spoken about, my whiteness and her blackness, and a 'shared history of slavery', of white slave-traders / owners growing wealthy from the suffering of black slaves? She simply replied "Yes" without hesitation. From this emerged freedom to speak of women's stories handed down; her great grandmother's memories of her mother's

¹⁵⁶ Yoruba (Nigerian) percussionist Solá Akingbolá describes in his programme notes for *Routes to Roots* how the rhythms of the Yoruba language speak through the different drums: 'The *iyalu* in the lead drum ... is made to 'talk' in such a way that the sound of Yoruba, which is a tonal language, is skilfully imitated' (ARC Music Productions, 2007: 2). The music is devotional. Spirituality and ancestor worship are at the root of Yoruba life and culture and its parts cannot be understood separately from the whole.

slavery. It was that close in time.¹⁵⁷ We talked of another long-term legacy, of the marginalization of black male slaves unable to protect their womenfolk or families, and her relationship with her partner and his emotional, psychological difficulties caring for her. We traced the legacies that continue to be worked out today in our black and white communities.¹⁵⁸

Our histories had always been ‘present’ in the sessions. The unvoiced past had always been in the room. And as long as it remained so, the past would contaminate the present. Kareem speaks of ‘psychological occupation [being] much more damaging and long-lasting than physical occupation. It destroyed the inner self’ (Kareem, 2000: 33), for ‘(n)either patient nor therapist is ‘innocent’ of history and of memory’ (ibid: 23).

With this brief example I share my belief that without intercultural micro and macro lenses it is impossible to practise psychotherapy beyond one’s own boundaried cultural experience, and even then inadequately (Ahmed, 1986; Carter and McGoldrick, 1989; Ho, 1987; Kareem and Littlewood, 2000; Krause, 1998; Lau, 1984, 1988; Messent, 1992; Minuchin et al, 1967; Wieselberg, 1992). Joy’s legacy of slavery hints at some of these complexities. The Mocans’ story exemplifies how with our different histories such an encounter could not have lead to the same level of relational engagement and understanding without addressing different and similar social, cultural, religious, political and economic contexts.

¹⁵⁷ Barack Obama in his victory speech on 5th November 2008 referred to his wife Michelle having the blood of African slaves *and* white slave owners in her veins. In those few words he brought a whole history of race, culture, oppression, and identity, to that evening in Chicago.

¹⁵⁸ Andrea Levy (2010) writes a historical fiction of slavery, transition from slavery to freedom, and the brutality that accompanied so much of this. Charles Ward (1983) published his autobiography, a tribute to the triumph of a man whose grandfather knew slavery, who left school at twelve and in 1980 at the age of 71, received his Doctor of Education from the University of Beverley Hills, California.

Anthropology.

There may be no more important task for our survival, however hard, than to understand the beliefs and stories of other cultures.¹⁵⁹ At best, we may know what people say they believe and what they do: '(P)eople do not necessarily believe what their culture trains them to say; and the ascription of belief is also unjustified if the psychological reference is elided, ...' (Needham, 1972: 5). This does not detract from what people say they believe since such statements are part of the socio-cultural glue that contributes to identity and survival. Understanding beliefs, how they arise, and their role in maintaining social stability is complex. It involves the not-consciously-known outside immediate awareness, often reinforced by myth (chapter 7).

Social-cultural studies attempt to understand the worlds of the other remaining as much as possible the outside observer, so as not to change the observed. Some anthropologists tend to focus on the present. Augé proposes that 'it is our need to understand the whole of the present that makes it difficult for us to give meaning to the recent past' (Augé, 1995: 30).¹⁶⁰ He identifies an increasing anomie in the West manifested by the cult of the individual, a me-first culture, disconnecting members from social responsibility.

Carrithers suggests that the anthropologist's focus is 'human unity in diversity' (Carrithers, 1992: 146), adding that anthropology is 'very much a product of a particular setting in a particular time, the late colonial and neo-colonial societies

¹⁵⁹ The emphasis in the US, UK, and Europe on the plight of the Israeli population suffering repeated attacks, (influenced at least in part by guilt at the Shoah), often masks the injustices of Palestinian dispossession since 1948 of Palestinians whose families had lived in the area for centuries, (Abulhawa, 2011; Burg, 2008; Lerner, 2012; MacIntyre, 2008). Is there an unremarked parallel of Europeans seeking freedom from persecution, who settled in America as refugees but who almost annihilated the indigenous North American Indian population, with the dispossession of Palestinians since 1948. In both instances the theme, a land without people for a people without a land, displays a disrespect for the indigenous inhabitants. In both cases, history and time have been manipulated to suit the dominant discourse (Tolan, 2008).

¹⁶⁰ 'The question of the other is not just a theme that anthropology encounters from time to time; it is its sole intellectual object, ... It deals with the other in the present; that is sufficient to distinguish it from history' (Augé, 1995: 18).

of the North Atlantic rim' (ibid: 147).¹⁶¹ Lewis proposes that a key term in anthropology is 'culture',¹⁶² 'a convenient term to describe the sum of *learned* knowledge and skills – including religion and language – that distinguishes it from another which ... passes on in a recognizable form from generation to generation' (Lewis, 1996: 17). This introduces an inter- and trans-generational focus.

Howard speaks of the 'focus on large cultural differences and ... cross-cultural patterns' (Howard, 1991: 192) in anthropology. These 'large cultural differences' may help our understanding of time by learning something of others' social structures against which to compare our own cultural contexts. Returning to Geertz, culture is 'those webs, and the analysis of it to be therefore not an experimental science in search of law but an interpretive one in search of meaning' (Geertz, 1973: 5).

We now consider how anthropological insights add to understanding time. I first describe a couple with this in mind. What simultaneously unifies and distinguishes Yael and Saul is complex and contributes to their confusion. Their temporal realities are different, reflecting their other rhythms, families, cultures, and histories.

¹⁶¹ The description of the history of anthropology (Barfield, 1997: 17-23 and 157-160) is interesting in itself. Attention is given to the development of western thinking, but none to the historical impact of exploration, colonialism and trade by European maritime powers from the seventeenth century onwards.

¹⁶² Lewis suggests that 'culture' is a neutral term, and all communities have their culture. 'Culture is thus the protective shell of a community and cultural distinctions become, to some extent, an index of social identity' (Lewis, 1996: 16). Culture is a complicated, multi-dimensional subject, and beyond the scope of this chapter to consider it in great detail.

Case vignette: Yael and Saul. ¹⁶³

Yael and Saul are a Jewish couple in their early forties, possessing different socio-cultural histories. ¹⁶⁴ Their stories provide an opportunity to examine how time, culture, and history, flow and interweave. Different cultures (American and mid-European/Israeli) linked by a shared non-observant and racial identity (Judaism), informed by different immediate histories (times), lead to contrasting approaches to continuity, discontinuity, change, loss, and connection. There are some similarities to the Mocan family, not least that both are stories of physical survival and persecution. Yael and Saul's stories are deeply rooted in millennial times of the race.

The excerpts.

These excerpts come from an essentially ethnographic interview. *Excerpt 1* comes at the start with Saul's story of his family and the Holocaust - the past. *Excerpt 2*, halfway through the interview includes Yael describing loops of time, her mother's death and their continuing dialogue - her present-past. *Excerpt 3* from the end of the interview considers parental hopes for their children - the future. The whole interview illustrates different aspects of time and how old loops replay differently in a continuing present. Yael says these loops are of past and present in relation to where they are going, the future.

¹⁶³ Yael and Saul were interviewed as part of an international training programme at Shinui Institute, Tel Aviv, March 1998. The focus of the interview was to explore their stories as a couple and the influence of family histories and time on their relationship. The interview took place in a large training room with the thirty-five course participants present in the same room. It lasted an hour and ten minutes. The interview was filmed as part of a two and a half hour session, all of which the couple participated in. Excerpts are verbatim transcripts.

¹⁶⁴ Neither is religiously observant. Yael comes from a fourth generation American middle-class family that was not touched directly by the Holocaust. She went to university in the US, going on to complete a Masters degree. She is the youngest child, and only daughter, with three older brothers. Her mother had died of cancer eighteen months before the interview and her father had recently begun a new relationship.

Saul's parents are mid-European from Poland and eastern Germany. His mother's family lived six houses away from his father's family in Poland. Apart from his father his whole paternal family and most of his maternal family died in the Holocaust. His father was transported to Israel in 1937 at the age of sixteen. Saul had recently accompanied his father on a visit to Poland and Strasburg.

Excerpt 1.

(We have been speaking of whether Saul is a risk-taker, more like his mother or father. Saul will describe some of his recent visit to Poland with his father. His first language is Hebrew.)

Saul. “My family is very small. Most of my family was, err (*pause*) died in the Holocaust. I know really parents (*pause*), that’s it. So I don’t have a wide reference to what other family members were”.

.....

Saul. “That reminds me of something. The most tragic event of my father growing up, they lived in Poland. And my grandfather, ... (*pause*) When he was about eight years old, his father wanted to move the family out of Poland, and he went to friends in Strasburg, (*pause*)”

HJ. “This is your grandfather?”

Saul. “Yes. And he got killed, trying to prepare the family to come back. He was looking for business, a job, I’m not sure exactly. My father was a kid and err, from that point on everything fell apart for the family. I think he never made a connection, (*pause*) because we were on a tour, from another place, and my father really has, err, very little experience of having a father. He doesn’t really know what a father should do or be. He has a very vague memory of his father, (*hesitates*)”

HJ. “He was a teenager, or younger?”

Saul. “He was (*pause*) he always lived thinking he was six years old then. Now, just recently, he finally found the name of his father in France, on the stone, and he found out he was really ten years old, and he’s confused now why he was always thinking he was six. I’m not sure.”

HJ. “Do you know anything about the decision and what time he left Germany to come to Israel?”

Saul. “Yes, it was, err, at an orphanage run by the Jewish community, in 1937 when it started to get difficult there. The community decided to send the entire school to Israel.”

HJ. “So the whole school was moved?”

Saul. “Because they were, (*pause*) a historical detail, the British Mandate gave certificates only up to seventeen years old. And he was like under this age, so everybody that was under seventeen was sent. Everybody above couldn’t.”

HJ. “So being under seventeen saved his life?”

Saul. “Ahh, (*pause*) yes.”

Age. Ages (time) become confused. The father was ‘about eight years old’ but thought he was six. He learns from the dates on *his* father’s gravestone (a time marker about a life’s duration) that he must have been ten, leaving him confused why he thought he was six and how he had ‘lost’ four years. Age becomes important in another way because being “under seventeen” saved his life. Saul

had always known this but not *known* its importance until the interview. Knowledge, knowing, and meaning, can be different. Age (time) saved a life and left a lifelong (duration) legacy of guilt. Following the visit there was confusion for Saul's father about why he had muddled his age when his father died.

Excerpt 1, continued.

HJ. "So he came here, and still in the orphanage. Were there relatives also in Israel for him, or was he (*Saul shakes his head*) ... so he really was on his own. Yeah. And he's settled here ever since?"

Saul. (*Long silence*)

HJ. "So the decisions he took, or the decisions that were taken to move, the decisions that were not his because of political circumstances, ..."

Saul. "Yes, err, we were in Poland, and we went to visit the house where his mother and his younger brother moved into after Poland fell apart and my grand-father's death, and he remembers visiting them before he came to Israel. ... I know that when we went to Poland we saw the house, he was just, errm (*pause*) he just wanted to get out. He didn't want any pictures taken, he didn't want (*pause*). ... Uhhh, later when we talked, he felt, he still feels somewhat guilty that he left, ..."

HJ. "And he survived?"

Saul. "He survived. He got letters from his mother. I asked him now to translate these letters so I can read them, but errm, she was asking if he could help in getting them out. And, errm, he couldn't."

HJ. "And has that been a burden he's carried all his life, do you think?"

Saul. (*Nods his head - pauses*) "I think so."

Guilt. Two important ideas are expressed: guilt and discontinuities. The idea of guilt is a Judeo-Christian concept belonging to our psychological background. It emphasises the private individual self. Guilt refers to an internalising process where feelings remain fixed in time and often impede the development of relationships or change by freezing a past dynamic. This is unlike the process of dealing with loss by *not* internalising and maintaining open dialogue, more characteristic of communities where resolution of conflict is conducted more publically (see chapter 7).

We hear tales of continuities and discontinuities in times of change. Saul's father renounces his name when he came to Israel: "It's not unusual". This is a disconnection from the past and potential embrace of a new future. It may also be a way to try and distance the pain of the past. In the Mocan family Liviu's parents renounce the land for the town. Both renounce important aspects of cultural time and identity to ensure survival in dangerous politico-historical time.

Excerpt 2.

(Yael speaks of her mother and the sense of timelessness of hearing her mother still speaking.)

HJ. "... What, if you like, the time loop that goes on here is a replay of different loops from different parts of your experiences?"

Yael. "Uhh, uh, it strikes me all the time."

HJ. "And that was just the connection I was making as you were talking and I was listening to you."

Yael. "That definitely, that connectedness, is the loop of our past and our present, and where we're going, it's becoming more clear to me all the time, and as *(pause)* Uhh. You know I'm being, becoming more and more comfortable with who I am and what my needs are. Simultaneously, I'm trying to *(pause)* understand and truly accept Saul for the way Saul is. Umm, and in some ways, you know, the fundamental differences will remain there forever. ... I'm really beginning to get it. I'm very stubborn. I'm finally beginning to get it that he just doesn't have the need to process, and he doesn't have the need to talk like I do. Umm. And I'm slowly learning how to truly accept that."

HJ. "If, and I know your mother only died fairly recently, but if your mother, you could hear her voice in your mind. What advice do you think she would be saying to you, right now, about this, how you could handle this, handle yourself and handle this in your relationship? What would her voice be in your head?"

Yael. "I like that question. Her advice would be: 'Yael, be yourself. Don't be afraid to be yourself. Continue to have the courage.' *(pause)* It would be, what, ... her spirit talks to me now in a very different way than her words spoke to me when she was alive. She's speaking with me now at the level I always wanted her to."

HJ. "That's like kind of the sub-text, or the bit underneath."

Yael. "Yeah. And, ... *(pause)* she would probably tell me also to accept Saul, accept who Saul is. Looking back at her marriage, which she could have done differently if she'd had the tools and more understanding of my dad. Because I remember that was also another issue for them, was, you know, my dad didn't say the words: 'I love you'. I mean, ... I mean it's Fiddler on the Roof. What do you mean? I've been married to you for fifty years. Of course I love you. Umm, ... It's needing to hear that many times she didn't receive, and had a hard time accepting. Umm, ..."

HJ. "And yet Saul knows what he knows he feels for you, and he's doing it his way."

Yael. “Right, right.”

Communication and the past-present. Two important ideas are expressed: Communication and the past-present. When Yael says (not transcribed) ‘that’s the part that I think we need to continue to learn to communicate’ she means all levels of communication, especially oral communication, listening as much as speaking. Language is one of the main factors that shapes the meaning of time in relationships, creates history and continuity, measures lives, and contextualises beliefs. Similarly psychotherapy takes time and events as recounted and re-experienced to help facilitate transformation (see chapter 8).

It is an important human ability to distinguish simultaneously the difference between Augustine’s ‘present of present things’ and ‘present of past things’ (Augustine, 1961). ‘(P)arts of our past become present to us once again, even as they are spontaneously distinguished from the present’ (Durkheim, 2001: 12). In some senses these times co-exist, though philosophically we understood this was not possible. When patients are unable to discriminate the past-that-becomes-the-present and spontaneously to distinguish this different kind of present (Durkheim) from the ‘present of present things’ (Augustine), deep confusion and distress frequently follow. We partly see this temporal discrimination in Yael’s description of her deceased mother: “She’s speaking with me now at the level I always wanted her to.” Yael carries the past-as-the-present in her continuing conversations with her dead mother as a time loop, as a present-past relationship into the future.

Excerpt 3.

(The final part of the interview focuses towards the future, and the idea of parents’ wishes and legacies for their children.)

HJ. “... You have a son and you have a daughter. What would you like them, thinking about them continuing, you know, the next generation to take from being born into this family, this marriage, as they grow up? What are your dreams for your kids? *(pause)* Why don’t I ask you first?”

Saul. “Uhhmm. What are my dreams? To be confident and, uhmm, sensitive, feel things, have the ability to feel, ...”

HJ. “To feel?”

Saul. “When I say ‘feel’, to feel other people, other situations, ...”

HJ. “If there were one thing you would want your son to carry, your voice, your voice with him, into this life, what would it be?”

.....

Saul. “One is for him to be confident and happy in what he is doing. But that’s not a continuation, which is neither my father nor me. I mean to some extent, but not a full extent.”

HJ. “Is there anything else? Is there anything else you would want him to carry, as it were?”

Saul. “To be, (*pause*) meaningful, ‘mash moulti’, ...”

.....

HJ. “What about for you Yael? What would you want them to take from you as parents?”

Yael. “The concept that keeps stirring in me as I’m thinking about it is what I want most is for them to feel connected with themselves, their own inner being, to use that connection with us and each other and with their friends and the world around them. And believe that through that connectedness with themselves and the world everything else will follow. And one of the things I want to follow is for them to feel comfortable taking risks and know that with risks comes sometimes falling down and there really is no such thing as failure, but really just another opportunity to grow. And for them to really feel it and not just to hear their ‘*ima*’ say those words, but for them to know that I’m really behind them, and I mean it. And for me, I have to keep working at demonstrating it through my actions, and not just my words.”

HJ. “And if there were one thing you’d want, mother to daughter? That’s important about becoming a woman, and maybe a mother and wife?”

Yael. “Yeah. Part of being a woman is that very, - and it doesn’t mean that men aren’t sensitive, and Saul is a very sensitive man, - but part of being a woman is this very intuitive sensitivity and I want to help Sigal nurture that while at the same time find it internally and not always have to get it outside herself. ... And for her to feel comfortable with who she is and to know there are costs to her, just as I’m learning.”

Discontinuities. The couple describe important ideas: future, culture, history, memory, context, and frozen time. Their thoughts as parents for their children are similar. Both wishes represent *discontinuities* with their own histories.¹⁶⁵ Saul wishes for change and discontinuity. His wish for Tomar is “not a continuation, which is neither my father nor me”. Yael wants her children to “feel comfortable

¹⁶⁵ After the interview, Yael said she would keep their copy of the video as part of their legacy for the children as a future oriented decision for the children later to have a connection with an autobiographical account of their parents’ pasts.

taking risks” and so break with the past. Risk-taking is often linked in the West to individual responsibility allied to an egocentric concept of self and individual responsibility (Sampson, 1993). Unlike in the East, it means challenging rather than supporting the status quo of the community and moving into new territory of time and place. Risk-taking in the East often takes into consideration the invisible dark realm of existence, emphasising community and group identity that place importance on reciprocity and filial duty (see chapter 7).

A socio-cultural perspective grounds our understanding of the couple interview. Its subjectivity contrasts with the abstract nature of philosophical discourse, and dilutes the possibility of a single certainty, although ‘to become emotionally as well as intellectually involved in another culture in no way detracts from our objective, rational, intellectual analytical ability’ (Turnbull, 1990: 51). Life has to be lived in the necessarily subjective experience of self and other, moment-by-moment, taking or not taking account of the past, and envisaging or not envisaging a future.

In the context of history and memory, Jonathan Sacks, Chief Rabbi, draws an important distinction for Judaism in the ritual of the Seder service:

‘The Seder service is not so much recollection as reactualisation. Judaism was organised around something other than history. Its key word was *memory*. History is what happened to someone else. Memory is what happened to me. Memory is history internalised, the past made present to those who relive it. ... Passover is the festival in which history becomes memory. Memory is our best guardian of liberty’ (Jonathan Sacks, *The Times*, 1995).¹⁶⁶

This is ever-present *mémoire* even if not actively recalled to mind as are ‘souvenir’ and ‘rappel’ (Ricoeur, 2000). When ‘memory’ of events from a generation or previous centuries becomes ‘what happened to me’, time collapses and acquires different meanings, and the three millennia-old insult to my forefathers is my personal insult. It is ‘semantic memory’ that becomes an experientially real ‘autonoetic episodic lived memory’ (Tulving, 2005) with all

¹⁶⁶ Passover is ritual – see chapter 8.

the dangers of repeating the same story. The logical consequence is vendetta, when the account is never ‘signed off’, like the child throwing rocks at an old woman in Hebron because of “what this woman did in 1929”, (MacIntyre, 23: 2008). The period (*time*) that defines, and some would say haunts the Jews, is the *Shoah*.

‘In the new and innovative Israel, the radical movement of total renewal that promised a spring of nationhood and a new society was compelled to redefine itself by memory and the past. Israel went beyond mourning; it was no longer a future oriented state, but a society connected to its bleeding, traumatic past. The dramatic proximity of 1945 to 1948, the years of grief and of utopia, depression and mania, fused two monumental events, the Jewish massacre in Europe and the building of the Jewish state of Israel, into one single entity. They became intertwined and inseparable’ (Burg, 2008: 75).

If Burg is correct all are trapped by a failure to move in time, and Israel actively locks all parties in an eternal *status quo*.¹⁶⁷ Jewish (Israeli) preoccupation with victim-hood traps Israel in the past, hinders resolution with the Palestinians, and turns the victim into the abuser. It means Germany is forever defined by its recent history. This is not an argument to forget, but rather not to be defined by a static view of the past. When these memory behaviours become fixed they take on qualities similar to repetition compulsion (chapter 2) or as if returning endlessly to ‘the same logical point’ at different temporal points (Howe, 1981) discussed in chapter 7.

Yael and Saul share different experiences of the same chronological times. Yael’s time from affluent US culture is distant from its European roots and the immediacy of war and fear.¹⁶⁸ Her first language is English and Saul’s is Hebrew. Saul’s experience is geographically and psychologically closer to the experience of annihilation. Israel, surrounded by its Arab neighbours, is sometimes seen psychologically as part of Europe while located ethno-geographically in the Middle-East.

¹⁶⁷ This becomes equally true for Palestinians (Abulhawa, 2011; Tolan, 2008).

¹⁶⁸ Much of this has changed post 9/11. The great super-power is no longer inviolate.

Saul's father wanted no photographs of the family home (or his father's grave) and no present record of painful memories of his return to Poland. Photographs 'freeze' time and can make more real what cannot be faced. Similarly, text fixes time in a way that fluid oral traditions do not. There is confusion over dates and his father's age when his grandfather died in a period of terrible chaos. The certainty of age had become frozen time and his father's time confusion troubles Saul. His father remained haunted by the memory of not being cared for by his German relatives and his adolescent impotence to save his family. The burden of survivor guilt remains with its legacy of silence. An example of this silent temporal burden was that Saul's father could not bear to translate his mother's letters in Polish for Saul to read. They remain locked in the time of their writing, increasing the difficulty of father and son connecting past and present.

Yael, with her American heritage of openness, finds 'not talking' so hard. As Saul finished his story in the earlier part of the interview Yael, visibly moved, said: "I'm hearing some of this for the first time". She begins to re-assess Saul's reticence about speaking. It is as if his father's silent trauma had become part of Saul's personal script. 'This silence is like denial: that which is not spoken does not exist' (Burg, 2008: 99).

Personal history is predominantly a Western concept. In other cultures family and community are the main source of identity and this sense of individual history or guilt does not necessarily apply. Thus, without a socio-cultural-historical framework to make sense of personal accounts, their stories would float away like un-tethered balloons. This leads to my chosen representatives of different strands of socio-cultural discourse.

Social or functional approaches:

Émile Durkheim (1858-1917).

Sociologist Émile Durkheim's importance is as 'the founder of modern comparative sociology' (Lewis, 1996: 46). '(H)e produced a theory of social solidarity' (Douglas, 1996: xv), believing that humans have a need to relate

socially. An important contribution was ‘the explanatory power of functionalism’ (Lewis, 1996: 49). Today there is nothing extraordinary in exploring the function and meaning of events.¹⁶⁹ In *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*¹⁷⁰ he studies ‘the most primitive and simplest religion currently known, and to analyse it and attempt to explain it’ (Durkheim, 2001: 3) to understand unchanging principles in human society and ‘to explain a current reality, something close to us and consequently capable of affecting our ideas and actions’ (ibid: 3).

While philosophical time can be studied in the abstract, cultural time must be contextualised by ‘the social origin of ‘time’ as a category’ (Gell, 1992: 5). Durkheim emphasises the social-collective nature of human experience and how theories of time affect every level of life. The cyclicity of days, weeks, months, and years, is *social time*:

‘We can see the enormous difference between the complex of sensations and images that serve to orient us in duration and the category of time. The first are the sum of individual experiences, meaningful only to the individual who has had them. By contrast, the category of time expresses a time that is common to the group’ (Durkheim, 2001: 12. Footnote 2).

Time common to the group is ‘social time’ and is a phenomenon of human society. My descriptions of different times for the Mocan family followed in the Durkheimian tradition. Subjective experience of time will be consonant with, or at odds with, the prevailing culture. The individual’s place in the social structure may be dislocated from the mainstream when a socially dissonant personal experience of time becomes public.¹⁷¹ Mocan family members described the danger of public ‘spiritual time’ in the context of Ceausescu’s ‘political time’.

¹⁶⁹ In psychodynamic and systemic psychotherapy, by whatever terminology is used, an important question often is to explore the ‘function’ of the symptom/ problem in the intrapsychic - interpersonal system of the designated patient.

¹⁷⁰ First published in 1912, this was Durkheim’s last major work before his death.

¹⁷¹ The individual with his banner in Oxford Street proclaiming the imminent end of the world - the end of time - is unlikely to elicit more than a wry smile from passers-by because he does not threaten social stability.

Reflections.

Important contributions relevant to psychotherapy by Durkheim include; challenging belief that all cultures are the same, recognising that humans organise collectively, and attributing meanings to events that include time as part of social structure. Durkheim anchors social time in society. In order to understand perceptions of time in psychotherapy we must include the socio-cultural context(s) of practice, whether Vienna in the early twentieth century, 1960s east coast America, 1970s Italy, or twenty-first century plural-cultural UK.

Marcel Mauss, (1872-1950).

Marcel Mauss ¹⁷² expands our understanding of the social and aesthetic by exploring the nature of the gift relationship. ¹⁷³ From his work stem an appreciation of honour, obligation to give and receive, the place of gifts in maintaining social structures, and the ‘phenomena of exchange and contract’ (Mauss, 1990: 5). His formulations of giving and receiving are systemic, especially in time relational elements. Mary Douglas links Mauss in the tradition of Durkheim who ‘tried to keep a delicate balance between reproaching utilitarianism for overlooking that humans are social beings and reproaching socialism for overlooking the demands of the individual’ (Douglas, 1990: xv).

Mauss is concerned with social functioning. He is interested to understand intersubjectivity, the space(s) in-between in human relationships, how they are experienced and managed in time and place, and the mechanisms holding society together. In the ritualistic nature of giving and receiving, timing, place, and participation are crucial in the context of ‘total services of an agonistic type’ (ibid: 8). He termed this ‘potlatch’. Perhaps key to the process of giving and receiving is revealed in Maori law where the gift retains something of the giver: ‘What imposes obligation in the present received and exchanged, is the fact that the thing received is not inactive. ... Through it the giver still has a hold over the

¹⁷² Marcel Mauss was Durkheim’s nephew.

¹⁷³ This is in cultures of the Pacific Rim, (Polynesia and Melanesia,) and the American Northwest.

beneficiary just as, being its owner, through it he has a hold over the thief,' (Mauss, 1990: 15).

A gift has significance for all parties over long periods of time. The giver continues to exert influence or stay 'alive' over time in the gift, long after the event itself. What is given may be given to others, and on occasion the original gift even returns to the original giver in Pacific Rim cultures. This reflexivity creates a dynamic time-flow related to a social network of obligation and connectedness. Timing and place reinforce the social nature of existence when non-participation risks social exclusion. Following Durkheim, adherence to giving and receiving rituals ensures social stability and inter-group peace over time, while managing transition and changing circumstance.

Reflections.

When considering time in psychotherapy in the context of Mauss' work, the emphasis on reciprocity is striking, especially giving and receiving gifts for social cohesion. Timing of receiving and giving is important, (Mauss, 1990: 46). In Palazzoli's framework we think of the 'time of the system' (chapter 2).

'Debts' are incurred and relationships reinforced within an understood timeframe in a stable society. The gift draws to itself qualities of the giver that enfolds a memory and encapsulates the meaning of the event and its temporal context that can be re-experienced at any time in the future. In the to and fro' of the gift relationship we see a similar process in psychotherapy where there is an offering, often intangible, by the patient.

In contrast to the societies that Mauss describes, Western-based psychotherapy has emphasised the individual psyche and an exclusive relationship between psychotherapist and patient. Instead of emphasising the interpersonal, the individual's others are in many ways excluded in the analytic model, 'out of social context', from the private space of a clearly asymmetric relationship in the consulting room. Different approaches to psychotherapy vary in paying attention

to the significance of gifts or objects in patients' relationships (Casement, 1985, 1990).¹⁷⁴

Important contributions from Durkheim and Mauss include, the social aspect of time and human interaction, cultural variations of social relationships, and the subjective nature of reality. Time and timing in the rhythm of giving and receiving, the 'time of the system', are important at a structural relationship level and for stability of the social fabric.

Systems of knowledge:

E. E. Evans-Pritchard (1902-1973).

Evans-Pritchard was interested in how we give meaning to our world. During the 1920s and 30s he lived among the Azande.¹⁷⁵ Their mystical world defies the empirical, rational world of Western thought, and encompasses unquestioned contradictions. In Lewis' words, 'witchcraft is invoked as a causal explanation of *irregularities*' (Lewis, 1996: 74).

The poison oracle, *Benge*,¹⁷⁶ has relevance to understanding the relationship between the present and the future. The oracle reveals the influence of mystical forces on future outcome. Facts about events or objective conditions are not sought, but rather 'information about the movement of psychic forces which might cause them misfortune' (Evans-Pritchard, 1976: 161). It is more important to understand the mystical powers that affect events than objective situations. A person's future is dependent on mystical forces and witchcraft enables the person to avoid or counteract a black future and have it 'changed to be more favourable to him' (ibid: 161). Influence over the future removes anxiety about the capriciousness of fate. *Benge's* answers are not challenged by experience since

¹⁷⁴ Irvin Yalom (2001) in *The Gift of Therapy* underlines much more the mutuality of such an otherwise asymmetrical relationship.

¹⁷⁵ The Azande inhabit a large area of Africa at the intersection of three modern African countries: Republic of Sudan; Zaire; Central African Republic. Evans-Pritchard lived in the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan, mainly with the Sudanese Azande. I use the present tense, even though the world of the Azande of the early part of the twentieth century no longer exists.

¹⁷⁶ '*Benge*, poison oracle, which operates through the administration of strychnine to fowls, and formerly human beings also' (Evans-Pritchard, 1976: 228).

they are not concerned with objective events while they influence events. Future doom once recognised can be avoided by changing plans, without undermining the foreknown existence of mystical forces, or credibility of the *benge*. Time for the Azande has moral connotations (Evans-Pritchard, 1976) and differs to Western experience. '(T)he present and the future overlap in some way so that the present partakes of the future as it were. ... (F)uture health and happiness depend on future conditions that are already in existence and can be exposed by the oracles and altered' (ibid: 162). If the oracle foresees a future event, that future is already part of the person.

An overlapping future and present contrast with a psychodynamic emphasis on an unconscious past and present. The Azande's 'future is already part of him' unlike Western belief of the *past* being part of the individual. Azande future focus on what can be changed to deal with 'mystical forces that can be tackled here and now', contrasts with Western 'mystical forces' in an 'unconscious past'. '(I)t is evident [for the Azande] that the answers he receives do not generally concern objective happenings and therefore cannot easily be contrary to experience' (ibid: 161). Some may argue similarity with Western psycho-analysis and all psychotherapy being *de facto* acts of faith.

Reflections.

Importance is given to 'epistemological value' and in this sense Evans-Pritchard's approach is intellectual, emphasising systems of knowledge and how we understand causation. There are parallels in his descriptions of the Azande with psychotherapy, especially an emphasis on abstract concepts and unconscious functioning. The fact that an analytic interpretation does not bring about observable change does not invalidate the approach. The interpretation may be in error or the patient is not ready so that *timing* acquires importance. Casement (1985) speaks of the correct interpretation made at the wrong time in treatment, or in Palazzoli's model, not respecting the Ts (chapter 2). Psychotherapeutically, how the Azande blur timeframes and believe the future is foretold in the present is particularly interesting in contrast with so much in the West. Oracular verdicts

and psychotherapy rely on external authority - spirits, oracle, king, founding figure - to provide socio-culturally acceptable authority.

In contrast to psychoanalysis Brief Solution-Focused approaches do not emphasise an external oracle. The patient is expert who influences future outcome, where s/he is invited to *foretell* a positive future event and recount it as if *now* achieved. The therapist's socially ascribed position validates the experience (de Shazer, 1982, 1985) similar to an Azande tribesman who foresees future doom wrought by mystical forces through the *benge* that has to be avoided, while not invalidating these forces.

In the systemic world other therapists have focused on the power of invoking the future, supporting the patient to imagine that real or hypothetical future time, and to then recall, as if looking back, how they were able to bring about such positive change (Bertrando, 2007; Boscolo and Bertrando, 1993; Penn, 1985; Seikkula, Arnkil, and Eriksson, 2003).

Historical approaches:

Stanley Jeyaraja Tambiah (1929 -).

Tambiah brings a historical approach. He traces the thinking of nineteenth and twentieth century anthropologists¹⁷⁷ and is interested in the social phenomena of lyrical participation, characteristic of the oriental world of connection, continuity and pattern. This contrasts with occidental virtues of egocentricity, individuation, instrumental action, and technical mastery (Tambiah, 1990). Peacock suggests that '(w)ith modernization, systems of classification become emancipated from the social groupings within which they originated, so that they can serve as abstracted, analytical instruments capable of the precise distinction necessary for reflective thought' (Peacock, 1975: 39). These representations have implications

¹⁷⁷ Beginning with a review of anthropology's intellectual legacy Tambiah examines the works of the following: Sir Edward Tylor, (1832-1917); Sir James Frazer, (1854-1938); Bronislaw Kaspar Malinowski, (1884-1942); and Lévy Bruhl, (1857-1939). He links this with the works of Wittgenstein, (1889-1951), later historians, and the influence of psychoanalysis.

for the self in relation to time and place, and for perception of one's state and status.

Tambiah identifies ritual within a primordial time that facilitates 'the operation of ritual action of the type branded as "magic", and the elaboration of a rich mythology about gods and men' (Tambiah, 1990: 7). Contemporary Western societies have developed their own 'magic' or enchantment to cope with anxiety of which psychotherapy is an example, attempting to give meaning in an uncertain or absurd world (Camus, 1942). These are seen in existential approaches (Frankl, 1985, 2000, 2004; Yalom, 1989, 2001, 2006). Tambiah invites us to consider how from early times ritual plays an important part in human experience (discussed in chapter 8).

A Structuralist approach:

Claude Lévi-Strauss (1908 - 2009).

Lévi-Strauss escapes easy categorization as he crosses many lines of thought:

'Claude Lévi-Strauss shares with Malinowski a Durkheimian heritage, yet where Malinowski has distilled from that seminal tradition his functionalist dogma that to understand myth one must unravel its social context, Lévi-Strauss champions the opposing viewpoint of 'structuralism'. He teaches that understanding of the meaning of myth comes from analysing the structure of the text rather than its function in context' (Peacock, 1975: 46).¹⁷⁸

Lévi-Strauss is interested in commonalities that unify societies. He believed that primitive life reveals basic elements relevant to all human groupings. Like Durkheim, he 'endeavours to reveal an unconscious universal structure that underlies seemingly diverse phenomena: kinship, ritual, language, myth, totemism, and systems of classification' (Peacock, 1975: 53) such as the gift relationship (Lévi-Strauss, 1969), and shamanism (Lévi-Strauss, 1963). 'The task of the anthropologist, ... is ... to understand and illustrate the principles of organisation that underlie the onward process of transformation that occurs as

¹⁷⁸ Peacock quotes Lévi-Strauss about how he detested the discomfort of travel, the boredom of wasted time waiting, compared to Malinowski's robust total immersion in the cultures he studied.

carriers of the culture solve problems that are either practical or purely intellectual' (Bloch, 2009).¹⁷⁹

Universal structures of the (essentially unconscious) mind interest him particularly. Little of his work is based on direct field observation reflecting a greater interest in the structure of ideas than the structure of society. Freud influenced Lévi-Strauss' seeking to discover the structure and layers of the unconscious, seeing symbolic (totemic) structures as isomorphic with social structures. '(T)otemism is a genuine system of consciousness, a symbolic structure that permits the interpretation of reality' (Peacock, 1975: 56).

Lévi-Strauss discusses Mauss' theories of the gift relationship, the principle of reciprocity (Lévi-Strauss, 1969: 52ff), and the importance of exchange distinct from economic value. 'The idea that a mysterious advantage is attached to the acquisition of commodities, or at least certain commodities, by means of reciprocal gifts, rather than by individual production or acquisition, is not confined to primitive society,' (Lévi-Strauss, 1969: 55). Giving and receiving help maintain complex sets of relationships over time. The exchange of women for marriage helps maintain kinship structures, which exist simultaneously at different levels and help 'resolve tensions between nature and culture, ... [and] certain basic conflicts inherent in particular forms of social organization' (Lewis, 1976: 65).

Lévi-Strauss offers an analysis of the shaman's effectiveness and the parallels with psychoanalysis and psychotherapy (Lévi-Strauss, 1963). He echoes observations made by Evans-Pritchard (1976) about the *benge*. For magic (or therapy) to be effective, three elements are required: 'first, the sorcerer's belief in the effectiveness of his techniques; second, the patient's or victim's belief in the sorcerer's power; and, finally, the faith and expectations of the group ...' (Lévi-

¹⁷⁹ Maurice Bloch, Tuesday 3 November 2009, Obituary, *The Guardian*.

Strauss, 1963: 168) since ‘the efficacy of magic implies belief in magic’.¹⁸⁰ The main story relates to Quesalid who not believing in the power of shamans, ultimately became a member of the group he intended to expose. In the process of learning the tricks he learns that real shamans exist and ultimately ‘he seems to have completely lost sight of the fallaciousness of the technique which he so disparaged in the beginning’ (ibid: 178).

Social consensus is essential for the shaman, whose effectiveness depends on the relationship between ‘a specific category of individuals and specific expectations of the group’ (ibid: 180). Like the therapist, the shaman undergoes a rigorous process that mirrors the ordeal of the patient (Lévi-Strauss, 1963; Vitebsky, 1995). Effectiveness rests on a ‘contract’ between the healer and the to-be-healed in a particular socio-cultural, temporal, context. The parallels between so-called primitive and advanced Western societies are closer than is often acknowledged. What happens temporally in the healing process, how time experiences may intentionally be altered, and how different timeframes facilitate change, are important for understanding ritual and therapy. If Lévi-Strauss is correct, the fact that ‘Quesalid did not become a great shaman because he cured his patients; he cured his patients because he had become a great shaman’ (Lévi-Strauss, 1963: 180) may be little different to attributing a particular address, such as Harley Street, to a physician’s competence level.

Reflections.

Yael and Saul’s story reveals different experiences of time, history, and culture. Yael’s American heritage is more present-focused, emphasising her more instrumental wish for immediate change. Saul appears more enclosed by his past, strongly influenced by parental families’ cultural histories and the Shoah. They negotiate as a couple in the ‘now’ of their marriage against the turbulence evoked by their different legacies. The Mocan family achieved this through their rural-peasant / urbanised-professional backgrounds of dispossession, and shared

¹⁸⁰ This is not entirely borne out by Stoller (2009), who describes his first experience of disbelief in magic and shamanism in Niger, but nonetheless being transformed by the event.

political history in the timeless-eternal perspective of their Christian faith. Different experiences of social and religious solidarity of time, change, and survival, mark out these minority group families.

To understand the meaning of religion or spirituality in different cultures has never been more pressing in the turmoil of globalised contemporary history. Mauss' model of the gift relationship carries new meaning if we substitute 'injury' or 'insult' for 'gift' in a time-framed discourse on the world stage or the private context of psychotherapy. A structural analysis of symbolic functioning such as totemism or American neo-conservative Christian fundamentalist politics may help understand their societal context.

All psychotherapy has an epistemology for how the therapist 'knows' what s/he observes. A key task is how to give meaning and thus find ways for change in the individual's internal world, interpersonal relationships, and to bridge both domains (Jenkins, 2006).

Gregory Bateson (1904-1980).

Bateson's thinking was influential in the development of Palazzoli's model of Systemic Psychotherapy.

His early fieldwork published as *Naven* concerned the Iatmul tribe in New Guinea, studying pattern and communication, especially as expressed in the Naven ceremony. 'His cybernetic model, inspired by an innovative, but nevertheless functionalist study of the Naven ceremony among the Iatmul, was clearly in tune with the idea that the function of parts is to maintain the whole in order ... or in homeostasis' (Krause, 1998: 52). Bateson's broad ecological perspective set him apart. With his research into communication, his preoccupation with how to classify information, an interest in the science of cybernetics, and an interactional theory of schizophrenia, Bateson became a commentator in many fields. He provided intellectual credibility for family therapy (Krause, 1998; Luepnitz, 1988) where his ideas significantly influenced

theory and practice. In later years, he feared that family therapy had become too instrumental and that by not celebrating heraldry therapists had lost respect for history and time (Lawrence Allman, personal communication 1989).

Bateson's paper on alcoholism and cybernetics highlights the importance of knowing how we know. '(1) ... an entirely new epistemology must come out of cybernetics and systems theory, involving a new understanding of mind, self, human relationship, and power' (Bateson, 1971: 280).¹⁸¹ He perceived mind as 'immanent', not bounded by the brain, (Bateson, 1980).¹⁸²

An interest in communication and logical typing led him to map the transactional patterns of schizophrenic patients and their families. '(T)he theory [of logical typing] asserts that no class can, in formal logical or mathematical discourse, be a member of itself; that a class of classes cannot be one of the classes which are its members; that a name is not the thing named; ...' (Bateson, 1964: 251). When using symbol, metaphor, ceremony in ritual and in daily activity, humans do not worry whether they breach the formal rules of logic. We play and engage in games to resolve problems or sustain relationships that can only be understood by ambiguity. We have noted this tension between the rational and visceral in philosophical discourse when attempting to understand human experience.

Bateson considers play and ritual, which I discuss in detail in chapter 8. Both activities rely on communication, and communication about (that is, meta-communication) the nature of the activity concerned. He proposes framing as in the box below to help understand communication (Bateson, 1955: 157). The reader is caught in a self-referential paradox.

¹⁸¹ The rest of this paragraph continues: '(2) that the addicted alcoholic is operating, when sober, in terms of an epistemology which is conventional in Occidental culture but which is not acceptable in systems theory; (3) that surrender to alcoholic intoxication proves a partial and subjective short cut to a more correct state of mind; and (4) that the theory of Alcoholics Anonymous coincides closely with an epistemology of cybernetics' (Bateson, 1971: 280).

¹⁸² For instance, Bateson argues in this paper that the problem for the alcoholic is not inebriation but sobriety, and that alcohol is a solution to this intolerable state of affairs. He describes a 'relationship' with the bottle based on a faulty epistemology of 'beating' the bottle.

All statements within this frame
are untrue.

I love you.

I hate you.

If the first statement is true it is false, but if false, then true. It ‘frames’ the other two statements making them false if the first statement is true, and true if it is false. Bateson argues that the problem is a difficulty in discriminating between ‘some’ and ‘all’ and between ‘not all’ and ‘more’. I suggest the absence of a *time* perspective creates the problem, so that a self-referential paradox occurs because it is believed the statements have to be accepted *simultaneously*. If *time* is introduced into the frame - *times* when they are true and when not, - the paradox dissolves. The framing of the statements as *simultaneous* seems to create the problem, just as society’s framing of the alcoholic’s problem as inebriation, rather than sobriety, becomes the problem (Bateson, 1971). This has relevance to Bateson’s theories about the self-enclosed quality of pathological communication. He suggests that in ‘pathological systems’ patterns exist similar to play and ritual, but without conscious contextual framing.

The *Double Bind* theory (Bateson, 1969; Bateson et al, 1956), developed out of his anthropological research (Bateson, 1958) and is posited as a self-referential paradox. The Möbius Strip (Plate 6.3) provides a visual image of a form that folds back endlessly on itself.



Plate 6.3. *Möbius Strip*.

The formal components of a double bind relationship in schizophrenic transaction are:

‘two or more persons; ... repeated experience; ... a primary negative injunction; ... a secondary injunction conflicting with the first at a more abstract level, and like the first enforced by punishment or signals which threaten survival; ... a tertiary negative injunction prohibiting the victim escaping the field. And finally a point comes when the individual perceives his world in such a way that the full sequence is no longer necessary’ (Bateson et al., 1956: 178-179).

Individuals caught in this timeless sequencing are unable to distinguish the different levels of communication. Similar to an endless self-reinforcing Möbius-like pattern, there comes to a point where ‘(a)n individual will take a metaphorical statement literally when he is in a situation where he must respond, where he is faced with contradictory messages, and when he is unable to comment on the contradictions’ (ibid: 180).

The double bind hypothesis describes levels of logical typing and mutually exclusive levels of ‘injunction’. The brain is called to deal *simultaneously* with conflicting levels of communication, - feeling, language, relationship, complexity - each part attempting to make sense within its own frame of reference.¹⁸³ The

¹⁸³ It is dangerous to attempt to over-simplify an organism as complex as the brain. However, there are known areas that process different aspects of our functioning: ‘(T)here appears to be a collection of systems in the human brain consistently dedicated to the goal-oriented thinking

sudden realisation of the unsustainable tension in *simultaneous* dual or multiple (time) levels produces the explosive laughter of humour (Bateson, 1955), partly as a comment on the *impossibility* of *simultaneously* holding conflicting or mutually exclusive positions. Unlike the double bind, there is no ‘tertiary negative injunction prohibiting the victim escaping the field’ or meta-communicating. The psychiatric patient’s bizarre behaviours, his symptoms, become comments on the situation without attribution (Haley, 1963). Extreme behaviour becomes a ‘solution’ to un-containable pressure when it is impossible to separate the process into *sequential* temporal ‘elements’. If Bateson’s ‘tertiary negative injunction prohibiting the victim escaping the field’ is non-verbal and affect laden, it becomes the dominant but unacknowledged element in the communication sequence. It cannot be commented on in the same non-verbal communicational ‘channel’, and is ‘resistant’ to time sequencing.

Damasio (2000a: 159-160) suggests that feelings are aroused *before* the brain’s cognitive ability to name them. Sequencing is critical: ‘what comes first ... what comes after’ and involves time. We are dealing neurologically with *sequences* however brief not *simultaneity*. If multiple communication levels could be processed *sequentially* and slowed down, I suggest the ‘logical’ contradictions that Bateson accurately describes would disentangle and the individual become self-reflective or *meta* to that process.¹⁸⁴ In chapter 8 we see how ritual slows time.

‘Time’ seems to be an important missing element from Bateson’s work. For the individual in the emotional pressure of the moment the un-resolvable in the context offered *is* un-resolvable, as long as it is presented as resolvable *simultaneously*. This seems similar to Evans-Pritchard’s description of the

process we call reasoning, and to the response selection we call decision making, with special emphasis on the personal and social domain. This same collection of systems is also involved in emotion and feeling, and is partly dedicated to processing body signals’ (Damasio, 2000a: 71).

¹⁸⁴ The work of Julian Leff and his colleagues on Expressed Emotion (EE) addresses many of these issues in helping families be aware of, and change, their communication patterns. These are: critical comments, hostility, emotional over-involvement (Hi EE), and supportive comments, warmth (Lo EE) (Leff, 1979; Leff and Vaughn, 1981, 1985).

Azande, unable to think outside their frame of reference, and so substituting one mystical contradiction with a higher level mystical explanation. Many of these elements are present benignly in ritual. 'Ordeal' changes from being implicit and denied in the patient's double bind context to explicit and intentional in ritual and psychotherapy (Haley, 1963).

Reflections.

We have begun to consider how an anthropological approach enhances our appreciation of culture to understand human activity. When it comes to noting time in many communities, memory is often fixed by associating specific events of importance that have survival value for the community, with phenomena such as when the volcano erupted, the rains failed, or 9/11. This is a form of simple history or time frozen, even as text fixes time.

What emerges from this brief consideration of anthropological studies on cultures and time, is how in our common humanity and need to make sense of our environment, we are united by our differences. By holding a mirror up to differences in others we find it is just that: we are different, and should not take for granted what we take for granted. Our Western emphasis on the 'I' and our internalised worlds lead to particular ways of locating ourselves in relation to others, seeking answers to existential questions about life, community responsibility, and the meaning of time and change.

Socio-cultural studies remind us that human experience in diverse contexts can be conceptualised in a multitude of ways. I chose to describe the Mocan family within different time frameworks (chapter 5). Other equally valid ways could have been chosen. Yael and Saul share common religious and political identities, but different cultural backgrounds. Their difficulties understanding each other were gendered, and related to different experiences of time and history.

Tambiah's comparison of occidental 'causality' and oriental 'participation' underlines important differences in worldviews. One is between believing that

the individual is responsible and can change the course of events, and a sense of being part of a much greater whole where identity is found in the group or community.

Bateson has an important place in bridging different worlds. The alcoholic caught in an endless relationship loop with the bottle, or the family whose double-binding communication patterns leave members trapped in a timeless epistemology, describe kinds of time where ‘participants’ live outside mundane temporality. The example of ‘All statements within this frame are untrue’ becomes endlessly self-referential when disconnected from time. We can envisage it as a self-contained Möbius-like context, cut off from all around it. ‘Time’ threads its way through the narrative as a way to understand existence and structure our worlds.

Even when approaches to research differ, anthropologists give importance to culture, social relationships, structure, context, and processes that provide stability. Usually this is with reference to history, through ancestors and tradition. The frequently abstract nature of philosophical discourse about time acquires a different reality in the context of anthropological studies.

I develop these themes in more depth and discuss two cultures and their temporal perspectives in the chapter 7. I consider the nature of past, present, and future, among the Balinese, and time after death among the Sora tribe.

Chapter 7.

Time in two cultures: timeless time and time beyond the grave.

‘Few of us ever walk a totally un-trodden path and many appreciate most strongly those places where a link with our ancestors can be keenly felt. This has more to do with the survival instinct than with nostalgia.’
(Fox, M. 2006: Exhibition Catalogue, Athens)

Aims.

In chapter 6 I considered a brief clinical example of slavery’s enduring impact and the power of unspoken history re-enacted unconsciously in the present. I described in some detail a non-clinical ethnographic interview with a Jewish couple and their contrasting experiences of time. These examples were contextualised by a short exploration of anthropological accounts of ‘cultural’ time with particular attention to Gregory Bateson whose important contributions are further explored in chapter 8. This chapter is devoted to two specific examples to deepen what I have said so far about the importance of a socio-cultural approach, by looking at the Balinese and an Indian pygmy tribe. My aim, therefore, is to explore whether and how such different worldviews of time can fruitfully offer new insights for thinking about time in psychotherapy.

I explore whether Balinese child-naming, co-existing calendrical cycles with their complementary methods of computing time, and ceremony in respect of time, add to how we can conceptualise time in psychotherapy. I then consider the Sora tribe. Times of the living, and the changing times of the dead offer a particular perspective on the past-in-the-present, and the present-into-the-future. These two cultures suggest alternative relationships to time. Descriptions of the Balinese and Sora are treated as their own case studies, while tentative observations based on this ethnography are made at the end of the chapter with reference to clinical practice.

Although I emphasise the Balinese, they are only one example of a people with complex, multi-layered, calendrical methods for measuring time and rhythm of the seasons. The Aztecs had a complex day calendar and day ritual cycles of cycles within cycles, accurate enough to predict eclipses of the sun today (Soustelle, 2002).



Plate 7.1. Aztec calendar stone, National Museum of Anthropology and History, Mexico City.

Plate 7.1 shows one of the Mesoamerican calendars with its 365-day calendar cycle, 260-day ritual cycle (Tonalpohualli), cycles within cycles, and 20-month year that together form a 52-year ‘century’. The time-span envisaged by this calendar extends beyond anything that contemporary Western society might deem possible.

‘When the units coincided, they gave rise to longer cycles, including one known as the Long Count, lasting approximately 1,877,000 days. It is the current Long Count which began in 3114BC that is due to end on 21 December 2012’ (Tegel, 2011: 31).

Extraordinarily, this civilization envisaged ‘repetition’, - for which words like ‘pattern’ ‘circularity’ or ‘recursivity’ substitute - in an ending and new cyclical beginning of 1,877,000 days. This encompasses eternity and finitude, not least

because such an expanse of time extends beyond any possible human conception of conscious memory or relatedness.¹⁸⁵

The Balinese.

The three Balinese examples are; naming children, calendars, and ceremony. These cultural examples provide an insight for the scholar into Balinese time. Geertz adopts three ways to describe relationships in society following Schutz¹⁸⁶, which I describe here to help think about temporal relationships among the Balinese and Sora.

Two approaches to understanding time and culture have people as ‘predecessors’ and ‘successors’ with whom there is no shared ‘community of time’ (Geertz, 1973: 365). The third describes two relationship categories: ‘contemporaries’ who share time but not necessarily space, and ‘consociates’ with whom time and space in social, work, religious, recreational, and other contexts are shared (Figure 7.1).

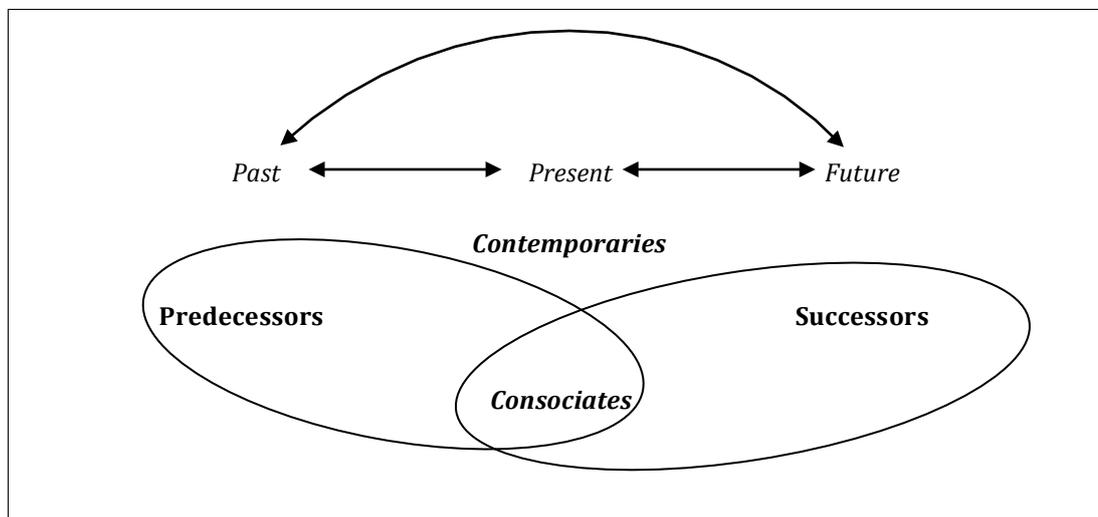


Figure 7.1. Predecessors, Contemporaries, Consociates, and Successors.

¹⁸⁵ Freud, chapter 2, was of course interested in phylogeny and the idea of a deep unconscious memory.

¹⁸⁶ Quoted by Geertz, in: Natanson, M., (Ed) (1962) *Collected Papers, Schutz, I*. The Problem of Social Reality. The Hague.

Geertz stresses the importance of *consociates* in Balinese culture in the present oriented towards *successors* (the future) ‘in the context of whom (one) is ancestral to’ (ibid: 379). He suggests this is an example of ‘looking forward’ to how one will be viewed at a later time, ‘in terms of whom one has produced’ (ibid: 379) as a future-past when one becomes an ancestor as part of others’ pasts. Geertz suggests time and place boundaries blur with the past repeatedly re-described in the present in the contexts of now and then (present and past), keeping an eye to the future. The Sora by contrast, discussed later, emphasise the present differently. They privilege *consociates* and *predecessors* (ancestors), while looking to the future in divination.

I will outline Geertz’s formulations about Balinese naming, calendars, and ceremony.

Naming.

In the context of a future-past orientation Geertz proposes that Balinese naming of children reinforces a sense of timelessness and absence of individuality. In birth order children are *Wayan*, *Njoman*, *Made* and *Ktut*, after which the name cycle repeats. The fifth child becomes another *Wayan*, the sixth a *Njoman* in ‘an endless four-stage replication of imperishable form’ (Geertz, 1973: 371). Although individuals are born and die, ‘socially the *dramatis personae* remain eternally the same as new *Wayans* and *Ktuts* emerge from a timeless world of the gods ... to replace those who dissolve once more into it’ (ibid: 372). Timelessness is reflected in kinship terminology which ‘defines individuals in a primarily taxonomic, not a face-to-face idiom, as occupants of regions in a social field, not partners in social interaction’ (ibid: 373). He suggests that the dominant feature is ‘the immobilization of time through the iteration of form’ (ibid: 374).

Geertz has his critics, discussed briefly here and later in more detail. While his overall understanding of the social world of the Balinese and taxonomic naming is of interest, he is incorrect in the detail. With the arrival of a fifth child a ‘tag’ is added to signify that this is both a ‘first’ child and a fifth child becoming *Wayan*

balek literally ‘first child returning to the beginning’, and so on. This acutally heightens a sense of recursive timelessness and subtle layering. When a ninth child is born, another ‘tag’ indicates its relative birth order. Even a child that dies at birth is given its appropriate ordinal name and tag.¹⁸⁷ Naming is thus more individualised and circular than Geertz suggests.

Tambiah challenges Geertz’s analysis of the Balinese state (Geertz, 1980). He refers to, ‘Geertz’s lacquered rhetoric [that] does not successfully glaze over the deep rupture he creates between expressive action, which he assigns to the still centre, and instrumental action, which he aligns with the base and the periphery’ (Tambiah, 1985: 318). This suggests a need for a ‘re-examination of his Balinese data’. The difficulty according to Tambiah is ‘the frequently unproven gap between ideology and practice by showing that what are often identified by the outsider as “practices” in fact exemplify the “ideological constructs”, and vice versa’ (ibid: 322).

I draw attention to weaknesses in some of Geertz’s analyses, not to highlight mistakes *per se*, but to suggest that even out of ‘faulty data’ or ‘superficial analysis’ it is possible to develop ideas to stimulate new thinking about different kinds of time in psychotherapy.

Calendars.

The Balinese have two calendars. These are the lunar-solar calendar linked to the cycles of the moon and sun, and the more important one that Geertz terms “permutational” (Geertz, 1973: 392). This consists of ten different cycles of day-names such that ‘any given day has at least in theory, ten different names simultaneously applied to it, one from each of the ten cycles’ (ibid: 392). Howe (1981) supports his view. The three most important cycles constitute sequences of: five, six and seven. Those appearing trinomially are the product of all three cycles occurring once every two hundred and ten days (5 x 6 x 7); those appearing binomially are the product of every thirty days (5 x 6), thirty-five days (5 x 7), or

¹⁸⁷ Dr. Angela Hobart (2007) personal communication.

forty-two days (6 x 7). Geertz argues such a punctual system cannot readily be used to measure time as duration.

‘The cycles and super-cycles are endless, unanchored, uncountable, and, as their internal order has no significance, without climax. They do not accumulate, they do not build, and they are not consumed. They do not tell you what time it is; they tell you what kind of time it is,’ (Geertz, 1973: 393).

This suggests that ‘analogic’, or meaning systems of time, are more important than ‘digital’ countable durational time, in that analogic can be viewed as ‘endless, unanchored, uncountable’. This may be important for considering ‘what kind of time it is’ in psychotherapy, whether the internal timeless time of the Unconscious (Freud, chapter 2), time of consciousness, memory and recall (Ricoeur, chapter 4), time of relationships (Mocan family, chapter 5), or Jane’s time dislocation (chapter 4). These are all ‘different kinds of time’.

Ceremony.

The third element in this brief review concerns the place of ceremonial.¹⁸⁸ Balinese relationships are formalised through ceremony with a high element of individual anonymization. Geertz argues we are dealing with a close and coherent system of beliefs, meanings, and actions, which produce a sense of endlessness outside time. ‘Ceremonialised interaction supports standardised perceptions of others; standardised perceptions of others support a “steady-state” conception of society; a steady-state conception of society supports a taxonomic perception of time (ibid: 406). Time as we think of it in the West becomes indistinct and pluri-directional. Figure 7.2 represents each element of stasis defining and self-reflexively defined by the other(s). Each way of punctuating of events has equal importance.

¹⁸⁸ Geertz speaks here of ‘ceremonial’. It seems to me that he sometimes blurs the distinction between ‘ritual’ and ‘ceremonial’ (chapter 8).

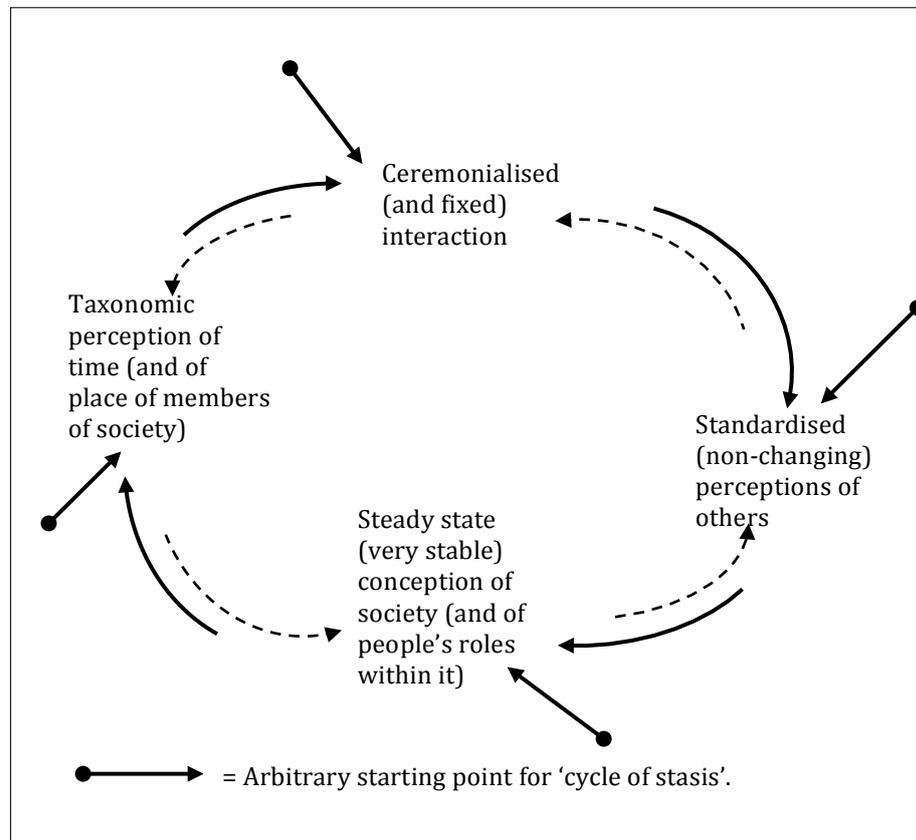


Figure 7.2. Social 'cycle of stasis' with the 'immobilization of time', extrapolated from Geertz's model.

The cycle begins at any point after which it is self-maintaining. Participants are distanced from intimate interpersonal relationships, naming anonymises the individual, and calendar systems do not reflect time as flow or progression. Ceremonialization emphasises public participation in events, thus reinforcing a sense of changelessness and timelessness to Western minds.

Alternate views.

Tambiah challenges the Balinese steady state society view. '(T)here were stable dynasties of rulers who succeeded one another according to defined and implementable rules of heredity. ... The cosmological state had to be continually reimaged and reincarnated' (Tambiah, 1985: 322). However, despite criticism of Geertz's stasis model (Figure 7.2) his ideas offer a way to conceptualise patients' experience of timelessness and changelessness, where the future repeats the past.

Ceremonialisation occurs in psychotherapy especially in psychodynamic models (Haley, 1963) which de-emphasise therapist individuality and emphasise her as a ‘blank canvas’ for the patient.

Geertz has other critics. Leopold Howe (and Angela Hobart) question the accuracy of his approach to Balinese concepts of time.

‘Indeed a study of the way that a people perceives time can only be accomplished by an investigation into the ways in which the passage of time is reckoned, how the intervals are obtained, the systems by which such units are counted, if in fact they are, how the units are conceptualised and what images and metaphors are employed’ (Howe, 1981: 222).

Although time may be cyclical the Balinese possess a concept of time’s irreversible flow in all aspects of life. Their word for time does not equate exactly with Western words, and this may partly explain these ‘transmutation’ difficulties. ‘What they have is a set of concepts, the structure and content of which is not the same as ours, but which nonetheless bears comparison. It is the presence of some similarities which makes a discussion of the differences possible’ (ibid: 223). Language informs perceptions of time just as perceptions of time influence language.¹⁸⁹ Howe maintains that Geertz misunderstands the Balinese meaning of day (*dina*) which translates as the whole of the day (duration) and is analogic. *Dina* is divided into four elements. Two are for daylight hours (*wai* and *lemah*) and two for darkness (*lemeng* and *peteng*). *Wai* and *lemeng* are used for counting intervals, so their use indicates whether they describe the whole or parts of a day. He argues that their calendar *does* have a durational concept of time.

‘Balinese do count *dina* and they are forever referring to the past and future as so many *dina* (or *wai/lemeng*) ago or yet to come. In fact it is precisely this calendar which enables them to compute exactly the number of days off a particular event is. ... Balinese thus have a very strong idea of the day as an individual and complete unit, and the verbal concepts which specify these ideas all exhibit the property of countability.’ (Howe, 1981: 224).¹⁹⁰

¹⁸⁹ This is one of the main tenets of social constructionism (Gergen, 1999) and how language constructs our realities, just as our realities influence language, from which come ideas about co-creating stories in therapy (White and Epston, 1990).

¹⁹⁰ There are particularly important days: *Buda* and *Anggara* in the seven-day week, *Kliwon* in the five-day week, and *Kajeng* in the three-day week. These enable the Balinese to calculate different

Howe agrees Balinese days describe ‘punctual’ time but this is not the only way and he suggests Geertz is mistaken to propose that particulate time excludes awareness of durational time: ‘It simply registers that each day in a cycle has different properties from all the others in that cycle – this does not preclude their being countable. ... The mistake ... is that of attributing to the class the same properties that are attributable to its members’ (ibid: 224-225).¹⁹¹ What Howe seems to suggest is that there are cycles within cycles; times within time. This may add to how we understand different levels or kinds of time in therapy with their rhythms and realities.

Awareness of their socio-religious-cultural context is crucial for understanding the Balinese whose lives are ordered around the spirit world. This seems absent from Geertz’s analysis. The two words closest to ours for time are *kali* and *kala*,¹⁹² and ‘‘time’ itself, is thought to be a wholly negative conception’ (Howe, 1981: 226). *Kali* and *kala* also refer to a class of ambiguous or malevolent spirits: ‘Thus both midday and dusk are intervals when these spirits are most active. ... (M)idday and dusk are given prominence in the series by the very fact that they are referred to by so many different phrases’ (ibid: 226) when certain things may or may not be done.¹⁹³

Spirits are active at *transitional* periods; midday at the zenith point after which the sun starts to decline, and dusk which is neither day nor night that the French call *entre le chien et le loup*.¹⁹⁴ Time and safety inter-mix in the spirit world. *Kala* spirits can enter someone temporarily, affect their sense of wellbeing, and make them more vulnerable to risk. When someone is angry the Balinese say that the

subsidiary cycles and the time (interval, duration) to the day of the next ceremony (see Howe, 1981: 224). The ability to compute time intervals between different days that have intervals of up to a hundred days would not be possible without a calendar with properties of countability.

¹⁹¹ This echoes Bateson’s use of Logical Typing and concepts of class and member, that a class cannot be a member of itself. They describe different levels of abstraction, (see chapter 8).

¹⁹² The suffixes - *i* and - *a* denote female and male respectively.

¹⁹³ Howe identifies eighteen different words for interval during the day in an invariant sequence, supporting the idea of countability in Balinese culture (see Howe, 1981: 225).

¹⁹⁴ Literally: *between the dog and the wolf*. This emphasises the in-between ambiguous nature of this time of day. Failure to distinguish dog from wolf could be fatal.

person has been ‘taken over by the god *kala*’ and it is *kala* that has to be exorcised.¹⁹⁵

Lawas, meaning ‘a long time’, is also ‘the segment of a piece of bamboo between two adjacent nodes. Just as new shoots grow from these nodes so ... change occurs at the transitional zones of duration structured in this articulated manner’ (Howe, 1981: 226). Howe maintains that ‘the conceptual opposition between the segments and nodes which join them is fundamental to Balinese culture’ (ibid: 226) and can be seen in a whole range of social institutions. Plate 7.2 shows the relationship of the bamboo *lawas* to the nodes out which new shoots (change) emerge.



Plate 7.2. Bamboo. New shoots grow out of the nodal points of the joining segments of the *lawas*. At this point the plant realises new, unknown, potential in different directions.

Transitory moments are ‘in between’ periods, similar to the bamboo’s ‘nodes’ separating the *lawas*. Nodes are ‘instants’ where what is ceasing to be remains, and what will be is not yet. These are frequently ambiguous, difficult, or unsettling moments (or places) of not yet before, and not yet after. The artist Alla Tkachuk maintains that it is precisely in these moments which cannot be pre-planned, that the artist’s creativity occurs.¹⁹⁶

¹⁹⁵ In mediaeval Europe, it was widely believed that witches were possessed by malevolent spirits. The cure for this would frequently result in their death.

¹⁹⁶ Personal communication, 2012.

Ambiguity threatens security and requires powerful methods to ensure safe passage from one stage to another. Ritual in its various aspects performs such functions (chapter 8). The person (shaman or psychotherapist) charged to take the person through those nodal-between *lawa* stages with their ‘in-between quality’ often live on society’s margins, themselves ‘between’ (Stoller, 2009). These thoughts lead to considerations about time, change, and intentionality (Husserl, 1991), psychotherapeutic intentionality (Tomm, 1987a, b, 1988), and the instant of crisis as potential for change (Jenkins, 1989b). It is in the in-between that the potentially transformative can be realised in therapy.

Cyclicity need not exclude duration. The difficulty from a Western perspective may be how to understand the purpose and cultural fit for the individual in a Balinese worldview. ‘Cyclicity does not entail non-durational time ... since the stages succeed one another in a fixed invariant order. Telling time, which implies the recognition that time passes, is achieved by reference to the place of a particular stage within the series’ (Howe, 1981: 227). In this worldview the person’s soul is part of an eternal cycle moving between heaven and earth, between ancestor and the living person. For the Balinese, as in India, there is the possibility of liberation to move into a transcendental realm of *nirvana* (Buddhist) or *moksa* (Balinese). In both instances we are dealing with time and timelessness in the context of reincarnation cycles.¹⁹⁷

Howe touches on the elusive nature of time. There are parallels with music. Music has rhythm, and rhythms within rhythms, often returning to repeated phrasings or changing tempo, with an internal structure holding together different elements. Rhythm and tempo are useful concepts for time in therapy, the apparent timelessness of the Unconscious, or timeless replaying of events or emotional states (chapter 2).

Although ‘cyclicity does not entail non-durational time’ there is often a timeless quality to the phenomenon of being unable to escape repetition. Howe’s

¹⁹⁷ Personal communication, (Dr. Angela Hobart, 2008).

observation, '(t)he accumulation of these cycles is however usually of far less interest than the co-ordination of events within the cycle' (Howe, 1981: 227) can be re-worked therapeutically. We saw this in the case vignettes of Caitlin and Peter replaying timeless scripts of abandonment, and Dan re-enacting his impotent rage. Cycles *do* accumulate in people's lives often becoming established imperceptibly like silt changing the contours of a riverbed. Over time (duration) events are organised or co-ordinated (without implying conscious or intentional process) so that linear events, as they become cyclical, cohere with their internal rhythms. If the therapist is able to identify such repeating patterns, s/he has a powerful 'interpretation' to help engender change.

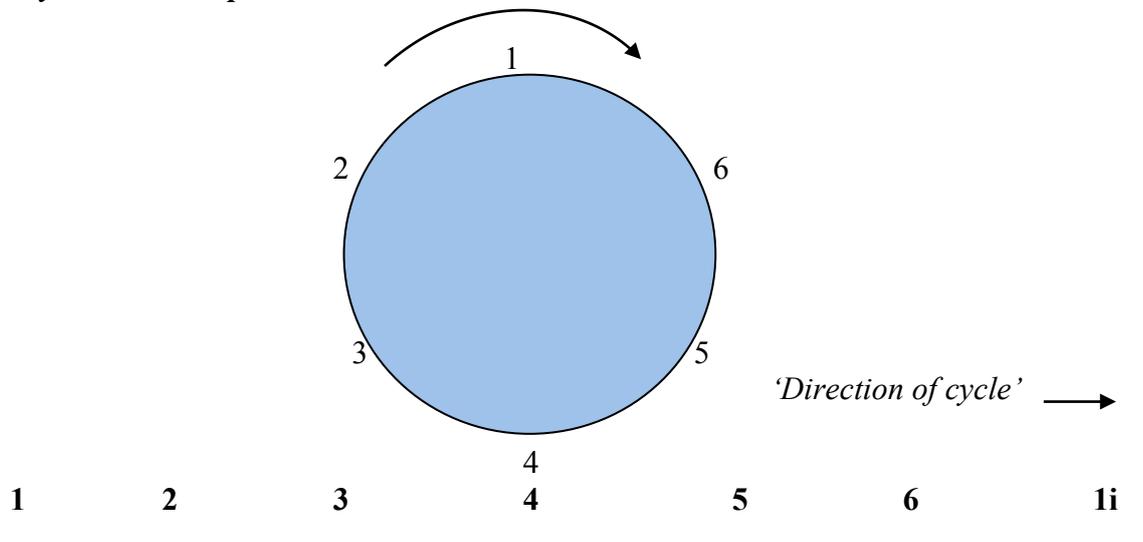
Confusion about meanings of time indicate interpretive difficulties for therapy. We need to understand 'what kind of time' is described, the nature of intervallic time between and frequency of meetings, and the rhythms of 'the time of the system' (Palazzoli et al., 1978, see chapter 2). Psychotherapeutic approaches differ depending whether time is considered within an individual lifespan or over generations, whether cyclical and repetitive, or linear and causal.

'(T)he co-ordination of events within the cycle' (Howe, 1981:227), social relationships, and harmony, are more important for the Balinese than temporal computational aspects of time because in the spirit-filled world 'people and gods are part of the same massive cycle, since gods are simply deified ancestors' (ibid: 229). Ancestors will be reincarnated through their patrilineal descendants when time and the cycle are closed. It is often different in therapy. The 'demons' that haunt patients seem to know no ending. The therapist's aim is for the patient to break those repetitive cycles, like a 'psychological exorcism' for which s/he needs powerful tools (see chapter 8).

I have referred to cyclical and linear time. These are usefully thought of as complementary ways to understand pattern and duration. Figure 7.3 reflects these perspectives. The same number on the revolving circle and the straight-line represent the 'same point' from cyclical and linear views. The intervals *between*

two or more ‘points’ represent ‘duration’, a *lawas* or particular length of time.¹⁹⁸ The rotating circle represents ‘cyclical time’. A complete cycle is six ‘*lawas*’ from 1 through 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and ‘back’ to 1. That ‘1’, and every numerical point in the cycle, (and the infinitesimal number of ‘points’ in between every numbered point) is Plato’s instant ‘this queer creature, the instant, [that] lurks between motion and rest – being in no time at all’ (Plato, 1997: 388).

‘Cyclical time’ - patterned



(A series)

‘Linear time’ – durational



(B series)



Figure 7.3. Cyclicity/linearity: complementary perspectives.

¹⁹⁸ That is, they can be counted as ‘number’. This echoes Plato’s *Parmenides* (chapter 3). ‘So of all the things that have number the one has come to be first. ... But that which has come to be first, I take it, has come to be earlier, and the others later; and things that have come to be later are younger than what has come to be earlier. ...’ (Plato, 1997: 385). In *Timaeus* Plato states; ‘at the same time as he brought order to the universe, he would make an eternal image, moving according to number, of eternity remaining in unity. This number, of course, is what we now call “time”.’ (Plato, 1997: 1241).

The ‘*new* 1’ at the start of the subsequent sequence is not the ‘*same* 1’ marking the ‘beginning’ of the cycle. It is at the same *logical* point but is at another point ‘along the linear time line’ of number. This *different* 1 we can call 1i and a further cycle later becomes 1ii, and so on at each *logical point* and subsequent *durational* point of repetition. ‘(W)hen a cycle ends it does not return to the same *temporal* point; it returns, and this is a very different thing, to the same *logical* point’ (Howe, 1981: 231). The ‘direction of the cycle’ shown is clockwise, the same left to right direction as the sun in its waxing and waning in relation to the earth’s axis, a direction that moves in the present from the past (earlier east) towards the future (later west). The linear time-line represents far past to near past through present to near future and to far future, (McTaggart’s *A-Series*) in a left to right direction, mirroring the ‘forward’ direction of writing in Roman script.¹⁹⁹ From an anticipatory perspective, the sequence ‘reads’ from far future to far past, from right to left. The ‘before’ and ‘after’ in Figure 7.3 is McTaggart’s *B-series* in infinite number.

Howe concedes ‘(t)here is little doubt that the Balinese accentuate the cyclical aspect of duration to the expense of the linear’ (Howe, 1981: 232). While Western cultures often emphasise duration, the instant, and how to ‘*use*’ time, the Balinese tend to be ‘*in*’ time. The difference between *using* time and *being in* time has a place for thinking about time in psychotherapy.

In the Balinese way of naming children we discover a perspective for placing people and relationships over time. Naming does not return to the same *temporal* starting point. It becomes *Wayan balek*, *Njomani balek*. Naming returns to the *same logical / different temporal point* (cyclical) in a sequential time-line (linear) of future, present, past. This movement resonates with Western psychotherapy when patients repeat the same story, or different versions that structurally are ‘the same story’. Repetition is an interactive act that reinforces and legitimates the experience and simultaneously is a beacon that signals the need for change.

¹⁹⁹ The opposite holds true for Arabic and Hebrew scripts, writing from right to left. I know of no evidence that this influences or reflects a different way of understanding or experiencing time.

Patients may tell and re-tell these stories lacking a sense that time can be fluid. They return repeatedly to the *same logical point*, but without any temporal markers, such as Balinese naming, where there is difference and continuity. Freud was aware of this in his many descriptions of ‘compulsion to repeat’ (Freud, 1917: XVI, 1918, XVII, 1925, XX, 1939, XXIII, inter alia, chapter 2). If we take this a step further it is as though the patient ‘stuck in their story’ has become ‘stuck in time’, as fixed in time as the insect in amber (Plate 7.3).



Plate 7.3. Insect fixed in amber, possibly 150 million years old.

Patients struggling with endless repetitions of their story re-enact their experience in a never-ending present. Some of the skills necessary to help break such patterns are discussed in chapter 8. I first turn to the Sora to expand our cultural understanding of time.

The Sora.

Traditionally the Sora, an aboriginal ‘tribe’ on the eastern side of India, experience the continued presence of the deceased in daily life, the past actively influencing the present. ‘In every Sora village, almost every day, living people conduct dialogues with the dead, who speak to them through the mouth of a shaman in a trance’ (Vitebsky, 1993: 3).

Vitebsky describes how the Sora give meaning to their current lives and past relationships with the dead. Much of this would be familiar to the Balinese. The

boundary between the living and the dead for the Sora (and Balinese) is more fluid than in the West and reflects a different temporal relationship. The dead in their afterlife form of *sonum* (Memory) are integral to daily life and participate in a continuing dialogue with the living. Sonum may be understood variously as ‘spirit’, ‘God’, ‘god’, ‘deity’ or ‘power’ (ibid: 13 ff.) but Vitebsky prefers mainly to translate sonum as ‘a Memory’.²⁰⁰ Memory implies time and time passing, ‘a journey through a time which is not homogenous but is shaped by people’s feelings’ (ibid: 14). Vitebsky makes a significant metaphysical distinction about sonum who exist outside the minds of those they affect.

‘A Western ‘memory’ ... is still seen as located firmly in the mind even when it is said to be ‘eating up’ its rememberer. A Sora memory of a dead person remains outside the mind of the rememberer, who is at least partly a confluence made of such Memories rather than an entity who could contain them’ (ibid: 14).

This suggests a different conception of personhood from a Western individualistic ‘mind’. ‘Memory’ (sonum) exists on the exterior and all who are dead are Memory. Experiencing conflicts, sorrows or joys, sonums are engaged externally at different stages along an afterlife continuum. The sonum is the person’s Memory of someone else and how I am influenced not only by how I was ‘but also by that of another person. So in addition to the onward movement of time there is also a transferral of perspective, a shift from the subjective viewpoint of the deceased to that of his successor’ (ibid: 14).

For heuristic purposes Vitebsky categorises sonums as ‘Undisturbing’, ‘Neutral’ and ‘Distressing’. The most recently dead belong to the last category. The Sora, as do the Balinese, live a simultaneous dual timeframe of complementary worlds of the living and the dead. The past in a continuing present influences a worldly present and future. These adjoining worlds exist on a daily basis in easy and

²⁰⁰ Vitebsky also refers to *sonum* as ‘recollection’, an active process making the distinction in French between *souvenir*, *mémoire*, and *rappel* (see Ricoeur, chapter 4).

uneasy relationships and are integral to life now. Sonums have their own lives and eventually have their ‘second deaths’.²⁰¹

Vitebsky suggests that ‘the rate at which the deceased moves away from the original death-Experience is related, not to the passage of time as such, but to the development of the feelings which the sonum and the mourner have for each other’ (ibid: 199). This is a visceral phenomenon. The relationship between sonum and mourner is real, changing over time, and affected by both parties’ feelings. Figure 7.4 highlights these differences.

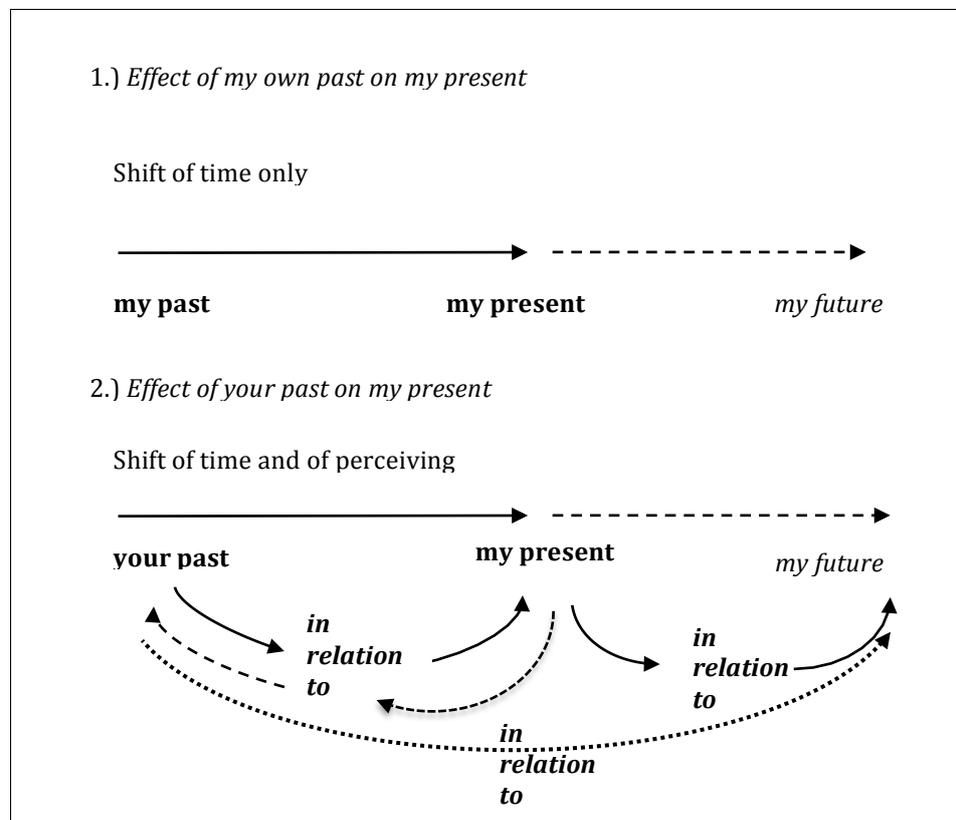


Figure 7.4. Adapted and expanded from Vitebsky, 1993: 199.

The shift between 1) and 2) proposes different relationships to the past. I retain my individual view as the person involved in 1) which is *my* past. That influences how I feel now, and what I felt about you before you died that continue to affect

²⁰¹ Their second deaths come at the time of the living rememberers’ first deaths. Sonums then become butterflies.

my feelings for you as a *sonum*. My feelings are not actively re-evaluated, do not change, and in that sense are timeless. The Sora experience is more accurately reflected in 2). Here, the deceased's past affects the rememberer in the present, and the sonum transmits those feelings to the living. The surviving person must return again and again to revise, challenge, or engage in different time dimensions (Figure 7.4). The repeated nature of returning to the sonum reflects the importance of affirming the experience, clarifying unresolved issues, externalising private stories or conflict in the communal arena, and ultimately being no longer defined by the past, yet not denying it. Memory is neither static nor circumscribed by an individual 'mind'. It 'roams outside the mind of any rememberer' (ibid: 201) and is open to public dialogue. The past continues but the nature of past and present remain negotiable. Shamans are go-betweens and remain active participants until the sonum meets his second death.

Death occurs passively to the person but after death the sonum actively seizes others. The shaman discerns who is attacking the individual through divination, and externalises the patient's inner turmoil. Sonums influence the lives of the living while conducting their own sonum post-mortem relationships. '(D)earth itself is not a negation of life but a continuation of it with a change in the quality of face-to-face interaction. ... Once one party to a relationship dies, certain inhibitions are lifted and the unspeakable can be spoken' (ibid: 17). Dialogue brings the deceased person into the present moment, or perhaps more precisely this becomes a moment in trance out of time, the past re-experienced as present. These dialogues involve historical events as well as what dead relatives intend. A presence from the *past* influences the thoughts and feelings of family members in the *present* about what is foretold, promised, or threatened, for the *future*; 'your past' continues to influence 'my future' (Figure 7.4).

Vitebsky compares Western psychotherapy with Sora practices in relation to Freud (*Mourning and Melancholia*, Freud, 1917: XIV). For the Sora '(t)he healing of the mourner, whatever this is, lies in the Memory's changes of form but not in the Memory's annihilation' (Vitebsky, 1993: 237). This is unlike Freud's

emphasis on death's finality: 'By denying the memory its autonomous existence, Freud reverses the Sora model and takes the initiative out of the hands of the dead. ... Thus it is not the Sora mourner who finds it difficult to 'abandon a libidinal position'²⁰² ... but the deceased' (ibid: 241).

The Sora worlds of the living and the dead are real but different. This has implications for perceptions of time. There is seasonal external time of agriculture and the yearly collective stages of the funeral cycle for the dead that change over time. There also exists 'the inner timescale of the mourner with its more uneven, jerky rhythm and backward counter-flows' (ibid: 245). Vitebsky suggests that the difference lies not in a divide between normal and pathological since the healing time of Western therapy similarly focuses on the inner experience of the mourner, but that it lacks the Sora's public consensual consciousness.

Naming patterns.

Naming patterns among the Sora record relationships over time in particular ways. This can be seen in a simple kinship chart (Figure 7.5). This indicates the route for a son's name, carried by the woman from the lineage into which she was born across to the lineage into which she marries, thereby marking out relationships, time, and place.

²⁰² Freud's statement to 'abandon a libidinal position', *Mourning and Melancholia* (Freud, 1917: XIV).

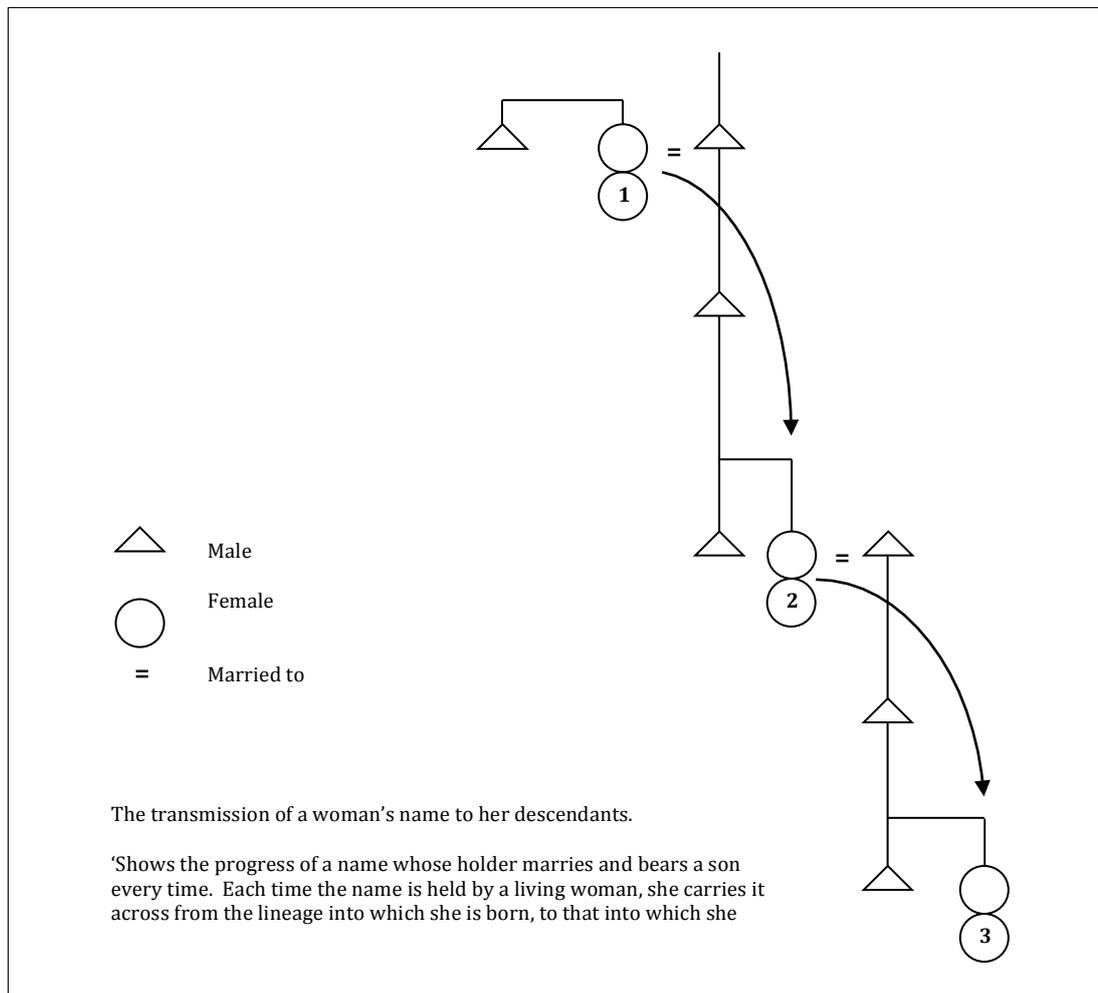


Figure 7.5 From: Vitbebsy, 1993: 62, (part of Figure 3.2)

Anthropological mapping typically focuses on the individual, family, and community's place in traditional societies. However, the individual is not a separate entity, unlike the emphasis in many Western psychotherapeutic approaches.

Mexican artist Frida Kahlo (1907-1954) provides a powerful illustration of her place in her family in a particular historical socio-cultural context (Plate 7.4). The image echoes the family genogram, developed by Murray Bowen (1978), as a way to understand patterns and themes over time in families, (Carter and McGoldrick 1980, 1989; Jenkins, 2006; Lieberman, 1979a, b, c) but without the specific

emphasis on kinship in anthropology. However, unlike the genogram Kahlo's painting provides information about family, geographical, and cultural contexts, physical characteristics, and the painter at two stages of her life (foetus and child).

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Plate 7.4. Frida Kahlo. My Grandparents, My Parents, and I (Family Tree), 1936. The Museum of Modern Art, New York.

Kinship is central to identity, meaningfulness, socio-cultural continuity and therefore time. Anthropologists map kinship structures to understand the worlds they observe. Kinship manifested through marriage and culture (Lewis, 1976: 234-280) provides structure for stability and continuity of generations. In essence, the organisation of who may marry whom with concomitant alliances and obligations, and the naming of children linking the past and carrying history into the future, are part of the threads that give continuity to history, meaning to the present, and help envisage the future:

‘Children may be named after or in honour of their grandparents, or considered to reincarnate them. Often grandparents and grandchildren refer to each other by a single reciprocal kinship term which means in

²⁰³ “Me in the middle of this house, when I was about two years old. The whole house is in perspective as I remember it. On top of the house in the clouds are my father and mother when they were married (portraits taken from photographs). The ribbon about me and my mother's waist becomes an umbilical cord and I become a fetus. On the right, the paternal grandparents, on the left the maternal grandparents. A ribbon circles all the group — symbolic of the family relation. The German grandparents are symbolized by the sea, the Mexican by the earth.” Frida Kahlo - La Casa Azul, Coyoacán, May 27, 1939.

effect ‘person of alternate generation’. This cross-generational solidarity is perhaps one of the most striking features shared by kinship systems which differ markedly in other respects’ (Vitebsky, 1993: 276-277).

Time here is externalised through the ancestors. People orient themselves towards communal relationships lived in public time where even age and time’s passing are referenced to external events of nature. By contrast, the private world of family in the West, similar to Kahlo’s representastion, is primarily part of an internalised world. This is psychotherapy’s territory.

Vitebsky provides a telling example of differences between traditional Sora rhythms and the impact of Christian conversion with the introduction of an alien timeframe that destroyed traditional pathways for healing. Conversion introduced a different kind of time without the structure or cultural assimilation necessary to protect its members. He describes ‘two contradictory paces’. The salvation time of conversion ‘is simultaneously both instantaneous (the farewell at the burial) and indefinitely postponed (the second coming). Between the day of the funeral and some point in eternity, Sora Baptism omits the middle ground of much living memory’ (Vitebsky, 2008: 255). Christian conversion removed rhythm, structure, ritual, and time perspectives, which once destroyed could not be recovered and resulted in an existential loss of belonging. Not only were dialogues impossible, the whole rhythm of healing was disrupted. While remaining in familiar geographic space their ‘time’ had been taken from them, and connection with their ancestors was adrift. They faced the unfamiliar in the familiar.

‘As Baptism collapses the slow therapeutic time of the shamans, forgetting is becoming more urgent, suggesting not that forgetting is a failure of remembering (which would be merely a cognitive lapse) but the reverse: remembering is a failure to forget – a moral lapse under a new ideology which rejects the obligation to *olong*’²⁰⁴ (ibid: 255).

²⁰⁴ ‘The verb *olong*, meaning “greet, engage, talk to”. ... The dead are remembered and forgotten, in terms of your verbal encounters with them. The drama of *olong*’ing them ... is framed by an initial summoning (*guding*, ‘pull by voice’) and a closing (*omda*, ‘let go, release, send away’). So the process of remembering and forgetting the dead is cast in a relational vocabulary of engagement and disengagement’ (Vitebsky, 2008: 245-246).

Christian ‘salvation time’ is out of time and rhythm with the ‘slow therapeutic time’ of traditional intercessors between the living and the dead. Sora culture offered the living a peopled space that would continue to change until the dead *sonum* achieved Ancestorhood. This reflected and respected the rhythms of the living, for which they were traded a desolate ‘middle ground’ marked off at either end by the ‘immediate instantaneous’ and the ‘indefinitely postponed’. The loss of culture, the glue that holds people together, meant alienation and denial of the past. Ancestors became un-joined in this new pattern of time.

This is different to the Mocan family (chapter 5) where from a Durkheimian perspective (Durkheim, 2001) I suggested there was a particular kind of time, ‘spiritual time’, that distinguished some families throughout the Romanian communist era and provided an identity and temporal perspective to enable survival.

Reflections.

We have considered aspects of time in two cultures; Balinese daily life and Sora dialogues with the dead. The case vignettes in previous chapters, by contrast, portrayed different aspects of Western self and personhood. The experience and meaning of time in its relationship to personhood is important in any culture. Thus, the meaning of relationship, self, autonomy, affiliation, mortality, healing, and temporality, will differ. A Cartesian dichotomy of mind and body persists in certain Western bio-medical systems and Western beliefs privilege an autonomous ‘I’, while the ‘I’ of personhood in other cultural contexts is often more diffuse.

If Western psychological experiences of relationships and time tend to be internalised, in Eastern societies these are located more in the external world. The psychodynamic psychotherapist works with this ‘material’ of the self and with relating selves in systemic psychotherapy. In psychoanalysis this becomes an unchanging internal ‘time’ based on an internalised ‘archaeological’ system (Schorske, 1991).

If Western psychological perspectives traditionally view the aetiology of problems originating from the inside-out so that treatment uncovers what already exists within, Balinese spirits invade from the outside-in and have to be exorcised (externalised) from the inside-out. ‘Psychotherapy and psychoanalysis lack the Sora concepts of communal space and time, as well as the interaction with exterior Memories which exist outside their rememberer’ (Vitebsky, 1993: 16). Even if grief following death was not invariably resolved through Sora practices, feelings could be acknowledged publicly and face-to-face interaction could continue with a different quality, as past and future continued meeting in a dynamic present.

Returning to Yael and Saul (chapter 6) Yael spoke of her mother’s frustration with her. When I challenged with “What do you think your mother sneakily admired in you?” she replied that she was named after her maternal grandmother (MGM) who died before her birth. Then came a story that her mother had never recovered from *her* own mother’s death and how this affected her marriage. Yael embodied important characteristics of her MGM for her mother thus keeping *present* a *memory* and relationship from a *past* before her birth. Recognising the impact of her MGM’s death on her mother, she spoke of “my commitment not to repeat this in my marriage”. This illustrates some of the complexities of loss and transgenerational transmission. The extended past and the place of Sora Ancestor-hood became the immediate present that could be processed and influence the future. Lacking a socially sanctioned public arena Yael carried on her private dialogue, private even from her husband, in and out of the past and future with her dead mother.

Yael and Saul embodied different time-scales, reflecting their respective backgrounds. Yael’s seemed more direct and instrumental; Saul’s was more internalised and timeless. Their familial histories and healing needs were different but they both lacked a public ordering of time as a way to process and live with loss.

The moment of dialogue with a sonum challenges the philosophical view that no parts of time ‘can ever be co-existent’ (Hume, 1978: 31) and that ‘parts of time are always successive’ (Kant: 2003: 77). In *Dialogues with the Dead* the living and the dead communicate in a particular kind of present, or co-existing different kinds of time. The past speaks into the present and encompasses different kinds of future, one for the living, another for the dead. What I think Vitebsky describes is Husserlian. It is a ‘thick present’ (Husserl, 1991) although like Hume, Husserl held that ‘two different times can never be simultaneous, that their relationship is a nonreciprocal one’ (ibid: 10). The dialogues compress history and the present moment and contain both in ‘retention’. There seems to be a coming together of before and after, where in that moment they are one and, following McTaggart (1927), we could believe that time did not exist. Certainly past, present, and future, are encapsulated in those moments, without confusing temporal orientation. This differs from Jane’s frequent experience in therapy and her daily life. Her experiences are partly captured in Howe’s (1981) idea that in Balinese time there is a linear temporal sequence, within which events return again and again to ‘the same logical point’, an always traumatic logical point. A central theme of traditional Sora culture is a narrative thread, stretching from a past through the present to an unknown future (Merleau-Ponty, 1945), which challenges Strawson’s (2005) arguments against narrativity.

These descriptions reveal interesting complementarities. Linear time, the *A*-series (McTaggart, 1927) that seems to progress from far future through to the present, and then to furthest past, has met unexpected cultural ‘counter-flows’. I have suggested a parallel between naming Balinese children and returning, *not* to the *same temporal* point, but to the *same logical* point as a metaphor for patients’ time in treatment. Days, months, and years pass, but the patient remains somehow (trans)fixed at the same repetitive logical point as if time were immobilised. I have considered ideas of times within times, seen in the multi-layering of time and patterns in Balinese (and Aztec) calendars with their rhythms

in punctual or computational time. These themes have relevance for rhythms of time in psychotherapy.

Boundaries of time or place are often difficult, ambiguous areas in human experience, to be negotiated with sensitivity in order to provide stability and help manage uncertainty (Leach, 1976). Boundaries between the living and the dead were in dynamic flux in traditional Sora culture; the future and change had a reference point, while the past remained actively present. This was lost following Christian conversion (Vitebsky, 2008). The traditional Sora view is contrary to 'cut off' and 'let go' following loss in the West. The Balinese and Sora provide a valuable reference point for my ultimate consideration in chapter 9 whether anthropological (and philosophical) descriptions can increase our understanding of time in therapy. First, I explore the nature and place of time in ritual and therapy.

Chapter 8.

Therapy as Ritual, Ritual in Therapy and the Importance of Time.

‘... although our ability to alter the external environment is very limited, we have a virtually unrestricted capacity for playing games with the internalised version of the environment which we carry in our heads.’
(Leach, 1976: 36)

‘... our contention [is] that therapy necessarily involves a combination of discrepant logical types of discourse. ... As we see it, the process of psychotherapy is a framed interaction between two persons, in which the rules are implicit but subject to change.’
(Bateson, 1955: 165)

Aims.

My aim is to describe the structure and transformative nature of ritual with reference to time and explore whether this provides a new dimension of how to understand psychotherapeutic change. The structure and reported phenomena of rites of passage promise a model for understanding time in treatment. Certain concepts are briefly described to help introduce the material.

I wish to explore whether it is useful to conceptualise therapy as ritual, whether ritual is comparable to psychotherapy in structure and intention, and whether therapy sessions create experiences of time in ways that parallel the shifts and changes reported in ritual. If psychotherapy is considered as ritual we must consider: structure, role(s) of the conductor, (shaman, priest, therapist), rhythm, duration, and timing. This includes ‘entry’ and ‘exit’ of sessions and interval times in between.

It has always been important in human history to explain unexplainable events, whether dis-ease of the body (soma) or the ‘psyche’ (soul). Western thinking reflects a move away from external forces or spirits entering the person, to belief in individual responsibility and the myth of scientific, rational explanation. I aim

to explore whether ritual can bring order or pattern to what otherwise appears disordered.

I draw on ethnographic data derived from a filmed interview and case vignettes to support my thinking. I return to Jane's story with reference to ritual, time, and trauma and briefly describe two other clinical stories: Jenny's ritual of obliteration, and Julian and Natalie's failed rite of passage.

Structure.

This chapter has two main sections: *Ritual and time*, and *Rites of passage: transformation and time* mainly for heuristic purposes. Rites of passage constitute a 'member' of the 'class' (Bateson, 1969) ritual. The material is complex, so I first introduce my outline structure.

I begin with an ethnographic example of everyday ritual and introduce a brief historical perspective followed by a description of a powerful therapeutic ritual of obliteration. This is contextualised by an introduction to some of the terminology. I give a necessarily selective anthropological description of ritual and time from this enormous field. Jane's story is taken up to describe ritual and time confusion in trauma followed by a playful ritual. This leads to Bateson's contribution to ritual through a model of play.

Rites of passage, transformation, and time, drawing on ethnographic material and a case vignette of a failed rite of passage, leads to a proposed a model for therapy and time based on this structure. Finally, I reflect on the contribution of ritual and time to frame therapy.

Ritual.

Ritual can be ordinary, mundane, and go unnoticed. I demonstrate this in the following excerpt from a filmed couple interview about ritual in Romanian culture. Remus is a pastor and Andreea a psychologist. I will ask about their

understanding and experience of ritual in their families and their marriage. I draw attention to the immediate everyday experience of greeting as ritual.²⁰⁵

H.J. “Did you notice what we just did? We shook hands. We entered into a very small ritual. A ritual making a different contact with each other, and ummm, greeting each other as you said, and demonstrating to each other that our hands are empty; there’s nothing to be afraid of. There are no hidden or dangerous things in our hands. And we made physical contact. Of course (*turning to Andreea*) if you were an orthodox Jewish woman, I would not have proffered my hand because that would have been inappropriate, ... So, there are all those little rituals we get involved in, all the time in our lives, and most of the time we don’t pay attention.”

The stuff of ritual is the everyday *and* the special. In this opening reflection, we notice a number of elements:

- the physical nature of our meeting in touching;
- the symbolic nature of shaking hands and what this reveals;
- socio-cultural and religious expectations;
- the importance of gender; and
- the ‘performative’ element in greeting.

This ritual takes less than a minute, and prepares the ground for important areas to be discussed. Thirty seconds later Remus observes,

“I feel that I don’t know too much about ritual. I don’t pay attention to this aspect very much. ... (I)n my mind, most of these are negative aspects. ... Sometimes people do things because of the ritual, not because they know exactly the significance of it”.

Remus’ comment is important. It hints at whether people know why they carry out ritual in religious life, the ‘empty ceremonial’ mentioned by Beattie (1970: 242). However understood, ritual has always played an important role in human societies. References to ritual go back millennia, recorded for example in the Han

²⁰⁵ This filmed interview took place in Timisoara on 10th September, 2011, as part of the Late Summer School, Dianoia Institute of Family Therapy and Systemic Practice. Andreea and Remus have been married for nine years and have a son and two daughters. The couple has given permission for the material to be used for research and teaching purposes. They knew of my research interests in time and ritual.

dynasty (Muller, 2001).²⁰⁶ Implements used or actions carried out are often familiar (mundane or profane) but acquire symbolic (sublime or sacred) resonance in ritual. Earlier than the Han dynasty, Stonehenge stands enigmatically for the performance of ritual for fertility, renewal, or sacrifice (Williams, 2001, 2002).



Plate 8.1. *Stonehenge*.

We continue to be fascinated by ritual in anthropology and psychotherapy, (Imber-Black and Roberts, 1992; Wilson, 1972; Wolin and Bennett, 1984; Woodcock, 1995), in mathematics, philosophy, physics, and theology (Connes et al., 2008). Such interest may represent at least in part a desire to resolve the irresolvable in human experience.²⁰⁷ Ritual brings cohesion to situations that otherwise risk disorder and entropy. It may be simple or complex, but the task is to maintain stability by channelling, almost paradoxically, instability to achieve socially sanctioned change.

Ritual in ancestor worship ‘binds the living to the dead and unborn in a generational solidarity that appears to preclude all change’ (Torrance, 1994: 65) by focusing on the past when ‘there can be no forward progression in time, for the past is continually being revived in the present’ (ibid: 66). Similarly, some

²⁰⁶ References are made to the Han Dynasty, 206BC – 220AD. Ritual, rites, and ceremony are integral to the political, social, and cultural fabric of society. *The Sacred Books of China* is volume 27 of a total of fifty volumes in the series: *Sacred Books of the East*. In *Sacred Books of China*, first published in 1885, the symbol Lî ‘is the symbol for a “vessel used in performing rites” ... and the addition of *khîh* to complete the character, whensoever it was made, shows that the makers considered the rites in which the vessel was used to possess in the first place a religious import’ (Muller, 2001: 10). Ceremonial and ritual are intermingled in the text. Propriety is paramount for conduct and respect for social stability.

²⁰⁷ It has been suggested that the Aztecs dealt with the discrepant requirements of initiating boys either to the *calmecac*, (a temple or monastery), or the *telpochcalli* (warrior training), as a way to resolve contradictory social demands (Soustelle, 2002).

Western approaches to therapy focus on understanding ways the past is ‘revived in the present’ as a way to enabling change.

Therapeutic ritual must incorporate the possibility of change, so that ‘the stability promoted by ritual is not an inertial inheritance but a continually renewed endeavour’ (ibid: 70). An excess of change in the system results in systemic runaway and entropy (Bateson, 1973; Beer, 1974) while excess stability risks negentropy. Rituals that affirm are important for continuity while rituals that structure change (Gennep, 1960; Turner, 1969) support transformation in a framework of stability.

Case vignette: Jenny.

This example incorporates the main elements of a therapeutic ritual. It is private and unconnected to a wider social community, thereby differing from rituals in traditional societies. Although a single cathartic act, it is one that Jenny could repeat.

Jenny’s partner had betrayed her. After having a child by her he began an affair with a married woman with whom he subsequently had two children. In her late forties, Jenny saw little hope of more children. Her hurt was palpable. There came a point in therapy when I asked her to write her story about the life of the relationship as ‘an obituary’. She should handwrite the ‘obituary’. My intention was for her to create a more direct, visceral relationship with her account. She should determine how long it should be thereby putting her in charge of part of the process. Jenny did this, and as suggested brought it to the next session. I asked her to read it aloud, taking her time. This concretised the anger and whole range of feelings she had previously struggled to articulate.

As an ‘assignment’ following this session, I asked her to find a time when she could go somewhere isolated but safe with her ‘obituary’. She should read it aloud as many times as she needed until she no longer felt dominated by her pain in its inchoate rawness. She was then to burn it, ashes to ashes, leaving it behind

physically and emotionally with all the primitive socio-cultural associations of burial and finality. I had instructed her to find somewhere beyond the boundary of the city as part of the ordeal, to heighten her commitment to the process and sense of completion. This was to be a ‘sacred’ space outside the ‘profane’, physically beyond the city limits; physically beyond her known. She had a structure, specific directions, and the message that this was for her healing.²⁰⁸

At the next session I asked Jenny to describe her actions and feelings. This was to ‘fix the moment’, reinforce her sense of control and celebrate her achievement. She recounted the whole process as I had directed in considerable detail. She paused, and said: “Then I took my jeans down and peed on the ashes”.

This is a complex ritual with a number of elements. It was a;

- transformative ritual of letting go,
- symbolic burial initiating the journey from victim to survivor, incorporating aspects of ‘redemption’ and purification as she cleansed herself of feelings of toxic self-loathing, anger, and impotence,
- deeply primitive act of annihilation.

All the basics of ritual are here. By standing over and urinating on the ashes of the relationship, in its physical symbolism she used the potency of her body fluids for total obliteration. In the annihilation we see an ending of time, temporally fixing the event and that painful part of her history.

The consequences of her ex-partner’s infidelity continued to live with her but a more self-assured Jenny began to emerge. Subsequently, after many consultations and ordeals with today’s ‘shamans’, she gave birth to another child. The ‘obituary’ was a ‘one-off’ ritual. It took planning, had powerful performative elements of privately writing it, publically reading it aloud in therapy, repeatedly

²⁰⁸ If she had had a close friend or confidante who knew her situation, I might have asked that this person accompany her to ‘bear witness’ and heighten further the performative element of her ‘ordeal’.

reading it aloud in a chosen place, annihilating it and, as if fixing it in a particular moment, recounting the whole event subsequently to the therapist. The ‘reporting back’ with its own rhythm was important, as she symbolically replayed the physical event of reclaiming control in her life.

A vocabulary.

In the context of Jenny’s experience, I provide definitions of the main concepts to help clarify ideas in the context of ritual.

Ritual:

There is no consensus on what is generally meant by ‘ritual’, for ‘ritual is a form sui generis that shares many of its compositional elements with other areas of human activity yet is not reducible to these elements’ (Kapferer, 2004: 35). The following quotation captures important aspects in relation to healing and change:

‘Ritual ... functions on a psychological level. It provides a coherent framework for the disorienting aspects of human life, such as illness, danger, and life changes. It gives people a sense of control over disturbing and threatening events; an exorcism may not actually drive out any spirits, but it can drive out the sense of helplessness and despair associated with an illness’ (Barfield, 1997: 411).

The most important outcome of ritual may be to acquire the resources to survive or endure even though the chaotic cannot be changed or fully comprehended as Turner suggests. ‘Rituals are devised to call a halt to crisis, redress wrongs, air grievances, find remedies that enable the group to continue’ (Turner, 1982a: 232).

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A particularly clear definition, quoted in Bowie (2006: 140), captures the essence: ‘Ritual defined in the most general and basic terms is a performance planned or

²⁰⁹ In the film *A Beautiful Mind*, John Nash (played by Russell Crowe) is credited with replying whether the people who haunted him in his psychotic episodes have gone: “No, but I have learned to live with them”. This change allows him to lead some semblance of normal life.

²¹⁰ A flavour of this is captured in Brookner’s novel, *Providence*. Kitty has just seen a fortune-teller: ‘“She’s good,” said Kitty, although she could no longer remember precisely what she had been told... She had gathered no information but some kind of shift in her consciousness had taken place.’ (Brookner, 1983: 75).

improvised, that effects a transition from everyday life to an alternative context within which the everyday is transformed' (Alexander, 1997: 139).²¹¹ This allows for the planned and spontaneous to occur and for the active performative aspect. In Jenny's example this climaxed when she peed on the ashes. It distinguishes between transitional change and the qualitative nature of transformative change. Jenny experienced the process as transformative, although nothing had changed in her personal circumstances. And, while not precluding religion or magic, this definition does not make either a requirement, (cf., Turner, 1967: 19).

Ceremony:

Ceremony and ritual are sometimes confused. 'Ceremony *indicates*, ritual *transforms*, and transformation occurs most radically in the ritual "pupation" of liminal seclusion – at least in life-crisis rituals' (Turner, 1982b: 80-81). Or, 'ritual is transformative, ceremony confirmatory' (Turner, 1967: 95). Ceremony is associated with the affirmative external, contrasting with the 'liminal seclusion' of the internal space of ritual.

Rappaport (1999: 38-39) referencing Firth²¹² emphasises the social and symbolic quality of ceremony, as '... it seems to me appropriate to refer to the secular as 'ceremonial' and to reserve the term 'ritual' for more full-blooded activities which, in the view of the participants at least, owe their efficacy to connection with a mystical power' (Lewis, 1976: 130). Therapists are more likely to think in terms of a *non-conscious* or *sub-liminal* than mystical.

Myth:

²¹¹ Alexander, B. C., (1997) Ritual and current studies of ritual: overview. In: Glazier, D., (Ed) *Anthropology of Religion: A Handbook*. Westport, CT. Greenwood Press. 139-160.

²¹² Ceremonial I regard as a species of ritual in which, however, the emphasis is more upon symbolic acknowledgment and demonstration of a social situation than upon efficacy of the procedure in modifying that situation. Whereas other ritual procedures are believed to have a validity of their own, ceremonial procedures, while formal in character, are not believed in themselves to sustain the situation or effect change in it' (Firth, R., 1967 *Tikopia Ritual and Belief*. Boston. Beacon Press. 13).

Myths provide an opening to understanding societies and the foundational beliefs that legitimate religious, social, and legal practices. Myths (Greek *muthos*, ‘story’) have ‘truth-value’ for the people concerned. Peacock quotes Malinowski: ‘Myth ... safeguards and enforces morality; it vouches for the efficiency of ritual and contains practical rules for the guidance of men. Myth is thus a vital ingredient of human civilization’ ²¹³ (Peacock, 1975: 41-42). Myths provide authority from the past for present activity almost contracting the time interval between then and now. Leach links myth, ritual, and symbol: ‘(M)yth is a charter for ritual performance and ... we can only understand what is being symbolised in the ritual if we take note of what is being ‘said’ in the mythology’ (Leach, 1972: 240). Myths legitimise action with reference to events of a previous time, or ‘beyond time’, and may be re-edited to fit current circumstances, just as ‘myths of course do change in their retelling’ (Hobart, 2003: 125) to reflect a changing world. They are stories with a purpose and ‘must say a great deal briefly and effectively’ (Lewis, 1976: 128) embodying important truths without being factually true. ²¹⁴ Lifton and Olson speak of mythic time where ‘(o)ne feels oneself alive in a “continuous present” in which the ancient past and distant future are contained,’ (Lifton and Olson, 2004: 38). ²¹⁵

Symbol:

‘The symbol is the smallest unit of ritual which still retains the specific properties of ritual behaviour; it is the ultimate unit of specific structure in a ritual context’ (Turner, 1967: 19). The relationship between therapist and patient in psychodynamic practice is symbolic, substituting *for* people, relationships, or

²¹³ Malinowski, B., (1954) *Magic, Science, and Religion, and Other Essays*. Garden City, New York. Anchor Books. 101.

²¹⁴ ‘A myth is a fiction which gives us the facts. The ‘facts’ that a myth conveys are not those of the world of evidence but the essential data of human nature. Myths chronicle the restlessness of humankind, its fascination with transgression, its curiosity and self-blindness’ (Vickers, 2008).

²¹⁵ A historical example brings myth and ritual together in a recursive loop. The Aztecs believed that in the beginning ‘the most important act ... was clearly the birth of the sun: and this sun was born from sacrifice and blood’ (Soustelle, 2002: 96). Their creation myth required daily blood sacrifice to ensure the sun rose every morning. ‘Blood was necessary to save this world and the men in it: the victim was no longer an enemy who was to be killed but a messenger arrayed in a dignity that was almost divine, who was sent to the gods’ (ibid: 99). The sun’s daily rising validated the ‘muthos’ requiring ritual blood sacrifice.

situations, past or present, in the patient's life. Therapeutic transference (chapter 2) is a symbolic transposing of other people, relationships, time(s), and place(s). Symbols have different meanings in particular times and contexts. Simply shaking hands in a greeting ritual has many possible symbolic meanings, as with Remus and Andreea. How these 'patterns of the mind' (Leach, 1976: 17) develop is complex and beyond the scope of this research.

Performance.

There is a performative aspect to ritual, whether in the temple, the bush, or psychotherapy room. Ritual is: '*... the performance of more or less invariant sequences of formal acts and utterances not entirely encoded by the performers*' (Rappaport, 1999: 24). None of these are unique to ritual, as for example Kapferer describes performance in ritual (and art) as 'the universalizing of the particular and the particularizing of the universal' (Kapferer, 1986: 191). In psychotherapy, performance lies in the drama of timing interventions, managing time, and the nature of the psychotherapist / patient relationship. In healing, '(t)he emphasis is on ritual as performance that transforms situations and affects the individual's invisible realm in order to tap forces that can either recreate or destroy the realities of patients concerned' (Hobart, 2003: 2-3).

The power of the invisible is important, whether as; spirits in a religious context, an internalised psychology, or a founding figure in therapy. The quality of the patient/healer relationship and the place of performance in healing, vary in different approaches. Performance has its own transformative dynamic, rendering ritual potentially effective even if healer and patient do not share beliefs about healing or spiritual powers (Stoller, 2009).

Ritual and time: an overview.

Émile Durkheim, (1858-1917).

Ritual practices reflect the eternal and the timeless. Superficially, there is nothing extraordinary in ritual activity. However, '(a) thing is consecrated when it is put into contact with a source of religious energy ... Understood in this way, religious

technique seems to be a kind of mystic mechanism. ... (T)he ideal society, then, presupposes religion rather than explains it' (Durkheim, 2001: 314-315).

Ritual interrupts and disrupts the mundane pattern. It draws participant and observer from a cognitive logical environment into a symbolic experience of the world. For Durkheim, '(t)he very impracticality of the ritual arrangements underlines the rite's symbolic and sacred character' (Peacock, 1975: 15). Rituals mark time in some way, for 'rituals are ways of acting that are generated only within assembled groups and are meant to stimulate and sustain or recreate certain mental states in these groups' (Durkheim, 2001: 11). Similarly, psychotherapy requires a change in 'mental states' if a different kind of change is to occur.

We have noted an acknowledgment in some philosophical descriptions that in moments of arousal everyday experience of time changes. Ritual involves an intended altering of emotional arousal to 'recreate certain mental states' that involve a different kind of time. I believe this often resembles a patient's experience in therapy.

Henri Hubert (1872-1927).

Hubert describes the manifestation of time through the 'sacred' in ritual (Hubert 1999)²¹⁶. His interest in time's representation in religion and magic drew him to think about kinds of time and space that differ from the everyday. Since all ritual is located in space and time, 'it is necessary to ask how the theoretical separation of time and space can be reconciled with the infinitude and immutability of the "sacred", in which rites and mythical events take place too' (Hubert, 1999: 43). If time differs qualitatively in religious or magical contexts, this may be true in psychotherapy. Time is at the centre of his thinking, for '(t)he examination of any ritual will suffice to show that rites vary by reason of the circumstances of time, ...' (ibid: 45).

²¹⁶ Originally published as *Étude sommaire de la représentation du temps dans la religion et la magie*, (1905), *Annuaire de l'École Pratique des Hautes Études, Section des Sciences Religieuses*. Paris. 1-39.

Hubert considers the nature of calendrical time and rites: '(T)he calendar ... originates not in the idea of a purely quantitative time, but in that of qualitative time, composed of discontinuous parts, heterogeneous and ceaselessly revolving' (ibid: 81). Calendars have never been fixed entities. Their history over some 5000 years is the history of humankind and its struggle with time (Duncan, 1999). They chart 'the return of events', and mark linear points 'to entail the celebration of certain rites'. They proclaim pattern, encode qualitative and quantitative meaning, provide rhythm and predictability (the recurring rhythm of religious events), and engender a longitudinal experience of past, present, and future, as McTaggart's (1927) *A* and / or *B* series, according to how one perceives calendrical sequences.

Bronislaw Malinowski, (1884-1942).

In *Coral Gardens and their Magic* (Volume 2) we discover a minute study of language. Language 'differs from other aspects of culture in one respect: there is much more of the conventional or arbitrary element in the symbolism of speech than in any other aspect of manual or bodily behaviour' (Malinowski, 2008: vii). Malinowski is concerned 'to distinguish between the names of a rite, a spell, or a whole inaugural ceremony' (ibid: 156) and finds 'linguistically interesting' (ibid: 160) the names of the rites that he describes.

He 'contrasted initiation rites, which are religious and aesthetic because their function is inculcation and maintenance of collective traditions valued for themselves, with childbirth rites which are magical because they are directed to the practical aim of safe child delivery' (Tambiah, 1990: 69-70). Malinowski saw magic springing 'from the idea of a certain mystic, impersonal power' (Malinowski, 1926: 23) composed of 'a body of purely practical acts, performed as a means to an end' (ibid: 66). Emotion in ritual implies deep involvement and is as important as performance for a desired outcome.

Victor Turner (1920-1983).

Turner believed that ‘very often decisions to perform ritual were connected with crises in the social life of villages’ (Turner, 1995: 10). He supports the Durkheimian view that ritual establishes meaning and maintains social structure and that the designated person or caste that initiates or employs ritual in healing occupies the ground at the edges of those structures. Like the shaman in ritual and the ritual of healing, the therapist crosses boundaries forbidden to others to breach, enabling the patient to return safely from the sublime to the mundane.²¹⁷ To practise ritual a person must be socially sanctioned to straddle the worlds of spirit, mind, and after-life, as the following Yolmo example highlights. Turner’s ideas on ritual are discussed again later.

Robert Desjarlais.

Desjarlais describes the initiation to become a Yolmo shaman healer in Helambu, north-central Nepal. His skills require an ability to ‘tour “with his heartmind” (with his *sems*)’ (Desjarlais, 1996: 147) the shrines and religious areas of the country. ‘Heartmind’ encompasses the whole being. A Yolmo heals by relying on symbols and metaphoric language as well as what the scholar terms ‘imagistic poem’ (ibid: 151). Healing ritual is a phenomenological experience. The shaman seeks bodily changes in the patient, thus emphasising the importance of sense perceptions and visceral engagement.

Only after change in the individual’s ‘heartmind’ can a person become aware of being healed. While there is a symbolic element in the journey from disintegration to reintegration in healing, rites only provide the necessary structure; ‘if the rite is to be considered successful, it must change how a person feels, (and) since the spirit is an intangible force, a villager can only determine its

²¹⁷ Turner describes the role of the healer in the Ndembu tribe. ‘The doctor mediates between the sexes, in that he treats both. The Ndembu doctor, in fact, has many attributes that are regarded as feminine in Ndembu culture; ... he handles women and talks to them about private matters in a way that would be impermissible to men in secular roles’ (Turner, 1995: 38). Turner continues: ‘One term for “doctor”, *chimbanda*, is said by Ndembu themselves to be connected with the term *mumbanda*, standing for “woman” ‘ (ibid: 38).

return by interpreting how body and ‘heartmind’ feel in the hours and days after a rite’ (ibid: 151).

There is thus an important time element between performance of the rite and phenomenological evidence of healing. It is a time without active intervention, pregnant with possibility, that allows change to occur. A change in world-view without physiological change would not be effective. Change is measured over time, and echoes an increasingly required behavioural emphasis on outcome in a Western context (Layard, 2006).

Roy Rappaport (1926-1997).

Rappaport examines the *quality* of time in ritual. He suggests that demarcation in ritual as an interval between two other kinds of time periods is more important than duration. ‘The distinction between intervals and the periods they separate corresponds to a frequently remarked distinction between two “kinds of time” ... (I)ntervalic “time” is said to be different’ (Rappaport, 1999: 181). Rappaport refers to sacred time as time out of time where the everyday is transformed. He pursues the question of change of consciousness in ritual states. ‘Metaphoric representation, primary process thought, and strong emotion become increasingly important as the domination of ... simple everyday rationality, recedes’ (ibid: 219).

As awareness of mundane time changes, so does the individual’s experience of being. During ritual the tempo of social life is replaced by a different pace, which reinforces a sense of being ‘out of time’. Rappaport suggests how computer binary logic computations of 0 or 1, can help understand those interstices as the ignored space of change. There is between each operation a ‘time’ that is different; neither 0 nor 1.²¹⁸

‘The intervals during which the values of variables are actually changing are *outside* the times during which the computer’s operant logic prevails and are ignored in its computations. ... (T)he values of the variables that *do* enter into the computations are *contingent* upon those changes. ... The

²¹⁸ 0 - (no longer 0: not yet 1) - 1

transition from 0 to 1 taking place *in the ignored interval* is not a digital but an *analogic* process. The processes occurring in the intervals are *literally* governed by a logic *other* than that in terms of which computation proceeds' (Rappaport, 1999: 216-217).

In the Yolmo change that occurs *after* a rite is an 'analogic process', in 'a logic *other* than in the terms of' the rite. We can draw a parallel between binary computer logic with 'mundane' conscious time and 'sublime' time in ritual where 'the quality of experience dominating many rituals stand in profound contrast to those of ordinary time' (ibid: 218). In the in-between moment time stands suspended, which suggests an alternative time reality. The digital and countable possess 'hard edges' while the analogic possesses 'soft edges'. Rappaport's computer language analogy re-introduces the transitional space of the instant '*in the ignored interval*' where change occurs outside conscious awareness. This recalls *Parmenides*; '... when it changes, it would be in no time at all, ...' (Plato, 1997: 388). Some would go further and portray the effects on time stemming from positive activity. '(M)ajor rituals ... aspire to annihilate measurable temporality ... to redress the failures of the present "time" ... and to restore the primaveral past as paradigmatic reality' (Turner. 1982a: 228). I suggest that in effective ritual, and 'the ritual of psychotherapy', there exists a similar instant of potentiality actively to crystallise as change that temporarily creates a different temporality. The problem is momentarily *detached* from the moment before but is not yet *attached* to the instant after.

This resembles a transcendent experience of going beyond, or being 'out of time' in psychotherapy, recalling Heidegger's exstasis (chapter 4). The patient enters symbolic reality where, in effective therapy, 'a patient feels a widening of the space in which he lives. It is as if the narrow images through which he has seen reality have been reorganised so that the past appears more coherent and the future more inviting' (Lifton and Olson, 2004: 38). Some of these phenomena are evident in a ritual I developed to end Jane's persistent nightmares.

Jane – a ritual of trauma.

Jane's life-long nightmares presented a seemingly intractable problem. As nightmares occur during sleep the individual cannot consciously control them. Jane would wake two or three times each night, usually at the bottom of the stairs. For almost fifty years, (then fifty-three,) she could not recall having more than four hours' continuous sleep. Relaxation strategies and new routines had partially worked, but the nightmares continued. At this point I proposed a counter-intuitive ritual with the following structure:

- Early each evening Jane was to plan the worst nightmare she expected that night, based either on the previous night or the one she most feared.
- She was then to write it down in detail, in stages if that helped.
- She was to read it aloud on her own as many times as necessary, as the 'performative' part, in the spare room, - a prescribed place – until she no longer felt panicky hearing her own voice speaking it.
- She was then to leave the room (physically leaving the event behind) and do something pleasurable ('performative') elsewhere in her house.
- Finally, after a relaxing bath she was to go to bed at least an hour earlier than usual, thus changing the time of her normal routine.

This ritual had a dramatic effect. For the first time in memory she slept seven hours without interruption. Subsequent nights were the same. The effect was 'transformative'; a change from nightmare-full to nightmare-empty nights.

The ordeal element of actively calling up the nightmare she most feared as a necessary part of healing was important (Jenkins, 1980).²¹⁹ To be willing to carry it out, night after night, meant committing fully to the process. The time, place, structure, and 'performance' were clearly defined, and the goal was clear. As the nightmares ceased dramatically, Jane was faced with a further dilemma.

²¹⁹ As Jane knew she had to approach the ritual each evening, she found herself holding this 'in mind' more and more as the evening approached. Paradoxically, this *increased* the likelihood that she would *not* have a nightmare.

She could not plan the night's nightmare from the previous one and so had to imagine fearing a nightmare that was based on experience that became increasingly remote. This became her further and further past (McTaggart, 1927). The final stage came when Jane 'forgot' to carry out the ritual and she did not have a nightmare. She then tailed off the 'formal ritual' at her own pace as she felt less need of it.²²⁰

The temporal mix is important. Jane;

- consciously and intentionally mentalised an unconscious process happening in the immediate *future*,
- wrote it down *now* in the *present*. She then
- read the *future* expected nightmare or the one she most feared aloud, repeatedly if she needed to, creating its own rhythm and bringing it under her *present* control
- in the *present* to relegate it to the *past* of a *future* that putatively was yet to happen as a *future-now-present*.

It appears that in this *later future* Jane does not experience her nightmare as being out of her control since it is *now* in the *past* under her conscious will. Ultimately, she establishes a new pattern in the *present* that survives into the *future* and confirms the changes in her *present* relationship with her traumatised and traumatising *past*. Jane describes some of her experience in interview.

H.J. "What were your experiences of time and place when carrying out the ritual. What typically used to happen?"

Jane. "It felt like you were taking the control out of my nightmares. I thought, 'I'm going to concentrate on this'. In a way it did go against common sense. I suppose it worked because I could plan and write it

²²⁰ At the start following nightmare-free nights, Jane stopped the nightly ritual without consulting me, and the nightmares returned immediately, to her considerable distress. It was not clear whether the ordeal of carrying out the ritual was too much, or that she could not hold in her mind the connection between ritual and cessation. Formally reinstating the ritual had the immediate desired effect.

down so that I was in control of it, and then if it happened, it was something I'd planned, and if it didn't, then it was a result. It was a win-win situation. If I can sit down and plan it out, it can't be that dangerous."

H.J. "From a time perspective, what would happen?"

Jane. "At the time of doing it, I'd sometimes enter a different time and space, and there were times when I'd flit between now and the past, and it would make time seem longer. When you go back into the past, in time, you seem to lose track of that, whole great big chunks, and it can seem like hours and hours. And when I came back to reality, I'd be kind of confused. I would have music on and I'd come back and it was the same music, and it was like, 'How did that happen?' And then I'd carry on, and sometimes flip back again, and each time it was not quite so bad. It probably helped because by then I'd done it, and so I didn't need to go back and replay it in my sleep. If it happened again, it was never so bad."

Jane indicates my go-between role of crossing *limen*, wresting control of her nightmares, and giving it to her. This suggests a powerful positive identification with me and trust of the therapeutic process. It meant that in therapy there was a 'different kind of time' to her everyday (mundane) time where nightmares had dominated. Her descriptions of how time changed for her in therapy are powerful. She describes losing 'track of time'. I suggest that for this to occur there was simultaneously another kind of (sublime) time that was not subject to the same constraints of her mundane time. The rhythm of repeated experiences of being safe enough in the containing structure of therapy contributed to her healing, where slowly she could bring order to the moment.

After the first interview with Jane about her experiences in therapy I failed to warn that discussing them might resurrect the old terrors. Realising this, I emailed her my concern. She replied:

25th July 2010

‘Dear Hugh

It was good to see you.

I did have the dream on Friday night, it came as a nasty surprise, but on reflection, I should not have been surprised. Last night I went back to the ritual, and all was ok again, phew.

In a way our meeting and the dream being a one-night stand, was a confirmation of the improvements made.’

Fortuitously my error confirmed to her how much she had changed and reinforced the enduring power of this ritual. Despite her abuse and terror, there was sometimes a playful quality to confronting these issues with a dark humour. Humour can momentarily release the person from present pain into a different time and place reality. Humour was especially important in her healing, to which there are many ‘post-scripts’.²²¹

While the ritual ‘muddled up’ time by dis-locating the future nightmare, there may have been another temporal effect. Ritual creates ‘a slowing down of the tempo of everyday life and a holding in abeyance or suspension some of the ritual qualities of lived reality’ (Kapferer, 2004: 48). Kapferer argues that in the repetitive dynamic characteristic of much ritual we find ‘the radical slowing down’ which the participant experiences as a different time reality. Jane internalised the ritual and with it a different tempo of her lived reality. The ‘slowing down’ creates temporal space where it is possible to establish or re-establish control.

²²¹ A ‘post-script’:

In October 2008, four and a half years after her parents were sentenced, her mother became terminally ill and was moved from prison to hospital. She asked to see Jane and she visited her. She told Jane that she was sorry for all that she had done to her throughout her life and asked her forgiveness. Jane said she forgave her. Her mother died two days later. The (*ritual*) act of forgiveness was an important indication of her personal healing.

A lay reader in the Church of England, Jane decided to officiate at her mother’s funeral: the final *rite of passage*. She later said that it was a surreal experience, but one that she was pleased she was able to do, for herself, and her self-perception as a human-being that was not ‘bad’ or ‘evil’.

Gregory Bateson (1904-1980): Play, frames, and ritual.

I have mentioned Jane's ability to be 'playful'. Play and playfulness have been recognised throughout history as fulfilling important social functions, whether to draw attention to the unspeakable or to facilitate coping with the unbearable. In similar vein to ritual Bateson describes play as '(t)hese actions in which we now engage do not denote what those actions *for which they stand* would denote' (Bateson, 1955: 152). Everyday action, time, and meaning, are suspended within this frame as participants enter the world of the sublime. Within the rules of the 'game' as in ritual, the everyday is re-framed 'in which the discrimination is drawn, but not completely, between denotative action and that which is to be denoted' (ibid: 154).

Much that relates to ritual and shamans applies to the psychotherapist's 'outsiderhood' role. Like the fool or the clown in the courts of kings and emperors the therapist breaches boundaries, voices the forbidden, and often employs humour although, as the Fool in *King Lear* says, it is not without its costs:

'I marvel what kin thou and thy daughters are. They'll have me whipped for speaking true; thou'lt have me whipped for lying; and sometimes I am whipped for holding my peace. I had rather be any kind o' thing than a Fool, and yet I would not be thee, Nuncle; ...' (Shakespeare 1963: Act I, sc. iv. 66-67).



Plate 8.2. The Fool, Shakespeare's King Lear by Lady Eleanor Cleavelly.

The clown (Plate 8.2) in his serious playfulness communicates simultaneously at many levels. He confronts the impossible and speaks the unacceptable; he lives on the edge, necessary for the system and an uncomfortable reminder of mankind's frailty. Handelman notes how '(c)lownlike figures are well-suited to perform as reflexive agents, for they are sited at the boundary of occasions' (Handelman, 1998: 240), in an in-between space.²²² The 'status-less-in-betweenness-status' of the Fool is dynamic and fraught with tension yet provides a clear example of 'the power of the between' (Stoller, 2009).

'(H)uman verbal communication can operate and always does operate at many contrasting levels of abstraction' (Bateson, 1955: 150). With multiple levels of communication Lear's Fool is safe to be outrageous and not lose his head, because all is framed; 'as said by the Fool'. Equally, the statement "this is ritual", "this is play", or "this is psychotherapy", *frames* an event for its duration. Like the Fool the shaman, priest, or therapist, holds and constantly reinforces the

²²² The etymology of 'clown' and 'fool' is something or someone not finished or complete, a being in-between, on the edge. **Clown:** North Frisian, *klünj*, 'clod, lump and the like', and Low German, *cloine*, *cloyne*. **Fool:** Medieval English, *fōl*, and Old French, *fol*, 'mad', but also from the Latin, *folli-s*, 'bellows, inflated ball, money-bag, and later empty-headed person, 'windbag' (*The Oxford Dictionary of English Etymology*, 1966, Oxford. OUP).

frame. *Frame* is important as a metaphor for defining boundaries of who is out or in. Below I have added *ritual* to underline this point.

‘The resemblance between the process of therapy and the phenomenon of play/*ritual* is, in fact, profound. Both occur within a delimited psychological frame, a special temporal bounding of a set of interactive messages. In both play/*ritual* and therapy, the messages have a peculiar relationship to a more concrete or basic reality. Just as the pseudocombat of play/*ritual* is not real combat, so also the pseudolove and pseudohate of therapy are not real love or hate’ (Bateson, 1955: 164).²²³

Bateson’s description of meta-communication and meta-language provides a framework to understand ‘the about’ of an activity. These processes are ‘liminal, in the sense that they are suspensions of daily reality’ (Turner, 1984: 22) of time and place. Therapy deals with ‘about’. Boundaries legitimise and ensure the safety of those participating in the activity. Therapy becomes a meta-pattern for the ‘frames, the metaphorical borders within which the facts of experience can be viewed, reflected upon, and evaluated’ (ibid: 22).

I suggested that clarity of time and place structures allowed Jane to risk herself in therapy with her constantly shifting inner boundaries. The effectiveness and lability of ritual lie perhaps in the ‘disjunction of the world of rite from its larger context’ (Kapferer, 2004: 46). Jane’s ritual of *pre*-enacting her nightmares is such an example. There was a labile feel to the process that the map-territory distinction²²⁴ would collapse, and the play of ritual would re-become the terror of nightmare; the abuse itself. Her willingness to carry this out eventually changed her relationship with her past and created stronger past-present time boundaries.

²²³ Bateson cites the Andaman Islanders’ peace ritual. Each side has permission to strike the other, which carries the danger that ritual blows are mistaken for the real blows of war. ‘This ... illustrates the labile nature of the frame ‘This is play’, or ‘This is ritual’. The discrimination between map and territory is always liable to break down, and the ritual blows of peace-making are always liable to be mistaken for the ‘real’ blows of combat’ (Bateson, 1955: 155).

Schechner reports a similar event of ritual invasion re-enactment of one village group by another in the Eastern Highlands of Papua New Guinea. ‘The performance both symbolised and actualised the change in status. ... Dancing and giving-taking the meat more than symbolised the changed relationship between hosts and invaders, it was the change itself’ (Schechner, 2003: 127).

²²⁴ Map-territory distinction: referenced by Bateson (1955) to Korzybski, A., (1941) *Science and Sanity*. New York. Science Press.

Ritual is real *and* is an ‘as if’ time and place. The ‘ordeal’ is real, is what it is, *and* symbolises something other. The ‘frames’ of rituals for Jenny and Jane include designations of time, place, procedure, and process, only possible in an intense relationship with meaning beyond the mundane. ‘Frames’ can of course be confusing, ambiguous, or contradictory (Plate 8.3).

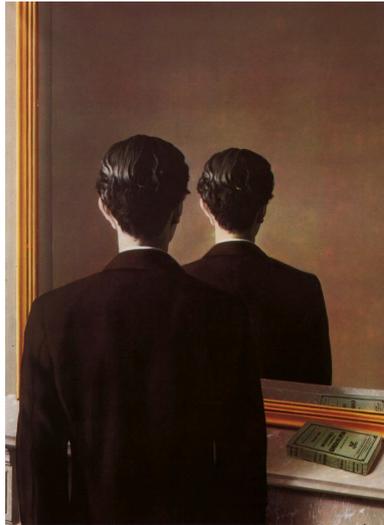


Plate 8.3. René Magritte (1898-1967). *La Reproduction Interdite* (Not to be Reproduced) (1937). Museum Boijmans Van Benningen, Rotterdam. (Bailey, 2004.)²²⁵

In *La Reproduction Interdite* Magritte’s figure is seen from behind. The figure is looking into the mirror but inexplicably sees himself from behind. We recognise it as the reflection but not the reflection we expect. The title employs a different method of (meta-)communication. Does it intend the image, its content, or that *this kind of reproduction* is forbidden? Frames of time in ritual and psychotherapy often need to be similarly ambiguous, for such confusing structures facilitate spontaneity. Work with Jane underlines some of these points. At different stages of her treatment I created rituals, often ones she could repeat in specific situations. The following examples demonstrate the nature of changing

²²⁵ Part of the ‘surreal’ effect of Magritte’s work is his paintings, at first encounter are ‘of a traditional oil painting, but only the appearance ... in (a) meticulously realistic technique, associations that are impossible in real life’ (Gimferrer, 1987:6-7). This gives a dream quality to his work and sense of timelessness.

frames, playfulness, the performative, altering experience of time, and the therapist's directiveness.

Case vignette: Jane: rituals, frames, and time.

It had become evident Jane needed a resource to draw on when she began to panic or dissociate. This became her 'BMW' (Breathe-Mantra-Write) ritual. It had simplicity at its core.

When she began to feel distressed, Jane was to follow three steps:

- to *breathe* slowly and deeply three times;
- then, to repeat to herself aloud her chosen *mantra*: "The time is now; I'm in control";
- to *write* down in a note-book, if possible, how she was feeling for as long as she needed until she felt calmer. Later, she was to read it aloud to herself. She could then destroy the pages if she chose.

The slowed-down breathing helped calm her. It calmed her physiological arousal; it slowed her sense of time; it made her mantra possible and helped her focus on the present - "The time is now"; while reinforcing her sense of agency - "I'm in control". In this different kind of time it changed her (experience of) time. Writing enabled her to externalise feelings of panic and dissociation, giving them a different kind of (survivable) reality outside her body. They were no longer 'boundaried' in her head. Her first, and most difficult step was to recognise her approaching dissociative state. This requires the ability to self-reflect rather than slip into a flight-fight mode created by her amygdala and brain stem functioning (Damasio, 2000a, b; Gerhardt, 2004; Schore, 2003a; Solms and Turnbull, 2002). At the point of pre-emptively recognising her rising panic, Jane had already begun the changes that BMW was designed to achieve. Over time she became adept at instigating her BMW without first phoning me in a panic. This helped reinforce her sense of control and began a virtuous cycle. I asked Jane about BMW.²²⁶

²²⁶ Interview on 15th April, 2011.

H.J. “Can you tell me something about the BMW ritual? How did that work for you?”

Jane. “It just calmed everything down. It changed the time when everything was out of control. The breathing slowed me down when it felt like time was running away with me. It was like taking control. And the mantra, ‘the time is now; I’m in control’, helped with this, when it would otherwise have spiralled out of control. The writing was like a confirmation. It was like seeing it from the outside. When things started to go wrong, it would be like it was spiralling faster out of control and it was like multi-tasking, and my brain was trying to multi-task what was happening in the present and the past at the same time. I was trying to stay in control with you, but then at the same time there was a part of my brain that was trying to go through what had happened before. That was the out of control bit. That was the scary bit. It was almost then that I’d realise I was losing control and lose contact with you. By concentrating on what was going wrong, it then pulled me into it further, like going to an eddy, like a whirlpool, sucking you down.”

She indicates how the BMW helped her *not* focus on her panic. It distracted her enough to experience time differently. Similarly, and although not formally introduced as ‘ritual’, over time she allowed me to hold her coat when leaving. Initially, this was terrifying and impossible because there is always a moment (in time) when the person must turn their back, to put an arm in the second sleeve.

H.J. “There was the issue about whether you could let me hold your coat to help you put it on. What happened there?”

Jane. “When I couldn’t let you do that, I thought, like, how difficult can that be? When it happened it was really good. After, I wondered ‘Why did I get myself in a mess’ and the next time it was back to square one. There was a point before when it was totally impossible. Then, like a

binary system it was suddenly OK. You distracted me enough for me to do it, so that I wasn't exactly paying attention, because you got me thinking somewhere else, so I did it without me psyching myself up for it. I was concentrating on what you were talking about and not on what was about to happen. Somehow, for a moment I was not quite there, and then it was done. And it was good."

Jane realises that my structured and carefully timed distraction of her conscious attention placed her momentarily in a different kind of temporal space. When she "was not quite there" in that other time-space she could allow me to hold her coat. Once established as a ritual I did not need to 'distract' and she could own her increasing sense of self and safety. This event took place outside 'therapy' in the waiting room between the consulting room and the outside world. This is also a physical in-between space, representing leaving therapy and re-entering the outside world. Simple though it was, I planned it as a performative event. There was an element of 'intentional ordeal'. I never formally defined this as 'ritual' or 'therapy' thus intentionally making it more intangible. Part of the distracting involved my active playfulness, thus changing the frame. The everyday act of helping Jane with her coat becomes 'sacred' in this specific context. As the 'ritual' became 'normal' it was more 'ceremony' celebrating a new *status quo*. Therapy often occurs as much in the accumulation of informal small events as in more formal conscious interventions.

Rites of passage: transformation and time.

'Rites of passage' describes a particular ritual structure and, I suggest, holds particular relevance for psychotherapy. 'Rites of passage occur when people cross boundaries of space, of time, or of social status. ... Since rites of passage occur at the boundaries of cultural categories, they provide a valuable key to a society's social and temporal classifications' (Barfield, 1997: 410). The nature of time is central. Boundaries, or Bateson's 'frames', are spiritual, imaginary, existential, psychological, and emotional, as much as physical. We will see how

psychoanalysis is strongly ritualised with many characteristics of an extended rite of passage.

Arnold van Gennep (1873-1957) published *Rites de Passage* in 1908, and Victor Turner greatly developed his ideas.²²⁷ Both scholars emphasise the initiates' experience of the quality of time changing. What therefore is the 'fit' (Dell, 1982) for rites of passage as structure and process for psychotherapy?

Gennep, (1960) described three phases: *séparation* (separation); *marge* (transition) also the liminal phase; and *agrégation* (incorporation).²²⁸ Rites facilitate the passage to the 'sacred' ('sublime' or 'ideal') and back to the 'profane' (mundane). 'The sacred is not an absolute value but one relative to the situation. The person who enters a status at variance with the one previously held becomes "sacred" to the others who remain in the profane state' (Kimball, 1960: viii-ix). DiNichola writing of language and therapy 'at the nexus of culture and family' speaks of the patient who comes for help. 'People in this situation are liminal: at a threshold "betwixt and between" the old world they know and the new one they are experiencing. ... (T)his is an ambiguous state' (DiNichola, 1993: 53).

Psychotherapy and rites of passage are intentional activities. The purpose is to bring about irreversible change that some scholars refer to as 'second order change' (Bateson, 1955, 1971; Hoffman, 1985). In the interview, Andreea describes her experience on the morning of her wedding at the threshold of this rite of passage:

²²⁷ Abrahams comments that Gennep's work was 'ignored in the cultural sciences in the main until the post-war generation' (Abrahams, 1995: x). He continues: 'It remained Turner's task, based on van Gennep's recognition of the structural similarities of rites of elevation, initiation, healing, incorporation, and transience, to show how this system operated as a way of marking life process in the experience of the people among whom he had lived and worked' (ibid: xi).

²²⁸ The Anglicism, reagrégation, (Turner, 1966) seems clumsy. In France a university graduate is *agrégé*, that is incorporated or admitted into the world of academe as a rite of passage, representing transformation. 'Re-incorporation' is sometimes used to imply return.

Andreea. “I want to tell you a something. The day we got married, my father took me in the car to a gas station before he took me to the church. And he wasn’t coming back. He was drinking coffee and he was smoking and he was saying, “Yeah, give me a minute”. So I was dressed as the bride, in the car, waiting for my dad to take me to church.”

H.J. “How sad was he at losing his daughter?”

Andreea. “He was sad.”

H.J. “So he was acting out his sadness?”

Andreea. “Yes he was very sad.”

H.J. “His last coffee and his last cigarette with his unmarried daughter, because you were about to become committed to another man.”

Andreea. “He really likes, he really loves Remus, before we got married. He didn’t like him afterwards for one year, one year and a half. Then he liked him again.”

H.J. “But you were no longer his daughter in that way. That’s something about a real change, isn’t it? You can never go home as a single woman.”

Andreea. “Yes, and also I was very active in the church and I realised that I cannot be the same now. I was the pastor’s wife. I was Andreea, the pastor’s wife.”

H.J. “So, we must come back to the wedding. As Andreea the pastor’s wife, you lose something of your identity in a sense.

Andreea. “Yes, I did. My independence, complete independence. Yes.”

H.J. “So, what you’re telling me is that the marriage for you, and maybe for him, meant letting go of certain things, of independence, of doing what you would like when you like.”

Andreea. “Yes. When I was thinking of rituals, I have a brainstorm, which was this exactly, what a ritual marks the end of something, the beginning of something else. You give away and you receive.”

Andreea describes her irreversible change of status, change that affects more than only the couple. There are gains and losses with strong emotions, such as her father’s feelings towards his new son-in-law. In the clinical story of Julian and Natalie the picture is different.

Case vignette: Julian, Natalie, and a 'failed rite of passage'.

Julian and Natalie had known each other for six years and been married eight months. Natalie struggled with Julian's inability to resist his mother's demands for involvement. She recalled in therapy a conversation with her future mother-in-law who had insisted on specific flowers for her son's wedding. She said to her. "I'm telling you this because your son hasn't got the bollocks to tell you himself".

They had gone through the symbolic *separation* in preparing for the wedding day when, wearing 'ritual wedding garments' they entered the church, a public *liminal* or in-between space (Plate 8.4). They made vows to each other, exchanged wedding bands symbolising eternal union, and signed the register, making their vows to God, public promises to each other with witnesses, and the civil contract. On leaving the church, there was a celebratory wedding breakfast to signify *re-entry* into the outside (profane) world, now publically and legally transformed as a married couple.



Plate 8.4. Wedding ceremony. This woodcut emphasises the public nature of the event in front of the priest, representative of a higher authority, witnessed by family and friends.

Despite outward appearance, pre-existing relationships remained unchanged. Natalie deeply missed her family overseas, while Julian seemed neither psychologically nor emotionally married to his wife. Their formal change in status posed a threat. '(T)hese changes may be dangerous, and, at the least, they

are upsetting to the life of the group and the individual. The transitional period is met with rites of passage which can cushion the disturbance' (Kimball, 1960: ix). The marriage ritual had not fully achieved its purpose.

Therapy involved two complementary elements: 'emotional and psychological divorce therapy' in respect of Julian's symbolic 'marriage' to his mother, and a rite of passage to recover the 'failed' transformative purpose of the wedding. A number of simple rituals were developed for Julian to re-enact the emotional and psychological process of dedicating himself anew to the marriage. These included establishing a new relationship with his father to help set boundaries around *his* marriage, as an important step to help Julian redefine his marital relationship with Natalie.

Victor Turner (1920-1983).

Turner (1995) suggests there are two ways to be in relationship, based either on differentiation and hierarchy, or the liminal. My focus is on 'liminality' and its putative value for understanding 'moments out of time' such as Jane describes.

Turner suggests that the liminal occurs in unstructured space.²²⁹ If relationships are based on a structure of socio-politico-religious positions *inter alia*, 'we must regard the period of margin or "liminality" as an interstructural situation' (Turner, 1967: 93). Change between states becomes possible in the 'interstructural' moment. In the shift from one way of being, of quality of relationship or organization to another, 'there has to be ... an interval, however brief, of *margin* or *limen*, when the past is momentarily negated, suspended, or abrogated, and the future has not yet begun, an instant of pure potentiality, when everything, as it were, trembles in the balance' (Turner, 1982b: 44).

In Roman mythology the god Janus exemplifies this moment (Plate 8.5). Representing time with his two faces, Janus saw into the past and the future. He

²²⁹ Liminal from the Latin, *limen*, for threshold, also meaning lintel, entrance, or house (Morwood, 2001).

also symbolises doorways, the *limen* or marginal place between two defined spaces that is neither inside nor outside.



Plate 8.5. Janus: god of gates, doors, doorways, beginnings and endings. (Vatican museums.)

Liminality in ritual describes an in-between state where the ‘the characteristics of the ritual subject (the “passenger”) are ambiguous; he passes through a cultural realm that has few or none of the attributes of the past or coming state.’ (Turner, 1967: 94). This suggests a simple understanding of liminality but nothing of its complexity. ‘It is often the scene and time for the emergence of a society’s deepest values in the form of sacred dramas and objects’ (Turner, 1984: 22). Life-crisis ritual is often hedged around with powerful myth and symbol to ensure socio-cultural continuity at moments of potential threat to stability. A ‘rite of passage’ is a dynamic, active process, whose function is ‘to transform one identity into another’ (Kapferer, 1983: 179). It facilitates an intended move from one state to a newly appropriate one. Male circumcision is a transformatory initiatory rite of passage of physical, social, and symbolic change.²³⁰ Among the Ndembu, the boys’ removal from maternal dependence in the male circumcision rite of passage symbolises ritual death and subsequent association with their ancestors, before

²³⁰ Similarly, the Jewish *Bris Milah* (infant circumcision on the 8th day) is a sign of the covenant reaffirming the bond between God and the Jewish nation for all time.

incorporation into adult male society (c.f., Turner, 1967: 52).²³¹ Therapy is a Western phenomenon for dealing with ‘life crises’ or achieving transformative change in the individual or relationships. Here the mundane and all that was familiar acquire new meaning.

Comments and critique.

While Turner contributes greatly to our understanding of ritual some scholars like Bruce Kapferer have expanded his thinking. Kapferer distinguishes between process and linguistic analyses. He stresses the importance ‘of dynamics to encompass both process or change and statics or stasis’ (Kapferer, 2004: 40) because this ‘moves the understanding of ritual beyond an emphasis on symbolic meaning, reflexivity, and representation’ (ibid: 37). ‘Dynamics’ imply tension, and without tension change, which involves a degree of letting go as Andreea says about marrying, is unlikely to occur or be sustained.

Transition and transformation are often confused in the systemic literature. Colin Turnbull suggests that through performance of ritual, ‘a transformation takes place, not a mere transition, and this has everything to do with our understanding of liminality and I believe, calls for a rethinking of what we mean by that term’ (Turnbull, 1990: 73).²³² Turnbull suggests that Genep and Turner short-change the complex emotionality of the ‘liminal’. Experience in a liminal state is often confusing, disorienting, and emotionally demanding. If we are to comprehend therapy as dynamic, transformative, and visceral, we need to incorporate this perspective.

Liminality is ‘the process of transformation at work. The technique of consciously achieving transformation is the process of entering the liminal state’

²³¹ Traditionally among the Sande in Liberia, initiation lasted months or even years, and ‘until someone was initiated they did not truly exist. ... (A) person was not regarded as having been really born until initiated’ (Butcher, 2011: 203).

²³² In systemic psychotherapy the distinction is made between first order change (a change within existing parameters) and second order change (a change of change). First order change may be thought as more like quantitative change (more or less of the same thing), and second order change as qualitative change.

(Turnbull, 1990: 79). This captures the dynamic of psychotherapy when the rational is subverted in an experiential shift, after which present and future cannot be the same. In this subjective in-between description we enter a more complex world, between the ‘phenomenological experience of time and chronological time’ (Perelberg, 2007: xv). St. Paul’s (liminal) experience, struck from his horse on the road to Damascus between two geographical places, between being persecutor and convert, arguably changed the course of world history.²³³ His transformation phenomenologically was beyond rational explanation.

Rites of passage: psychotherapy.

There is little reference to the liminal in the therapeutic literature. This is the often over-looked space where the patient is free to change in this ‘instant of pure potentiality’ that Plato describes in Parmenides (Plato, 1997).

In many respects psychotherapy is a liminal temporal phenomenon, inhabited by patient and therapist at the margins of society. In the Oedipus myth, Oedipus kills his father at Phokis ‘where three roads meet’ from Daulis, Delphi, and Thebes (Vickers, 2007). It is an ambiguous transitional territory of psychological transformation, choice, and uncertainty, pregnant with potential for confusion. It marked the cataclysmic moment that sealed Oedipus’ predicted ultimate destruction.²³⁴

Therapy involves ordeal, play(fulness) and transformation. The reader could easily replace ‘psychotherapy’ with ‘rite of passage’ in this description:

‘If one could simplify the context of psychotherapy and ways to achieve enlightenment, it could be said a similar paradox occurs ... Within a benevolent framework, ... the suppliant ... undergoes an arduous ordeal which makes it difficult for him to continue in his usual ways. The

²³³ Without Paul’s evangelizing and his letters, which encompass almost every human emotion, it is arguable that Jesus’ story would hardly have survived the immediate generations who followed his crucifixion as a common criminal.

²³⁴ Tali Sharot (2012) makes the point that prediction *causes* future events. Saying that something will happen becomes heavily causative. She draws attention to the fact that we use the same parts of our brain to plan the future as we use for memory. This points to an interesting neurological relationship of past and future, and perhaps to how difficult it is to ‘learn from our mistakes’ rather than repeat them.

response to this paradoxical situation is a type of response which the individual has never made before and he is thereby freed from the repetitive patterns he has followed in the past.’ (Haley, 1963: 85).

Haley describes a dynamic resembling a rite of passage. However, an over-focus on the session and its parallel with rites of passage risks ignoring another element of treatment. These are the in-between-session-times, the spaces that create some of the complexity suggested by Turnbull (1990).

Leach draws attention to the betwixt and between moments *between* the betwixt and between, from pre-liminal to liminal, and from liminal to post-liminal. He suggests boundaries are artificial distinctions for what would otherwise be continuous. In the no-man’s land *between* boundaries lie ambiguity and anxiety. ‘A boundary separates two zones of social space-time which are *normal, time-bound, clear-cut, central, secular*, but the spatial markers are themselves *abnormal, timeless, ambiguous, at the edge, sacred*. ... The crossing of frontiers and thresholds is always hedged about with ritual, ...’ (Leach, 1976: 35).

The uncertainty of the *limen* often evokes discomfort and in dynamic liminal tension transformational events may more readily happen *between* sessions, rendering the interval *between* sessions a marginal time of potentiality. The face-vase-face (Figure 8.1) captures the nature of ambiguous boundaries. The lines define lip, mouth, nose, throat, vase, vase stem, forehead, a bowl. The lines simultaneously ‘frame’ inside and outside: this is face; this is vase, (*vide*, this is play; this is therapy), or this is *not* face, *not* vase, creating an image of constantly changing phenomenological realities.

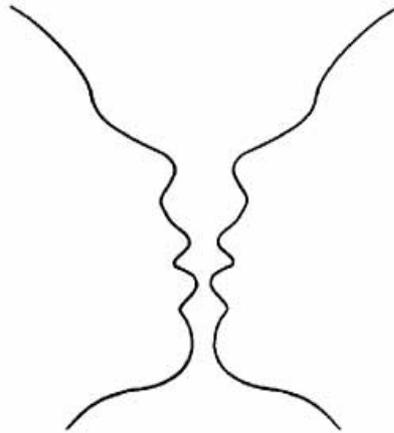


Figure 8.1. Face-vase-face gestalt: one, other, both.

Figure 8.2i proposes a rites of passage structure view of psychotherapy. The duration of therapy becomes a dynamic liminal period. It represents treatment like a unity as if ritual were without variation or rhythm *within* its structure.

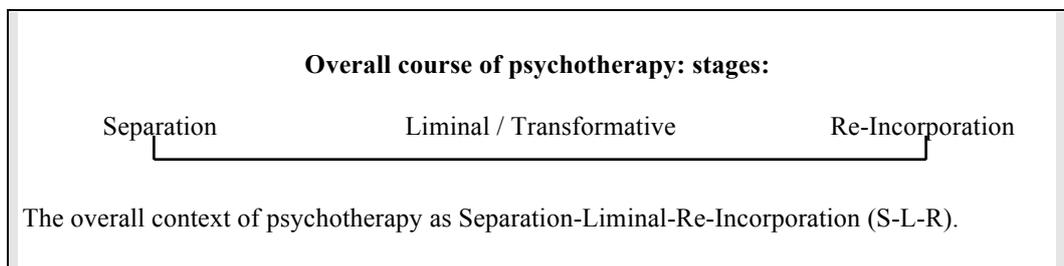


Figure 8.2i. Psychotherapy: a rite of passage structure.

In Figure 8.2i treatment is conceived as *liminal*, a sublime period during which transformation is possible. Its chronological time and the phenomenological experience of time from within refer to different kinds of time. The start of therapy, which can be highly stressful, represents *separation* from the mundane. For example, at the start of his second session a patient, John, reflected to me about his first meeting. He said he had found the process of beginning to confront his personal experiences and relationships “traumatising” and he had left the session “exhausted”. Beginning therapy was an ordeal in the physical, emotional,

and psychological separation from the familiar, without knowing quite what to expect in that process.

As psychotherapy ends a process of re-integration must be achieved, separating from the psychotherapist's continuing involvement. Casement, (1985, 1990, 2002, 2006), Sandler, Dare, and Holder (1992), Sandler et al., (1997), and Yalom (1989, 2001, 2006) discuss separation and ending as a critical, transformative, and integral aspect of treatment. Ending symbolises a moment of re-incorporation to the world of the everyday.

Each session, to which much attention traditionally is given, is potentially transformational. However, the time *between* sessions suggests another kind of temporal space *out of time* from the sessions, which themselves are *out of time* from the mundane. This becomes a betwixt-and-between time *between* betwixt-and-between. Transformation may occur in that *in-between* period 'spontaneously' from the session or through the psychotherapist's explicit intentionality through ritual or ordeal-like tasks (Jenkins, 1987). Just as the shaman's activities are intentional, (the Yolmo, the Ndembu, or the many aspects of shamanism described by Vitebsky (1995)), so too are the psychotherapist's in the psychoanalytic (Sandler, Dare and Holder, 1992; Sandler et al., 1997), and systemic fields, (Palazzoli et al., 1980; Penn, 1985; Tomm 1987a,b, 1988).

Jane describes her experience of the in-between periods and the impact of varying the length of describing that time between sessions as important and active.²³⁵ The timing of sessions, morning or evening, was significant, while my availability, almost on-call constant-time, played an important part:

H.J. "What did you think about the time and spaces in between our sessions? How did you experience them at different times, stages of our meeting?"

²³⁵ Interview on 21st January 2011.

Jane. “After meetings it could be worse. I needed time to settle. Sometimes it was worse, or sometimes it was better. Everything was there and I couldn’t ignore it, and it was as though it was happening then, but better for the same reasons because I could feel in control of the situation. But then it would go in the opposite way, and swing and feel as though I was losing control of it. The space in between was better to give time to sort things in my head in between.”

H.J. “What was important about the intervals?”

Jane. “When it was a longer time, that was quite difficult. By the time we met, I’d managed to tuck it away again. To a certain extent that made it difficult to come back to it. When there were longer intervals, there was a danger of pushing it away like I’d done before I came.”

H.J. “How much were the intervals part of therapy?”

Jane. “I think it was very much in my mind, or at the back of my mind all the time. It was like it was all the time because the things we talked about here, I could use as a tool in between. Going first thing in the morning allowed me to get over it a bit and to focus on going to work. Evening sessions were more difficult because I’d get in a mess.”

H.J. “What was important for you about the rhythm, pattern, and timing of the sessions?”

Jane. “I found the flexibility of spacing helpful. It was helpful because we both decided at the time, a consensus, and sometimes I needed a break from it. That was important. It allowed me to feel I was partly in control. It was a joint thing.”

H.J. “And what did you feel about the use of the phone and email? That you could contact me at any time you chose?”²³⁶

Jane. “That was really good, especially the phone because we would talk and the fact that it was a reminder that you hadn’t given up on me, and could talk me through, a bit like first aid.”

H.J. “And the Sunday routine, when you would call every Sunday and leave a message whether you needed me to call you back? How was that for you?”

Jane. “That was good. It was like doing a stock-taking at the beginning of the week. It was often a bit of a relief, and we could talk it through if it was going wrong. It was knowing you were there, and knowing that, when it came to the phone, it meant I had to make a decision and not let it drift and get in a mess. I could think: ‘I can sort this’, and ‘I know what Hugh would say, so why do I need to phone him?’ And either way, I had to decide if I wanted you to call me back, so in that way I was in control.”

The agreed variable nature of time *between* sessions gave Jane a sense of control and autonomy, while *timing of sessions* had a significant impact on her ability to cope. She also had responsibility for knowing what she needed when phoning on Sunday evenings. Significantly “It was knowing you were there”, reflecting the importance of time constancy. An important premise for therapy was that eventually she would not need a therapist, as she would internalise that figure of constancy.

Figure 8.2ii re-configures this structure for each therapy session. Every session is a microcosm of the larger whole, each with its rhythm. The liminality of each

²³⁶ I said that she could call or email any time, although I might not always be immediately there. I instigated a regular Sunday evening call rhythm where Jane left a message saying if she needed me to call her back.

session is 'boundaried' by a beginning (separation) and ending (re-incorporation). However, the intervals boundaried by and *between* each session have their own liminal quality and 'rhythm' (Hubert, 1999): five times a week, weekly intervals, every 2/3 weeks. These are not inert periods that passively separate sessions. They are replete with potential for planned or spontaneous change.

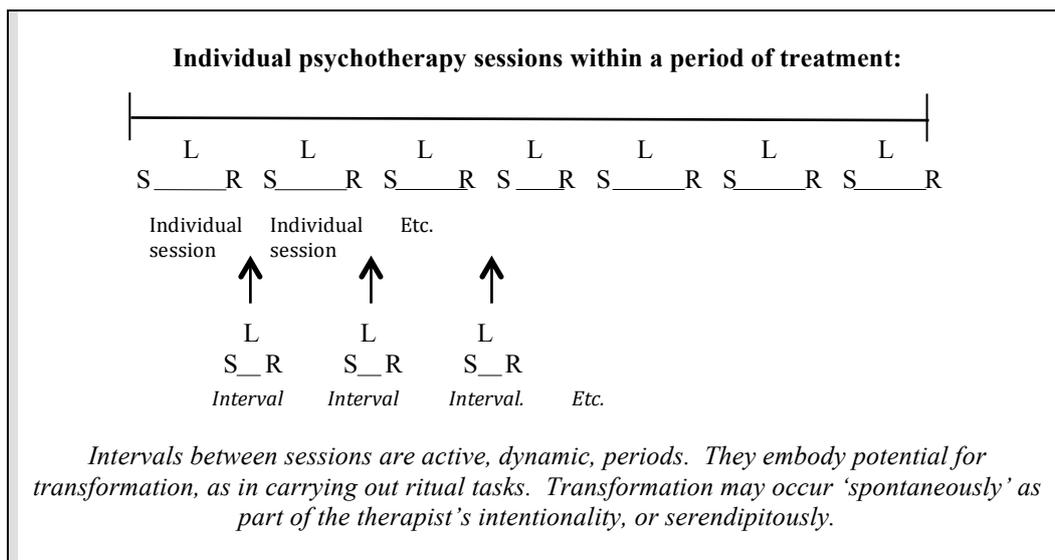


Figure 8.2ii.

Each S-L-R sequence (Figure 8.2ii) represents an individual session, a particular separation from the mundane. Intervals *between* sessions embody a different kind of out-of-session liminality. Session-interval-session becomes figure and ground in dynamic flux, each defining and re-defining the other, like the face-vase-face gestalt (Figure 8.1). Each interval has its own kind of S-L-R. Interval-session-interval becomes a different sequence like music with its rhythms and tempo (Turner, 1982a).

Therapy has similarity with music. It can be discordant as much as melodic, with therapist as 'conductor-composer'. Beethoven composed in his head listening to the strings, feeding in the brass, and cumulatively composing. Mozart also composed in his head, but '(s)omething about the way in which his central nervous system was organised enabled him to experience his music all at once'

(Hall, 1983: 139). As I deconstruct the rites of passage structure into its component parts something of the whole is inevitably lost. After identifying the parts we must return to the whole, to experience phenomenologically and viscerally the melody of therapy.

Reflections.

The analytic invariant of time and place over a long period of months or years, can be conceptualised as a sublime, liminal state, as an experience of different kinds of time or no time; ‘the anti-temporal character of ritual’ (Turner, 1982a: 237). Systemic therapy is likely to be more variable in frequency of sessions often planning longer intervals in between. The patient does not bring material immediately back to treatment and this creates a different kind of tension, tempo, or tune (Palazzoli et al., 1978). In effect, psychoanalytic and systemic models create different kinds of time during and between sessions.

In many ways psychotherapy through process and structure share much with age-old healing traditions. What scholars have to say from their researches into ritual opens up ways to understand psychotherapy, the nature of change, and the experience of being a patient. Of particular interest are ideas about the mundane/profane and the sublime/sacred; the nature of ordeal, and change or transformation.

The sense of uncertainty or imminent chaos as part of a liminal state, the sense of time slowing down, experiencing oneself out of time, are brought in sharp focus as a result of these studies. The idea that the liminal is a dynamic phenomenon (Kapferer, 2004), occurring in interstructural points (Turner, 1967) provides powerful concepts for the psychodynamic or systemic therapist. In order to cross thresholds (Leach, 1976) we need structures and procedures to navigate these ambiguous areas.

This research has brought us full circle to Parmenides’ reflections in the *Way of Truth* and *Way of Illusion* and Plato’s ‘instant’ being out of time. Now, this

‘instant’ can be an extended duration and have different temporality. It is not *chronos* that we experience or measure, but *kairos*. The inward process of what happens structurally and externally to the initiate is they become ‘invisible’ in this period of pupation, ‘at once no longer classified and not yet classified’ (Turner, 1967: 96).

We have encountered another kind of timelessness paradox in ritual, with parallels to psychotherapy. Ritual emphasises stability and continuity, loyalty to one’s ancestors, while requiring adaption to changing external influences. There is always tension between forces for change and stability, and if in ritual it seems at times that the weighting tends to stability over change with ‘traditions eternally acted in ritual’ (Torrance, 1994: 65), in therapy the focus must fall more towards change and transformation in a context of over-arching stability. In both instances in dynamic tension, time may appear to tremble.

Without ways to describe and take account of time and timelessness we are left with an ‘absence’ that prevents us from understanding what happens to patient and therapist ‘meeting in the moment’ (Jenkins, 2005). In developing these ideas we have given importance to ‘the interval’ which is not the inert time-space of after and before. It is dynamic, changing, elusive, and powerful, like human experience of time itself.

Chapter 9.

Ending at the beginning.

‘What might have been and what has been
Point to one end, which is always present.’
(T. S. Eliot, 1944/2001: 3)

‘The whole of our thinking about what we are and what other people are
has got to be restructured. ... The most important task today is, perhaps,
to learn how to think in a new way.’
(Bateson, 1970: 437)

‘What a man sees depends both upon what he looks at and also upon what his
previous visual-conceptual experience has taught him.’
(Kuhn, 1996: 113)

Aims.

I want to return to the question raised in chapter 1. How do temporal notions in philosophy and anthropology contribute to understanding time in psychotherapy with specific reference to Freud and Palazzoli’s work? Mainly, I want to re-visit and develop my thoughts in the Reflections of the preceding chapters.

In the last part of this chapter I take an unconventional stance. I introduce some new ideas. They are about changing relationships and attitudes to time in a rapidly changing world, a world where the Touareg call on their mobiles as they cross the Sahara by camel; where political and natural disaster go viral on YouTube as they occur. Part of the impact of these changes is mediated by cinema, whether the plushiest multiplex in London or an open-air screen in Gao in the Sahel. Technological advances since the 1990s have set off a chain of exponential change that continues.

The process.

I have contrasted philosophy's essentially abstract methodology with anthropology's more phenomenological approach to human activity. 'Normal science ... is predicated on the assumption that the scientific community knows what the world is like' (Kuhn, 1996: 5). Both disciplines seek to understand the world as not yet known and challenge our assumptions about it. Freud the neurologist and psychoanalyst Palazzoli developed theories of the mind that were controversial to contemporary Western thinking and 'what the world is like'.

Time as a bridge.

Time is my bridge connecting psychotherapy, philosophy, and anthropology. It transcends culture, language, and shapes our experience of both (Hall, 1989; Levine, 2006). The bridge metaphor complements my starting point 'where three roads meet' (Vickers, 2007).

A bridge (Plate 91.) is a connecting structure that can facilitate communication across the in-between space separating two places of which it is neither. The area at either end generally differs in nature, function, even substance, and presents an edge or boundary that the bridge structure meets, but is not. It is 'liminal' in-between these opposite edges.



Plate 9.1. *Dialogue on a Bridge*, Liviu Mocan, 2008. (Photo. Hugh Jenkins)

In the sculpture (Plate 9.1) the physical barrier separating the couple disrupts and bars dialogue as they sit supported on slender stilts in a liminal space that emphasises the nature of in-between. The contrast in the surfaces of the barrier, one smooth and shiny, the other covered with sharp points highlights the different realities for the couple in the same temporal moment. The ‘his’ and ‘her’ story are radically different, but not necessarily known to the other.²³⁷

My clinical stories (‘vignettes’) have been bridges linking experience, notions of time, psychotherapy, philosophy, and anthropology. In clinical and ritual encounters I described ‘different kinds of time’. The therapist’s ability to connect with the other at multiple levels is important for bridging divergent perspectives.²³⁸ Patients’ stories become part of my stories as I become part of theirs. ‘(T)he personal (is) a bridge ... that connects our realities to inner impressions, others to selves’ (Stoller, 2009: 164). This concerns more than ‘talking about’, for to talk *about* time is to inhabit the mundane. Ritual transcends social time and bridges these worlds. Psychotherapy as ‘ritual’, and rituals in treatment, create bridges between the ‘material’ and the ‘spiritual’.²³⁹

Case vignette: Judith and Chris - bypassing worlds.

A great deal written is on my subject of study so it is inevitable that much had to be omitted. Such omissions are easily identified, such as gendered experiences of time that are influenced by culture, ethnicity, and religious belief *inter alia*. The artist Alla Tkachuk²⁴⁰ says women experience time mainly as a circular phenomenon linked to the menstrual cycle. By contrast, she says for men time is linear as manifested in their approach to people or problem-solving. This

²³⁷ I use this sculpture in couple therapy. I bring it into my consulting room so it can be experienced. Sometimes the image is emailed and put up in the couple’s home, often the bedroom, to help them focus and seek solutions in their intimate relationships.

²³⁸ This reminds me of C. P. Snow’s *Two Cultures* (The New Statesman, 6th October 1956). He identified the divide of the ‘two cultures’ of science and humanities as a consequence of the English approach to education. The philosophy of Sussex University in the 1960s was an attempt to bridge that divide.

²³⁹ Also the ‘mundane’ and the ‘sacred’.

²⁴⁰ Personal communication, 17th January 2012.

suggests that biological-hormonal-socio-cultural factors impact on experience and notions of time. In order to illustrate an aspect of gendered time I describe briefly Judith and Chris' dissimilar temporal realities.

Judith describes feeling emotionally disconnected from her husband, Chris. She tells how he seems not to share her interests, how he walks away when she wants to discuss what is in her heart. She has a hearing disability so it is easier to watch DVDs with sub-titles, which Chris points out spoils his experience. Hence he will not watch sub-titled films with her. This is symptomatic of their relationship.

It is possible to understand their difficulties in terms of their personal histories, emotional absence in their families, especially of fathers and poor attachment figures, which leads to a relational dance that avoids intimacy. However, there is a temporal way to 'reframe' their disconnection that is 'to change the conceptual and/or emotional setting or viewpoint in relation to which a situation is experienced and to place it in another frame which fits the "facts" ... and thereby changes its entire meaning' (Watzlawick et al., 1974: 95).

Chris lives in a world of *episodic* moments (Barbour, 2000, 2008; Strawson, 2005; Tulving, 1983, 2005). He becomes involved in what interests him now, excluding other things around him. Once finished with one, he engages with the next. By contrast, Judith inhabits a *diachronic* world of continuity and history that relates to her present; it is *narrative* and not *episodic* time (Strawson, 2005). The temporal reframe helped Judith accept that the problems were not her creation.

Communication is problematic in these circumstances. Judith and Chris live in discrepant *temporal* worlds. Psychodynamically and systemically we have different explanations for their difficulty in communicating. However, time the 'silent guest' suggests another perspective. I will briefly compare these ideas in relation to Freud and Palazzoli.

Freud and Palazzoli.

An important part of psychoanalytic treatment is to make the unconscious conscious. Freud even proposed a time-span encompassing phylogenetic memories that ‘behave as though they had just occurred’ (Freud, 1933: Vol. XXII: 74). Treatment addresses unconscious mental processes that are ‘timeless’ (Freud, 1920: Vol. XVIII: 28) usually early events that have been repressed. We can understand transference as a phenomenon of the ‘simultaneity of the noncontemporaneous’ (Schorske, 1991: 9) to confront the ‘unalterability by time of the repressed’ (Freud, 1933: Vol. XXII: 74). Causality is predominantly historical and linear as I discussed in chapter 2. This has resulted in a model requiring longer treatment than Freud necessarily envisaged (Meisel and Kendrick, 1986).

If Judith and Chris were taken into analysis they would see separate analysts who would preserve the integrity of the analytic boundary. Early experiences would be examined in the temporal transference phenomena as they play these out in later and adult relationships (Malan, 1979). Aetiology and psychical topography would be more important in the exclusivity of this liminal space. The time of change for Judith and Chris would probably be different and any temporal disjunction would make it more difficult to establish a new kind of relationship. Personal individual growth may be privileged over relational systemic considerations as part of ‘working through’.

By contrast, Palazzoli opens the private space of psychoanalysis using teams, one-way mirror, communicating with the family from both sides of the screen, and active involvement of family members. It represents a shift from a Western science linear model to a circular systemic-cybernetic stance that changes how we understand causality and seems to blur responsibility: ‘*No-one* can have linear control in an interaction which is, by definition, circular’ (Palazzoli et al., 1978: 30). While working in the present with families the Milan team accepted Bowen’s thesis (Bowen, 1978) of three-generational aetiology for schizophrenic

onset. This recognises history re-playing in the present but does not accord the same degree of importance in the symbolic relationship with the therapist.

The Milan team reformulated treatment duration. They defined ‘this method of work as *long brief therapy*. It is *brief* considering the time dedicated by the therapist to working directly with the family, and *long* in respect to the time needed by the family to organise the transformation’ (Palazzoli et al., 1978: 14). Such long-term treatment contrasts with much contemporary psychoanalysis (see chapter 2).

If Judith and Chris were seen in Systemic psychotherapy they would be seen together, without precluding possible individual sessions. In exploring their recent histories, their ‘projections’ each to the other in marrying and their ‘invisible contracts’ that ultimately become a ‘pact to disappoint’ (Jenkins, 2006), they would confront many unconscious issues played out in their marriage. Time in the many ways I discussed in chapter 2 would be held in mind with the different ‘times of the system’ (Bateson, 1955; Palazzoli et al., 1978). Work on repeating ‘logical points’ (Howe, 1981) would become an active element in working for change.

By exploring Freud and Palazzoli’s theories anew, we celebrate their unexpected complementarity. As I have discussed (chapter 2) Freud’s concept of ‘compulsion to repeat’ can be reframed in Bateson’s terms of temporal repetition and memory circuits in a sequence where ‘behaviour ... is thus in some degree determined, not only by its immediate past, but by what it did at a time which precedes the present by the interval necessary for the message to complete the circuit’ (Bateson, 1955: 287). This is another type of ‘memory’. By being mindful of these models we achieve a depth of vision that neither temporal perspective provides singly.

One of the complementary perspectives often cited concerns a linear epistemology for psychoanalysis and systemic ‘causality’ as circular. While true to an extent,

the timespan involved may affect description. A large number of straight lines ultimately creates a circle (Keeney, 1983). Freudian psychology relates causality to early experiences, yet a phylogenetic perspective must incorporate flows and eddies, pattern repetition and linearity (Eliade, 2005) just as the psychodynamic literature records the replaying of old scripts in marital problems (Dicks, 1967).

Philosophy and anthropology.

Differences between philosophy and anthropology soon became apparent. Philosophy tends to rely on rational abstract thought. Philosophers talk about ‘normal’ experiences of time. This resulted in some of the difficulties in relating philosophical time constructs to clinical experience (discussed in chapters 3 and 4).

The Greeks were preoccupied with time and cosmology (Sorabji, 1983) while the Enlightenment emphasised reason and the rational mind (Hampshire, 1956). Phenomenologists and existentialists focused on a more embodied experience (Kaufmann, 1956). This is evidenced in Heidegger’s project, which began with the (thingly-ness of the) thing.²⁴¹ He (Heidegger, 1962) looked to the future and unlike Freud was not preoccupied with the past (Ellis, 2008). Ricoeur (2000) draws different themes together through narrative, time, memory, forgetting, and history.

Anthropology engages with the unexpected and the seemingly messy, with human ‘existential’ questions about the nature of being.²⁴² It moves us to the embodied physical sensual being who moves in multiple social contexts. In this respect, anthropologist and psychotherapist share common ground. ‘Like an anthropologist, the family therapist joins the culture with which he is dealing. In the same oscillating rhythm, he engages and then disengages. He experiences the pressures of the family system’ (Minuchin, 1974: 124). The ‘intimate

²⁴¹ Heidegger’s description of van Gogh’s clogs gives a visceral story of their construction, their structure, their usage, and their history as embodied memory / time (see chapter 4).

²⁴² This can be as much a marginalised inner city community as a remote Amazonian tribal group.

experiential' involvement that Minuchin describes differs from philosophy. Anthropology, especially when it turns to healing and ritual, explores a world beyond the rational.

Contributions of philosophy and anthropology to the study.

Parmenides (Geldard, 2007) and Aristotle (1999) argued that time does not exist while Plato's (1997) *Parmenides* and *Timaeus* include attempts to describe time. Augustine proposes past and future as dimensions of the present.²⁴³

Parmenides reminds us of reality behind the phenomenological world of experience. His emphasis on self-reflecting requires an awareness of a present self, the ability to retain a past, and envisage a future. Similarly, Freud believed in the importance of self-reflection and rationality in psychoanalysis. In the clinical vignettes patients who were unable to stand outside their un-reflected accounts remained timelessly in their pasts. This increased the likelihood of remaining emotionally at an earlier developmental stage. Judith's husband, Chris, cried when she returned from ten days visiting her brother in the US, like an infant whose mother has returned whom he feared he would never see again. This reaction re-enacted early life experiences fifty years ago re-experienced 'now'.

The ascription 'instant', 'now', or 'present', continues to intrigue me. Plato introduces 'the instant' (*Parmenides*, Plato, 1997: 388) being not in time. If the therapist's task is to align the patient's undifferentiated time perspectives, the 'instant' becomes an 'a-temporal-temporal space' for change. This imperceptible 'instant' of pure potential remains elusive.²⁴⁴

²⁴³ My task has not been to debate the relative merits or demerits of their arguments or provide a comparative exegesis of their theories. See for example Cornford, (1997), Judson (1991), Roark, (2011), Sorabji (1983), Tallis (2007), and White (1992).

²⁴⁴ I believe this 'instant' is the 'out of time' moment that allowed Jane (chapter 8) to have her coat held for her. A seemingly insignificant instant, she remains puzzled about how it happened and the impact that this micro-event continues to exert. Just as Jane had to turn her back physically to be helped into her second sleeve, so analogically there was an instant of turning her back and dropping her guard about her past, to look towards a different future. (Personal communication, 25th February 2013)

Aristotle's view that the present is always passing, the past is no longer, and the future is not yet, describes many patients' difficulty retaining a sense of temporal continuity as trauma or dread overwhelm their sense of present-ness. Patients who cannot 'hold onto reality' lose their sense of time or 'being'.²⁴⁵

Even though Aristotle states time does not exist, he offers a temporal framework appropriate for therapy. The past *had* potential and *has* crystallised in one of many possible ways. The future *has* potential which has *yet* to crystallise. The therapist can explore Aristotle's notion of 'potential' that *has previously* crystallised with ways that potential in the past *could have* crystallised. By asking "What would have needed to change *then* for that potential to have crystallised differently and how might *now* potentially be different?" Thus the therapist can explore *future* potential as choices *not yet* crystallised. In this difference lies 'the information that makes the difference' (Bateson, 1970) with potential for change.

Augustine (1961: 269) suggests we have only three presents, the present of past, present, and future. This offers a powerful temporal structure for therapy. If the present of past and future things exist only in the present, all is 'now'. The 'present of past things' describes well the phenomenon of time confusion of 'now' and 'then', whether in personal relationships or in psychotherapy. A category mistake is attempting to change the past. One's *relationship* to a particular event in time can change and potentially allow the future to crystallise differently to the one feared.²⁴⁶

Twentieth century phenomenological approaches are more useful for psychotherapy than notions of reason and rationality characteristic of the Enlightenment period that neglects psychological aspects of experience (Hampshire, 1956). A phenomenological focus 'solely on what shows up *as it*

²⁴⁵ Kelly Holmes spoke of her self-harming at a point in her career when she no longer saw herself when she looked in the mirror. It was as if she had ceased to exist. *Dame Kelly Holmes: Sports Life Stories*. ITV. 24 April 2013.

²⁴⁶ Protestant Christians in Romania could not change events, (chapter 5). Their spiritual time context that theologians call 'sacred time' (Duncan, 1999: 75) gave a different temporal and meaning relationship to oppression that helped sustain them under persecution.

presents itself in our experience' (Dostal, 1993: 141) is relevant. Therapists begin with what and how they observe at the outset of therapy.²⁴⁷ The experientially real of phenomenology offers a bridge between philosophy and psychotherapy (Merleau-Ponty, 1945).

We can usefully build on Husserl's ideas about 'intentionality' (1991) since psychotherapy is intentional. His conceptualisation of the present introduces a contextualised 'embodied-ness' or 'thickness'. It signals a dynamic tension that changes according to circumstance and amplifies understandings of 'memory' in psychodynamic and systemic psychotherapy. Excessive retention overwhelms the present, obscures protention, and creates an unbalanced temporal thickness. However, Husserl's concept of 'shading off' in everyday life contrasts with clinical experience of no sense of 'shading off'. We see this in Bill's story.

Case vignette: Bill.

Bill had a difficult and very enmeshed relationship (Minuchin, 1974) with his mother whom he felt never loved him for who he was, and an emotionally arid relationship with his father for whom money, and no doubt insecurity, was of paramount importance. One day Bill entered the kitchen to find his wife making a birthday cake for their daughter. The combination of cake-baking for a much loved daughter and accompanying smells reminded him so powerfully of his mother and his feelings of maternal emotional neglect that he abruptly left the kitchen for his bedroom and hid under his duvet for the whole afternoon.²⁴⁸ Bill experienced no sense of 'shading off'. The 'present of past things' was painfully 'now'.

²⁴⁷ This recalls the principle skills for training family therapists, and true for all skills training. They are, perceptual, conceptual, and executive skills (Cleghorn and Levin, 1973). That is, *what* we see, *how* we make sense of what we see, and the interviewing skills, structures, strategies employed (*executive*). Each depends on *how* we make sense of *what* we see. Each aspect is part of a continuous recursive loop.

²⁴⁸ This recalls the madeleine dipped in a tisane in Proust's *À la Recherche du Temps Perdu*.

In the phenomenological mould, Heidegger's project to grasp the nature of being-in-the-world (*dasein*) is part of understanding a temporal 'self'.²⁴⁹ He describes a 'presentness' embodying memory and 'horizontal' future different to notions developed in Freud's work. Heidegger's view of time confronts the reality of our finite existence of uncertain future in an ever-fleeting horizontal present.

Merleau-Ponty emphasises 'the field of experience in which I find myself' (Honderich, 2005: 588) future and past being a single movement where being and passing are synonymous. What is now past still is. '(T)he "synthesis" of time is a synthesis of transitions' (Merleau-Ponty, 2011: 485). This describes psychotherapy that seeks transformative transitions. Merleau-Ponty's ideas lead to an embodied existential relational temporal model.

Ricoeur describes a dynamic that extends 'from untold and repressed stories in the direction of actual stories' (Ricoeur, 1984: 74) in a 'structural reciprocity of temporality and narrativity' (Ricoeur, 1980: 170) which describe important elements of psychotherapy. Because the human psyche and relationships are multi-layered it is not a simple linear cause-effect model. Drawing on Aristotle's (1996) treatise on plot, Ricoeur suggests a temporal structure. 'Plot' implies 'whole', encompassing beginning, middle, end, and therefore time. 'By plot I mean the intelligible whole that governs a succession of events in any story' (Ricoeur, 1980: 171). A patient who tells her story knows the end of the 'plot', while the therapist pieces together the bits and pieces of the tale to enable a new narrative to emerge. The time of the plot and changed time of the re-told plot place time at the centre of therapy. It brings us again to Palazzoli's 'time of the system' (Palazzoli et al., 1978).

²⁴⁹ All concepts of the 'self', the 'I', and a private interior world, are characteristically Western. This is pertinent for an activity that is particularly Western in orientation. Where patients do not share this, it is essential that psychotherapy involves and incorporates respect for the patient's socio-cultural world, (Ahmed, 1986; Kareem, 2000; Lau, 1988; Messent, 1992; Wieselberg, 1992) as in Joy's story of blackness, gender, and slavery (chapter 6).

In exploring ‘memory’²⁵⁰ Ricoeur (2000) describes ‘the temporal distance of the past’ (ibid: 6) in contrast to the experience of the compressed temporal distance of many patients, such as Bill and Chris (this chapter). It would be a mistake to think of memory as fixed. Husserl suggested that the remembered event is different to the event experienced at the time (see chapter 4). Jay (2013: 15) captures memory as dynamic;

‘Memory creates our identity, but it also exposes the illusion of a coherent self: a memory is not a thing but an act that alters and rearranges even as it retrieves. Although some of its operations can be trained to an astonishing pitch, most take place autonomously, beyond the reach of conscious mind’.

This suggests ‘the presence of the absent’ (Ricoeur, 2000: 23) that touches on the boundary between *souvenir* and *rappel*.²⁵¹ Ricoeur’s understanding of differentiated ‘memory’ and the possibility of changing relationships to the past, as I have previously discussed, contribute to therapeutic notions of time.²⁵²

Strawson (2005) proposes that our world is episodic or diachronic. I described this to Judith and the effect of her and Chris’ contrasting temporal worlds. While this could not change the situation, it reframed (Watzlawick et al., 1974) their different realities and eased Judith’s feelings of responsibility for their situation. Temporal ‘reframing’²⁵³ does not contradict psychodynamic or systemic understanding.

²⁵⁰ The three kinds of memory are: *mémoire*, *souvenir*, and *rappel*.

²⁵¹ I am aware that at no point have I discussed the phenomenon of pre-cognition, and the idea of future knowing. Although this is a relatively common experience, I decided this would distract me from my main focus. It may be that we can know in advance, or that through sub-liminal signals we experience sub- or unconscious ‘pre-knowing’ before consciously ‘knowing that we know’ and experiencing that we ‘know that we knew’ in advance.

²⁵² Ricoeur adds to Plato’s instant in *Parmenides*. There is the ‘absolute instant’ and in Husserlian tradition the thick present or ‘existential now ... which is a “making-present”, inseparable from awaiting and retaining’ (Ricoeur, 1980: 173). This ‘thickness’ is a dynamic (making-present) temporal space.

²⁵³ Minuchin (1974) and Minuchin and Fishman, (1981) also describe the technique and effectiveness of ‘reframing’, literally of giving a new ‘frame’ to the familiar (sequences of) behaviour, thus increasing the likelihood of (relational) change.

Anthropology and psychotherapy share a great deal. Both engage with ‘the other’ and endeavour to see the other from their perspective; ‘the task of an anthropologist causes him to land in strange places. That is, places that are strange to him but, of course, not strange to the people who belong in those places’ (Bateson, 1987b: 71).

Anthropological studies always concern time and clearly contribute to notions of time in psychotherapy. Time is intrinsic to every anthropological account, embodying the present and transgenerational perspectives. Stories about communities’ origins, survival, or respect for the past have a temporal component.²⁵⁴ This is evidenced in Mauss’ discussion of gift and gift exchange (Mauss, 1990). In my own work the power of gift exchange is evidenced by the *Dialogue on a Bridge* sculpture (Plate 9.1) that I discussed in relation to time and the liminal.

This sculpture was presented to me at the academic rite of passage of a student graduation in Romania. It embodies nuanced relationships and varied meanings. Initially, it embodies the long-term friendship between the Mocan and Radu families. This provided the context for the commission.²⁵⁵ The act of presentation celebrated my training and course development roles over the previous six years and our envisaged future collaboration; it embodied elements of past and future. It personified ‘memory’ for the giver and recipient, and was a public witness for all present that could be recalled at future times. This gift has a life and story that changes over time. It embodies the linear time trajectory of the *A* series (McTaggart, 1927) for a future that will reflexively refer to a future past and foresee further futures; ‘the thing received is not inactive’ (Mauss, 1990: 15). There is equally a *B* series of before and after the gift giving. An event marks a

²⁵⁴ Time has been a ‘silent guest’ in many spheres of human activity. The global warming debate is loaded with temporal urgency. In politics, the future is the ‘pauper’. ‘Time will become more important than space to the politics of 2013. ... We know how to examine the politics of “where”. But that is not much use when the big issues are when, and over what time frames decisions should be taken. ... The trouble with the politics of time is that the future has no constituency whereas the present has plenty to defend its interests’ (Leadbeater, C., (2013) The art of knowing when to go slow. *New Statesman*. 8-14 February. 13-14).

²⁵⁵ Ileana Radu is the driving force behind many of the training initiatives in Timișoara, Romania.

temporal point, defines kinds of time for people in a particular place, and links them to each other at that specific moment.

The image of *Dialogue on a Bridge* has been adopted as the symbol for a series of ‘bridging conferences’ in Timișoara. This embeds it further in the Romanian history of family therapy and gives it a public presence to complement its multiple private meanings.

The therapist-patient relationship embodies elements of ‘gift relationship’ (Yalom, 2001). When I bring the sculpture into therapy I make a ‘gift’ of its story to my patients and celebrate its creator, Liviu Mocan. When I give or email a photo, I make a ‘gift’ to my patients in their healing journeys. Through professional ‘giving’ the therapist ‘receives’²⁵⁶ without which there can be no real encounter (Yalom, 1993). ‘We must speak of *us* and *our* problems, because our life, our existence, will always be riveted to death, love, loss, freedom to fear, and growth to separation. We are, all of us, in this together’ (Yalom, 1989:14).

The poison oracle (*Benge*) (Evans-Pritchard, 1976) introduced other ideas about time with relevance to psychotherapy. The Azande believed that by altering plans in the present, future doom could be avoided without undermining mystical forces.²⁵⁷ Being attuned to the future in the present has begun to play a more significant role in Western therapy. The therapist may ask the patient to imagine achieving a desired change by a specific future time, and to consider the steps necessary to achieve that (de Shazer, 1982, 1985, 1991: Penn, 1985) or by temporal circular questions (Tomm, 1987a, b, 1988).

²⁵⁶ Some of these issues are explored in Jenkins, 2005.

²⁵⁷ ‘(T)he present and the future overlap in some way so that the present partakes of the future as it were. ... (F)uture health and happiness depend on future conditions that are already in existence and can be exposed by the oracles and altered’(Evans-Pritchard, 1976: 162). Jane’s nightmares (chapter 8) existed for her in the present in her (impending) future and every further future before her, based on fifty years’ experience (her past). By entering into her future in her ritual and replaying / pre-playing her nightmares she brought them actively into her dynamic present. Once present at her command they lost their potency.

Cross-cultural comparisons can be made with conceptions of time among the Balinese and the Sora world-views (chapter 7). By naming time sequences differentially Balinese calendars complement each other.²⁵⁸ In similar vein, temporal sequencing according to the psychotherapeutic model brings forth different temporal rhythms.

In exploring the Balinese calendar, I found the concept of returning to ‘the same logical point’ (Howe, 1981) helpful in my practice. For example, the man who has married and divorced three times and whose current relationship is in difficulty might be ‘returning to the same logical point’ when understood temporally.²⁵⁹ Previous marriages become ‘the same marriage’ ending at ‘the same logical point’ related perhaps to difficulties with intimacy, trust, or abandonment, possibly relating to earlier such experiences. When the difficulty is re-framed (Minuchin, 1974; Watzlawick et al., 1974) as ‘returning to the same logical point’ the patient is encouraged to identify the pattern and examine how it illustrates another failed attempt. Judith (this chapter) realised through therapy that she was replicating her mother’s marital script and hence returning to the ‘same marital logical point’.

Sora attitudes to an active *post mortem* relationship have influenced my clinical practice of continuing evolving dialogues with the dead. The ‘healing of the mourner, whatever this is, lies in the Memory’s changes of form but not in the Memory’s annihilation’ (Vitbesky, 1993: 237). By reversing the focus from the past to a present-past-future in active dialogue with the deceased, the patient is helped to have a memory of the *real* person. Dialogue contextualises, making memory dynamic. By being true to life it becomes possible to be true to death. The therapist helps the patient mourn and live with a real relationship. ‘Once one

²⁵⁸ Calendars measure predictive time. Measuring time has often been a matter of life and death (Duncan, 1999, Levine, 2006).

²⁵⁹ The actress, Elizabeth Taylor married eight times, twice to Richard Burton. In spite, no doubt, of different circumstances surrounding her divorces, I wonder to what extent they all faltered around the same or similar issues as her ‘same logical point’. For example, to do with trusting the other, emotional intimacy, disappointment at not finding the perfect or the impossible in love, all in her ‘pact to disappoint’ (Jenkins, 2006).

party to a relationship dies, certain inhibitions are lifted and the unspeakable can be spoken' (ibid: 17).

Ritual.

Research on ritual has proved invaluable. Many clinicians describe the use of ritual in practice (see, Friedman, 1989; Imber-Black, 1989, Imber-Black, and Roberts, 1992; Palazzoli et al., 1977, 1980; Wolin and Bennett, 1984; Woodcock, 1995) but little use is made of anthropological research to create a deep understanding of ritual in treatment. A temporally oriented description of the Catholic Mass adds an important dimension.

Ritual in Catholicism is an important feature of worship in many cultures. Communicants are invited to become one with Jesus by imbibing the bread and the wine. These are transformed into his body and blood where 'two objects or two points in time are united ritually' (Murphy, 1979: 319).²⁶⁰ The collapse of time in that specific moment and place in the church before the altar, requires that the believer does *not* differentiate the time shift. A 'third time reality' occurs. Liturgical time '*is thus represented as never-changing*. The relationship of what occurs in liturgical intervals to that which occurs in mundane periods is *the relationship of the never-changing to the ever-changing*.' (Rappaport, 1999: 187-188). A common denominator of ritual is an invariant structure entailing process and content that is embodied in the priest and congregation, shaman and 'patient'. Ritual demands commitment, involves risk, and contains elements of ordeal. In this there are similarities with psychotherapy (Haley, 1963).

A reason that time in ritual in clinical practice is often overlooked may be that transformation occurs 'in the ignored interval' (Rappaport, 1999: 217). When I created a moment of distraction so Jane could do the impossible and turn away safely (chapter 8) there was an 'ignored interval' where she was in-between

²⁶⁰ In the doctrine of transubstantiation in the Roman Catholic and Orthodox churches the bread and wine *become* Jesus' body and blood. In the protestant churches, they *symbolise* his body and blood. The words used in both rites are identical but their meaning is different.

conscious awareness of the event in the moment. Therapists who work with ritual, create ritual, or challenge the patient through ritual, in so doing step outside their and their patient's everyday logic and enter the world of playfulness (Bateson, 1955; Turner, 1982) even when past or current trauma is truly horrifying.²⁶¹ The liminal is a disorienting space but the goal is for the initiate to be legitimised in his or her (new) role.

Ritual that is part of a community's calendar can have deep symbolic meaning. The Seder service is such an example.

'The Seder service is not so much recollection as reactualisation. ... Judaism was organised around something other than history. Its key word was *memory*. ... History is what happened to someone else. Memory is what happened to me. Memory is history internalised, the past made present to those who relive it' (Jonathan Sacks. *The Times*. 1995).

This unchanging memory fixes an event forever and provides continuity over long periods. It is different to the memory 'that alters and rearranges even as it retrieves' (Jay, 2013: 15). History becomes memory at Passover and memory is the past contemporised. The Seder service performatively re-tells and re-enacts a moment of uncertainty and danger. It re-affirms God's enduring faithfulness to His people in an unending temporal connection. The forty years in the wilderness becomes an extended liminal phase before the 'chosen people' were transformed and purified and could return to the Promised Land.

The ritual of the Catholic Mass is a re-enacted transformative memory recalling a specific historical event. Sora mourning involved active Memory (*sonum*) from the present to the future. Active recall and re-enactment fix times-then in a new time-now. Transformative ritual in initiation enables socially sanctioned change *and* ensures continuity with the ancestors, founding fathers, or particular creation story. In ritual and the ritual of therapy patient and therapist engage in a unique liminal moment in the healing encounter. Emphasis on the socio-cultural

²⁶¹ In Jane's situation when her life was threatened regularly throughout the long period of therapy being 'playful' could not have had a more serious intention.

importance of memory, different meanings of memory, and the continuity of time, provide simple templates for therapy.

Actively incorporating ritual and time into psychotherapy encouraged me to develop new methods in my practice. Therapy becomes a ‘liminal’ period between ‘separation’ and ‘re-incorporation’. This further entails working with the isomorphism of separation and reincorporation of each session. This focused my attention on the importance of between-session time. As the patient separates from the session, the *in-between interval* becomes ‘liminal’ which later has to be ‘left’ to re-incorporate into the next session.²⁶² The interval is not time out of therapy but is dynamic and has temporal reality.²⁶³

In summary, it emerges that there are parallels between ritual and psychotherapy. Both involve risk and ordeal may arise in the, often paradoxical, nature of healing (Haley, 1963). Familiar premises are challenged in this ‘liminal’ space (Jenkins, 1980, 2005). Memories of the past, explanations of the present, and expectations for the future, are questioned. The emotional connection of ‘meeting in the moment’ (Jenkins, 2005; Stern, 2004; Yalom, 1989, 2001) is essential in confronting uncertainty. Change requires survivable uncertainty and sufficient temporal/spatial boundaries.

Critical appraisal of philosophy and anthropology for the study.

The challenge of engaging with different disciplines has been its own reward by encouraging me to think more critically about both sides of any argument. The

²⁶² Jane spoke clearly about how intervals and their timing between sessions impacted on her. Intervals were not passive moments in between (see chapter 8).

²⁶³ Liviu and Rodica Mocan (chapter 5) described their experience of transition from a command centralised political system to an emerging democracy in a period of social and political discontinuity. These were ‘interstructural’ situations (Turner, 1967: 93) ‘in many respects “homologous” to the liminal periods ... when major groups or social categories in those societies are passing from one cultural state to another’ (Turner, 1995: 112). In a state of transformation, the ‘structural “invisibility” of liminal personae has a twofold character. They are at once no longer classified and not yet classified’ (Turner, 1967: 96). Rodica reflected many of those uncertain elements in her descriptions of the changing roles of women in post-communist Romania.

whole study has provided me with a more complex understanding of the field. The major difficulty confronting a therapist is that much philosophical thinking relies heavily on rationality and logic and not on visceral experience, i.e., of patients. This view applies less to the existentialist emphasis on the nature of 'being'.

Marinoff attempts to bridge the Plato-Prozac gap but does not fully resolve the problem for me (chapter 4). He argues that McTaggart's (1927) *B* series offers existential comfort. 'Even when your life ends, it can never "unhappen". All events ... are somehow preserved in the B-series of time' (Marinoff, 2000: 247-8). McTaggart's *A* series is in constant flux as 'time dissolves into an ever moving present moment' (Marinoff, 2000: 247) while the static *B* series remains in the same relation to events. McTaggart's *A* and *B* series are interesting nonetheless as they draw attention to complementary temporal formulations of a static time relationship and a fluid changing temporal horizon.

Some systemic therapists have followed the philosophical route. Steve de Shazer began with simple ideas about brief therapy (1982, 1985). He then tried, unsuccessfully in my view, to legitimise them with increasingly abstract philosophical ideas (1991, 1994). The existential models of Viktor Frankl (1985, 2000, 2004) and Irvin Yalom (1989, 2001) have a more grounded feel.

The dominant philosophical position propounds that humans cannot experience different times simultaneously. Clinical examples challenge this view. It became clear that it would be a mistake to seek a coherent understanding of time in psychotherapy from any single philosopher or school of philosophy. This is partly because notions of time often appear within a broader body of philosophical thought by all those I have considered, and partly because I did not set out to establish a single philosophical perspective on time for psychotherapy.

In relation to my study, understanding phenomena as overlapping realities is difficult when boundaries dissolve in a kaleidoscope of changing foreground /

background experience. Magritte captures this (Plate 9.2). Unity comes from disunity of expectation about what is before and after, nearer or farther away with the apparently mundane image of a rider on a horse. This complexity increases when we incorporate other disciplines. It requires suspending known realities to enter others' worlds and preconceptions of what to expect. Having lived and worked in different cultures it seems normal to accept and celebrate difference (Hall, 1989).²⁶⁴



Plate 9.2. René Magritte, *Carte Blanche*. Paul Mellon Collection. Washington DC.

It is easier to relate the contributions of anthropology to time for psychotherapy than philosophy. Nonetheless, it is easy to miss commonality of experience due to different cultures or belief systems (Fadiman, 1998).

‘Could not the therapist who gives psychotherapy to a severely deteriorated schizophrenic patient by trying to establish contact with the remaining healthy parts of the personality and to reconstruct the ego be considered the modern successor of those shamans who set out to follow the tracks of a lost soul, trace it into the world of spirits, and fight against the malignant demons detaining it, and bring it back to the world of the living?’ (Ellenberger, 1970: 9).

²⁶⁴ My personal mantra on my visits to Singapore, (a country in transition and transformation, caught between powerful cultural currents east and west) was whenever uncertain about how to respond to a situation to ask: “Is this culturally appropriate?” It showed respect for the other, protected me from the hubris of ‘the expert’, and introduced humour in delicate social and professional situations.

All stories in anthropological studies are temporal. To say of others “They are not like us” must be followed by “How can we learn and enrich the patient through this experience?” Jane’s accounts of her childhood and adult life described a ‘world’ beyond the pale of civilization (chapters 4 and 8). Seeing her as a survivor and accompanying her on a ‘journey’ with no guaranteed outcome was like an anthropologist entering an alien world.

Concluding comments on Freud, Palazzoli, and time.

A temporal viewpoint changes our understanding of Freud. He was certainly interested in the nature of time; ‘There is nothing in the id that that corresponds to the idea of time; there is no recognition of the passage of time’ (Freud, 1933: Vol. XXII: 74). The Unconscious, for which he constructed a complex and changing architecture ²⁶⁵ is central. This reflects the least directly accessible aspect of our minds and suggests that in a conscious world where we track time, there exists a profound part that is ‘timeless’ or ‘a-temporal’. This touches the atheist or God-believing existential position that while we struggle to give meaning to our lives, to gain temporal control of our destiny, it is the timeless core that confronts our finite nature (Sartre, 1945).

Let me describe a moment in the everyday of a simple, mundane experience. Just before reconsidering the previous paragraph I was waiting to be served coffee in a local coffee shop. The assistant asked me, “Are you busy today?” (she certainly was). It was a simple question. As I reflected on this it occurred to me that ‘being busy’ shields us from the timelessness of the id and facing existential despair at our finiteness. If we are to avoid Sartre’s ‘mauvaise foi’ we must grasp both realities of timeless eternity and mortality. ‘L’homme n’est rien d’autre que ce qu’il se fait’ (Sartre, 1945: 30) ²⁶⁶ since life in itself *a priori* ‘n’a pas de sens’ (ibid: 74). ‘Busyness’ anaesthetises such temporal dilemmas and numbs the ‘absurd’ of existence.

²⁶⁵ And therefore the sub- and pre-conscious together with his evolving ideas about the id, ego, and super-ego.

²⁶⁶ ‘Man is nothing other than what he makes of himself’.

Palazzoli introduces a temporal framework. She explicitly used ritual (Palazzoli et al., 1977, 1978, 1980), and alternative ways to consider time in healing. While Palazzoli (Palazzoli et al., 1978) does not refer to any anthropological studies about ritual, the work of Kapferer (1986, 2004) Turner (1967, 1969) and Schechner (1990, 2003) increases our understanding of the performative and temporal aspects of the Milan Systemic model.

Contributions from anthropology are present from the start (Bateson, 1973) such as the idea of ‘the time of the system’ returning (at a different temporal point) (Bateson, cf., *The Cybernetics of Self*, 1971) observed in his concept of mind.

‘The elementary cybernetic system with its messages in circuit is, in fact, the simplest unit of mind; and the transform of a difference travelling in a circuit is the elementary idea. ... The unit which shows characteristics of trial and error will be legitimately called a mental system’ (Bateson, 1970: 433-4).

When that system becomes my wider ecology and affects my interaction with an environment that reflexively influences my responses, my skin is no longer the beginning-and-end-of-‘me’. Bateson concludes, ‘The individual nexus of pathways which I call ‘me’ is no longer so precious because that nexus is only part of a larger mind’ (ibid: 440). A person’s ideas are immanent in ‘the other’ and become timeless. Palazzoli’s work with wider systems, and organizations (Palazzoli et al., 1986) was a logical progression from Bateson’s later ideas about our wider ecology and planetary survival.

Palazzoli was intensely pragmatic as demonstrated in her later work (Palazzoli et al., 1989). In this respect phenomenological approaches to time in philosophy, with special reference to Husserl (1991) and Merleau-Ponty (2011) provide a context for understanding a present imbued with temporal depth and substance that affects patients in their quest no longer to be defined by their pasts.

Twentieth and twenty-first centuries: reflections on our changing times.

The impact of repeatedly asking “What is time?” and realising how little we grasp its quicksilver qualities leaves me as curious as ever. The changing impact of time in contemporary life is a new area I want to consider briefly. Developments in technology are occurring at an exponential rate. Change is and has been so rapid that at the end of my research I can only flag certain issues related to time that are changing our living patterns.

‘Time and space – time to be alone, space to move about – these may well become the great scarcities of tomorrow’ (Burnside, 2013: 23) as we experience difficulty coping with ‘the overabundance of events in the present’ (Augé, 1995: 34). The malaise imputed in the aphorism ‘cash rich, time poor’ pinpoints a contemporary Western conundrum. Time is crowded out by living and the way we live leaves little time for life. The developing technologies create expectations to achieve more and more in less time.

The Tree of Life (Plate 9.3) is an eternal image that contrasts acutely with our ‘time poor’ life styles. It encompasses a threefold perspective and draws on imagery going back millennia, crossing all cultures and religions. It is an image that reflects our holistic yearnings for completeness ‘of the threefold structure of the cosmos, often expressed in the image of a tree. The Tree of Life ... penetrates the three zones of heaven, earth, and underworld, its branches penetrating the celestial world and its roots descending into the abyss’ (Cook, 1972: 8).



Plate 9.3. Petru Leahu. Tree of Life (Gospel Book) (Photo: Hugh Jenkins)

The Tree of Life unites underworld, earth, and heaven in one, the id, ego, and super-ego. ²⁶⁷ Roots reach deep exploring a world that reaches our elemental being. Branches spread in every direction from a central supporting trunk. ²⁶⁸ The celestial realm beyond the tree is ‘timeless’ space. In an age attuned to urban living there is hardly time for awareness of space or time; this possibility is even actively avoided. ‘Time and space have become luxuries or, for the many who have become unaccustomed to them, new and surprising burdens’ (Burnside, 2013: 23). This leaves us at risk of losing any sense of ‘I-Thou relation’ (Buber, 1955, 1966) with fellow humans or our ecology.

How does this affect psychotherapy? It raises issues about time, timing, rhythm in treatment, and patients’ changing expectations for immediate attention and quick results. Long-term therapy is not necessarily more effective although different kinds of problem need different levels of intensity and duration. Nonetheless, therapeutic models should not determine treatment duration. Work

²⁶⁷ Dante’s *Divine Comedy* describes a unity of three, paradise, purgatory, and inferno (Dante, 1964a, b/1965). In Christianity the triune God is Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. We describe our world in 3-D, or by adding time, in 4-D.

²⁶⁸ The eucalyptus tree sheds its bark regularly and is a representation of eternal life and regeneration.

with children and young people is affected to a degree by the pace of physiological, emotional, and cognitive changes.

A consequence of ‘the overabundance of events in the present’ is to invoke technology to cram more activities into less time. The internet on the move and smart phone technology as commuters on the 6.36 a.m. deal with their emails before they arrive at work (they are already ‘in work’, never ‘leave work’) allow everyone to be connected to everyone – globally, instantaneously.²⁶⁹ The internet enables multiple identities – several mobile numbers, more than one internet address. People who complain of being disturbed in the night by their mobile phones become anxious to use the on/off button for fear of losing an important contact. The apogee / nadir, depending on one’s viewpoint, is Facebook, Twitter, MSN, blogs, LinkedIn, texting, all accessible on the go via laptop, tablet, or smart phone. Self-worth is measured by how many ‘friends’ one has on social networking sites, living with the constant fear of being ‘unfriended’ by people one has never and will most probably never meet. Even food is ‘to go’; there is no time for being or ‘to be’.

This has practical consequences of immediate access in therapy with iPhone, Face-time, texts, emails, and Skype.²⁷⁰ These resources promise an ever-expanding world of possibility, or so it would seem. What if behind this global immediacy the world of experience and real interpersonal encounter is shrinking? I will take Skype as an example. We no longer have to leave our homes; we can meet instantly and have immediate control over the environment. The patient can terminate the encounter if s/he feels upset. How do I as therapist reach out to someone in distress a hundred miles away? The encounter is at the mercy of an unpredictable line drop-off. There is the problem of time boundaries and demand

²⁶⁹ The ‘Blackberry’ is no longer a sweet autumnal hedgerow berry, but an unforgiving tyrant that takes the office on holiday and has alienated many a family that has felt itself marginalised by its insistent demands.

²⁷⁰ There are examples of telephone contact services that can be life-saving. In the UK, Samaritans and Child Line are two highly professional services. The caller will never meet their ‘counselor’, but without them living might not be possible. A disadvantage of GPS technology is that people regularly using Sat Navs have no idea of where they are.

for instant gratification of reply via internet. The expectation to be an all-providing good figure is easily transformed into the rejecting parent if a reply is not immediately forthcoming. The therapist quickly becomes overloaded with data between sessions when every thought or emotion can be expressed instantly via email. There need be no sense of in-between-ness, no liminal tension because at any moment the patient can ‘communicate’.

Well managed, these new resources potentially enhance therapy, deepen a relationship that has begun, hold the patient in crisis, enabling him or her to take responsibility for contact. Active permission to call between sessions should the situation become intolerable, when based on a sound therapeutic relationship, becomes part of the holding, often reducing the need for instant contact.²⁷¹

I will return to the timeless image of the Tree of Life (Plate 9.4) and its place in such a changing world. This is the African baobab whose roots are said to be as deep as its branches are high.²⁷²

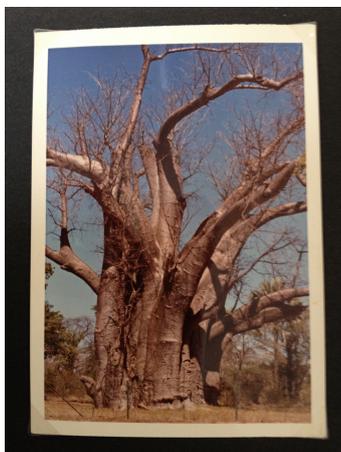


Plate 9.4. African Baobab tree, known as The Tree of Life. Photo Hugh Jenkins (1970).

The baobab in African mythology represents stability, rootedness, and balance between different spheres of being. In Western terms we think of psychological,

²⁷¹ Jane describes importance of this (chapter 8).

²⁷² The African baobab is reputed to live for thousands of years, in one instance 6,000 years, although since they do not create rings, they are much harder to date.

socio-economic, and cosmological spheres where balance must continually be sought anew. The African baobab, of all trees, is rooted deeply in the earth; it is profoundly stable, safe from toppling. Such images are important waymarks in a postmodern world of relative and changing values.

As a metaphor for time, structure, and continuity, tree images are powerful. Frida Kahlo's *Family Tree* (chapter 7, Plate 7.4) provides a dramatic symbolic image. Family genograms (chapters 1 and 5) recall anthropological kinship charts (chapter 7). All tell stories over time. They are temporal records of a specific moment of past-present timelines (Suddaby and Landau, 1998), like inverted trees as the older generations or 'roots' are above and the most recent ones below. In these images multiple realities of the 'branches' spread out from a central trunk between life and death.

Film and cinema.

In chapter 5 I reflected on different timeframes for the Mocan family filmed interview. There was the time of the interview, the times of viewing and re-viewing the film, the time of transcribing the dialogue, and later commenting on the material. This related to time categories for the family's experiences in a series of 'nows' then, and 'different kinds of nows' then. Thinking about this process I reflected on the power of film and cinema in daily life. Film arguably has had, and continues to exert a profound influence on how we view ourselves or others in many contexts. It reflects and shapes the world in equal measure; at time it challenges our sense of the real. Deleuze explores film in terms of 'the movement-image' (1986: 23) and 'time-image' (1989: 40).

In film we are presented with images of movement and time. What is actual and defines a virtual that can become actual; the actual map then defines a new virtual setting.

'When the virtual image becomes actual, it is then visible and limpid, as in the mirror or the solidity of the finished crystal. But the actual image becomes virtual in its turn, referred elsewhere, invisible, opaque and shadowy' (Deleuze, 1989: 68).

Colebrook (2002: 33) says that we should '(t)hink of time as the power of difference or becoming whereby we move from the virtual to the actual, from all the possible creations and tendencies to actualised events'. That is we have 'the past or impersonal memory which is virtual and the actual lines of lived time' (ibid: 33) recalling Aristotle's crystallised potential (actual) past and a future potential (virtual) yet to crystallise.

And what of time? From an Augustinian point of view all time is now, past, present and future; the image can only be in the present. In film, what has taken place, what takes place, and what will take place are all the same, past-present-future are a created illusion. There is a succession of events in the cinema yet they exist simultaneously. It is only in the *now* in the viewing room that we have the illusion of sequence or succession in 'a direct time-image ... the simultaneity of peaks of present' (Deleuze, 1989: 98). Cinema is not derivative but 'offers an image of time itself ... where time is what connects one movement to another' (Colebrook, 2002: 30). From a number of images which form a sequence when joined together 'it cuts and connects ... using the inhuman eye of the camera' (ibid: 31) to create a number of competing viewpoints or angles. The order in which scenes are shot, how they are cut, the juxtaposition of people and places, are different to real time sequence when filming. This results in a portrayal of time (and place, movement) that draws the viewer in but does not reflect the chronological order of filming.

For example, each episode of the Danish TV series *The Killing* presents a specific sequence where each key event is titled as a specific time; day, month, hour and minute.²⁷³ At the start of each episode there is a résumé of events so far which

²⁷³ *The Killing* (2007) (*Forbrydelsen*) Søren Sveistrup. Danish Broadcasting Corporation. Time or its seeming absence always structures film narrative. *Memento* is a powerful example of this.

Memento (2000) Christopher Nolan. '*Memento* is presented as two different sequences of scenes: a series in black-and-white that is shown chronologically, and a series of color sequences shown in reverse order. The two sequences "meet" at the end of the film, producing one common story' (Wikipedia, 2013). Time past-to-future and future-to-past interweave throughout and the viewer's chronological reference points are constantly disrupted.

reminds us of ‘the inhuman eye of the camera’ since sound and visual sequences are disrupted and re-ordered, and subsequent résumés are further disrupted, yet tell the same narrative.

As we think of film and time we consider movement, which would seem to be in and through time. Colebrook suggests that movement does not happen *within* time because time is not an entity.

‘Rather, time as the force of movement, is always open and becoming in different ways. Movement does not just shift a body from one point to another (translation); in each block of movement bodies transform and become (variation). So each movement transforms the whole of time by producing new becomings’ (Colebrook, 2002: 44).

In this brief foray into film, I wanted to consider time differently to what we have considered so far. Cinema has changed our worldview over the last hundred years. It disrupts our certainties of time and place, forces us to view from many other angles through a different eye - the camera eye. It challenges the certainty of memory (Jay, 2013) as in *L'Année Dernière à Marienbad*²⁷⁴ and our sense of reality. Were they there, did they meet, and what becomes of time? In cinema we are presented with ‘sounds that do not coincide with visual images’ (Colebrook, 2002: 33) and time-images that do not coincide with a progressive chronology or images that are time itself beyond our experience.

In an increasingly frenetic world our time sequences become disrupted. We see from other angles that we are not our own, the actual and virtual are blurred, and ‘things fall apart; the centre cannot hold’ (Yeats, 1994: 158). The promise of *The Tree of Life* comes to mind. If the person is centred like a trunk he or she has then the capacity simultaneously to perceive and enter multiple temporal and spatial realities, and retain equilibrium in a rapidly changing world.

²⁷⁴ Directed by Alain Resnais (1960).

Conclusion.

Philosophy and anthropology have enhanced my thinking about notions of time in psychotherapy in surprising ways. I realised as I continued that this inquiry could not stay 'out there'. It became increasingly personal. As I added my clinical experience my own story started to show through, as often happens in therapy. As Yalom (1989:14) suggests, 'we are all in this together'. It had to include me if the plot was to be more than a dry exercise without heart or soul.

With time a pivotal factor in psychotherapy the process and moment of healing assume unexpected qualities. The Platonic 'instant' provided insights into what appears to be beyond or out of time to enable change. Different ways of being in a present that co-exists with the past and future have sensitised my thinking and practice. When memory becomes *mémoire*, *souvenir* or *rappel*, this affects the nature of time past, irrespective of my conscious awareness; the present acquires more or less *retentive* or *protentive* thickness. Awareness of 'the liminal' in ritual has enabled me to give deeper meaning to the patient's experience. Whether we return at short or long intervals to 'the same logical point' or expand our horizons to allow a dialogue with the dead, we engage in changed temporal encounters. Whether we fear the future and confront it in the present through ritual; or whether we travel with our 'heart-mind' to instigate change, we alter the temporal world which in turn changes us. Whether we struggle with our patients' 'demons' in the 'time travel' of transference where time and place are transposed in a time that is never fully grasped, my notions of time and the Unconscious have expanded and changed. Time may previously have been a silent, even invisible guest. Through conscious awareness we intuit time, through cognition we describe time, through our hearts we experience time. In none of these can we grasp time. The Latin dictum claims; *tempus fugit!*

I began this thesis by quoting the anthropologist Paul Stoller. He worked in Niger while I worked in Gao, Mali, and he spoke Songhai better than I ever did. His writing reflects the power of the desert world, a vast liminal space where my heart

remained. ‘ “But to tell my story ... you have to tell your story as well. It takes two hands, ... using a well-known Songhay proverb, to secure a friendship” “Or to tell a story” ’ (Stoller, 2009: 161) and time, I would add, is their silent guest.

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Appendix 1.

Examples from analysis of material.

Transcript 1.

- Rodica “May I say something, what David should have said to introduce his dad? When David was two, my husband had an exhibition at the art museum.” *Past: a particular instant*
- David *(Inaudible – Liviu laughs)*
- Rodica “... and while he was in the exhibition I had a walk with him in the park. And we have that huge, umm, monument of Matthew Corvin, the king. And it’s a very big bronze statue that has figures standing on the sides. And he wanted me to take him up to one of the sculptures, and he was the size of the boot of one of the characters. And he put his arms around the boot, and he said: “This is what my daddy made”. And for me that was the first time I realised he knows what his father’s job is, to make this kind of sculptures. But many years later, about five or six years later, my husband had a sculpture in that square. It’s in bronze, and every time I pass by I touch it and say: “This is what my husband did”. So this is probably the way he should have introduced his father.” *Past, a particular time, which has a powerful meaning. Time locates place and relationships Statue represents historical time past.*
- [< 6.02. p. 4] *Past: nearer to the present*
- That is, in the immediate past – just now.*

Transcript 2.

- HJ “... And I’ve just been thinking about you as a family who lived in Romania, have crossed from one place to another, which is before and after the fall of the Ceausescu regime. And one thing maybe for Paul and Emma and David, what do you think the coming down of the Ceausescu regime in December 1989, what do you think it means for your mum and dad?” [**8.37. p. 6**].

Transcript 3.

- Paul “I was pretty small. I was two years old when that happened, but I still remember the revolution, there were gunshots outside. It was pretty interesting, perhaps interesting memories about that time, a pretty dark and, errm, I don’t know. I think it’s about freedom. That from that moment on we gain the freedom to speak, and to write and to express ourselves and of religion, and I think that was the best part of it, the freedoms we’ve gained.”
- Past: an instant*
Memory
Context of gunshots
Memories (the past)
Past: that instant - meaning
The freedoms – individual and religious
- HJ “What do you think it meant for your mum and your dad, because it may mean a different thing? What do you think that changed for them in the last seventeen years?”
- Paul “I think they had to decide whether to change their way of thinking and basically start a new life, because their whole life style changed at that moment, and so I’m glad that my parents were open-minded. And I know that a lot of people their age are not willing to learn computers and be ready to, errm, be open-minded. So I think that’s the best thing about them, that they became open-minded, and after that we travelled a lot and we had a good time.”
- [< 10.17. p. 7]
- Meaning*
Change
Time past – duration
Choice and change at a particular point in time
Time – new start.
Change at a moment – open-minded
New concept: open-mindedness
Effects of changes – over a period of time past (duration)

Transcript 4.

- Emma “I think this ‘open-mindedness’, (*makes quotation marks in the air with her hands*) you can read a lot of this after the communism, ... because I have no idea how my parents were before. I was four as well. I was thinking more of the travelling, that my brother was thinking about. So, I know a lot of parents that are our parents’ age still have problems with adapting themselves and raising their children, especially because they still believe that you have to be very strict with
- Open-mindedness*
Now – after political time, communism
Past - personal
Personal present, change and problems adapting (duration)
Past views in the present, recent past (post 1989)

your children in their way of thinking. It was great for us that our parents were going away all the time, and especially the travelling Paul was talking about. I think it had a lot to save my parents' relationship, because I remember when my mum was first time in Norway. I remember that now she goes everywhere she can. ... And now, fifteen years later, my mum has no problem to go by herself, and my dad has no problem letting her go. This has brought them closer.”
 [< 12.10. p. 8]

*Past – political changes
 affect personal
 relationships
 Personal time past*

Personal present re. past

Consequences

Transcript 5.

Liviu “Do you want to answer that? (*takes microphone*) Umm, I was studying Fine Arts, from the beginning of my education, and I enjoyed that. I came from a very poor family. My parents were farmers, but very intelligent and people that believed in God. They were very open-minded. So, they worked a lot as farmers, and bought a piece of land, and another piece of land for us three children. I have two brothers also. We are three. So, when my parents had some land, after many years of hard work, the communists came, and took everything, everything. So in that moment they were absolutely poor again, as they started. Then they used to tell us that when they started as a couple, they had just one spoon, they were so poor in those years in Romania. After that, when they got something with a lot of effort, and now they were poor again. Then God gave them a very good thought, they said, very remarkable they said, ‘From now on we cannot offer our children land,’ - that was the biggest value in the countryside, when you have land, you have a life. Because they said, ‘we cannot offer any more land to our children, we’ll move to the city and we will give them education’. So, today, if that wouldn’t have happened, you would

Personal history time

*Personal family of origin
 time*

Faith

Open-mindedness

*Political
 time,
 context
 for
 personal
 time*

*Instant - communists
 (political time past)*

In an instant (of time)

*Family history – past
 personal time*

*Faith – an instant in time
 past*

Moment in time - instant

*Personal past – at that
 time*

Personal future choice

Education

*Effects of history on the
 present*

have interviewed a peasant now (*makes hand gestures for hat and dancing movements, smiling*) dancing here for you for something nice, but, ...”
 [< 16.00. p. 10]

Transcript 6.

- | | | |
|-------|---|---|
| Liviu | “... It was not simple for the communists. In order to take the land from my parents. My father was a fighter, so he kept fighting for that. The animals that they took, the carriage, everything that they had. But my father was one of the last ones in the village that accepted. Only when they twisted his arm so badly (<i>makes gesture</i>) then he said: “OK. No way”. But they could do that because they had not only an open mind, but they had God that they believed in, they, they trust in. So, they could fight with people because they had a, ..” | <i>Political past time / period</i> |
| HJ | | <i>Open-mindedness. God, higher authority</i> |
| Liviu | “Truly, a belief system, ...”

“Yeah, and that became dangerous for any centralising political policy. Right, yeah.” | <i>Higher authority</i>

<i>Challenge, in political past - to authority</i> |

Transcript 7.

- | | | |
|--------|--|---|
| HJ | “It’s different for you? Liviu was saying about his family coming from one of three boys, a rural family. Was yours different?” | <i>Personal origins, past time</i> |
| Rodica | “Yes, very different. I grew up in the city, although my parents also came from poor backgrounds, but my mother is a medical doctor. Errm, I got the same idea, but a bit different than his parents. His parents did not know anything else, and they said: ‘We moved to town to give an education’, but they didn’t really know how to give an education, other than moving to the town. So, out of the three brothers, Liviu is the | <i>Personal time, past</i>

<i>Professional identity, context</i>

<i>Meaning system, education</i> |

Liviu	<p>only one who went to college eventually. Umm, my mother had a different approach. Errm, it was always clear that after you finish high school, you go to university. We haven't talked about university. It was something understood. ... At that time when we grew up, we lived in a Christian family, and we had not much choice in terms of education. There was not much to choose, because a lot of the jobs were closed, either for what it was called 'unhealthy social origin', or just because you had Christian beliefs you could not go in a certain direction. And I had both. I had an uncle who defected and went to the US, and I knew I could never be able to study history, law, umm, what else was forbidden? And of course police, and because we were in a Christian family ..."</p>	<p><i>Family script - present in relation to past - for expectations</i></p>
Rodica	<p>"Become a professor, ..."</p> <p>"... and we were practising Christians, we were not recommended to go to any profession that would make us school teachers, because they were getting rid of the school teachers that they had. So it wasn't a screening at the admission process, but it was a screening later on for jobs. So I ended up like many of the people of my generation, to go to polytechnic school. To my surprise I liked it, and I discovered I had some technical abilities. I never practised as an engineer for one day in my life, - never. Just because after I graduated I had my second child, so I stayed home for two years. And after that, the revolution came. And following my husband in the States for one year that he did there as a student, I had the chance of studying something else, and getting into a completely new field. And, er, that job took me to a university position now, and I discovered that I enjoy learning, - that I have to study all the time, as a job, and</p>	<p><i>Political past & choice</i></p> <p><i>Political time, past (discrimination)</i></p> <p><i>Political action – fleeing</i></p> <p><i>Personal time, faith Discrimination</i></p> <p><i>Political past time</i></p> <p><i>Political time – restricted choices</i></p> <p><i>Opportunities</i></p> <p><i>Past, personal event time</i></p> <p><i>Past, political event time Travel Opportunity</i></p> <p><i>Personal change - past</i></p> <p><i>Personal past, legacy for the future</i></p> <p><i>Mother's personal and political past times</i></p>

that I start to like it. And it's probably part of the legacy that I had. And I look at my mother sometimes, and I think that she could have gone much farther if she had lived in the times I lived, because she was much more serious and much more thorough. But because of the times that were given to her, she ended up as a country medical doctor, where she did a great job, but she could have done much better than that. And probably I was able to take the legacy a bit further.”
 [< 26.17. p. 17]

Political past times (for mother)

Opportunities (less) for mother - past

Transcript 8.

Rodica “What I am saying is that it's much more difficult now to keep a firm belief, umm, to present your value system than it was during the communist times. At that time it was dangerous, at that time, if you said it in the wrong setting it could have been dangerous, you could lose your job, and we know people, we have friends who got arrested. So it was pretty extreme. But now, ...”

Present – personal time (in political context), in relation to then (political past)

HJ

“At least it was clear.”

Political past – clarity of situation

Rodica

“It was clear. White was white, black was black. All people knew that is white, that is black. And now I am saying a lie because I have to, and everyone around me knows I am saying a lie, for I can say it because I know what the truth is. That was pretty much the system we operated at that time. Right now, I find it more difficult to talk about my faith than at that time. At least at that time I could say: ‘Well, I’m brave if I do it!’ Now I’m ridiculous if I do it. ... Just one phrase before I pass the microphone, (pause). I’m at the point of seeing these two, somewhat satisfied with the past, at least some of our values, the main ones. I’m more worried if they will be able to pass

Political past time – clarity

Present political time – more difficult

Past – then

Present – now political & personal

Personal present time

Personal future, anxiety

Paul

them on!”

Personal present

Political past

“I think that mum is pretty much right, because in the communist regime everybody had something they wanted to say, but they never had the courage because what it would mean to get arrested. I’m not talking only about Christians, but also about non-Christians. So, being a Christian and having a faith and having the courage to speak up, it was a really big thing. But nowadays you can say whatever you want because today nobody cares. So, you’re more like, ‘Why should I say because nobody cares?’ And that time was like, ‘I’m saying that I’m being a brave person, I’m being arrested. Everybody knows I risk a lot by saying that’. Today you don’t risk anything. They just get to mock you.’

Past, personal time, in relat. to past political time

Personal / political present

Personal past in political past context

Now personal time

[< 48.58. p. 31]

Transcript 9.

Rodica “... I think change is differently for everyone, and change from communism to this system has been very difficult for everyone. And I’m sure that men have their own story and their own viewpoint on issues. But as a woman, I think I am part of a generation that is going to disappear. We are a species, and by we, I talk, me, Ileana, Ileana, and maybe other women here (*indicates,*) and I don’t know. Umm, look at us carefully because we are an endangered species! We inherited (*Liviu chuckles*) a mentality of being housewives, erm, submissive wives, do all the chores in the house, washing, cleaning, shopping, - am I right? (*Looks towards Ileana Radu in audience*) umm, ...”

Liviu

Change – personal time
Political time, past

Gender personal time – present

Future personal time

Present – gender

Endangered species: from the past personal time thro’ to future.

Legacies

Rituals of the past

Rodica “Cooking, ..”

Liviu “Cooking, washing the dishes after, ..”

Rodica	“Cutting the hair for everybody.”	<i>Personal past time, legacies</i>
Liviu	“I missed that, <i>(she and Liviu laugh)</i> . Cleaning the house from loft to basement every Easter and Christmas. Then cooking at least three to four kinds of cookies for celebrations and ..”	
Rodica	<i>(Inaudible)</i>	
Paul	“No, no” <i>(Laughter, joking, Rodica, Liviu and Paul, physical touching.)</i>	
Rodica	<i>(Laughing, inaudible)</i>	<i>Personal past time;</i>
	“Ummm, definitely doing preserves in the fall; canning for winter. Everybody understands me, and then, after the revolution, all of a sudden there was this opening for a lot of careers. And there were a lot of things we could do, that we could not do before, and very graciously, our husbands allowed, and I stress the word ALLOWED us to develop a career. But we remained also, with all the rest, with all the other things. And I think that we are a generation that is going to disappear, because we juggle, and we still try to do all of this. I don’t know about all you women <i>(indicates with her hand)</i> , but it’s been a few years since I don’t do preserves any more. I don’t do canning and I feel very guilty about it. And sometimes the environment makes me feel guilty for not doing any of this. And my children sometimes mock me that they have to borrow ‘zacusa’ from somebody else, because “our mother never does it!” Errm, and I was able not to do this canning because I was away during the summers and I had a lot, and I had an excuse. But, there are other things, and I don’t do and feel guilty about them.”	<i>Moment in political time Change</i>
Emma		<i>Personal time – change / gendered</i>
		<i>Future personal time – transitional time (liminal). Present personal gendered time Re. past personal time – changes Impact – feeling guilty personal present time</i>
	<i>(Laughs)</i> “I don’t know if I’ll ever be a lot of a career woman. ...” [< 58.15. p. 37]	<i>Personal future, hypothetical, time</i>

Transcript 10.

- Emma “I think that you cannot change the world. I personally don’t think I can change the world, but at least what you can do is change the people that are very close to me, and maybe one day, when I’ll have my own family I’ll get to share with them some of the values that my parents shared with me. So, I’m not hoping for a new world, I’m just hoping for having a family like mine, if I can say that.”
[<51.30] *Present in the context of the personal future.*

Transcript 11.

- Emma “I have no idea what the future brings us, at least politically speaking, because maybe as my parents lived years ago, what they will tell their children, I mean twenty years ago, maybe my parents thought it will still be communism.” *Future – past – present*
- HJ “But you’ll be talking, one way or another, about how your parents lived through the end of communism and the beginning of a different kind of society in Romania. ... If you had a child, now you could tell your child something of that story. I wonder what that story would be for you?” *Future re. the past*
- Paul “I don’t know. Probably a thing that I would try to pass on, ... I think that’s the first thing I’ve learnt from my parents is to talk, to communicate. If you have an issue, don’t just go away and lock yourself in a room and shut up for the rest of your life about it. Just let it out. And being able to share things with your family, with my parents means a lot because I know a lot of my friends don’t have this at home.”
[<53.32] *Future*
Present

Transcript 12.

- HJ (To Emma) “But, you see. I don’t know *Recent personal past time*

Emma	<p>how it felt for your mother when she was telling us this, but behind what I was hearing, although she talked about endangered species, I was also hearing a kind of story about survival over, errm, not just the communist period, but before that. There were generations, often within a female culture, how women support each other. And I think women often support each other very differently to how men do or don't support each other. But what I was hearing was a kind of thread about survival. It was almost as though passing the microphone (<i>makes as if to pass the microphone</i>) she's passing the baton to you. And saying, how are you, as a young woman, if you are going towards middle age, get older, how are you going to survive? Because it's going to be different from how it was for her, how it was for her mother, how it was for her grand mother. That is what was coming into my mind when I was hearing the story."</p>	<p><i>in interview</i></p> <p><i>Gendered past / present.</i> <i>Survival theme</i> <i>Political past, incl. pre communist time</i></p> <p><i>Gendered stories over (past) times</i></p> <p><i>Duration – time – survival</i> <i>Legacies</i> <i>Present personal time</i></p> <p><i>Future personal time</i> <i>Future time, survival</i></p> <p><i>Future change (difference)</i> <i>In relation to past times (gendered)</i></p>
HJ	<p>"I don't think it's going to be that hard for me, because as I look at my grand mothers and their way of keeping the house, I think that as my generation comes in, ... I think, .."</p> <p>.....</p> <p>(<i>To Emma</i>) "Maybe, as you see for you or your mother, and from her generation moving to your generation, if you can inherit a different kind of freedom and choice without feeling guilty. Maybe that's a kind of chain you won't have to carry around any more. And, of course, it's men traditionally who often make women feel guilty. So that is also going to change in relationships between men and women, husbands and wives. That's what's behind a fundamental change in society I come from, at least at some level.</p>	<p><i>Future personal time</i></p>
Emma	<p>Maybe that's the same kind of changes here too in Romania." [< 1.00.50 p. 39]</p> <p>.....</p>	<p><i>Present time, personal, from past time, to present, to future time</i> <i>Choice</i> <i>Change – discontinuity with the past</i> <i>Present time, gendered (men re women)</i> <i>Future change</i></p> <p><i>Re current present political and personal time change outside (UK)</i> <i>Re present political time – changes</i></p>

HJ	<p>“And I thought that every woman is supposed to be a loving, caring wife and mother, and it’s maybe why we marry and have children, to find our identities. So, like I was telling you, I don’t think I’m going to be a very high career woman because I think that somewhere we each find ourselves in our gender about families. And so, about the guilt you were saying, it comes along the way I see things. It’s the same society, there’s nothing wrong.”</p>	<p><i>Personal present time in relation to past time</i></p> <p><i>Future time</i></p>
	<p>“Yes, I think ... (inaudible) some of what you are saying is extremely important, is that the thing I’m hearing you say is you have a choice. You could choose if you want to be a high career person woman, if that’s what you chose, or you could choose to be something different, whatever that is, career and family, and so on. But actually, you have a choice, and maybe that is the really important thing. And maybe, your mother said, I’m sure there were not the same choices for your mother, and certain ones for her mother, and most certainly not for her mother before her.”</p>	<p><i>Present personal time</i></p> <p><i>Choice</i></p> <p><i>Future personal (gendered) time</i></p> <p><i>Choice</i></p> <p><i>Discontinuities – personal time past with present time</i></p>
	<p>[< 1.03.52 p. 41]</p>	

Appendix 2.

David's position in the family interview.

Although David, the youngest family member spoke, looking at the recorded material it became clear that on each occasion he was asked a question, one or more family members would take over, to 'interpret' my comment or question, to suggest an answer to him, or to answer for him. It seemed that all members were quite appropriately in this public context, highly protective of him. Since this was not a therapy interview, my task was to elicit, not provoke changes in their dynamics. For this reason I chose not to use the minimal data from him in this study, as what he says is very much prompted by one or other family member.

An advantage of the group or family interview format is that different views are shared with family members, and members can develop or change their views. This also provides important information on family process dynamics. A disadvantage from a research point of view is that a particular member may find it more difficult to articulate their individual perspective. For example, about twenty minutes into the interview, I ask David: "David, I wonder what you were thinking, hearing about Emma. You're the generation of the internet, Google and all this kind of thing. So, it's a very different world you are living in, even from what Emma and Paul grew into. What do you think about that?" Emma leans forward to talk to David, and simultaneously Rodica asks if she can re-phrase the question, which becomes: "How do you feel about your life. Tell us something about your school. You're second grade right now. Would you tell us how old you are?"