

Review Article: Psychoanalysis as finite, psychoanalysis as infinite? Psychoanalysis' religious potential

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Abstract *This paper explores the implications of James Grotstein's important book, which revisits the question of the foundations of psychoanalysis in the light of its relation to 'infinity'. The review article argues that there are at least three infinities in psychoanalysis which complement one another, and which vindicate Grotstein's stance. These are the Kantian infinite, the metaphor of an infinity behind any and all experience, an infinity of the unknowable; the Hegelian infinite, the metaphor of a mirror infinity of mutually reflecting, or mutually alienating (but still, in that sense, negatively mutually mirrored), centres of subjectivity, implicit in experience; and the Freudian infinite, an infinite of cross-referencing, and mirroring, reduplication in a textual sense, transcending the immediacy of experience, a textual sliding away from any possible metaphor, model, or located centre of subjectivity, with various degrees of mutual suppression, censorship, and forced disguise, or partial revelation, which form its substance—a textual model of what is meant by 'repression'.*

Who is the Dreamer who Dreams the Dream?, James S. Grotstein, New Jersey and London: The Analytic Press, 1993, xxxiv + 347 pp., ISBN 0-88163-305-4

Introductory: the ground of any overview of psychoanalysis

Is there anything like an 'infinite' dimension to psychoanalysis? If the recognition of such an 'infinite' dimension of psychoanalysis were part of the total spectrum of psychoanalysis, a grounded and inclusive overview might be possible which would include both 'finite' and 'infinite' aspects. Though there would, appropriately, be continuing contention about where the centre or root of the whole spectrum would properly lie, it would thus make possible a comprehensive overview of psychoanalysis.

Grotstein's major book offers such an overview. It presents itself as such, to the more radical of us, because of its breadth of vision, and likewise to the more orthodox of us, by reason of its intensive, closely reasoned, engagement with the Psychoanalytic tradition; for instance, this book indicates precisely the point where Bion takes one step on from Klein.

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This is one of those condensed and closely packed, but very rich, texts, which it may be best to read straight through once, not worrying whether one understands it adequately, and then to read and re-read with a close attention, to yield its potential of greater richness, of its compelling grip on our imagination, and complexity, and consistency of core vision.

All I can do here is to expose the pathways of some of the major arterial themes, and my own exposition is unavoidably somewhat dense also. The text itself is holographic, and it is an instance of that kind of strong thinking which does not situate itself in terms of opponents and opposed views, but pursues its own path. This sometimes makes it harder to unpack it in the time-honoured way, of ascertaining what it is denying, in order to see what it is saying.

The question the book implicitly raises, is whether, in opening up, in a unique way, the question of the ultimate *ground* of psychoanalysis, this book has turned Psychoanalysis into something else, Philosophy or Religion? It brings into play both philosophy and spirituality to a depth beyond that pursued by almost all major psychoanalysts, except for certain exceptions like Jung (whom I include with psychoanalysis for reasons which shall become apparent), Bion, and Lacan.

Or, is this, rather, congruent with the emergence of its fundamental nature *as* psychoanalysis? Was Freud's profound ambivalence, about philosophy, his philosophical limp, a handicapping Oedipal limp (c.f., Freud, 1991a, postscript), which contributed to the schismatic, and, (in its appeal to authority), quasi-theological, form which Psychoanalysis initially took? Is its correction long overdue? And is today's renewed philosophical questioning of the ground of psychoanalysis connected with its renewed looking out over its frontiers at the rest of psychotherapy? How fascinating that psychoanalysis, without ceasing to be psychoanalysis, should have moved from a narrow preoccupation with the nature of drives, to a concern with infinity in various, including religious, forms!

Frontiers of psychoanalysis

I can here only pass in view peripherally the full range of its frontiers, as touched upon, or implicit, in this book. They include those with Jungianism (an especially important theme in this book), with the body itself, with energetic psychology, with spirituality, with religion, with philosophy, with neuro-science, with mathematics, with Darwinian biology, with post-modernism, and with literature.

I shall here concentrate on psychoanalysis' frontier with itself—for I believe this book, as indicated, offers a comprehensive and ambitious theoretical and clinical, reflexively aware, integration of the schools of psychoanalysis. And this takes us on to the question of the frontier with Freud himself, a figure significantly not *directly* as deeply considered as others such as Bion (though hiddenly present in the question-mark he constitutes, as we shall see), in this book, Freud the founder, facing both ways, in many ways the most enigmatic and questionable, the most Janus-faced, of all the figures we have to deal with in the story of Psychoanalysis, and who is certainly not to be equated with it in any simple way, though likewise it is unimaginable without him and he is woven into every thread of its tapestry.

This addressing of the grounds of psychoanalysis is connected with Grotstein's fundamental anti-environmentalist concept, of *authochthony* or creationism, to which I shall shortly turn, and which I link with his themes of 'infinity' and of 'agency'. It is also connected with Grotstein's more general highlighting of the philosophical issues regarding the ground of Psychoanalysis. Of its essence, Grotstein's is a vision which is open to other perspectives; it is not a closed system, although it is systematic, and constitutes a complex, and, in a true and

honourable sense, Platonic, totality. In this modified sense (in relation to phenomenological data, and the data of reflection) it is Popperian, a conjecture open to refutation or (more than merely verbal) modification.

The chapters of the book

The Chapter headings give some sense of its scope:

- (1) **The Ineffable Nature of the Dreamer** [this chapter shapes the whole book, and includes Grotstein's own 'key dream', in the manner of *Interpretation of dreams* (Freud, 1999); the key dream, however, is explored for its *structural* implications rather than its content implications];
- (2) **Autochthony (Self-Creation) and Alterity (Co-Creation: Psychic Reality in Counterpoint)** [Grotstein's grounding of psychic autonomy and psychic reality, and core attempt to demarcate psychoanalysis];
- (3) **A Fearful Symmetry and the Calipers of the Infinite Geometer;**
- (4) **Inner Space: Its Dimensions and its Coordinates** [these two chapters explore the relevance of Matte-Blanco's 'symmetrical/asymmetrical infinite/finite sets' model for psychoanalysis, and combine his concepts with a new 'perceptual/processing/structural' model of experiencing, based on mathematically analogised dimensions of inner space];
- (5) **Psychoanalytic Subjects** [a reconstruction of the psychoanalytic concept of the subject];
- (6) **Internal Objects** [this chapter 'mops up' the whole issue, and Kleinian domain, of pathological, projected, errant, subjectivities; its theme might be stereotyped as 'psychic objects are *alienated* subjectivities'];
- (7) **The Myth of the Labyrinth;**
- (8) **Why Oedipus and not Christ? I;**
- (9) **Why Oedipus and not Christ? II** [these three chapters 'cash' the theoretical cheque, so far established, in terms of a profound exploration of both the psychic, and the collective-human, significance of several myths, and works of art, especially those of the Minotaur, and Michelangelo's *Pieta*, in connection with detailed exploration of clinical examples; in them the 'autochthony' theme is integrated with an exploration of the 'sacrificial' trend in human existence, and the connection of that in turn with the transference/countertransference exorcistic enactment process, which is also a form of 'reduplication', on which we touch later, or 'mimesis', Girard, 1978];
- (10) **Bion's Transformations in O** [this is Grotstein's summation of Bion's work, which brings together the themes of the rest of the book, culminating in his invocation of the hidden 'third' 'Kleinian' position,—after the 'paranoid-schizoid' and 'depressive' positions,—of the '*transcendent position*'].

Psychoanalysis and schism: complementarity of Freud and Jung

So much by way of scene-setting; we now turn to the central themes of this book. They return us to the conflicts which arose in the origins of psychoanalysis. Freud was in his own way a visionary, a life-long member of the B'nai B'rith, of the Society for Psychical Research, a cautious believer in telepathy, owner of the central texts of the Jewish Mystical Tradition (c.f., Bakan, 1958), whose admirable ambition was to found a profession of 'secular ministers of souls', who would be neither priests nor doctors.

Grotstein effectively takes as read that the original division was oversimplifying, and draws, where relevant, equally upon Jung, and, more importantly, freely and generously seeks to identify the core common ground in the tradition (c.f., e.g., Samuels, 1986). Thus he makes the familiar linkage, for instance, of the Kleinian concept of unconscious phantasy in relation to Jung's archetypes, which is connected to Bion's mystical Gnosticism, Matte-Blanco's concept of 'symmetry', and the general acknowledgement of the mystical tradition. In Chapter 7 on the myth of the labyrinth and the minotaur, Grotstein links Klein on the early stages of the Oedipal, with the archetypal domain, in a way which substantially parallels Jung's analysis, in *Symbols of transformation* (1956), of Siegfried's slaying of the dragon in Wagner's *Ring*. Chapters 8 and 9, poignantly linking the Oedipus and the Christ myths, are simultaneously Freudian and Jungian. The implied Judaism/Christianity tension of this is presented with authority by one who acknowledges with grace his own rabbinical heritage and direct rabbinical bloodline.

Now, the recognition of the centrality of the archetypal connects with Grotstein's 'creationist', and anti-environmentalist thrust, invoking his concept of 'autochthony', as we shall see shortly, and this leads us into the central theses of this paper.

What defines Psychoanalysis: technique or content?

This renewal of the question of Psychoanalysis' relation with Jungian positions, then, brings us to the frontier of psychoanalysis with itself—including the boundary with psychoanalytic psychotherapy (and, no doubt, beyond, to the para-analytic, the active approaches rooted in psychoanalysis, c.f., for all of this, Wilkinson, 2003). Grotstein puts forward an intriguing thesis. In the important international discussions now taking place concerning the boundaries of psychoanalysis as such, which are related to psychoanalysis' movement towards updating itself, in the light of certain inescapable realities of the modern world and modern media realities, Otto Kernberg has attempted (Kernberg, 1999) to define the boundaries of psychoanalysis in terms of *technical methodology*—i.e., *interpretation*, *transference analysis*, and *technical neutrality*.

Such an attempt can only succeed if it is shown that these lead,—and that there is no alternative which can also lead,—to the evocation of unique contents which can be evoked in no other way. The reason for this lies in the fact that the methodology of orthodox psychoanalysis is exclusive, involving the claim that it cannot be integrated with other methods, such as bodywork. This is a peculiar situation, for it is not primarily positively defined; it is defined, rather, by a *negation* (equated, contentiously, with the doctrine of abstention, or technical neutrality). This definition by negation, by the very nature of a negative definition, must have a very strong *positive* ground, or it will be arbitrary and merely tradition-based. On it, therefore, lies the *onus probandi*, the burden of proof.

Now, Grotstein does have a *general* thesis about these positive contents, and grounds, with which he thereby attempts to epitomise the shared core assumptions of the whole range of schools of psychoanalysis. Thus he includes: classical and orthodox Freudian schools, Kleinian, Fairbairnian, other Object Relations schools, Self-Psychology,—which he includes, like Kernberg, with reservations, in his view concerning intersubjectivity; these reasons will shortly become apparent,—and Lacanian, and which implicitly include the Jungian, as already indicated. Grotstein, then, appeals to real differences in *content* as the foundation of the demarcation of psychoanalysis.

Grotstein's appeal to *autochthony* as the ground of Psychoanalysis

This he does in terms of his contrast of *autochthony* (creationism) and *alterity* (approximately: adjustment to the external)—the former arguably the heir of Freud's concept of primary narcissism and its variants and successors. By this pairing he roughly means, respectively, the

pre-intersubjective and post-intersubjective phases (in, for instance, Stern's, 1985, sense). He believes that psychic reality begins by *creating* its reality, because it cannot tolerate the primary deprivation or rupture which is entailed in encountering 'reality-in-itself', without adequate parent-mediated containment. Good 'parent-mediated containment', as evoked by Winnicott or Bion, will support such 'creationism'. This 'reality-in-itself' is transhistorical ultimate reality, both beginning and end, simultaneously both pre- and trans-personal, both Bion's 'O', and his 'beta-elements'—an apparently multiplex metaphysical (and Kantian) postulate and synthesis whose meaning will appear later.

Ordinary intersubjective-reality-based interventions, which presuppose the attainment of social reality and relativity, he regards as the province of psychotherapy, not psychoanalysis, here being in accord with the psychoanalysis/psychotherapy distinction, or spectrum, as explored by Kernberg (op. cit.), Wallerstein (1995), and others. Self-psychology and relational approaches in psychoanalysis are perceived as overlapping into psychotherapy thus defined.

He does recognise a 'dual track' aspect here, allowing both at their respective levels. However, the thesis is stated with emphatic clarity, in the end, as follows:

One must first believe that one has autochthonously 'created' the world that one discovers or encounters, and then, epigenetically, one must become a self with a continuous 'history' who then—and only then—becomes able to allow one's self to be the vulnerable and varyingly helpless recipient of life's experiences.

It is my belief that the only proper subjects for psychoanalytic discourse are primary and secondary autochthony [Klein's 'paranoid-schizoid' and 'depressive' positions, respectively]—and that the psychoanalyst's only proper intervention is interpretation of the unconscious (autochthonous) phantasies that constitute the patient's psychic reality. (pp.56–57)

The theme of 'agency' becomes important later, and the reference to 'self' relates his thinking to Jung's (but also Kohut's!).

The privileging of 'creationism' is expressive of something common to a variety of approaches, both psychoanalytic and para-analytic; it would include, or have affinities with, Winnicott's (1982) notion of illusion; Klein's (Isaacs, in King and Steiner, 1992) primary unconscious phantasy; Bowlby's (1997, 1998) and Fairbairn's (1952) notions of the self creating itself as a badness in response to abandonment or rejection. From related analytic and para-analytic approaches, it would include Jung's recognition of the primacy of the archetypal (Jung, 1956); Transactional Analysis' notion of early script decision (e.g., Erskine, *et al.*, 1999); Gestalt's (Perls *et al.*, 1979) recognition of the primacy of Gestalt-process/organisation at the contact-boundary; and any approach which acknowledges a layer of primary self-creation or empowerment, transcending environmentally dependent victimhood.

Grotstein, then, argues that it is important *that this, too, is seen in its 'autochthonous' aspect, its creative function* for the analysand, if we are not inadvertently to exacerbate their alienation by denying their internal sense that they had/have power over outside (environmental) forces. There is, therefore, something profound in this. And we can see the force of necessity in relating this to some such primary ground—if Psychoanalysis is to be demarcated from the para-analytic approaches I have indicated (c.f., Wilkinson, 2003).

Developmental versus Existential interpretations of 'autochthony'

But, as it stands, it is paradoxical. *If it is taken developmentally*, it would have the implication that, for instance, that anything later than the Kleinian model of the achievement of the

Depressive Position (which constitutes secondary autochthony, for Grotstein), let alone the developmentally later (Freudian) model of the Post-Oedipal phases, and Grotstein's own extrapolation from Bion of a developmentally attainable Transcendent Position, which would be attained sustainably normally in mature adulthood, would then be movements *out* of the psychoanalytic realm rather than its consummation,—unless he can argue that this is always the ground bass, the underpinning, of all of the work. But can he do that on a developmental basis? There is a deeply ramified entanglement of 'aetiology' and 'teleology' here—one which is not perhaps entirely an accident, in view of the ontogenetic bias of Psychoanalysis, its huge developmental preoccupation.

Clearly, here, Grotstein is drawing upon Kleinian understandings of the primacy of unconscious phantasy as the core content of mental life (c.f., Isaacs, in King & Steiner, 1992), and allied notions. He relates (pp. 46–47) this aspect of Klein to Freud's fundamental statement about the primacy of 'psychic reality' in *Introductory lectures on psychoanalysis* (Freud, 1971).

Whether the Freudian statements can bear this assimilation, when Freud is referring clearly as much to post-Oedipal as to pre-Oedipal fantasies, and is simply referring to the qualitative (transcending of factual memory) character of our proactive shaping of reality through imagination, rather than its developmental phase, is the kind of question one may raise throughout Grotstein's book. I shall suggest that Grotstein's distinction works, and is completely valid, if it is taken *ethically/existentially* rather than developmentally (rather along the lines of Symington, 1986), but that it then does not provide the criterion of demarcation he needs, but rather opens psychoanalysis to the world!

So this then has the consequences that the required criterion for the demarcation between psychoanalysis and psychotherapy would seem to dissolve—which is why the developmental view is tempting.

In these cross-comparisons, theoretically we are clearly dealing with clusterings, and family resemblance spectrums, that someone else might reassemble differently. This potential pluralism may be the saving grace, and the most truly Freudian feature,—for Freud is the supreme *master* of the indeterminate (c.f., Balint, 1984, Derrida, 1987, Gouws, 2000, Wilkinson, 2000, 2003),—of Grotstein's book, which therein occupies, as any subtle 'humanities' text properly must, a space, a space very open to dialogue, of hermeneutic indeterminacy.

In this instance, the Freudian position on psychic reality points the way to a liberation from the criterion of the developmental stage, opening the way to recognising the more universal criterion of the intrinsic autonomous and proactive aspects of the psyche. We may still validly see dominant prototypes, or templates, in pre-Oedipal and pre-Intersubjective experience. In general we may hold that Grotstein here has grasped something so fundamental, that whether the precise form in which he has stated it is correct is of less moment. But also there is the challenge to extricate the whole issue from its entanglement in the developmental model.

In such passages as the following we perhaps see the 'developmental' understanding at work just beneath the surface of the text:

Making interpretations to a patient that impute traumatizing ('organizing') responsibility to external objects for his earlier (or even current) life risks the emergence of reifications that collusively establish a manic defense (Klein, 1940) against a personal sense of responsibility for the trauma, thereby foreclosing the patient's capacity to own a sense of internal (unconscious) responsibility as an integral self-respecting self. (p.57)

It is my contention that the transition from the dominance of the one-person model to the two-person model some important aspects of the former have been overlooked. An emphasis on an intersubjective model suggests that psychic reality owes its origin to *actual events* in the individual's life. (p. 42, emphasis added)

The ‘one-person’ versus ‘two-person’ contrast of models, equated with ‘intra-subjective’ versus ‘inter-subjective’, *starts out* as a developmental analysis.

The implied explanation of how the ‘inter-subjective’ model, conceived developmentally, then becomes the paradigm for intersubjective factual knowledge, is derived from how the stage of alterity (object-constancy, intersubjectivity, etc.) emerges. The point is that the concept of independent reality is established in the phase of alterity, and therefore is, by default, taken as the paradigm—and this is rightly associated with intersubjectivity:

Autochthony—is dialectically counterposed to intersubjectivity and *social constructivism*, the realization of ones dependence on the other and of the absence of omnipotence [= ‘alterity’]—a realization that applies not only to one’s birth but also to the cocreation with the other of one’s personal reality. (p. 38)

Here, then, can be seen the tempting equation which links with the equation: intra-subjectivity = psychoanalysis; inter-subjectivity = psychotherapy, whereby, in the final words of the chapter, the original quotation above, psychoanalysis is directed to autochthony alone (viz: ‘the only proper subjects for psychoanalytic discourse are primary and secondary autochthony’, p. 57).

But, in fact, as suggested, this strand is not the profoundest layer of what Grotstein is saying. I might sum up my response to, and reading of, him (which will be illustrated in the rest of this paper) in the formula:

‘Alterity is not an alternative to, but a transformation of, autochthony. Autochthony, in the sense in which it is foundational, is not primarily a developmental phase, but an existential stance of being-in-the-world.’

And here, in embryo, in the emphasis on transformation into (in his view of Bion, e.g.), rather than displacement of, autochthony by alterity, is implicit my reasoning for regarding Grotstein, in philosophical terms, as even more an Hegelian than he is a Kantian, a theme to which I shall return, and which is the route whereby we come to the theme of ‘infinity’. *It is primarily prospective not retroactive*. This, of course, has fundamental implications for ‘finite’ psychoanalysis, *since it undercuts or relativises the developmental interpretative model* (in a way which complements the ‘process’ emphasis of Ehrenberg 1992, c.f., Wilkinson, 2003).

Once this is all grasped, essential things in Grotstein’s text fall into place. In the following passage, the emphasis on emerging agency can be seen as something which may perfectly well be enhanced in the phase of inter-subjectivity [grasped in a non-simplistic way]:

Autochthony represents the infant self’s assumption of the source and means of creation like God, of a personal cosmic order; in the process, the pleasure principle becomes attached to the narcissistic capacity to do so. That is, the infant ‘claims’ personal ownership of his drives and becomes an autochthonous [at a pinch, this could be replaced by ‘autonomous’, here], self-determining self with a committed sense of *personal agency* [emphasis added] (Stern, 1985; Moran, 1993). [Grotstein then links this with Bollas’, 1989, movement from the ‘Fate’ to ‘Destiny’ motif.] (p.53)

Agency, subjectivity, and the dream

With this theme of ‘agency’, in relation to autochthony, we now cross over into the heart of Grotstein’s vision. For these link with his central theme of the nature of subjectivity. The chapters which are most nearly key chapters for this are the title Chapter 1, on the constitution

of dreaming and the dreamer, and Chapter 5, *Psychoanalytic Subjects*. Here it becomes more fully apparent what the insistence on autochthony is all about, what it is grounded in, and into what it opens up, which paves the way to the later exploration of personal and collective redemptive myth, and of ‘mimesis’ and the scapegoat theme (c.f., Girard, 1994) in Chapters 7–9.

In summary, in the self’s initial collision with ‘ultimate reality’ (Bion’s ‘O’, Kant’s ‘noumena’, Lacan’s ‘Real’),—this is *everything which is ‘not-self’, both inner and outer*,—the self divides into one part which *filters and contains*, in the light of what can be tolerated, and another part which manifests ‘ultimate reality’ within the self, and is *filtered and contained*—this, as a whole, is the creative act of autochthony.

The parallels with, and is an inheritance from, Freud’s censorship (dream-thoughts/dreamwork) model, will be apparent in this concept of a division between a ‘manifesting’ part, and an ‘interpreting/filtering’ part. Also will be apparent the re-emerging origin of Freud’s model in turn from the Kantian (Kant, 1964) model of the representation process’s collision with the unknown as ‘thing-in-itself’. This is an example of the extraordinary fertility, and illumination, of the interconnections Grotstein establishes and *re-establishes*.

A long quotation is necessary to convey, and illustrate, the many linkages being made here. It also illustrates the condensed character of the writing to which I alluded above:

By agreeing to experience the event-object confronting me as ‘object,’ [here is confirmation of the argument about ‘alterity’] I, the subject, sample and prepare for the strange new event-object by anticipating its nature with inherent a priori categories (Kant, 1787) that I have at my subjective disposal. That is, I autochthonously ‘create’ it [here Kantian ‘representation’ and ‘creation’ merge] (see chapter 2) in order to make it familiar (native) so that I can counter and countenance its strangeness. . . . In this formulation, then, the subject comes into being when it experiences a lack, a lack that originates at birth when fetal completeness and perfection are shattered by the act of birth and the newborn is ‘thrown under’ (into) the breach of experience and engaged to the death (i.e., for a lifetime) with the minions of the Real (with infinity, chaos, Ananke, beta elements, noumena, things-in-themselves, O). . . . I have already posited that two subjectivities exist (as aspects of a Supraordinate Subject of Being and Agency): the Ineffable Subject and the Phenomenal Subject. *What characterises each of these subjectivities is an incompleteness that reminds each of its need for the other and for the external other.* [emphasis added] (p. 119)

Here we have a conception (c.f., Freud, *On negation*, 1991b) which bases subjectivity on a primal splitting, grounded in denial or negation, in line with the conceptions of Freud, Lacan, Hegel, and Heidegger. Thus, on Heidegger’s *aletheia* (un-concealment) model, if we take it fully literally, unconcealment is secondary, concealment is the primary mode of relation to the true (c.f., Heidegger, *Parmenides*, 1992, p 24 and *passim*)

‘The being sinks away into concealment in such a manner that with this concealment of the being I remain concealed from myself. Moreover, this concealment is itself concealed.’

At the level of the ‘I’, denial is before acknowledgement, as when we receive intolerable news, of bereavement for instance: we simply wipe it out, and change the meaning, half consciously. We may become aware of it a moment later as we process the reality. Consciousness itself, on the model of much psychoanalytic thought, also that of Hegel (1977), Julian Jaynes (1990), and of Buddhism, is quite literally the reflexivity of

unconcealment, the undoing of concealment or avoidance, or perhaps, rather, their transformation (so that the denial continues to lodge, like a piece of ancient shrapnel, at its heart). This is an economy of negation, an epitomising annulment of the negation, negation of negation, whereby the *sign* as minimal or abbreviated significance, as referential intentionality, is created, in the transformation of a primary denial, which Jaynes calls 'paralogical consilience'. This is his word for something near Orwell's 'doublethink', when something, for instance a statue in bicameral, pre-self-consciousness, ancient Egypt, is treated simultaneously as 'alive'—fed regularly, for instance—and yet also 'dead'—assumed not to move, and so on. (This has its parallels in the development of children's thought, c.f., e.g., Piaget, 1990.)

An illustration of these abstract formulations would be the recognition in early childhood of the absence of an object, which is the prelude to its being evoked by a sign. The following schema is not intended as literally true—merely as a possible illustration of how the negation might be in turn annulled. The child points or reaches towards the absent, but desired, object. Its absence is thereby denied. Later, a sound or image evokes the object in its absence, as a sign of (for) it. The absence of the object is now presupposed and incorporated within this. The making present of the object, in the pointing or reaching towards it, is now in turn denied (e.g., the child treats the object as 'hidden' behind the settee by mum). Thus the denial of absence is now annulled once more in the sign. This double negation is how the sign constitutes a minimal or homeopathic replication of the thing (*Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, Freud, 1991a). The basis of the recognition of the reality of the Other in a primary negation is here suggested.

Freud works on this assumption also—which is highly Platonic, for the Platonic *an-amnesia*, and *an-amnesis* is the reversal of a forgetting, evoking a primary remembering which has been denied. It is a double negative not a positive (c.f., again, *Negation*, Freud, 1991b). And out of this double negative is the positive alone constituted as we know it. With this model of primary repression, Grotstein is in the end very Freudian. Here the Jungian position, overtly at any rate, misses something essential, which is perhaps connected with Jung's avoidance of his own affinity with Hegel and with the double negation model (arguably implicit in his doctrine of polarities, though). If there is a defining difference between the Freudian and the Jungian positions it lies in the cardinal position accorded to *repression* in Freudianism. But Freud and Grotstein here are also, of course, very Hegelian, transformational, bringing them closer to Jung also, and, again, to this I return.

There is, then, Grotstein holds, a primal division or splitting, based on negation, which constitutes the Subject. There also arise many mediatorial and defensive elements in the face of this primal division, which Grotstein personifies quite vigorously! For instance, in the context of dreaming we have: The Dreamer who Dreams the Dream [who is also both The Background Presence of Primary Identification, and The Ineffable Subject of Being, and is associated with Bion's 'O']; The Dreamer who Understands the Dream; the Dreamer who Makes the Dream Understandable [the biblical Joseph, the analyst in us]; and whose partner is the Dreamer Who is Willing to Have His Dream Understood. Of the first three of these, in Jungian vein, Grotstein says,

All three of these Dreamers are functions of 'I' and Self in their ultimate, ultimate, unknowable, preternatural quintessence and awesome excellence. We are fated never to know them, only to be their clients and to walk in their shadow.

The dream is the epiphany of divine conversations between the 'ineffable subject' and the phenomenal subject and constitutes a reading of our existence while we are in transit between our once and future being. (pp. 35–36)

The constituting subjectivities which are involved in the evocations of the dream, drawn out as structural inferences from Grotstein's own 'key dream', in his first Chapter, from which originated this whole enquiry (and there is much implicit personal history touched upon here), are developed into an account of Psychoanalytic Subjectivity from this, in the Chapter *Psychoanalytic Subjects*, from which I have already quoted at length.

Agency

Grotstein develops the theme of Agency in this Chapter, into a kind of voluntarism of the collective Subject, so that 'autochthony' becomes, at one level, a *primordial creative act*:

Subjectivity not only dares to risk being the authentic sense organ foreexperience (i.e., for *being*) but becomes active by subjectivising experiences as its own personal repertoire and finally links up with its sense of *agency* (intentionality, will, desire, conation, entelechy) to seek and to react to experience—all the while remaining true to its nature. Subjectivity in action can be seen in infants as they lick an object with their spittle—to make it their own personally (subjectively) experienced property—prior to attempting to swallow it. (p. 121)

But, in doing this, Subjectivity has acquiesced in a contraction of its own infinity, which Grotstein here and there puts vividly, and perhaps inevitably, in terms of the Gnostic symbol or metaphor of God (whilst himself remaining carefully and cautiously agnostic in a Kantian way), which evokes the ambiguous status of agency in his model—for instance:

Yet if God is the Ultimate Subject and if it is a universal law that every subject is incomplete and thus subject to desire, then perhaps we can hypothesise why God created mankind. He may have needed mankind to 'desire His desire' so as to ratify and notarize [juridical categories—i.e., signifying *agency*] His Ultimate Being. (p. 139)

and

It is my belief that 'world spirit'—that is, Hegel's (1807) *Geist*,—appears to shrink (or to become decentred as the unconscious) as the infant accepts its self-in-the-world and becomes branded and claimed by personal and social subjectivity. That is, one's own unique and idiosyncratic fingerprint or sign converts the universal into the personal. To become a subject, then, means to allow oneself to be subjected to life and to *claim* ['agency': emphasis added] oneself out of the maw of the cosmic universal. (p.121)

Without going into the full detail of the complex multiplicitousness Grotstein finds in the notion and reality of Subjectivity, something of its scope and reciprocal inter-exchangingness has now been suggested. Such reciprocal inter-exchangingness has here become explicitly Hegelian, (and Girardian, of which more later). Now, Agency—as the form of the *manifestation* of the 'Supraordinate Subject of Being and Agency' and 'the Ineffable Subject of Being',—takes on a role parallel to that of the Freudian Preconscious as the intermediary between the Ineffable Unconscious and the Personal Conscious (the Freudian roots are never far from the surface!).

Grotstein makes it quite clear that the question whether Agency belongs to Ego or Unconscious/Id is one of the undecideables; Agency, for him, is one of those Hermes-like *intermediary* or intersection concepts/realities, like the Preconscious. It is important partly because, as such, it helps point the way (with the assistance of Rangell and Matte-Blanco) towards the re-integration of Freud's 'topographical' and 'structural' models.

A much increased weighting and ubiquity is accorded, in this process, to the Preconscious (a weighting which is implicit in the astonishing cryptic communication of insight about transitions between psychic dimensions in Freud's *A note on the mystic writing pad*, 1991f, c.f., Derrida, 1978, Gouws, 2000). For, if this is not done, in many ways, the later Freudian metapsychology, with its foundations in the theory of narcissism as a finitist response to Jung (Wilkinson, 2000), becomes an attempt to contract the infinitist elements in the theory of dreams; which is illustrated, for example, in Freud's contraction of Groddeck's 'It' (Freud, 1991c).

But, even more, for Grotstein, the totality of our being, as we experience it, is brought into being as such by an act of creation; with Goethe/Mephistopheles, and Schopenhauer, and Wittgenstein (1969) he will say

—und schreib getrost
 'Im Anfang war die Tat.'
 —and write with confidence
 'In the beginning was the Deed.'
 (Goethe, *Faust*, part I)

And so our empirical agency is, in effect, the surrogate (a strikingly Gnostic theme) of the cosmic or collective unconscious agency, of our participation in the primal act of creation. *Here is the link with autochthony*, as promised, and this now points us on towards the concept of infinity in Grotstein's work.

Finite and infinite

First I shall outline in anticipation and in summary the three main infinities with which we have to do:

The Kantian infinite is the metaphor of an infinity *behind* any and all experience, an infinity of the unknowable.

The Hegelian infinite is the metaphor of a mirror infinity of mutually reflecting, or mutually alienating (but still, in that sense, negatively mutually mirrored), centres of subjectivity, implicit *in* experience.

And **the Freudian infinite** is an infinite of cross-referencing, and mirroring, reduplication in a *textual* sense, *transcending the immediacy of experience*, a textual sliding away from any possible metaphor, model, or located centre of subjectivity, with various degrees of mutual suppression, censorship, and forced disguise, or partial revelation, which form the substance—a textual model (c.f., Gouws, 2000)—of what is meant by 'repression'.

As already suggested, Grotstein's infinite is overtly, like Bion's, which is explored in the final chapter, culminating in Grotstein's key concept of the transcendent position, a Kantian infinite—but sliding towards the Hegelian in both of them! This Kantian infinite is the infinite of that which transcends any possible sensory experience. (This is, like Freud's infinite, an inexhaustibly protean infinite.) At the same time, it cannot be mediated other than through sensory experience or symbolism derived from it. It is encountered, rather,—at a different categorial level, also envisaged by Kant and Schopenhauer—in event and action—volitional agency. It cannot be mastered in knowledge; it can only be enacted, in a primary enactment, in the manner indicated above. Summarizing, as already indicated, what this means is that the self collides with 'ultimate reality' (Bion's 'O', Kant's 'noumena', Lacan's 'Real'); and this is *everything which is 'not-self', both inner and outer, which is unknowable, but is implied or postulated in our enactments*. The self divides into one part which *filters and contains*, in the light of what can be tolerated, and another part which

manifests ‘ultimate reality’ within the self, and is *filtered and contained*—this, as a whole, is the creative act of autochthony.

This culminates in the transcendent position. Here, in this development of Bion, Klein’s vision, uneasily contained in the finite, emerges in its latent infinitude, but only as something enacted. For Kantian reasons also it is not knowable as such. Grotstein, therefore, speaks of evolutions in ‘O’, rather than transformations in ‘O’, and holds that the transformations can only take place *in our relation to ‘O’*. At the same time, the transcendent position is nothing recondit; just watching a sparrow pecking corn—if we really ‘see’ it—can be an experience of the ‘transcendent position’. This is the simplicity of the Japanese *Haiku*, (and of the ‘*sunyata*’,—emptiness, the void,—in Buddhism, though Grotstein does not touch on Buddhism).

At the end of the book Grotstein quotes striking comments from an analys and, of which the following is a brief excerpt:

None of the mobilization I set in motion yesterday in regard to my job was really necessary. I was in a state of unnecessary overkill. I need to acknowledge, in daily, minute-by-minute episodes, that I do not need to get hysterical and enter into crises. In the scheme of things I did not need to create a crisis. The whole thing did not need that response. *One was only a prop for the reenactment of the evolving human condition.* (p. 304, emphasis added)

So, roughly, of Bion’s versions of Klein’s positions, as further developed by Grotstein, ‘paranoid-schizoid’ is split, projection, and attack; ‘depressive’ is personal reparation and concern; but ‘transcendent’ is comprehensive acceptance as a response *in action* of the whole self to the totality which is ‘O’. At a realistic level it is the positive realisation of the implication of the capacity for Keats’s ‘negative capability’, much emphasised by Bion (1970), ‘that is, *when a man is capable of being in uncertainties, mysteries, doubts, without any irritable reaching after fact and reason*’ (Keats, 1817).

This is a vision of majestic simplicity and beauty, as Grotstein rightly suggests. In this simplicity it is tempting to see it as a possible apotheosis of psychoanalysis, as the implicit value ideal even of psychoanalytic accounts which do not overtly envisage it, or make it explicit, and therefore to locate psychoanalysis clearly in this infinite. Grotstein’s underpinning frame, like those of Freud and Jung, and Bion, is Kantian; Kant’s theme of the unknown and ineffable, that which is beyond any phenomena and any experience, haunts every page, the equivalent, in this book, of Freud’s ‘primary process’ in *The interpretation of dreams* (1999); this, in a manner, is Grotstein’s philosophical myth.

It might, then, be tempting to move to a premature closure in this concept of infinity, of alignment with an ineffable centring in the ‘transcendent position’, and construe this as the implicit resolution and apotheosis to which psychoanalysis and allied approaches tend. A case could be made in this connection, drawing upon, for instance, Bion, Lacan, Jung, Matte-Blanco, possibly Winnicott and Bollas, and elements running right through Freud’s work (e.g., the reference to Kant’s noumena theory in the paper on *The unconscious*, Freud, 1991d).

The Freudian infinite and Hegel’s infinite

But Freud’s vision is doubly, multiply protean. From it can be drawn many apotheoses (c.f., Derrida, 1978; Wilkinson, 2000). There are at least two alternative ‘infinities’—Freud’s own (on one understanding) and Hegel’s. I believe both are implicit in Grotstein’s vision, and offer an alternative ‘vertex’, in Bion’s term, upon this book.

First Hegel's: this is the world of *reciprocal subjectivities*, which Grotstein invokes perforce in his account of subjectivity as quoted above:

What characterises each of these subjectivities is an incompleteness that reminds each of its need for the other and for the external other. [emphasis added] (p. 119)

This is Hegelian 'desire of desire', as Grotstein is himself highly aware. Its model in Hegel (*Phenomenology of spirit*, Hegel, 1977) is the Master/Vassal relationship, which is a dominance based relationship, wherein, however, the Vassal becomes the Truth of the Master, i.e. in psychoanalytic terms, the carrier (and eventual unpacker!—c.f., the striking differences in awareness in the relations between conquering and conquered peoples!) of the Master's projections, and vice versa; clearly there are huge parallels to this in both Freud and Klein.

This might be seen as the movement, via the internalization of 'the Other', from Autochthony to Alterity. What is involved in this process is the identification with, the *mimesis* (participatory imitation) of, the Other, as in the Oedipus dialectic also (e.g., Freud's account in *Totem and taboo*, 2001), of which Girard (e.g., 1994) has made so much in his analysis of the scapegoat mechanism; here it is apparent that he is mapping a movement which is both Hegelian and Freudian in its essential process.

In his evolutionary hypothesis, regarding the early evolution of man out of the fixed hierarchies of the higher primates, Girard argues that the development of our intelligence necessarily involved an enhanced capacity for identification/imitation. This had the inevitable consequence, at some point, he holds, that we identified, through mimesis, with each others' violence, *and could not help but replicate it*, a process involved in the evolution of higher, more mobile, brain capacity, but risking annihilating each other in the process. We then 'solved' this through the scapegoat mechanism (ritual murder) and its sanctification, which enabled 'the tribe' to survive at the expense of one individual. Whereas in Hegel, one person, through submission, becomes the scapegoat of the Other, in the Other's dominance, but the Other reciprocally becomes dependent, in his turn, through the labour/work of the vassal, upon the vassal,—this is *the prototype of transformation*,—in Girard and Freud the mimetic identification is with the tribe; it becomes *social* through the shared ritual murder, or, later, expulsion, or, later still, symbolic dismemberment, of the scapegoat (c.f., Grotstein, 1997).

This is their parallel account of the inauguration of the human social contract and of culture and religion. But Freud, however, has the Hegelian concept of sublimation. These three accounts are closely akin to one another, but it is possible that Girard's hostility to Hegel and also Nietzsche, and his minimizing of Freud and Lacan, has much to do with the fact that these four all offer an account of how violence may be transformed, sublimated, not merely repudiated in the manner of St Matthew's Gospel, Chapter 5, (the Beatitudes). This, coming out of the Judaic Old Testament tradition, Girard thinks the *only* challenge to scapegoating violence which is not a covert apology for it. Grotstein, too, offers an alternative account here, in line with the Hegelian, the Jungian (Jung's focus on polarities), and the Hegelian aspect of the Freudian.

Grotstein's use of Girard

In his three clinical chapters, 7–9, Grotstein both draws from, and modifies, Girard's vision in line with the psychoanalytic, and Jungian, understanding, of transformation not repudiation. In particular, in Chapters 8 and 9 he maps the way in which the vicarious suffering of the analyst, (analogous, in a modest way, to Christ's as conveyed in Michelangelo's *Pieta*, through what Grotstein calls the *Pieta covenant*), is a countertransferential response to the transference

violence of the client or analysand. (Here is his overlap with *process-based* psychoanalytical accounts, c.f., Ehrenberg, 1992, Wilkinson, 2003.)

For this violence is an attempt to activate a *mimesis*, in Girardian terms, but which the analyst must meet by a paradoxical *non-violent countertransferential identification with the transferential violence*. This would seem at first sight to go against the famous aspect of Bion's work of which Grotstein quotes a sample in this connection:

[W]hile listening to the patient the analyst should dwell on those aspects of the patient's communication which come nearest to arousing feelings corresponding to persecution and depression. In my experience this gives as good a check on the soundness of one's interpretive validity as anything I know. On the whole I am more satisfied with my work if I feel that I have been through these emotional experiences than I do if the session has been more agreeable. I am fortified in this belief by the conviction that has been borne on me by the analysis of psychotic or borderline patients. *I do not think such a patient will ever accept an interpretation, however correct, unless he feels that the analyst has passed through this emotional crisis as part of the act of giving the interpretation.* (Bion, 1992, p.232–3 of Grotstein, Grotstein's italics).

It might seem, on the face of it, as if Bion is speaking of a full identification here. Yet clearly there has to be an element of the 'homeopathic' in this vicarious suffering, or else there could not be the crucial survival of the analyst, nor the containing transmutation of the transmitted material; there would be a simple imitation, and a simple imitation has to be avoided,—since that is *precisely* the fate that Girard maps as what maintains, if in partially transformed fashion, the scapegoating violence (which would here be retaliation of analyst/therapist against patient/client). What experience witnesses is rather that the vicarious transforming identification has to paradoxically *both* succumb, and be experienced as succumbing by client/analysand, to the persecution/depression, *and* yet to not succumb, to remain whole at the same time. We know, in reality, this is an immensely difficult combination to evoke; it can perhaps only be evoked dialectically, by a (once more Hegel-like) movement now one way now in the other, and we shall pause at that reminder. This will suffice to give a glimpse of the way in which Grotstein, in these clinical chapters, goes beyond a mere Girardian repudiation of violence, recognising succinctly, and penetrating, in his concept of the Pieta Covenant, to, the core of the paradox of countertransferential transformation, in a remarkable way.

Further Hegelian modifications

We can, then, go further still with the recognition that less absolute and less totally dominance/submission based 'mimetic' reciprocities and paradigms, ones more equally reciprocal, or just more difference based, also meet, as a yet further winnowing and pacifying of the element of violence, the Hegelian criteria of transformation (though no doubt there is always a subtle play and dance of inequalities—but upon a more equal basis of position changing). In this play of subjectivities the infinite is situated within the play of subjectivities itself (a Winnicott-like concept), without loss of the creationist element. And this reciprocal play surely is as close to unveiling the elusiveness of human love as is the absolute 'beyond' of the Kantian infinite. Self and Other are inseparable; as Lacan (1988) quotes Verlaine as saying "I is an Other."

Proust and Beckett,—Bion's analysand,—would be two brother spirits who are transfixed upon the cusp of the tension between, on the one hand, the Kantian vision mediated by Schopenhauer, the absolute solipsistic unknowability of the Other, and, on the other, a fundamentally Hegelian understanding of desire—reciprocal desire, however much also doomed to subtle mutual missing of one another. Missing, and finding, each other in these

reciprocities, are mutually related possibilities, coming down, perhaps, in major part, though not totally, to the simple,—but not merely external,—rhythmic matching of ‘vitality effects’, of which Stern and Trevarthen have written so well, (Stern, 1985, 1998, Trevarthen, 2003). Team sports, and musical performances, are other good illustrations, where the ‘inner’ and ‘outer’ rhythms are so very intimately, and dialectically, interwoven.

It was recounted, in a BBC broadcast, that when the great conductor Furtwängler first returned with the Berlin Philharmonic to the UK after the war, they were rehearsing somewhere such as the Kingsway Hall, and the BBC correspondent was watching them playing through the pieces, led by the leader of the orchestra. Suddenly the the quality of the playing utterly changed, and became incandescent, for no visible reason. Then the BBC correspondent saw that, right at the other end of the hall, the door was ajar, and Furtwängler was stood half in half out, no more. The play of subjectivities!

Intimately interwoven with the behavioural, it therefore also transcends it, and is a function rather of mirroring ‘mimesis’ (Girard, 1994), of inner reciprocity as well as the outer. Without such ‘Hegelian reciprocity’, it is hard to see how the ‘infinite’ could be manifest in ‘finite subjectivity’ at all—even when it is the ‘unilateral intersubjectivity’, in Grotstein’s phrase, of the mother’s meeting of the infant’s ‘illusion’ (and how is that so much as possible?).

A dream answering a dream

To mediate this tension between two infinities, we may call upon the Freudian dream infinite, in its concrete societal contextuality, of the censorship, as well as, as Grotstein does, on the symmetrical/asymmetrical mathematical/logical ‘infinite sets’ of Matte-Blanco. The Freudian dream infinite is an infinity of interconnected meanings, of textual ramifications and mirrorings, i.e., reduplications, parallels, recurrences, rather than the ‘seeing myself in another’ experience, rather than the direct mirroring of subjectivities, even though these are summoned up imaginably and, as it were abstractly, in the play of the textual mirrorings. The Freudian infinite is a textual reflexivity which is at the same time societal-political (the whole dialectic of the censorship and its concealment/unconcealment, touched upon in relation to primary repression above, which is social, yet also textual, reveals this).

Girard’s (1978) ‘mimesis’ is the cross-over concept between the two forms of mirroring/reduplication. There are glimpses in the later Freud—for example in *Beyond the pleasure principle* (Freud, 1991a),—of an irreducible Hegelian social reciprocity, in the transference, which is at the same time incurably textual, in the manner of *Interpretation of dreams* (c.f., Wilkinson, 2000).

Grotstein’s key dream (like Fairbairn’s analysand’s dream in his *Endopsychic structure* paper, 1952) was a revelation of manifestations and situatednesses of *subjectivities* (part-subjects, so to say) and their structuring.

Now, when I, the present writer, first obtained my copy of Grotstein’s book, I found myself dreaming a responsive ‘Freudianly infinite’ dream—one ostensibly all about text, not subjectivities. Without uncovering all of its personal meaning of which I am aware,—the censorship operates at several levels, as Freud found!—there is enough to illustrate the indefinite textual infinity and reflexivity of the Freudian infinite, which yet remains contextual. A partial excursus into more personal material,—but about which there is no problem of consent!—is, then, unavoidable here, transcribed from my extended notes made at the time.

The rationale for this is to emphasise the multi-layered reflexivity of the Freudian mode of dreaming, its function, and its reduplication at level after level, the Freudian infinity, of which this paper is itself, therefore, a further manifestation. The interpretation and the censoring of the interpretation are both part of the dream. And the dream, in its turn, is part of a waking, and part-transferential, dialogue. The reference to the subjectivities as the real correlate of the

text is itself a floating signifier, and constantly revisited, as one may in a literary work, as one moves around in the text of memory. So, also, the Hegelian element is there in tandem with the textuality.

Reflexivity of the dream

I am busily and steadily reading through Grotstein's dense and rich text. It is highly 'saturated', overdetermined, like the work of Kant, Hegel, and Freud themselves. In the light of his chapter on the dream, a fragment of one of mine (dreamt since I began the book) makes an indirect comment/testimony on my reading of the book.

It was just a dream-fragment of a moment where I was trying to gain access to my old, well-thumbed, much annotated, copy, bought when I was at Cambridge in 1967, of *The interpretation of dreams*, which in the dream had become buried in a pile of leaves and branches and was dirty, wet, and slightly mouldy!!

I have recently got the new Oxford translation of the first edition; also I have just recently found once more my copy of Schleiermacher's *Doctrine of Faith*, a treasured book, which I thought I had lost. In the dream my 'official' thought was that, as I had a new copy of the first edition, I did not need to reclaim this one; at the same time,—more out of awareness,—I felt sad and bereft! So there is a theme about reclamation here!

As I have been reading the dream chapter I have found myself wrestling, in passing, with whether Grotstein's vision of the process of communication between the Dreamer who Dreams the Dream, and the Dreamer who Understands the Dream,—with its echoes of Freud's model of the relation between the dream thoughts and the dream work, between the primary process and the secondary process, but also tapping into the whole debate which gradually emerged about the relation between psychotic and neurotic, pre-Oedipal and post-Oedipal, etc.,—all these resonances, all these signifiers,—has not lost something of the haunting and teeming richness and saturatedness of Freud himself in *The interpretation of dreams*, even though, through its 'reference back' it also accesses it. It is a guilty anxiety (for I am also *identified* with his shift of the emphasis) about a slight element of demythologization, or quasi-Jungian idealization, even though I feel less anxiety with his reconstruction, which so much reminds me of the remark (a remark made by Orme) Boswell quotes, about Johnson's *Journey to the Western Isles*, in *The Life of Johnson*—"There are in that book thoughts, which by long revolution in the great mind of Johnson, have been formed and polished like pebbles rolled in the ocean."—for every page is resonant with the depths of long meditations on these matters. But, increasingly, I am feeling that Freud needs reclaiming—warts and all—from the over-simplifiers, both pro and anti; as my review article on Totton's book (Wilkinson, 2000) suggests, Freud's own endless fertility and overdeterminedness is the most striking fact about him.

I am sure there is also an element of 'envious attack',—or, more positively, of competitiveness,—here too of course!

But there is also a motif of whether I may not myself have 'buried' Freud in my *own* over-complexifications, and also, that of nostalgia for a time when I was young and, however confused then, not having rolled my own thoughts around for so many years in Johnsonian fashion, was still not as 'finished' as that 'rolling around' implies. In my overprotection of the 'overdeterminedness' of Freud there is a protection also of my own 19th century roots – my father was born in 1880, so I skipped a generation as it were, and he was in the first motor vehicle (a Benz, before Mercedes!) to visit Stonehenge in 1895, the year of Freud's *Project* and of Oscar Wilde's imprisonment, the pre-First War world where the world, as Jung said, was still essentially mediaeval – and in my sense of Grotstein's Scottish roots and of his Scottish dream in this book, and his often traditional and archaic use of language I am feeling he also is, in that sense, a bridge, if not a throw-back, to that 'ancestral time'.

In Jungian terms there may also be an archetypal motif of ‘buried treasure’ (my interest in Freud ran parallel with my obsession with Wagner’s *Ring* and the Jungian preoccupation with Siegfried’s retrieving of the Nibelung Hoard, and its bearing on Nietzsche’s predicament!! (Incidentally, Grotstein’s patient on p. 31–2 with the falcon and the snake put me in mind of *Zarathustra*’s eagle and snake and therefore of Jung’s massive commentary on all that in the *Zarathustra Seminar*). There was a long period of my life when I was not as able, as I am now, to reconnect with that enthusiasm and ‘getting carried away by my thoughts’ of my youth.

So this is the ‘reclamation’ motif—the more I explore the more connections come up! There was a sense of the numinosity of the ancient—and this stirs in me also as I am reading this book.

This gives a sense of the depth of the level at which reading it is affecting me! Having read parts of it in ‘paper’ form, it feels so different in book form—there is a mystery about ‘the book’. There is also, I think, a ‘meta-level’ self-commentary (Joycean/Borgesian/Derrida-type reflexivity); this is a dream about a ‘book about dreams’, in the context of a later ‘book about dreams’, which comments on this original book about dreams, *both* books being about the ‘reclamation of the dream’, and the dream *itself* is about the ‘burying of the book’/(treasure), in turn a long-term preoccupation of mine!

There may also be something connected about the burying of my thoughts—in that, unlike Grotstein, I have published no books, only papers, and then by a kind of accident, and I often have a fantasy about being in effect like Coleridge whose influence through his conversation (Oscar Wilde and Johnson also come in here—I have always felt drawn to the great procrastinating talkers!) far outweighed his influence via his writings, despite the great value of *On the constitution of Church and State*. So, the being cluttered under leaves and dirt has many resonances for me in connection with my use of my own talent—and with my identification with Freud (this is alluded to in my paper on *Phenomenological causality*, Wilkinson, 1998), and my thoughts about being connected with comparable breakthroughs! (Which is no longer possible.) An ancient preoccupation of mine, naturally enough, then, is to *make use of the fragmentary and to redeem it* (Fellini’s δ_2^1 , his film about an unfinished film, is an archetype of mine). Although *The interpretation of dreams* is a uniquely *long* book of Freud’s, most of whose writings are effectively large paragraphs, monographs, fragments, his talent being for the fragmentary, as he wrote to Groddeck, I think, further, we can say that, belying its unique and exceptional length, the *theme* of *The interpretation of dreams* is still the Lacanian/Derridean one of the redemption of fragments, which Lacan makes much of in relation to *The interpretation of dreams*—in this connection I can note that *my* dream memory was *also* a fragment. I think of *The dream of the botanical monograph*,—that key envy dream of Freud’s about a book!—in this connection, where his own ‘bookworm’ propensities are a key element.

The exemplar of this,—also a very Freudian and dream-based work,—for me has been Fellini’s δ_2^1 , that veritable Borgesian hall of mirrors, whose ending is the discovery that it is unendable [*Unendlich*, with its Freudian resonances, again]—and that this is all right.

Thus, *the reclamation of the discarded and fragmentary* is a highly overdetermined and concentratedly ‘charged’ theme for me. And in this demonstration of the endless interrelations embedded in this fragment there is an indication of the meta-reflexivity theme of the dream—a kind of ‘throw-away’ of its very essence.

Later the realization dawned that, one layer of meaning was the recognition of the commitment to writing a book—which would be partly a response to this one. (And with *that* movement we return of course to the Hegelian infinite of reciprocal mimetic intersubjectivity!) The presence of death in the psychoanalytic sense is not far away also in this dream, in conjunction with relationship issues and failures, of which no more here.

Implications: the Freudian infinite and the three infinities

The Freudian dance of concealment/disclosure is also, of course, at work in this material—and in its reduplicated use in the present context! (And in how far this *whole paper* may be read in its light!) Reduplication is at the heart of the Freudian discovery—and places an infinity, of cross-referencing, at the heart of it. I believe that the Freudian infinity maps across on to, and alongside, the others—and I have only touched upon three here (leaving Matte-Blanco on one side). I doubt whether there is, or can be, an end to the mappings.

The ultimate logic of psychoanalysis is Joycean, or Borgesian, then! This brings it much closer to the Jung of *Symbols of Transformation* (Jung, 1956). And because it is inextricably both contextual and universal, it combines the philosophical with the livingness of unique experience. It overflows both the Kantian and the Hegelian infinities, which still have the synthesising tendency to be closed systems. But both, like the developmental understandings, have the capacity still to work as metaphors or models; however, what is implicit in the infinite cross-referencing of the Freudian infinite is that it is essentially deconstructive of any metaphoric system taken as real (including the metaphor of ‘Real’ or ‘Things themselves’); the floating signifiers ‘do not ultimately refer exclusively to anything specific’ (and that is why we are anxious and inclined,—Freud himself included,—to premature closure).

To resummarise: **The Kantian infinite** is the metaphor of an infinity *behind* any and all experience, an infinity of the unknowable.

The Hegelian infinite is the metaphor of a mirror infinity of mutually reflecting, or mutually alienating (but still, in that sense, negatively mutually mirrored), centres of subjectivity, implicit *in* experience.

And **the Freudian infinite** is an infinite of cross-referencing, and mirroring, reduplication in a *textual* sense, *transcending the immediacy of experience*, a textual sliding away from any possible metaphor, model, or located centre of subjectivity, with various degrees of mutual suppression, censorship, and forced disguise, or partial revelation, which form the substance—a textual model (c.f., Gouws, 2000)—of what is meant by ‘repression’.

For, despite Freud’s Kantian tortuosities on the question of representation and the drives (Freud, 1991e), the energy in dream meaning, or slip of the tongue meaning, or jokes, is not separable from the meanings as such (Wilkinson, 2000). Therefore, repression must be understood, in some way or other, as a relation of difference between meanings, as well as energies. There is no absolute meaning/energy disjunction (Derrida, 1978).

It is clear that the Freudian system rides on the back of both the Kantian and the Hegelian metaphors; but it also deconstructs them endlessly. But one should also add that, without the Kantian and Hegelian frameworks, it would not be possible to see the ‘infinity aspect’ of the Freudian vision. Even Matte-Blanco himself came to his infinitist reconstruction of Freud via philosophical mathematics going back to Kant.

Lacan turns this, via Kant, and via Hegel and Absolute Spirit, into a system of his own; in this respect, Derrida’s version in *Freud and the scene of writing*—(Derrida, 1978)—of the Freudian infinite is nearer to its essentially protean nature. Derrida also saw clearly that the Freudian infinite is captured by Freud in metaphors, in an infinite regress, which are essentially alien and external, if taken concretely, to what he is ultimately trying to express, and that he was never entirely sure (or pragmatically suspended the question of) how literally to take them (Wilkinson, 2000).

Once we see these major infinities,—which we could call, respectively, the concepts of *epistemic*, *intersubjective*, and *semantic* infinity,—it is also evident there can be argued to be others. All three overlap profoundly with Jung’s work (e.g., Jung 1956). Perhaps Winnicott’s is an infinity of *being*, in some sense—maybe tacitly Kantian. Klein’s might be a pessimistic version of the Hegelian. Matte-Blanco’s is possibly a mathematical infinite. Reich’s would be

an infinity of *embodied energy* (see Totton, 1998, Wilkinson, 2000). Ehrenberg's (1992, Wilkinson, 2003) is a *process and context* infinity, which is paralleled in certain para-analytic approaches such as Core Process (Donington, 1994) and Gestalt. There is no need to dwell on the detail; what is fundamental is that *concepts of infinity are at the heart of psychoanalysis*. To open this issue up so emphatically is at the heart of Grotstein's seminal insight.

Infinity, the quest for reduction to the physical, and other such questions

If these are implications of Grotstein's work, then our original questions about the ground of psychoanalysis, and its relation to infinity, are now faced in the form of two questions:

First, there is the question whether or not it is grounded in some version of infinity, as against a finite model of psychic elements (drives, or alternatively biologically understood instincts, both taken in a realist sense, for instance); if Grotstein's position is taken seriously, this is a confrontation which now has to be had.

Secondly, all the forms of infinity, themselves, still leave unsettled the question whether they are compatible with a 'this worldly' account of subjectivity, for example a functional model of brain functioning, which does not entail a reduction of psychic functioning/subjectivity to physical states, but nevertheless involving a full causal interaction on some basis, such as the concept of 'distributed mind' (c.f., e.g., Damasio, 1994; Totton, 1998; Wilkinson, 2000). In the light of the concrete concepts of *epistemic*, *intersubjective*, and *semantic* infinity, the way is open for this question now to be addressed with less baggage in the way of preconceptions.

We may also note, third, that it may turn out that some ancient disputes in psychoanalysis and between psychoanalysis and other approaches, may turn out to be helpfully construed in terms of infinity versus a finite model. The Freud/Jung dispute, for instance, at its official level, might turn out to be discussible in these terms, as well as aspects of the Freud/Klein debates. Freud's three models of primary narcissism (c.f., Balint, *The basic fault*, 1984),—as 1. the experience of the original presence of the mother; 2. as the limitless, but non-embodied, and formless, and essentially repressed, internal reservoir of the id; and 3. as the turn back upon the self in the face of rejection (a concept mobilised against Jung's archetypal view of psychosis),—in a manner mirror and map the alternate forms which a model aspiring to stay finite can take. This would, then, be as the extremes of:

- (1) a wholly *inter*-subjective model (alterity, Hegelism),
- (2) a wholly *intra*-subjective model (autochthony, Kantianism),
- (3) and one which, in its mixed mode, based upon splitting, and turning round, seems to waver between both and also between finite and infinite—*finite* in its objectification of the body, and *infinite* in that this is one modelling of the basing of self-identity in the primal (and hence infinitely reflexive, and infinitely deferring) disavowal of which we have already spoken (the Freudian infinite).

In fact one could not wish to find a more apt expression of Freud's Janus-faced overdetermined genius than his theories of narcissism, which are, in their creative tension, a characteristic manifestation of that inexhaustibly protean infinite, embracing at least all three infinities, showing endless iridescences like shot-silk, of which we have spoken, yet seeking to contain it all within a finite model.

Psychotherapy as *philosophy in praxis*

By placing the issue of *infinity* at the heart of psychoanalytic discourse, Grotstein implicitly vindicates psychotherapy as *philosophy in praxis*, rather than science,—as it should be

vindicated (which would save it from many a pseudo-scientific blind alley, c.f., Berger, 2002)!

In this area of fundamentals, we have been exploring related and complementary conceptions, which may be in some measure at odds with one another, but which are also *related to one another in a pluralistic or dialectical way* (a major argument against the schismatic models which have bedevilled psychoanalysis). If we disagree with Grotstein's predominantly Kantian position, it is this sort of disagreement—against a background of more fundamental agreements. He himself does much to indicate this sort of background. And, as indicated, it is not that the 'alternative infinities' are not present in his work; it is more a matter of what is the dominant emphasis in these discussions. His book thus also offers us a model for genuine dialogue. And what has latterly become apparent is the likelihood that the different models of infinity are in fact complementary. It is even possible that the overview perspective would also eventually construe the 'finite' and 'infinite' models as complementary.

Final questions

This book, then, leaves us, among others, with the following new, or renewed, questions.

- (1) If Psychoanalysis opens up towards the infinite full-bloodedly, as this book implies, then Freud's agnostic claim in the *New introductory lectures* (1971) that Psychoanalysis is not a *Weltanschauung* is thrown into doubt.
- (2) If Psychoanalysis, on these models, is a unique empirical window into the psyche as an infinite, then the dispute between a purely secular, this worldly, functionally brain-located, model of the mind, and one which leaves the relation and reducibility to the brain indeterminate at best and, more radically, as unrealisable and impossible, then Psychoanalysis has a unique role in the dialogue with the new neuro-science, as Freud had already prophetically envisaged in the *Project for a scientific psychology* of 1895 (Freud, 1950, c.f., Corrigan and Wilkinson, 2003).
- (3) And we have to ask, finally, whether *psychoanalysis infinite* may not be the paradigm of the next hundred years, as *psychoanalysis finite*, in all its forms and offshoots, has been that of the last hundred.

These are the questions which we are left faced with by James Grotstein's great book, which, when understood, reopens the questions of psychoanalysis' relations with the rest of psychotherapy—and with so much else.

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Résumé *Cet article explore ce qu'implique le contenu du livre très important de James Grotstein, qui revient sur les fondements de la psychanalyse à la lumière de son rapport à "l'infini". L'article de revue soutient qu'il existe au moins trois infinis en psychanalyse, qui se complètent entre eux et justifient la position de Grotstein. Il s'agit de l'infini Kantien, métaphore d'un infini placé derrière toute expérience, un infini de l'inconnaissable; de l'infini Hégélien, métaphore de l'infini miroir, réfléchissant mutuellement, ou aliénant mutuellement (mais dans ce sens, réfléchissant encore négativement et mutuellement), centres de subjectivité, implicites en expérience; et de l'infini Freudien, un infini de références croisées et de réflexion, de re-duplication au sens textuel, transcendant l'immédiateté de l'expérience, une fuite textuelle depuis toute métaphore, tout modèle, tout centre localisé de subjectivité, avec plusieurs degrés de suppression, de censure, et de déguisement forcé – ou révélation partielle – mutuels, qui forment sa substance – un modèle textuel de ce que le mot "répression" signifie.*

Zusammenfassung *Der Artikel erforscht die Implikationen von Grotsteins wichtigem Buch, das die wichtige Frage nach den Grundlagen der Psychoanalyse im Hinblick auf ihre Beziehung zur Unendlichkeit untersucht. Es wird argumentiert, dass es drei Unendlichkeiten in der Psychoanalyse gäbe, die sich wechselseitig ergänzen und die Grotsteins Haltung bestätigen. Das ist das Kantianische Unendliche, die Metapher eines Unendlichen hinter jeder Erfahrung, eine Unendlichkeit des Unbekannten; das Hegelianische Unendliche, die Metapher einer Spiegel-Unendlichkeit des wechselseitigen Reflektierens oder des gegenseitigen Befremdens (aber auch in dieser Weise negativ spiegelnd), Zentren der Subjektivität, die jeder Erfahrung inhärent sind; und das Freudianische Unendliche, ein unendliches wechselseitiges Bezogensein und Spiegeln, Reduplikation bezogen auf den Text, der die Unmittelbarkeit der Erfahrung überträgt, ein textbezogenes weggleiten von jeder möglichen Metapher, jedem Modell oder lokalisierten Zentrum subjektiver Erfahrung mit verschiedenen Abstufungen wechselseitiger Unterdrückung, Zensur, forcierter Verschleierung oder partieller Enthüllung, welches seinen Kern bildet – ein textbezogenes Modell von dem was, 'Verdrängung' meint.*