INCONGRUITY AND "PSYCHOLOGICAL JUSTICE"

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Most believers encounter some level of incongruity between their intellectual assent to, and their lived experience of justification. An individual's view of justification in and of itself will at times raise complex and various levels of deliberations. These can range from higher academic scholarly debates, to local congregational emphases and the flow on effects these conversations, or lack of, have for the masses that sit in church pews, some who do not feign to be able to fully articulate the justification they have been given in Christ.

Most of us have encountered circumstances that make us stop and ask the question: How or what caused that incongruity to occur? For instance, why does a pastor of immense experience and standing within a community "suddenly" fall into adultery? Or why after a crisis do some believers "lose" their faith? Why is it that there are many believers who walk in various states of denial of incongruity and/or believers that compensate felt incongruity with more striving, more accumulation of knowledge or more, dare I say, conferences that promise to fix such incongruity?

Within contemporary debates in recent years, scholars such as Marshall, Haughey, and Wakefield have considered justice with an emphasis towards criminal restorative, ethical, and social justice.[1] However, there appears to be a lacuna regarding what I term "Psychological Justice". Whereas a person may (or may not) receive criminal restorative, ethical, or social justice, they may be left with the effects of injustice to their psychological wellbeing. "Psychological Justice" is justice which extends beyond a forensic status before God to a person's emotional wellbeing. It is the consideration of how justice is given or appropriated to an individual's psyche that has been fractured because of wounding from injustice, either as a victim and/or perpetrator (as the perpetrator often is both). My research has focussed on taking the term "Psychological Justice" as it is utilised in the social science field and redefining its use within the theological domain.

Wakefield proposed the term "Psychological Justice" in an article entitled "DSM-5 and Clinical Social Work: Mental Disorder and Psychological Justice as Goals of Clinical Intervention."[2] In this article in the *Clinical Social Work Journal*, Wakefield highlights several pertinent consequences of the new DSM-5. Wakefield argued that from a social justice perspective, the way that the DSM-5 now classified mental or psychological disorders has both psychological and fiscal consequences for those individuals whose medical

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[1] Christopher D. Marshall, *Beyond Retribution: A New Testament Vision for Justice, Crime, and Punishment*. Studies in Peace and Scripture. Vol. 5. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001). John C. Haughey, ed., *The Faith That Does Justice: Examining the Christian Sources for Social Change* (Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 2006). Jerome C. Wakefield, "DSM-5 and Clinical Social Work: Mental Disorder and Psychological Justice as Goals of Clinical Intervention," *Clinical Social Work Journal* 41 (2013): 131–38.

[2] Wakefield, "DSM-5," 131–38.

classification was now not considered financially viable or deemed to require psychological intervention. In utilising the term "Psychological Justice" from a theological perspective, I have endeavoured to draw together the complexity of the historical and theological understanding of the term justification with theories drawn from the social sciences, particularly the psychological theories of Attachment Theory (AT) and Object Relations Theory (ORT).

"Psychological Justice" is the recognition that a believer's intellectual belief system as it pertains to justification can be limited by fractures in the psyche through experiences in a believer's past. Further to this, fractures in a believer's psyche can impact on their image of God which affects the mode of connection the believer is enabled to experience with God. The intellectual belief system a believer adheres to concerning justification will either limit or be conducive toward the healing of a believer's Christ-defined identity in terms of the psyche. Within the definition of "Psychological Justice" therefore it is imperative that the believer experiences an increasing congruity between what constitutes a Christ-defined identity with the psychological aspect of a believer's experience.

In concrete terms "Psychological Justice" is defined as:

> A believer's intellectual assent concerning justification (i.e. what being justified means for a believer's identity) informs their perception of their Christ-defined identity. This is connected to but separate from (only in terms of definition, not in reality): the formation in psychological terms of fractures within the psyche which informs "gut" beliefs that in turn inform the believer's lived experience of justification.

Psychological theories aid in informing an understanding of the unconscious and conscious functioning of the psyche in an individual's every day experience. ORT is particularly helpful in demonstrating how incongruity can exist.

The legitimacy of utilising psychological theory in relation to dealing with the sins inherent within wounds in the psyche is often challenged. Howe states that a major obstacle that ORT presents from a theological point of view is that "it persists in addressing the question of God in human experience only at the level of concepts or representations that exist in the psyche alongside all the other object representations."[3] Meissner argues that the consequences of the projection of God as one more object in a person's unconscious psyche is that "the psychology of religious experience does not pay attention to the formally supernatural or specifically religious qualities of the phenomena it observes, describes, and tries to understand."[4]

Halstead and Hautus assert that one must caution against one-dimensional resonance in regards to making "simplistic links between people's early relationships and object-Gods" because "the formation

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[3] Leroy T. Howe, *The Image of God: A Theology for Pastoral Care and Counseling* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1995), 107.
[4] W. W. Meissner, *Psychoanalysis and Religious Experience* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984), 7. Maureen H. Miner, "Back to the Basics in Attachment to God: Revisiting Theory in Light of Theology," *Journal of Psychology and Theology* 35/2 (2007): 112–22, 112. Miner argues that "neither the cognitive nor the relational theories of attachment to God refer to a clearly articulated theological framework.

processes of objects are inevitably complex."[5] However, keeping the above in mind, psychoanalytic theories do provide a guide to the normal variations that typically occur in psychical object formations. In simplified terms, ORT identifies that people live simultaneously in external and internal realities. The diagram below encapsulates the different object representations as they operate within social interactions.
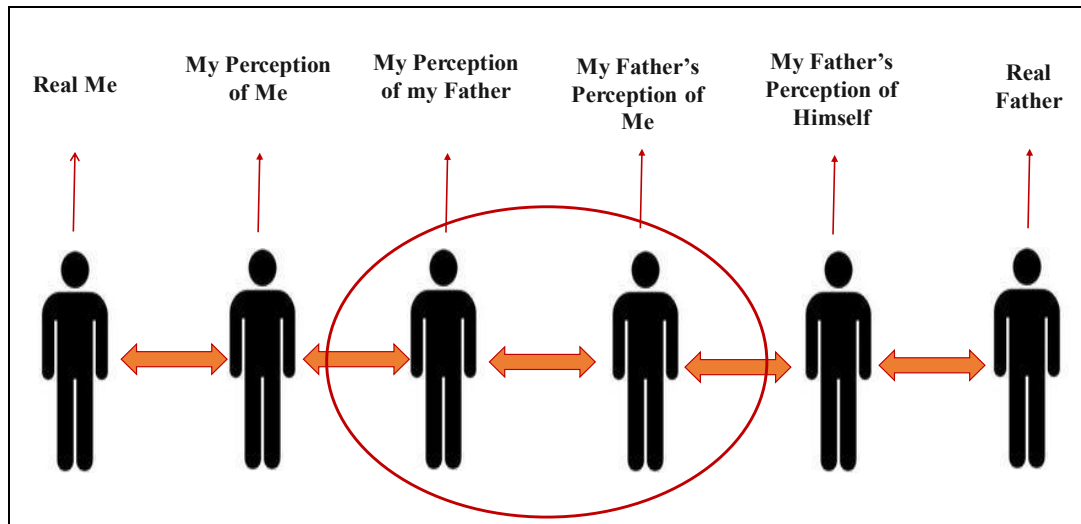

Figure 1: ORT Interactions[6]

This diagram shows the object representations of a son and a father and what their interactions could look like through ORT. These object representations are real. They are real in the sense that the conscious object representations (the son's perception of himself/the father's perception of himself) and unconscious object representations (the real son/real father) have embedded memories that impact the present. People live from these object representations when relating with others. Multiple levels of interaction happen in conscious and unconscious ways. This has bearing on a believer's interaction with God. Unconscious representations have memory imprints that inform the God image/s that an individual brings to the point of justification. Being able to process these object representations will enable a believer to have a more fully robust lived experience of life in God.

Greenberg and Mitchell note that though scholars differ on the naming and function of "objects" within the psyche it is generally agreed that internal objects or introjects "constitute a residue within the mind of relationships with important people in the individual's life."[7] Rogers defines introjects as an internalization of relationships with primary caregivers and that individuals use these relationships "to form

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[5] Philip John Halstead and Michael Hautus, "Defending the God Beyond: The Development of the A God-Scale—a New Instrument for the Assessment of People's Perceptions, Experiences, and Activities in Relationship to God— and Its Initial Use in a Forgiveness Study," *Journal of Spirituality in Mental Health* 15 (2013): 160–85, 164.

[6] Philip L. Culbertson, *Caring for God's People: Counseling and Christian Wholeness* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress), 308. Figure adapted from Culbertson's diagram of praxis.

[7] Jay R. Greenberg and Stephen A. Mitchell, *Object Relations in Psychoanalytic Theory* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1983), 11.

two sets of object representations, which are called *introjects*."[8] These introjects become "internalized templates" through which an individual will relate with others and themselves.[9] Knowledge of these introjects enables the tracing of an individual's psychological development.

Recent empirical studies substantiate that early infant experiences are the locus of an individual's formation of their primary God images.[10] In terms of AT, God images are formed and set in place mostly by the age of three.[11] This means Rizzuto's contribution in this regard is significant. Rizzuto argues that "official religion comes to the child *after* the image of God has been formed."[12] This is through a process that Rizzuto calls the "birth of the living God."[13]

St. Clair also affirms that a child creates "an inner representation of the divinity long before the child becomes exposed to institutional aspects of religion."[14] For St. Clair this is an ongoing process that is never over, and states that: "Children bring their own God, the one each has assembled, to this official religion, which encounter really only occurs AFTER the image of God has been formed. Now the God of official religion and the God of the child face each other and, through the child's reshaping and rethinking, there is a blending and a second birth of God."[15]

Rizzuto raises a valid caution that "demands keeping two things distinct: the God image and the idea of God".[16] In concurrence with McDargh, God images do not denote "any single 'Picture' or mental entity, but rather the individual's very personal dynamic relationship to [the] conscious and unconscious constellation of values, impressions, memories, and images" as they relate to God.[17]

The delineation of the formation of God images sets the platform for how a believer's intellectual belief system can be incongruent with God image representations held within the unconscious psyche. Ascertaining how and in what manner God images are formed will help identify how one would undergo God image adaptation.

AT identifies what causes primary levels of ORT. During these early years, an infant begins to develop a repertoire of behaviours based on a cycle of bond formation, separation protests, stranger anxiety, and exploratory activities. Rizzuto affirms that mirroring is the "core experience in the process of becoming human."[18] The early manifestations of mirroring are eye contact, smiling, and an infant's "fascination with the configuration of the human face."[19] In this mirroring phase basic trust develops which creates the

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[8] S.A. Rogers, "Where the Moment Meets the Transcendent: Using the Process as a Spiritual Intervention in Object Relations Psychotherapy," *Journal of Psychology and Christianity* 26/2 (2007): 151–58, 152. Italics his.

[9] Ibid.

[10] C. Ellis Nelson, "Formation of A God Representation," *Religious Education* 91/1 (1996): 22–39, 33.

[11] Ibid.

[12] Ana-Maria Rizzuto, *The Birth of the Living God: A Psychoanalytic Study* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1979), 10. Italics hers.

[13] Ibid, 49.

[14] Michael St. Clair, *Human Relationships and the Experience of God: Object Relations and Religion* (New Jersey: Paulist, 1994), 11.

[15] Ibid 23. Capitalisation his.

[16] Rizzuto, *Birth of the Living God*, 28.

[17] John McDargh, *Psychoanalytic Object Relations Theory and the Study of Religion: On Faith and the Imaging of God* (Lanham: University Press of America, 1983), 18.

[18] Rizzuto, *Birth of the Living God*, 185. Rizutto states that mirroring is "the child, *reflected in the maternal eye*". Italics hers.

[19] Ibid, 184.

grounds for a person's concept of God.[20] An early positive experience provides the "development of a sense of trusting faith in the relationship to God."[21] Whereas where there is an experience that is "discolored with insecurity, uncertainty, or anxiety, the foundation is laid for a basic mistrust that can contaminate and distort the later experience of God."[22]

The above considerations help explain why many believers can have an unconscious God image representation that is at odds with their intellectual assent. God images are not static, they are changeable and as Nelson states, they must at some stage "undergo a secondary process in order to become a theologically informed image."[23] The secondary stage of God image adaptation is very dependent on the psychological constituency of the individual and the type of attachment filters they bring to this process.

Within embedded objects are emotionally laden stories within the unconscious psyche. These stories can be reshaped, reimaged, and reintegrated but not destroyed. In this light, from adolescence forward an individual has opportunity to revise, adapt, or change their God image objects or representations.[24] As an adolescent differentiates themselves from that of their parents or other caregivers, there is potential for their God images to have increased congruency or in contrast potentially destructive dissociation with God. As St. Clair states "each life crises offers an opportunity to revise the God representation or leave it untouched."[25] In this phase the individual's "image of god is more significant than faith in god."[26] The unconscious image of God a child brings into their adolescent developmental phase, together with the conscious analytical challenges presented to the adolescent offers the opportunity to mature their God representation. St. Clair defines maturity in the following way: "A person of mature spiritual and psychological life is able to embrace, affirm and somehow resolve the tensions of life, to integrate them in a more balanced faith orientation and faith existence."[27]

However it can also unfortunately create the opposite as McDargh states "sometimes it is the case that the sheer intellectual contradiction of certain notions of God makes it impossible for an individual to use their object representation of God for the activity of faith."[28] Capps goes further and argues that "religious concepts and beliefs" can erect a "wall of silence" around a child's pain and suffering.[29] This is particularly the case if parents, caregivers or other authority figures offer "religious justification" for silencing a child.[30]

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[20] Meissner, *Psychoanalysis*, 138.
[21] Ibid, 140.
[22] Ibid. Howe, *Image of God,* 100. Howe states that the mirroring phase locates life's most important transition, "from infantile dependency to mature self-sufficiency and reciprocal relationships".
[23] Nelson, "Formation of God Representation," 36. Michael J. Thomas, Glendon L. Moriarity, Edward B. Davis and Elizabeth L. Anderson, "The Effects of a Manualized Group-Psychotherapy Intervention on Client God Images and Attachment to God: A Pilot Study," *Journal of Psychology and Theology* 39/1 (2011): 44–58, 53. Thomas et.al deduced from the data in a pilot study that through group-psychotherapy intervention that individuals can experience "adaptive shifts in their god images and attachment to God."
[24] McDargh, *Psychoanalytic*, 55. McDargh states faith can serve to have "an integrative function in the psychic economy."
[25] St. Clair*, Human Relationships,* 46.
[26] Ibid.
[27] Ibid*,* 47.
[28] McDargh, *Psychoanalytic,* 128.
[29] Donald Capps, *The Child's Song: The Religious Abuse of Children.* 1st ed. (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1995), 20.
[30] Ibid*,* 22.

Starky proposes that "on the basis of the responses of childhood attachment figures the developing adult begins to form an internal working model" (IWM).[31] Persons resort to these templates (IWMs) or internal objects (ORTs) which pre-consciously or unconsciously inform each other, in order to challenge, inform, or reject any "official" God image presented to them.[32] There are four commonly cited attachment filters that arise out of these early parental experiences. They are secure, anxious, ambivalent, and avoidant.[33] These filters will affect the way an individual will respond to life events. Particularly for this discussion, filters have a direct effect on the way an individual perceives and relates to God.

The following is a hypothetical case study designed to illustrate how the psychological theories of AT and ORT form the foundational applied aspect of "Psychological Justice."[34]

CASE STUDY: TOM'S STORY

Tom grew up as an only child with relatively good-enough parents in what would have been perceived by others to be a highly functioning family unit. They were regular church attendees who were well respected within the congregation and the wider community. Tom's father Bill was an Executive Director of a large international corporation.

Tom, at the age of 17, was to give an important speech at his school. Tom's father Bill did not attend. As a consequence, Tom dissociated emotionally from his father Bill at this juncture. The experience of his father's rejection over previous years further solidified Tom's dissociation with God at an implicit internal level. However, Tom had a robust faith at an intellectual level and continued in his youth leadership position within the church.

In his adult years, Tom found success in business and was as driven as his father Bill. However, due to restructuring at his employment, Tom was made redundant. This set off a psychological, spiritual, and relational downward spiral for Tom. In this phase, his internal bad objects laden with painful stories embedded within the unconscious psyche came to the fore. Tom no longer had the defensive structures he had built into his life to protect and nurture his pseudo-self.

Tom was in a faith crises and he had no psychological or spiritual structures in place to deal with such disequilibrium. Though Tom searched in the sea of his theological intellectual assent, he could not find

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[31] A. B. Starky, "A Theological Application of John Bowlby's Psychoanalytical Theories of Attachment," *American Journal of Pastoral Counselling* 2/1 (1999): 15–43, 20.

[32] Rizzuto, *Birth of the Living God*, 77. Rizzutto states "Inasmuch as there is no aspect of ourselves not object-related in some way". Rogers, "Where the Moment Meets the Transcendent," 152. Rogers states that internalized templates cause a person to "relate to friends, supervisors, and even strangers" according to past relationships.

[33] Starky, "A Theological Application," 20.

[34] Please note: this case study is hypothetical. It does not represent any person or event known to the writer. This case study also presents significant limitations. One cannot rule out alternative explanations for the response of Tom to his father Bill or to the process of the data presented. The findings from this case study cannot be used to generalize causal affects and responses of other individuals who pose with the same clinical presentations. Its purpose here is to describe possible connections between processing of implicit unconscious functioning and explicit verbal and emotional laden stories of the presenting client and his circumstances, in order to promote God image adaptation.

God. The image of God Tom carried in his psychological embedded unconscious was, for the first time, meeting the God image of his intellectual assent.

TOM'S PROCESS OF "PSYCHOLOGICAL JUSTICE"

An ORT clinical interpretation of Tom's story could note that Tom had internalized his felt abandonment from his father partially as an object of idolization. In other words, Tom venerated his father's absence as a figure to admire to counter the felt abandonment Tom experienced, thereby lessening the unconscious fracture within his conscious functioning. As Rizzuto argues, it is not only the actual parent but the "wished-for-parent and the feared parent of the imagination" that "appear on equal footing as contributors to the image of God."[35] Tom's hidden object representation of his self (that which Tom implicitly lived from unconsciously) as a child was deemed as "abandoned" and his father's representation was as "deserter". In contrast, Tom's extant objects (the self and father that Tom presented to others, the conscious functioning) was himself

Childhood

Extant Conscious
Explicit Objects

Secure　　　Hero

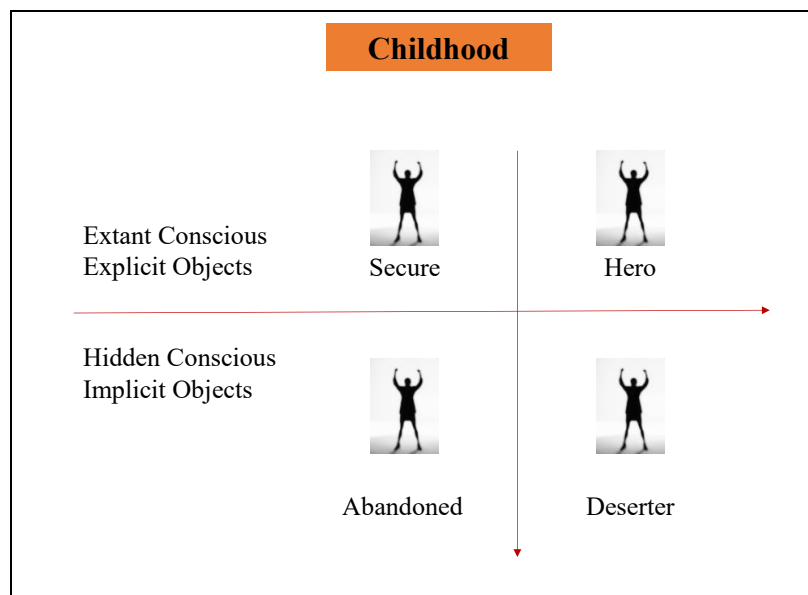Hidden Conscious
Implicit Objects

Abandoned　　　Deserter

Figure 2: Tom's Childhood ORT

Tom's veneration of his father's abandonment due to work commitments as an idol to be admired could point to having formed in infancy an anxious/ambivalent attachment style that could have created an inner "preoccupied" IWM filter.[36] This is not a clinical diagnosis however, and Tom may have had another type of IWM filter. However, the identification of Tom's IWM filter could describe Tom's relationship with his father. This relationship constituted an aloof withdrawn image of God.

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[35] Rizzuto, *Birth of the Living God,* 44.
[36] T. Hall, "Psychoanalysis, Attachment and Spirituality Part 1: The Emergence of Two Relational Traditions," *Journal of Psychology and Theology* 35/1 (2007): 14–28.

Tom's object representations of the event of his father not attending his speech when he was 17 could be as follows:
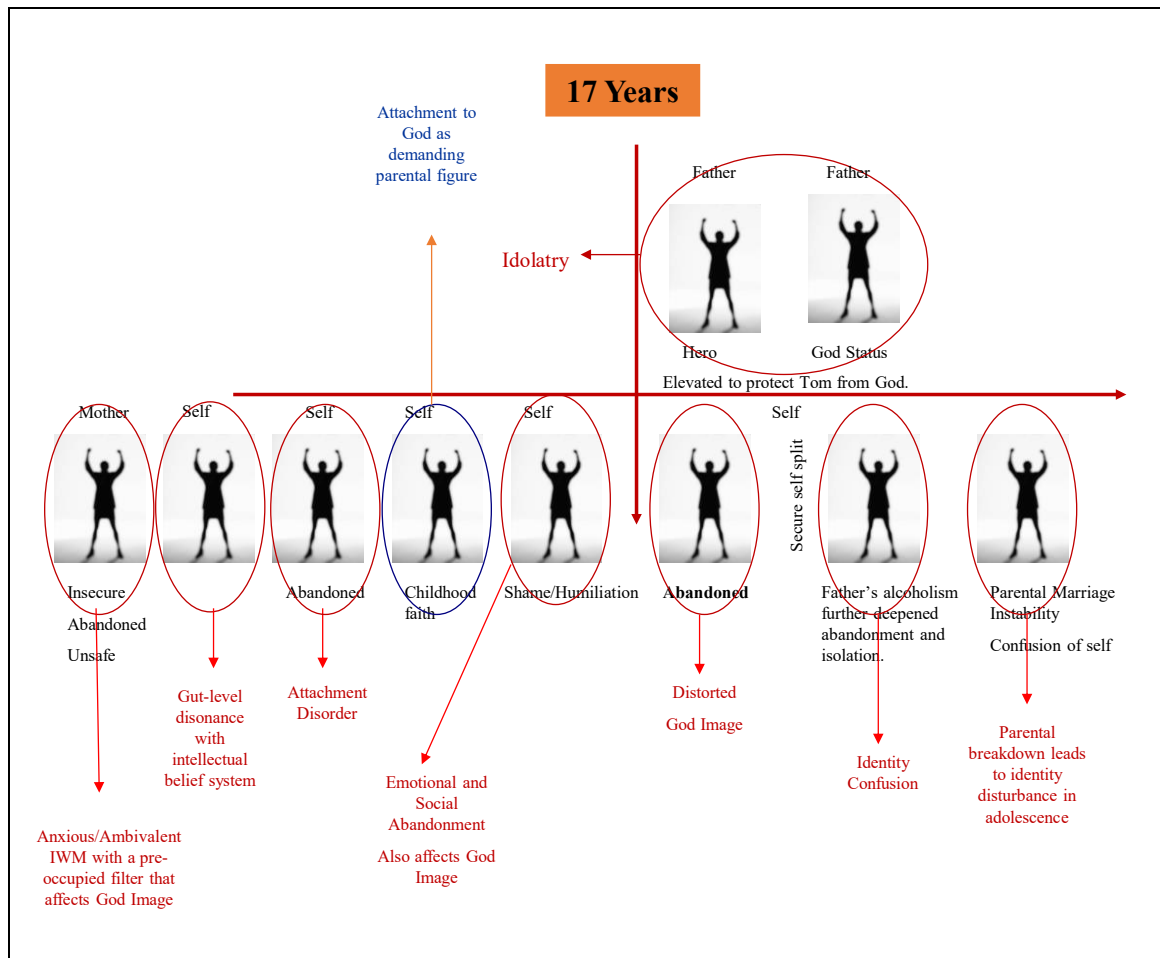

Figure 3: Tom's Adolescence ORT

Tom's external presentation of the self as secure is shown as above the line. This is the self which Tom shows to others. This includes the veneration of his father as a hero that he admires. However, below the line represents Tom's internal world, where multiple fractures are embedded in the stories of his unconscious functioning. Internally, Tom feels insecure, abandoned and unsafe with his mother, and his father's absence further deepened this abandonment and isolation. As a consequence, Tom's internal self is objectified as abandoned with a shame based identity. Of note for our discussion, gut level dissonance with his intellectual belief system in this phase is at a high.

Figure 3 above shows that as Tom emerged into adulthood he had quite complex multiple implicit hidden objects that were blocking an inordinate amount of psychic space.[37] Celani surmises that "children from dysfunctional families who have experienced continual frustration of their legitimate needs are going

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[37] Philip John Halstead and Michael Hautus, "Defending the God Beyond: The Development of the A God-Scale—a New Instrument for the Assessment of People's Perceptions, Experiences, and Activities in Relationship to God—and Its Initial Use in a Forgiveness Study," *Journal of Spirituality in Mental Health* 15 (2013): 160-185, 179.

to have large numbers of bad-object memories in their inner world."[38] This is important in spiritual terms because, as St. Clair highlights, if scary, confusing, or difficult aspects of a parent can be split off then these "negative qualities can be attributed to the devil."[39] Or in contrast, I would add they may regrettably inform one's God images. Payne highlights that a further consequence of trauma in infancy or early childhood for the individual is that healing will require "a need for healing of memories" but also with the "complicated survival mechanisms these persons have adopted in order to live."[40]

Tom's internal world had been kept together by his ability to block the truth of his inner life to his extant world. This was enabled through constructs of external performance and success in both his academic and spiritual life. Tom's constructs enabled him to keep the internal world of object representations of abandonment, identity confusion, and the instability of the family unit, of the self-intact. The implicit and explicit resources it had taken for Tom to keep from disintegrating was all-encompassing. However, Tom's redundancy led to an acute phase of self-disintegration. In this phase, all previous attachment systems and the constructs he created to function failed and unconscious negative objects were now becoming conscious. The crisis revealed the internal unconscious God image that was, amongst other factors, reflective of the negative aspect of his father's parental offense of abandonment. Tom's realization of this theological and experiential lack of congruence instigated an urgent profound need to deal and process his unconscious story towards positive God image adaptation. This would require Tom to begin the journey of dismantling these negative God images that were mirror images of parental and other authority figures.

"Psychological Justice" is bringing these unconscious wounds, and the inherent sin (and its effects) in the structures of these wounds, to the light of God's righteous transformative power.
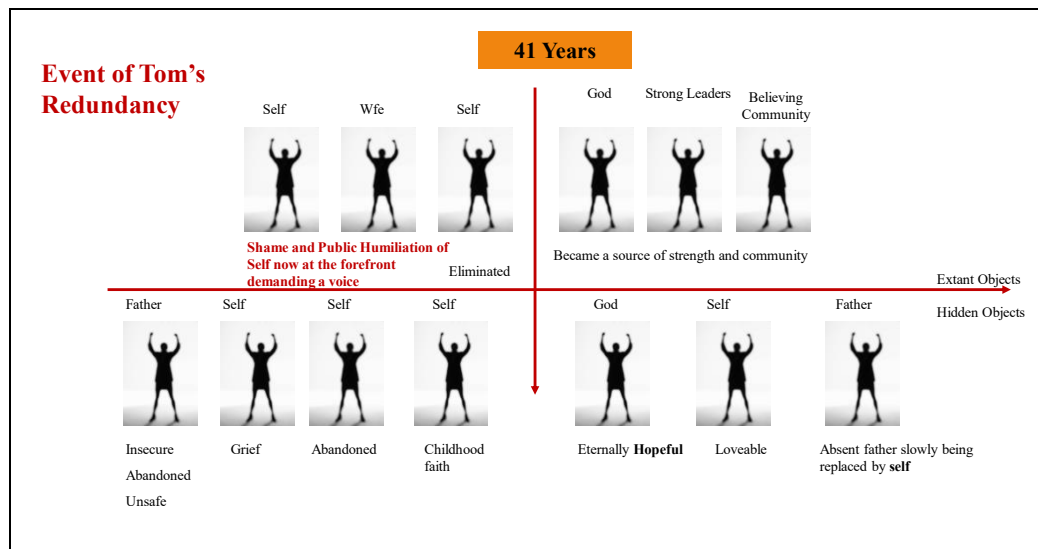
Figure 4: Tom's Redundancy ORT

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[38] David P. Celani, "Applying Fairbairn's Object Relations Theory to the Dynamics of the Battered Woman," *American Journal of Psychotherapy* 53/1 (1999): 60-73, 64.

[39] St. Clair, *Human Relationships,* 43.

[40] Leanne Payne, *Healing Presence: Curing the Soul through Union with Christ* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1995)*,* 207.

In Figure 4, the event of Tom's redundancy has resulted in the internal shame and abandonment shown in Figure 3, to become extant and demanding attention. As a consequence, Tom's father has now lost the hero status Tom had given him. Tom's performance-based relationship with God had become an obstacle to receiving grace. Tom served God out of fear of abandonment rather than out of the security of being justified. Tom's "good, false self", that which he presented to others, was also hindering his access to authentic community as it fed his desire/need to be authenticated by the community as more congruent then his interior life was enabled to do.[41] However, this crisis could bring his faith to the forefront where God, and the faith community could now be re-imaged and become places of safety and hope.

The painful objects hidden in the psyche had caused Tom psychological and spiritual disequilibrium. Tom's intellectual assent had not been enough to cope with the level of pain hidden in the unconscious. Tom unconsciously had transferred to God his anger and felt abandonment from his father Bill. It would be necessary for Tom to voice his story so that hidden bad objects could become extant and thereby reimaged and reconfigured to make integrated meaning making for his future.

Hall states that "stories turn out to play a critical role in integrating explicit and implicit knowledge."[42] When an individual is enabled to voice their unspoken story, transformation is possible as it helps the individual bring together their "gut level" experiences with their explicit "head" knowledge.[43] Hall argues that the process of an individual telling their story can lead to changes in the "very structure" of an individual's soul, increased access to "gut level meanings within themselves" and new storylines in their relationship with God.[44] This is important because helping people tell their stories can identify where they are trapped in wounds from the past. Within these stories there may be faulty God images limiting the lived experience of intimacy with God and others.

As Hall and others propose there is a "conceptual distinction between implicit spiritual functioning and explicit spiritual functioning which reflect two separate ways of knowing and processing information."[45] Exploring the implicit knowledge stored in the believer's unconscious psyche can help to define the variances with the explicit knowledge stored in the believer's intellect. These ways of "knowing" bring imports from a believer's past into relation or contradiction with the believer's lived experience as justified before God.

The outcome for a believer of being offered the opportunity to explore and deal with the incongruence between their implicit and explicit functioning is ably presented by Parker who states:

> It is only when God is allowed to be other than what one wishes God to be, or dreads God to be, that the God who truly is might be known and responded to as something other than our projections.

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[41] Andrew Comiskey, *Strength in Weakness: Overcoming Sexual and Relational Brokenness* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2003), 81.

[42] T. Hall, "Psychoanalysis, Attachment and Spirituality Part 2: The Spiritual Stories We Live By," *Journal of Psychology and Theology* 35/1 (2007): 29–42, 35.

[43] Ibid.

[44] Hall, "Psychoanalysis, Attachment and Spirituality Part 2," 38.

[45] T. Hall, Annie Fujikawa, Sarah R. Halcrow, and Peter C. Hill. "Attachment to God and Implicit Spirituality: Clarifying Correspondence and Compensation Models," *Journal of Psychology and Theology* 37/4 (2009): 227–42, 227.

One could suggest that it is only as God is able to survive all our fantasies about God (both good and bad), that the true God that is, other than just our projections about God, is able to emerge and be real to us.[46]

An understanding of IWM's give credence to the need for "Psychological Justice", that is justice for the whole person. IWM's provide evidence for how incongruity can develop.[47] In this regard Hall and others investigated the claim that: "Either one's IWMs of self/other are associated with one's IWM model of God (correspondence hypothesis) or they are not, and God functions as a substitute or surrogate attachment figure in the context of an insecure attachment history (compensation hypothesis)."[48]

Hall and others undertook an empirical study arguing for an "implicit internal working model correspondence" meaning that the "dynamic motivations underlying one's use and experience of relationship with God and religion corresponds to, is reflected in, one's IWM of attachment".[49] Hall and others' underlying assumptions are built on the evidence provided by neuroscience that humans "are hardwired for two fundamentally distinct forms of knowing, one of which exists in storied form."[50] These forms of knowing are "explicit knowledge" that is "conscious, linear, and exists in images and words" and "implicit knowledge" that is "gut level" knowledge "that is carried in our bodies, emotions and stories."[51]

Implicit relational knowledge "fundamentally exists in a code or 'language' that is nonverbal."[52] Hall and others note that a "core part of the healing process" for an individual is accessing these nonverbal stories held in the unconscious through verbalization, thereby giving the stories embedded in the unconscious a voice.[53] Implicit relational knowledge is processed automatically and for our purposes here it is noteworthy that "explicit knowledge *per se* cannot directly transform implicit relational knowledge."[54] This means that an intellectual assent of justification in and of itself will not directly "transform" the unconscious belief system held in the psyche. As Hall et. al state: "Implicit experiences form the *foundation* of the emotional appraisal of meaning in any aspect of spiritual functioning, including one's experience of relationship with God, rather than explicit, symbolic, knowledge of God or theology."[55]

Hall and others' findings suggest that "IWM's do correspond to individuals spiritual functioning at an implicit level. Furthermore, our results do not support a compensation model at the implicit level as we predicted."[56] In other words "consistent with attachment theory: individual's implicit, 'gut-level' knowledge of how to be with human attachment figures also governs their automatic appraisals, or implicit knowing,

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[46] Stephen Parker, "Winnicott's Object Relations Theory and the Work of the Holy Spirit," *Journal of Psychology and Theology* 36/4 (2008): 285–93, 291.
[47] Starky, "A Theological Application," 20. Starky states: "On the basis of the responses of childhood attachment figures the developing adult begins to form an internal working model".
[48] Hall et. al., "Attachment to God and Implicit Spirituality," 229.
[49] Ibid, 233.
[50] Hall, "Psychoanalysis, Attachment and Spirituality Part 2," 29.
[51] Ibid, 32.
[52] Hall et. al., "Attachment to God and Implicit Spirituality," 231.
[53] Ibid.
[54] Ibid, 232. Italics theirs.
[55] Ibid, 233. Italics theirs.
[56] Ibid, 241.

of God and spirituality."[57] This has direct bearing on the relationship between a believer's implicit or unconscious lived experience of their Christ-defined identity and their intellectual or explicit assent to justification. As Hall and others highlight "implicit relational/spiritual knowledge embedded in IWM's does not reliably predict explicit aspects of spiritual functioning over which people have more direct control."[58] They further note that "being religiously committed and engaging in certain religious/spiritual practices *by themselves* simply do not tell us much about a person's implicit relational-spiritual dynamics and maturity level."[59]

This could be cited in Tom's case. In telling his story, Tom's hidden world of emotionally laden fractures could be heard and new life could then begin to take root. Tom's Christ-defined identity could as a result, become more integrated with his lived experience of justification. As increased integration between his implicit and explicit objects occurs, Tom would no longer feel the drive to be defined by success. God image adaptation could be aided by releasing the abandonment he had felt as a child. This would necessitate forgiving his father of parental offences that until this point lay unconscious in hidden object representations. Through forgiveness, Tom could be begin to be reconciled to his Christ-defined identity. It is worth noting that this is only one aspect of Tom's story. I am not suggesting here a simplistic link between Tom forgiving his father and "Psychological Justice".

However, Halstead's research gives concrete evidence of how the identification of sin in parental wounding and the subsequent forgiveness of these wounds, promotes God image adaptation. Halstead developed "the A God-Scale" (AGS) to measure psychometrically if people's God images can be modified.[60] The AGS showed conclusively that there "appeared to be clear connections between the participants' object-parents and their object-Gods."[61] Forgiveness of parents for parental wounds can create healthy God image adaptation. Halstead defines it this way:

> The process of forgiving one's parents can modify one's object-Gods. Forgiveness achieves this by enabling the unconscious to become conscious. It helps to dismantle the idols, sinful structures, resistance, and misunderstandings that people carry in regards to the God Beyond. As a result, psychic space is created within persons for the God Beyond to emerge and concomitantly the forgivers' cognitive perceptions, affective experiences, and activities in relationship with God are able to change.[62]

Halstead and Hautus' research shows conclusively that forgiveness of parental wounds is an important and highly viable God image adaptation modality.

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[57] Ibid, 232.
[58] Hall et. al., "Attachment to God and Implicit Spirituality," 233. Italics theirs.
[59] Ibid, 233. Italics theirs.
[60] Halstead and Hautus, "Defending the God Beyond," 179. Ibid, 160. Which they define as a "new instrument for the assessment of people's perceptions, experiences, and activities in relationship to God – and its initial use in a forgiveness study".
[61] Ibid.
[62] Ibid.

The following shows how the process of "Psychological Justice" could help to redefine and reimage Tom's internal bad object representations. An increase of good objects in the unconscious psyche will affect his external lived experience. This could result in greater congruency between Tom's implicit and explicit spiritual functioning as part of a continual journey.
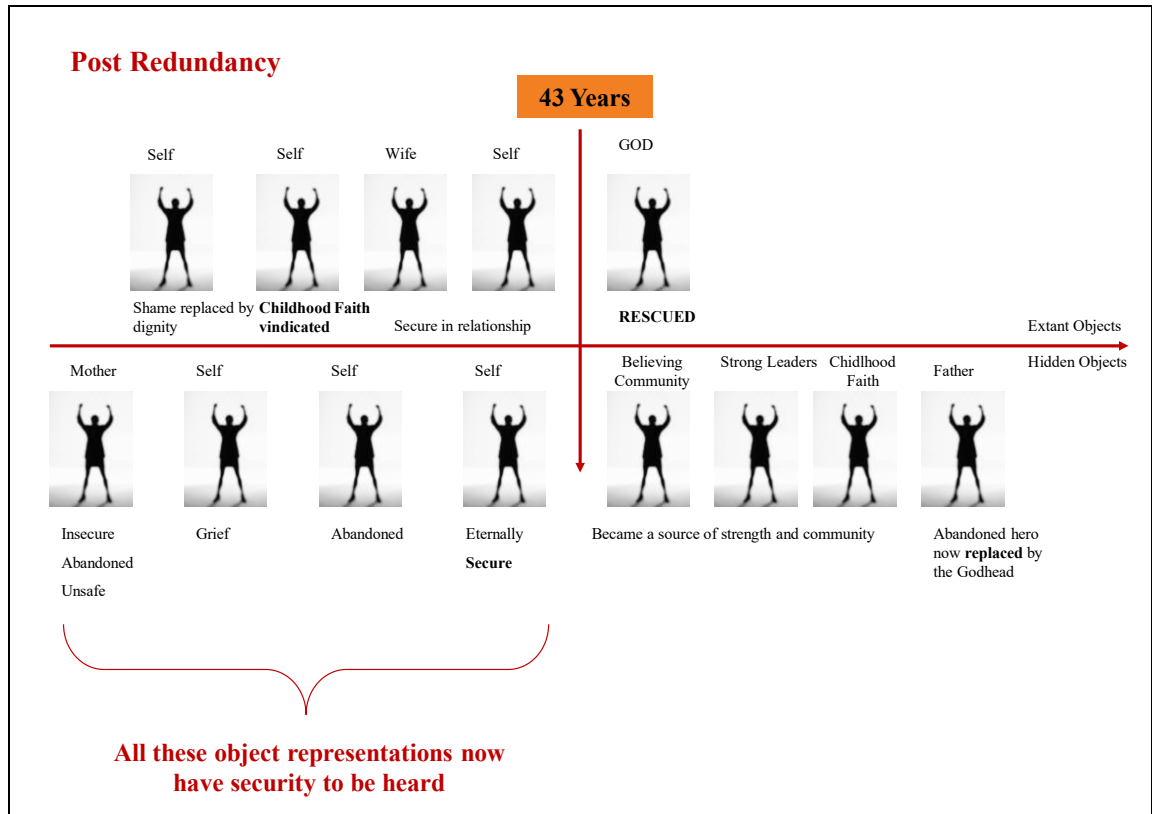

Figure 5: Tom's Post Redundancy ORT

Tom's extant world is now mirroring higher congruity with his intellectual assent of faith. As Tom has processed his internal objects they have been given security to be heard and re-imaged. God has now become an extant source of security, replacing the abandonment Tom had experienced with his mother and father.

In summary, "Psychological Justice" is the recognition that a believer's intellectual belief system as it pertains to justification can be limited by fractures in the psyche through experiences in a believer's past. However, it is also true that the intellectual belief system a believer adheres to concerning justification can either limit or be conducive toward the healing of a believer's Christ-defined identity in terms of the psyche. In this regard, in my research I looked at Paul's utilisation of the term righteousness (*dikaiosynē*) in Romans in order to explicate Paul's view of justification. A believer's intellectual assent of justification is an important component of "Psychological Justice". However, due to the complexity of my argument it is not possible to include the research here.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, there are spiritual ramifications for an individual regarding what they believe psychologically about their identity and there are psychological ramifications for what an individual believes about their position as justified. Incongruity with either or both, can lead to a believer's incessant striving to apprehend their identity in Christ through performance of religious duties and/or a total negation of possible psychological root causes of their incongruity concerning justification.

The outcome of either of these positions for the believer will be that it will either:

1. *Limit* psychological healing;
2. Or *eclipse* the need for psychological healing;
3. Or psychological healing becomes a substitute in the search for a believer's Christ-defined identity, in what Payne defines as the "disease of introspection".[63]

The primary implications of these outcomes for the believer include:

1. There may be relational blockages with God and others.
2. The growth and maturity of the believer may be limited or disjointed.
3. Habits, sin, and painful events embedded in objects in the psyche will continue to affect the emotional, spiritual, psychical, and physical parts of the believer.
4. Intellectual knowledge about justification alone will not be sufficient for a believer to have an authentic faith journey. In fact, it may lead to broader psychological and spiritual disequilibrium if the blockages in the psyche are not dealt with.

I have created an "Applied 'Psychological Justice' Model" that encapsulates the full embodiment of the required intellectual assent and the lived psychological resources needed for a believer to experience justice at the level of the psyche. There is not the room to detail the model succinctly here, but in simplified terms the model is aimed at establishing a lived experience of "Psychological Justice". The Applied "Psychological Justice" Model is a cyclical continuous process with six stages that incorporate theological and psychological import. Corresponding questions are aimed at helping the individual process through the six steps when an event is triggered or needing to be processed at a deeper level. This model can be a specific process for specific events or a guide to pinpointing constructs that have engendered God image incongruity.

"Psychological Justice" is, therefore, the declaration of the believer as justified being made effectual on the psyche. Fractures in the psyche that are not healed can inhibit the lived experience of many aspects of the believer's life in Christ. This provides the grounds upon which psychological healing is both legitimized and more than that, proven essential to the development of a mature Christ-defined identity, both individually and corporately.

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[63] Payne, *Healing Presence,* 185.