

**PLAYING WITH THE LIVING GOD:
A PSYCHOLOGICALLY ENGAGED THEOLOGY OF PARTICIPATION IN THE
TRIUNE LIFE**

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To 朋友 and 小朋友

Short Abstract

This thesis develops a psychologically engaged theology of participation in the Triune Life, making three core claims. My first claim is methodological: I argue that deifying participation in the Triune God makes use of human psychology, especially the psychological dynamics involved in the infant-parent relationship. Second, I argue that participation in the Word's play revises a God-representation. Third, I argue that participation in the Spirit's holding reshapes the Internal Working Model.

The originality of my argument is most evident in my interdisciplinary methodology, drawing on both the theological and psychological literature. While the last fifty years has seen theology give both the Trinity and participation a substantial amount of attention, there has not been a great deal of engagement from these fields with psychology. My thesis corrects this providing a robust theological engagement with Donald W. Winnicott's Object Relations Theory, attachment theory and Interacting Cognitive Subsystems (ICS).

Simply uniting otherwise siloed literatures across psychology and theology would be significant. In addition to this, psychologically engaged theologies of participation in the Triune Life provide important pastoral resources for the Church.

My thesis takes the following structure:

Chapter 1. Thomas Aquinas and Object Relations Theory. The first chapter establishes a conversation between Aquinas and Winnicott arguing that participation in the Triune Life brings about a revised God-representation.

Chapter 2. Augustine and Attachment Theory. The second chapter establishes a conversation between Augustine and attachment theory, arguing that participation in the Spirit revises the Internal Working Model.

Chapter 3: The Spirit Holds. Chapter three argues that participation in the Spirit can be understood as a form of holding.

Chapter 4. The Word Plays. The final chapter argues that God-representations are revised through participating in the Word's play.

Long Abstract

The argument of the dissertation

This thesis develops a psychologically engaged theology of participation in the Triune Life, making three core claims. My first claim is methodological: this thesis is grounded on the claim that deifying participation in the Triune God makes use of the human psychology, especially the systems and dynamics involved in the infant-parent relationship. Second, I argue that, in participating in the Life of God, persons can come to know God in a new way. Third, I claim that this new knowledge is possible through the reformation of the basic relational schemata established in the infant-parent relationship.

Claim One: Psychologically Engaged Theology

To substantiate my first claim, I draw on St Thomas Aquinas' principle that 'grace does not destroy but perfects nature' (*ST*, I, 1.8) arguing that it provides a theological foundation for using psychological work to explore participation in the Life of God. If grace does not destroy nature but works with the grain of nature, then we have a theological framework to make sense of a psychologically engaged theology. This methodological approach is further strengthened by Thomas' theological anthropology which understands psychological faculties to be shaped by the Triune Life. For Thomas, the intellect and the will are grounded in the Trinitarian processions. Indeed, Thomas even refers to the intellect as a procession of the word, and the will as a procession of love. Together the intellect and will operate as 'an Image of the uncreated Trinity' (*ST*, I, 93.6). Developing Thomas' thought I propose that deifying participation in the Triune Life makes use of human psychology.

Claim Two: Knowing God

My second claim is that participating in the Word's play revises a God-representation. That participation in the Word changes the way we know God is common to much Trinitarian theology, in which the Word's intra-Trinitarian identity consists in being God's knowing of Godself. Indeed, Thomas understands knowing God as an inherently participatory activity.

Parallel to this theological narrative we find a psychological account in which God-representations are meaningfully shaped by what British paediatrician and psychoanalyst Donald W. Winnicott calls 'primary objects' (representations of caregivers). That infant experience of caregivers shapes a God-representation is further affirmed by attachment theory which understands these early experiences to shape the Internal Working Model, which then acts

as a 'filter', shaping a God-representation. Significantly, such primary objects are not static but are capable of being revised in what Winnicott calls play.

Drawing this theological and psychological account together I propose that participation in the Word functions as a kind of play. In doing so, I suggest that participating in the Word makes use of the same psychological dynamics as the play between infant and parent. In unpacking this claim I propose that participating in the Word's play leads to both the deconstruction of a God-representation and the reconstruction of a new God-representation in an iterative attempt to know God more and more deeply. Following Augustine, I propose that participation in the Word leads to a Christoform God-representation in which God comes to be known as perfect love, the saviour of the world (1 Jn. 4:14).

Claim Three: Reconfiguring a Sense of Relationality

My third and final claim is that participating in the Triune Life reconfigures our foundational sense of relationality. Such a claim naturally emerges from claim two. For Winnicott, primary objects are shaped by the holding of the mother. Similarly, attachment theory holds that the attunement of the caregiver gives rise to the Internal Working Model. Both argue that caregiver attunement gives rise to a foundational sense of relationality which then shapes a God-representation. If participating in the Life of God is to reform a God-representation, then the psychic schemata which shape our knowing of God need to be reformed.

To develop an account of how participation in the Holy Spirit reshapes the Internal Working Model I begin by looking at Augustine's claim that participating in the Life of God reshapes our emotional experience of the world. Such a claim is at the heart of Augustine's account of properly ordered loves in which participating in the Spirit reshapes our loves. Moreover, for Augustine, love acts as the foundation of all emotional experience. This creates a point of engagement with the psychological literature which understands the implicational subsystem as the central engine of emotion production. Developing Augustine's thought in a psychologically engaged direction, I argue that participating in the Spirit reshapes our implicational schema, reforming the Internal Working Model.

To further clarify how the Spirit reforms the Internal Working Model, I develop a dialogue between Augustine's pneumatology and Winnicott's concept of holding. Just as caregiver attunement provides the basis for the Internal Working Model, I suggest that the Spirit's attuned loving, their holding, can reform implicational schemata. This argument is helped by Augustine's proposal that the Spirit is the 'ineffable embrace of the Father and the Image [Son]' (*De Trin*, 6.10.11). Constructively, developing this element of Augustine's thought I propose that the Spirit's holding

reshapes the Internal Working Model. The infinite love of the Spirit reveals patterns of relationality by which the implicational code of the Internal Working Model can be refashioned.

Significance and Originality

The originality of my argument is most evident in my substantial engagement with both the theological and psychological literature. While the last fifty years have seen theologians give both the Trinity and the concept of ‘participation’ substantial attention, there has not been a great deal of engagement from these fields with psychology. Theologians have hesitated to specify the way in which participation in the Triune Life might make use of specific psychological systems or dynamics. In turn this has contributed to the ‘theological abstraction’ of certain theologies of participation weakening their ability to develop pastorally attuned doctrinal claims (Zahl, 2020: 70). In contrast some pastoral theologians or psychologists of religion have developed accounts of human experience of God with real phenomenological specificity, but which lack a deep theological or Trinitarian basis for their proposals (e.g. Ulanov, 2001, Hall and Hall, 2021).

In developing a psychologically engaged theology of participation in the Triune Life I believe I avoid both pitfalls. Identifying the psychological structures by which participation in the Triune Life reforms both God-representations and the Internal Working Model provides an account which clearly outlines the material effects of participation and *how* these material effects are brought about. At the same time rooting these changes in the intra-Trinitarian identities of the Word and the Spirit provides an account with real theological and ontological depth.

Simply uniting otherwise siloed literatures across psychology and theology would be significant. In addition to this, psychologically engaged theologies of participation in the Triune Life, especially when explored through the lens of liturgy, are important resources for the Church. Despite this, little attention has been paid to exploring the psychological dynamics at work in liturgy, with Fraser Watts’ comment almost twenty years ago that ‘there is only a very limited psychological literature on liturgy, and that focuses almost entirely on pastoral liturgy’ still very much valid (2006: 3). Looking beyond liturgy, I believe the pneumatological proposals I offer might also be fruitful for pastoral contexts, shaping the way in which those who are responsible for pastoral care, and those who seek it, might understand the activity of God.

Chapter structure

My thesis is divided into two parts. The first two chapters focus on demonstrating the relevance of psychological work on the infant-parent relationship for a theology of participation in the Triune Life. To do so I construct two conversations between my theological and psychological

sources. Chapter one focuses on ‘knowing’, making use of Thomas Aquinas and Winnicott, and chapter two focuses on ‘loving’, using Augustine and attachment theory.

Chapter 1. Thomas Aquinas and Object Relations Theory. My first chapter begins by outlining the theological rationale for a psychologically engaged theology. Drawing on Aquinas’ principle that ‘grace does not destroy but perfects nature’, I argue that deifying participation in the Triune Life makes use of human psychology. With the aim of identifying a point of conversation between the psychological and theological literature I explore the way in which participation in the Triune Life shapes our knowing of God. For Thomas, we come to know God through participation in the Word, by which we move from confused knowledge to faith, and then finally to the beatific vision. I argue that as human persons participate in the Word so their God-representation changes. To further explore the psychological dynamics involved in participation in the Word I turn to Donald Winnicott’s Object Relations Theory, and Ana-Maria Rizzuto’s application of Winnicott’s thought to God-representations. Based on Winnicott and Rizzuto’s thought I suggest that a God-representation might be revised through playing with Godself. I also emphasise that the reformation of a God-representation will require the reshaping of the affectively laden patterns of relationality established in the infant-parent relationship.

Chapter 2. Augustine and Attachment Theory. The second chapter further explores the relationship between a God-representation and the affectively laden patterns of relationality established in the infant-parent relationship. On the basis of Interacting Cognitive Subsystems (ICS) and attachment theory I argue that the patterns of relationality in the infant-parent relationship shape the implicational subsystem providing a non-propositional and affectively encoded sense of self and others, what attachment theory calls the Internal Working Model. Attachment theory provides a strong empirical evidence base for the claim that the Internal Working Model persists into adulthood. In addition to this, attachment theory also provides a strong empirical evidence base that the Internal Working Model shapes a God-representation. In doing so attachment theory provides a robust account of *how* the infant-parent relationship shapes a God-representation, i.e. through the Internal Working Model. To identify a point of dialogue with the theological literature I turn to Augustine’s theology of the emotions which argues that participation in the Spirit reshapes our emotional experience of the world. Importantly ICS understands emotions as materially shaped by the implicational subsystem. Attachment theory also understands the Internal Working Model to shape emotion production. On the basis of ICS, attachment theory and Augustine’s theology I argue that participation in the Spirit reshapes the implicational code of the Internal Working Model. In short, participation in the

Spirit reshapes the affectively laden patterns of relationality established in the infant-parent relationship.

Together chapters one and two give an account of participation in the Triune Life which leads to a changed God-representation and to a changed Internal Working Model. The next two chapters move to consider how these changes are brought about. To do so I develop two of Winnicott's concepts theologically, holding and play. Chapter three argues that participation in the Spirit's holding reshapes the Internal Working Model and chapter four argues that a God-representation is revised in the Church's liturgy, through participation in the play of the Word.

Chapter 3: The Spirit Holds. Chapter three develops sustained engagement between Augustine's pneumatology and Winnicott's concept of holding. My key claim is that the Spirit's holding, their loving attunement, reshapes the Internal Working Model. In doing so I draw on Augustine's account of the Spirit as the 'ineffable embrace' between the Word and the Spirit. Before going on to articulate an account of the material effects of participation in the Spirit, I suggest that such an account needs to be grounded in the Spirit's relationship to the Triduum. Here I develop a constructive extension of Augustine's thought, reading the Spirit as the one who holds Christ throughout the three days. On Good Friday the Spirit holds Christ as Christ takes on the ultimate distance from the Father, deconstructing the possibility of our forsakenness. On Holy Saturday, the Spirit holds Christ in death and so can hold the death within us. The fruit of the Spirit's holding is new life, as Easter Sunday reveals. I argue that as we come to participate in the Spirit, so we share in this holding. There is no experience that the Spirit cannot hold, no death which the Spirit cannot bring into the Triune Life, no death the Spirit cannot hold to new life. Further developing the material effects of this holding, I emphasise the way in which the Spirit reveals new patterns of relationality, new patterns of love, by which the Internal Working Model might be reconfigured.

Chapter 4. The Word Plays. My final chapter explores how participating in the Word reforms a God-representation, further developing Winnicott's concept of play theologically. In doing so I begin by looking at the intra-Trinitarian identity of the Word, following Aquinas in understanding the Word as God's knowing of Godself. Again, before going on to articulate an account of what it means to participate in this knowing, I turn to the way in which the identity of the Word is revealed in creation. Drawing especially on the Gospel of John I argue that God's knowing of Godself expresses itself within creation doxologically. Notably play is well suited to holding together the noetic and the doxological. Winnicott has already stressed the noetic nature of play and many theologians have drawn connections between play and liturgy. Extending this further I investigate

whether liturgy might help us understand the nature of participation in the Word. In doing so I argue that liturgy functions as a kind of play with the Word in which we come to know the world as it truly is. Indeed, drawing on Proverbs 8:30-31 I argue that we can understand the Word's knowing of Godself as a kind of play. Applying this to God-representations I argue that in participating in the Word we come to share in the play of the Word before the Father, a play which revises our God-representation. In this account, participation in the Word's play involves both the deconstruction and the reconstruction of a God-representation. I finish by arguing that participating in the Word brings about a Christoform God-representation in which God is known as perfectly attuned to human experience.

Introduction

The prayer behind the technical language of this research project¹ is that as sons and daughters of God gather before the Lord, they are changed. As the cloud fills the tabernacles in which we worship so the Spirit moves. In this movement wounds long buried surface, and in their surfacing, they come to be transfigured by the One who is Love. It is in this love that we come to know God. In the Spirit of adoption, with Christ we too call out *abba* (Rom. 8:15; Gal. 4:6). This thesis asks how people are changed by coming to share in the Life of God.

To move into the more technical language in which this thesis is written, I develop a psychologically engaged theology of participation in the Triune Life, making three core claims. My first claim is methodological: this thesis is grounded on the claim that deifying participation in the Triune God makes use of the human psychology, especially the systems and dynamics involved in the infant-parent relationship. Second, I argue that, in participating in the Life of God, persons can come to know God in a new way. Third, I claim that this new knowledge is possible through the reformation of the basic relational schemata established in the infant-parent relationship.

Key Sources

Before unpacking these three claims it will be helpful to specify the key sources with which this thesis works. Theological claims cannot be made in a vacuum, nor can theology meaningfully engage with psychology² without specifying conversation partners. As I outline my key sources, I also provide an overview of the three central concepts of this thesis: participation, play and holding.

Theological

¹ I am grateful to Doehring (1993: xv) for the image of a prayer behind a research project.

² This thesis uses psychology as an umbrella term to include both psychoanalysis and more empirically oriented work, such as contemporary attachment research. The relationship between psychoanalysis and the scientific method is contentious, with a number of psychologists and philosophers defending psychoanalysis as a 'science' (Wallerstein, 1986; Lacey, 2013, 2018; Hoffman, 2015) and others resisting what they see as the straightjacketing of psychoanalysis by the scientific method (Rizzuto, 2006: 23; Wulff, 2006: 33; Clarke, 2017). There is of course a distinction between the empirical investigation of the results of psychoanalysis and an empirical investigation of psychoanalytic theory. Greenberg, Mitchell, and Rizzuto all emphasise that psychoanalytic *theory* itself can never be verified by the scientific method (Greenberg and Mitchell, 1983: 19; see also Rizzuto, 2006: 23). This thesis celebrates the possibility for the scientific method to add clarity to our understanding of the world and ourselves while resisting scientism, the epistemological claim that only propositions verifiable by the scientific method are true. This allows me to make use of both non-scientifically verifiable theological truths, psychoanalysis, and empirically grounded attachment research.

The two central theological conversation partners for this thesis are St. Augustine and St. Thomas Aquinas. While I do engage with other thinkers at various points, it is these two giants of theology who provide the conceptual backbone to this thesis.

Thomas' principle that 'grace does not destroy but perfects nature' (*ST*, I, 1.8) provides a foundation for using psychological work to explore participation in the Triune Life.³ If grace does not destroy nature but works with the grain of nature then we have a theological framework to make sense of a psychologically engaged theology. This methodological approach is further strengthened by Thomas' theological anthropology which understands psychological faculties to be shaped by the Triune Life. For Thomas, the intellect and the will are grounded in the Trinitarian processions. Indeed, Thomas even refers to the intellect as a procession of the word, and the will as a procession of love. Together the intellect and will operate as 'an Image of the uncreated Trinity' (*ST*, I, 93.6). That our psychological faculties are grounded in and shaped by the Triune Life gives further credence for a psychologically engaged theology.

Augustine's key contributions to this thesis lie in his theology of the emotions and his account of the *totus Christus*. In the reading of Augustine I develop, much indebted to the likes of Carol Harrison, Michael Lamb, and Rowan Williams, I read Augustine as proposing that human persons experience the world correctly when their loves are ordered towards God. In doing so I draw out the participatory dimension of this ordering, arguing that human persons come to love creation properly when they love from within God. Such a position is at the heart of Augustine's *util/frui* distinction in *De Doctrina Christiana*.

Together Augustine and Aquinas' theology provides my thesis with a theology of participation. As I unpack Thomas' account of nature and grace, his Trinitarian, participatory ontology naturally emerges. For Thomas, all of creation receives both the fact of its existence and the shape of its existence through participation in the Triune Life (*ST*, I, 8.1; *ST*, I, 44.1). In addition to this, human beings are invited into a deeper participation, in excess of this basic participation (*ST*, I-II, 110.1). The perfection of a human person, for Thomas, consists in her deification in which she comes to participate in the Triune Life such that she comes to resemble, in a manner appropriate to a human being, the procession of the Word and the Spirit. Based on Thomas' thought, I argue that

³ This especially reflects de Lubac's (1967) reading of Thomas' understanding of the relationship between nature and grace. A reading notably indebted to the Augustinian principle that 'you have made us for yourself' (*Con. 1.1.1*). Our human systems of knowing, feeling and desiring work most truly when ordered to God. Indeed, this is very much at the heart of Augustine and Aquinas' understanding of the *imago dei*.

our psychological faculties are grounded in and shaped by the Triune Life, and that the deification of the human person makes use of human psychology.

Augustine allows me to develop the proposal that deification makes use of human psychology providing a worked example of how psychological faculties might be reworked by participating in the Spirit. For Augustine, participation in the Spirit shapes emotional experience. Noting connections that psychology makes between a basic sense of relationality and emotional experience, I go on to argue that the Spirit is capable of reshaping not only our emotional experience, but the foundational relational schemata established in the infant-parent relationship. Moreover, further drawing on Augustine's work I will argue that Augustine gives us a vision of how the reshaping of these relational schemata allows us to know God in a different way. Indeed, Augustine's work gives a particularly vivid articulation of the way in which a God-representation might be shaped by participation in Godself through his depiction of the *totus Christus*.

Psychological

My most important psychological interlocutor is the paediatrician and psychoanalyst Donald W. Winnicott. Winnicott's psychoanalytic thought, a branch of Object Relations Theory,⁴ provides the two central psychological concepts for this thesis: holding and play. For Winnicott, it is the mother's attunement, her 'holding', which provides the infant with a basic sense of relationality. This holding provides the foundation for play, an activity in which the infant iteratively fuses their internal world with the external world developing representations. Ana-Maria Rizzuto very helpfully develops this account into theological terrain using Winnicott's thought to argue that the infant-parent relationship shapes a God-representation. In doing so Rizzuto also significantly clarifies the nature of a God-representation distinguishing it from Godself and emphasising that it consists of affectively laden patterns of relationality.

While Rizzuto's work is hugely helpful, she does not specify *how* the patterns of relationality developed in infancy go on to shape a God-representation. To develop an account of this I turn

⁴ I follow Greenberg and Mitchell in using a broad definition of Object Relations Theory, including both 'individuals' interactions with external and internal (real and imagined) other people, and to the relationship between their internal and external object worlds' (1983: 13-14).

to attachment theory.⁵ Attachment theory emphasises *how* the infant-parent relationship shapes future relational experience, introducing the concept of the Internal Working Model. The Internal Working Model proposes that early experience of caregivers creates a relational model which then shapes the perception of and experience of future relationships.⁶ Moreover, there is a strong empirical evidence base that the Internal Working Model influences persons' God-representations. To further clarify the nature of the Internal Working Model, and indeed God-representations more broadly, I draw on dual-process cognition to emphasise that the Internal Working Model is held at the implicational level, i.e. in a non-propositional and affectively laden mode. Moreover, dual-process cognition suggests that implicational schemata shape emotional experience. This is significant because it provides a point of contact with Augustine's theology of emotions. Speaking in a psychologically engaged mode I propose that we understand participation in the Spirit to reform implicational schemata.

Such a proposal is strengthened by the way that both Winnicott and attachment theory understand the attunement of surrogate caregivers to be capable of reshaping our basic sense of relationality. Indeed, both suggest that the same systems operative in the infant-parent relationship are also operative in psychotherapy.⁷ Here, the psychotherapist's attuned loving provides the possibility for basic relational schemata to be redrawn, and through doing so for the client to form new representations of the world. Drawing especially on Winnicott's work and

⁵ The history between attachment theory and psychoanalysis is complex. While Bowlby trained as a psychoanalyst and makes use of psychoanalytic concepts, he is also clear that he adopts concepts from beyond psychoanalysis, most notably from ethology (Bowlby, 1979: 127). Indeed, elements of Bowlby's theory were vociferously critiqued by Anna Freud and Melanie Klein (Fonagy et al, 2016). Nevertheless, attachment theory is widely considered an Object Relations Theory (e.g. Wulff, 2006; Someah, Edwards and Beutler, 2017) even by attachment theorists critical of psychoanalysis (Granqvist, 2006b). For a discussion of the similarities and differences between psychoanalysis and attachment theory see Greenberg and Mitchell (1983: 184-7) and Fonagy (2019). The critical point for my thesis is the compatibility between attachment theory and Winnicott. Here we are on strong ground as 'Winnicott's theory is traditionally regarded as highly compatible with attachment theory formulations' (Fonagy, 2019: 102). We can see this in Bowlby's writings where he makes use of Winnicott's concept of the Transitional, play (1979: 156), as well as the true and false self (1979: 139). This is not to say that Winnicott and Bowlby agree on everything. They do not. However, it does demonstrate the potential synergy which can be brought about by drawing on the two together.

⁶ There has been substantial empirical validation of the claim that parent-infant relationships shape infant interaction with their primary caregivers, infant interactions with other people, and that this style persists into adulthood. For overviews of the evidence see van IJzendoorn (1995) and Hesse (2008).

⁷ I understand psychotherapy as an umbrella term which includes psychoanalysis (Someah et al, 2017). In referring to 'psychotherapy' I am seeking to make clear that I am not confusing attachment theory and psychoanalysis. What exactly I mean by psychotherapy is complex and will emerge as the thesis progresses. By way of a brief definition, I am referring to the activity in which a therapist provides an attuned, safe holding environment, an environment which allows the client to reform their basic relational representations. Whenever I refer to the practice of 'psychoanalysis' I am referring to Winnicott's understanding of psychoanalysis.

developing this theologically, I propose that the Holy Spirit holds human beings reforming their Internal Working Model and that the Word plays with human beings reforming their God-representation. In making these claims I am arguing that the same psychological dynamics present in the infant-parent relationship are also present in deifying participation in the Triune Life. Such a proposal is based on Thomas Aquinas' principle that grace does not destroy but perfects nature as well as his theological anthropology in which human psychological faculties are grounded in, shaped by and oriented to the Triune Life. Critically, in using the language of holding and play to describe the Spirit and the Word respectively I am using these terms analogically.⁸ There is, as I will argue, a very real sense in which the Spirit holds and the Word plays, however, as with all analogical language there is also a sense in which these analogies fail.

The Three Claims of this Thesis

With this overview of my key sources in place I can now outline the three key claims this thesis will make.

Claim One: Psychologically Engaged Theology

Using Thomas Aquinas' thought as a foundation I make the key methodological claim that participation in the Triune Life makes use of human psychology, focusing on the psychological systems and dynamics present within the infant-parent relationship. Chapters one and two are particularly important to this claim, seeking to show points of contact between my theological and psychological sources and, in doing so, emphasising the integrity of the psychologically engaged theology which follows.

In suggesting that psychological systems might be operative in participation in the Divine Life, I follow theologians such as Kathryn Tanner (2010: 274) and Simeon Zahl (2020) both of whom have argued that participation in the Triune Life makes use of the same psychological systems at work in non-religious cognition. Developing this claim, Zahl draws attention to the 'incarnation as an affirmation of embodied existence as the primary site of soteriological participation in

⁸ I follow Thomas Aquinas (*ST*, I, 13) in understanding analogy as a way of navigating between using language univocally and equivocally. Univocity suggests that language refers to God and human beings in the same way, using language univocally would mean the Spirit's holding was identical to human holding. Alternatively, equivocality suggests that language is used of God in a way which is wholly unlike the way language is used of creation. Equivocity suggests that divine and human holding have little, if anything, in common. In contrast, for Thomas, analogical language is used when perfections flow from God to creation. To say that God is good, analogically, is to say that all goodness flows from God to creation. It emphasises both the likeness between God and creation, while also emphasising an unlikeness. Using 'goodness' analogically suggests a non-identical use of the term. Similarly, to say that the Spirit holds is to suggest that all attuned loving flows from the Spirit. Yet, it also suggests that God's holding will differ from creaturely holding in important ways. I discuss Thomas' account of analogy in greater detail in chapter four, section 3.1.

Christ in this life, [this] implies that divine grace must get purchase on bodies. In order to accomplish this, it must do so through the same biological and psychological structures of feeling and desiring that are at work in “non-religious” experience’ (Zahl, 2020: 179). Importantly, it is not only theologians who have made this claim, the assumption that religious cognition makes use of psychological systems is inherent in the psychology of religion. Bonnie Poon Zahl, Nick Gibson and Carissa Sharp, for instance, write that their work ‘assumes that the acquisition and maintenance of religious beliefs, experiences, and emotions can be explained by ordinary psychological processes that are not unique to religion’ (Zahl et al, 2013: 97-98; see also Watts, 2002: 8-10).

Claim Two: Knowing God

My second claim is that participating in the Triune Life allows persons to know God in a new way. That participation in the Life of God leads to a change in the way we know God is common to much Trinitarian theology, in which the Word’s intra-Trinitarian identity consists in being God’s knowing of Godself. Indeed, Thomas Aquinas understands knowing God as an inherently participatory activity. While our knowing of God is brought to perfection in the beatific vision, prior to this, faith is an ‘imperfect’ or ‘incomplete’ participation in God’s knowing of Godself, one in which we move from confused knowledge of God, little by little, to greater clarity as to who God is.

Parallel to this narrative we find a psychological account in which God-representations are meaningfully shaped by what Winnicott calls ‘primary objects’ (representations of caregivers). That infant experience of caregivers shapes a God-representation is further affirmed by attachment theory which understands these early experiences to shape the Internal Working Model which then acts as a ‘filter’, shaping a God-representation. Significantly, such primary objects are not static but are capable of being revised in what Winnicott calls play.

Drawing these two accounts together I develop an account of participation in the Word as a kind of play. While Rizzuto proposes that God-representations are the fusion of the internal world with the God of institutional religion, building on hints within her own work I extend Rizzuto’s thought in a more theological direction suggesting that participating in God’s knowing of Godself amounts to a play, not with cultural depictions of God, but with Godself. In so doing I emphasise the way that participating in God’s knowing of Godself creates the conditions for both the deconstruction of a God-representation and the reconstruction of a new God-representation in an iterative attempt to know God more and more deeply. Following Augustine, I propose that

participation in the Word leads to a Christiform God-representation in which God comes to be known as perfect love, the saviour of the world (1 Jn. 4:14).

Claim Three: Reconfiguring a Sense of Relationality

My third and final claim is that participating in the Triune Life reconfigures our foundational sense of relationality. Such a claim naturally emerges from claim two. For Winnicott, primary objects are shaped by the holding of the mother. Similarly, attachment theory holds that the attunement of the caregiver gives rise to the Internal Working Model. Both argue that caregiver attunement gives rise to a foundational sense of relationality which then shapes a God-representation. If participation in the Life of God is to reform a God-representation, then the psychic schemata which shape our knowing of God need to be reformed.

How might participation in the Triune Life reform these psychic schemata? In developing a response to this question, I propose that participation in the Holy Spirit reshapes the Internal Working Model. In suggesting that the Holy Spirit reshapes the Internal Working Model I am no way disputing the strong empirical evidence base that surrogate human caregivers can reshape the Internal Working Model. That the attuned love of a surrogate caregiver can reshape the Internal Working Model is an empirical fact.⁹ In proposing that the Holy Spirit can reshape the Internal Working Model, I am not challenging any empirical claim about human relationships, rather I am making the additional theological claim that the Holy Spirit is capable of reshaping the Internal Working Model.

To argue that participation in the Spirit reshapes the Internal Working Model, I begin by looking at Augustine's claim that participating in the Life of God reshapes our emotional experience of the world. Such a claim is at the heart of Augustine's account of properly ordered loves in which participating in the Spirit reshapes our loves. Moreover, for Augustine, love acts as the foundation of all emotional experience. This creates a point of engagement with ICS which understands the implicational subsystem as the engine of emotion production. Developing Augustine's thought in a psychologically engaged direction I argue that participating in the Spirit reshapes our implicational schema, reforming the Internal Working Model.

To further clarify how the Spirit is able to do this, I develop a dialogue between Augustine's pneumatology and Winnicott's concept of holding. Just as caregiver attunement provides the basis for the Internal Working Model, I suggest that the Spirit's attuned loving, their holding, can reform implicational schemata. This argument is helped by Augustine's proposal that the Spirit

⁹ For an overview of the empirical literature on the way in which human caregivers can reform the Internal Working Model, a phenomenon known as 'earned security', see Hesse (2016: 570-571).

is the ‘ineffable embrace of the Father and the Image [Son]’ (*De Trin*, 6.10.11). Constructively developing this element of Augustine’s thought, I propose that the Spirit’s holding reshapes the Internal Working Model. The infinite love of the Spirit reveals patterns of relationality by which the implicational code of the Internal Working Model can be refashioned.

My Mode of Argument

The legitimacy of using these sources lies not only in the strength of the individual thinkers I draw on but in the ability of these sources to enrich one another. Indeed, I have chosen theological and psychological sources which are particularly well suited to dialogue with one another. Through this dialogue I look to develop a genuinely significant and original psychologically engaged theology of participation in the Triune Life. I have found that the psychological sources are especially helpful in further conceptualising the phenomenology of participation in the Triune Life. Clearly the theological sources make an important contribution to this as well. However, I have found psychology to enrich a theology of how participation in the Triune Life is experienced by human beings. The theological sources are, of course, essential in specifying the ontology which gives rise to this experience.

In arguing for the three claims outlined above, I sometimes give precedence to my theological sources and sometimes give precedence to my psychological sources. As I will go on to say in the next section, the relationship between sources I establish depends on whether I am unpacking the ‘close-up picture’ of human psychology, in which case I give precedence to the psychological sources, or relating human psychology to God and God’s creation, in which case I give precedence to theology (Watts, 2002: 8). For example, in examining the way in which caregiver attunement shapes a God-representation I give precedence to attachment theory, finding the concept of the Internal Working Model hugely helpful. However, in developing an account of the way in which God’s holding reshapes the Internal Working Model, I remain faithful to the way attachment theory understands the Internal Working Model but allow the ontology of the Triduum to act as the primary lens through which I understand the holding of the Spirit. As should be clear in this example, the way I understand grace to perfect nature means that there is a genuine synergy between my psychological and theological sources, making conversation between them hugely productive. In developing this conversation, I move between disciplines (psychology and theology) and between sources within a discipline (e.g. Winnicott and ICS), choosing the most appropriate conversation partner to help substantiate the three claims for which this thesis argues.

Clearly such a methodology has its dependencies. Indeed, I am clearly reliant on my psychological and theological sources being faithful guides to reality. Importantly, the aim of this thesis is not to provide a definitive account of participation in the Triune Life; nor do I suggest that my psychological sources provide a complete account of human psychology. My aim is far more modest. I simply seek to provide a *plausible* account of how participation in the Triune Life might make use of psychological systems based on the sources I deploy. Critically both the theological and psychological sources I use are well-respected, and we have good reason to trust them. Despite this, I do not suggest that the psychologically engaged theology which I develop is a complete account of participation in the Triune Life. As my conclusion will make clear there is much more work to be done. Nevertheless, I believe that this thesis makes an important contribution to an area which has not seen significant scholarly attention.

Positioning My Claim

While it is not possible to provide an exhaustive literature review, it will be helpful to situate my three claims amongst the work of four thinkers who are particularly relevant to this thesis. The first two are systematic theologians, Mark McIntosh and Simeon Zahl. The second pair are psychologist Fraser Watts and psychoanalyst Ann Belford Ulanov. Looking at these four helps to position the claims of this thesis among specific theological conversations. It will also help to further clarify the nature of the dialogue I seek to establish between my theological and psychological sources.

Mark McIntosh and Simeon Zahl

Mark was my teacher for three years at Durham University. He, more than anyone, has shaped my understanding of what theological work is and how it should be undertaken. Even more than this, Mark provided a theological vision which continues to sustain not only my studies, but my life more broadly. It is fitting that this thesis begins with his own work.

McIntosh's last monograph, *The Divine Ideas Tradition in Christian Mystical Theology*, develops a rich account of the Trinitarian Life and creaturely participation in this Life. To provide a truncated definition, the divine ideas tradition holds that 'in God's eternal knowing and loving of Godself, that is, in the eternal begetting of the Word and breathing forth of the Spirit, God also knows and loves all the ways in which creatures might participate in God's life' (McIntosh, 2021: 12). Within this tradition creatures exist because of God's knowing of Godself (the Word), and God's loving of Godself (the Spirit). Not only does the Word include God's knowing of creatures and the Spirit include God's loving of creatures, but creation is caused by, grounded in, structured and sustained by the Trinitarian processions. As such, 'creatures come to be *because*

God eternally knows and loves the truth of God, *including* the truth of God's gift of existence to other beings... at the core of every being is the continual speaking of its imperishable truth in God' (McIntosh, 2021: 2).

At the heart of the divine ideas tradition lies a rich Trinitarian ontology. An ontology which goes on to shape and connect a doctrine of creation, redemption, and beatitude. Not only is all creation sustained by the Trinitarian processions, but it is also brought to fulfilment through these processions. Creation's flourishing is inherently participatory, for 'the more a creature is able to attend and respond to its authentic truth in God, the more fully and freely it is able to flourish' (McIntosh, 2021: 15). Sin becomes conceptualised, at least in part, by the gap which opens up between the life of the creature and the truth with which it is known and loved in the Divine Life. As such, redemption becomes a matter of reunion with the truth of the creature contained within the Word, and the love by which creation is loved in the Spirit. This reunion with the truth of our creaturely identity is made possible by Jesus of Nazareth, the incarnate Word, who holds within him the truth of all creatures. Christ's incarnation and the Paschal Mystery together open up the possibility that creation might be reunited with its truth within the Life of God. The resurrection of Jesus reveals that there is no distance, not even death, which creatures can go which would make it impossible to return to the truth of who they are. In McIntosh's thought the resurrection is the manifestation 'within our world [of] the Father's infinite speaking of Godself in the Word' (McIntosh, 2021: 184-5). The Father's speaking of the Word, in the Spirit (Rom. 1:4), is Christ's resurrection.¹⁰ Simultaneously, the resurrection is an invitation to all creation to enter into re-creation, to move from death to life, from the false life to the true life. In the Father's speaking of the Word, Jesus is raised from the dead, and in doing so all of creation is invited to return to the truth which echoes at the ground of its being, and in this return to enter into the love of the Spirit.

The theological framework within which this thesis is written is much shaped by McIntosh's thought. I am particularly indebted to McIntosh for his readings of both Augustine and Aquinas, for the centrality with which he positions the Trinity, and the union he sees between theology and spirituality.¹¹ The type of Trinitarian ontology McIntosh sees as central to the Christian tradition

¹⁰ McIntosh develops the pneumatological dimensions of the resurrection in his earlier monograph, *Mystical Theology* (1998). Here McIntosh, following St Paul who identifies 'the Spirit as the power of God which intimates the vindication of Jesus as the Son of God by raising him from the dead (Rom. 1:4)... the Spirit is the crucial eternal affirmation and acceptance of the Word. And because this Word comes to be spoke into the broken history of humanity, the same One who speaks to us in Jesus also speaks within us as the Holy Spirit, calling forth from us the acceptance of this Word' (1998: 156).

¹¹ For extended discussions of this last theme see McIntosh (1998 and 2004).

is one which runs the length of this thesis. Moreover, his commitment to the integrity of theology and spirituality is particularly seen in chapters three and four where I turn to pneumatology and liturgy.

The theme of my third chapter signposts a second thinker who has substantially shaped this thesis: Simeon Zahl. In *The Holy Spirit and Christian Experience* (2020), Zahl makes important claims not only about pneumatology but also about theological method more broadly. Zahl's argument is rich and sophisticated, and this overview can only pick out the points which are most relevant to my own project. The element of Zahl's argument which has had the most significant impact on my thesis is his critique of 'theological abstraction'. Zahl identifies 'a certain kind of complacency with theological abstraction that is often apparent in discussions of the Spirit, and indeed in doctrinal and dogmatic statements more generally' (Zahl, 2020: 70). While never suggesting that theological truths should be reduced to subjective experience, he argues for the need for theologians to 'draw connections between metaphysical or otherwise abstract dogmatic statements about the status of believers before God in the Spirit and their phenomenological correlates, and where possible to refuse the distinction entirely' (2020: 75).

More specifically when discussing T. F. Torrance, Kathryn Tanner, and neo-Thomist¹² accounts of 'participation'¹³ Zahl argues that it remains unclear how 'metaphysical realities actually relate to the lives of real people in time' (2020: 73). Commenting specifically on neo-Thomism, he writes that:

the language about implantation of new powers and capacities is framed in the language of habit as a kind of Spirit-given tailwind for facilitating virtuous action. It describes a kind of affective atmosphere that quietly energizes our natural capacities and that opens them to supernatural ends without overriding or annihilating them. But once again the question of how this energy of facilitation actually comes to push upon our bodies in the first place is only really answered in metaphysical rather than experiential terms: it is the product of an infusion of supernatural virtue that occurs paradigmatically in baptism... Indeed, a

¹² To be clear Zahl does not assume that the neo-Thomists he engages with (Pinckaers, Cessario, and Aumann) faithfully interpret Aquinas (2020: 109). Moreover, Zahl notes that neo-Thomism is initially 'substantially more friendly' to establishing connections between ontology and 'practically recognizable experience' (2020: 114) than the Protestant accounts of participation he considers. However, Zahl finds these neo-Thomists to have over-optimistic accounts of ethical formation and an over-developed focus on virtue which make them problematic from the perspective of the Protestant soteriology he seeks to develop (2020: 114-5).

¹³ While Zahl is critical of these soteriologies, he does go on to incorporate participation into his own soteriology (2020: 136-141.). Zahl's target here is not the doctrine of 'participation' but theological abstraction in discussions of participation.

cynic might argue that even the most sophisticated versions end up using the sacrament of baptism as a kind of pneumatological version of Descartes' pineal gland, his postulated site in the brain where body and soul interact. Each of these cases ultimately says, "Look, here. This is the place where something happens that can be described only in ontological terms, even though it has material effects. This is the spot where the Spirit mysteriously changes bodies." (Zahl, 2020: 187)

Here, Zahl pushes theologians to consider *how* their rich ontological accounts are related to 'material effects'. Taking up his own challenge, Zahl goes on to develop a pneumatology focusing on the 'practical recognisability' of the Spirit, attending to the 'effects of the Spirit's agency or presence in ways that are temporally specific', and the 'affective impact' of these effects (2020: 76). In particular, Zahl notes the way in which the Spirit works to bring negative affects to the surface and provides a 'real therapy for them' which transforms these 'painful and troubling affects into joy, peace, and the desire to serve others' (2020: 164).¹⁴

I find myself convinced by Zahl's core point – theologians need to consider the way in which the ontological realities we discuss manifest phenomenologically. Such work is an important part of developing 'experientially integrated and pastorally attuned doctrinal claim[s]' (2020: 72). While Zahl's approach of focusing on the 'practical recognisability' of the *Spirit* clearly bears fruit, it leaves me with questions as to how the method he commends might be applied to a theology which positions participation in the *Trinitarian* Life more centrally to its thinking. Indeed, McIntosh's earlier work, in which he develops an account of how participation in the Trinity might manifest in embodied affective 'experience'¹⁵, provides an early indication of the plausibility of such an endeavour (1998: 62-89).

¹⁴ By way of clarity Zahl understands affect as 'a mode of experience that is tethered to physical bodies and that encompasses emotion, feeling, and desire' (2020: 3). We can compare this definition to the one provided by psychologists David Matsumoto and Paul Ekman whose work Zahl draws on. Ekman and Matsumoto understand affective phenomena to include 'emotions, moods, affect-related personality traits, some psychopathologies, and well-being' (2009: 69; see also Ekman 1992). Zahl's more limited definition is, I think, intended to limit his investigation to affective experience which is intentionally directed at a specific object. This, for instance, rules out 'moods'. This is more clear in Zahl's article 'The Affective Salience of Doctrine' (2015: esp.440). Here he draws out how moods differ from emotions as the latter 'involve cognitive appraisal as a defining feature' (Ekkekasis, 2013: 41; cited in Zahl, 2015: 440). Regarding the inclusion of 'desire' under 'affect', see Frijda (2009) for the importance of attending to the motivational aspect of affect. While I primarily focus on 'emotion' in this thesis, I follow Zahl in using affect as an umbrella term for 'emotion, feeling and desire'.

¹⁵ McIntosh is very careful about using the language of 'experience'. Discussing the nature of mysticism, he is particularly concerned by the possibility that experience has become valued for its content (primarily whether it is pleasurable or not) rather than for its 'object' (i.e. God). Nevertheless, for McIntosh, participation in the Divine Life is marked phenomenologically. It is marked by the embodied and affective,

This thesis draws on both McIntosh and Zahl's projects. Zahl has profoundly affected my methodology. Responding to his critique of abstraction in contemporary theological method, I develop an account of how participation in the Triune Life manifests *phenomenologically*. However, whereas Zahl sets out to develop an account of the 'practical recognisability' of the Spirit, this thesis develops a practically recognisable account of participating in the *Triune Life*. In doing so I argue that theology needs to draw connections not only between ontology and phenomenology but between the intra-Trinitarian identity of the Triune Persons and their material effects. Zahl, as I discuss in chapter three, does not attend to these connections. In contrast I argue that we can only fully understand the patterns of knowing and loving which flow from sharing in the Divine Life if we look at the Life from which these patterns flow.¹⁶

Fraser Watts and Ann Ulanov

The second conversation I enter into is, somewhat inevitably, the way in which dialogue between theology and psychology should be undertaken. As mentioned above, this thesis follows a range of thinkers in holding that participation in the Triune Life makes use of the 'the same biological and psychological structures of feeling and desiring that are at work in "non-religious" experience' (Zahl, 2020: 179). Two thinkers who follow this approach are Fraser Watts and Ann Belford Ulanov.

Watts is a natural figure to examine here because he is one of the few thinkers whose work engages the full suite of psychological sources this thesis makes use of. Indeed, I have particularly benefitted from his engagement with ICS. It would not be possible to provide an exhaustive overview of Watts' significant body of work here, instead I focus on Watts' proposals on how psychology and theology might interact. In *Theology and Psychology*, Watts sets out a methodology in which neither discipline is conflated with the other, nor does either take precedence over the other. Indeed, Watts emphasises a non-oppositional relationship between

knowing 'which comes from sharing in the bodiliness of Jesus, from feeling the burden of his grief, the pain of his suffering, the scintillating joy of being given new life to forgive those who had betrayed him – this is not the case of being "trapped" in a world of physical sensations, but rather the actual sensations are, Christians believe, the very structure of a new creation. They are the pattern of a new, emergent reality which is fully noetic and intelligible, but which cannot be "known" apart from the practical, bodily commitment of one's whole being' (1998: 82). A pattern, which ultimately can only be understood in Trinitarian terms (1998: 151).

¹⁶ McIntosh captures something of this when he writes: 'this conception of the unity of knowing and loving is not based on an analysis of the human subject but of the divine subject; it depends on considering the issues from the teleological standpoint of divine reality. In the human subject, knowing and loving are distinct, and as directed towards other creatures they are often in conflict with each other; as directed towards God they are not just complimentary but essential to their mutual fulfilment, indeed in the relationship with God they are united to each other. But a shift to a more anthropological analysis, a reading of the mystical life primarily in terms of the inner self is, not surprisingly, going to unravel the perceived unity' (1998: 71)

psychology and theology in which ‘a theological account can, in principle, always be offered alongside the scientific account, completing it and cohering with it’ (2002: 9). This is a relationship in which both disciplines are able to constructively engage with and challenge one another, while not suggesting that the mode of relation between the two disciplines is the same.

Developing this further, Watts likens the relationship between psychology and theology to ‘relating a close-up picture to a panoramic view’ (2002: 8). By this I understand Watts to mean that psychology provides a detailed investigation into specific phenomena, however theology sets psychological research in its appropriate frame of reference. The close-up picture psychology gives of human cognition means that it can shape theology in so far as it ‘can influence how an insider’s perspective can most plausibly be framed’ (2017: 11). However, theology’s panorama view, its relating of all things to God, means that the interpretative lens which psychology gives to phenomena will be open to engagement and critique from theology. Theology’s relating of all things to God is not simply a disciplinary reference, one possible reference amongst all others, it is *the* ultimate frame of reference by which all things come to be known as they truly are. To provide an example of how theology might constructively engage with psychology, in evolutionary psychology it is common to refer to the attachment system as a survival mechanism, its function is to keep infants close to their parents to protect them from predators. While theology can acknowledge this as a function of the attachment system, and a very important function, the true *telos* of the attachment system will lie in loving ‘the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind’ (Mt. 22:34; Mk. 12:30). Here theology does not debate any empirical finding, but it does question the frame of reference in which these empirical findings are interpreted.

The fourth thinker who has shaped this thesis is Ann Belford Ulanov. Ulanov is a significant figure because of her creative application of Winnicott’s thought to human experience of God. Ulanov is explicit about this, writing that she ‘locate[s] Winnicott here with the mystics’ (Ulanov, 2005: 13) and that she plans to use his Object Relations Theory to examine ‘what happens in the space between our experiences of our self and our experiences of God’ (2005: 6). The result is hugely stimulating, providing exciting insights into the psychic structures which might shape how God is known and loved. Indeed, I draw much from Ulanov’s work in chapter four.

However, despite her work being consistently grounded in the Christian tradition, using key themes and motifs (such as the death and resurrection of Christ), frequent citations of scripture,

and references to key figures in the tradition,¹⁷ Ulanov does not provide a thick theological descriptions alongside her psychological analysis. For instance, in discussing the destruction of God-representations, Ulanov regularly makes links between the destruction of a God-representation and Christology. For instance, she writes that ‘just as the psyche presses us to enter those gaps in our self to become whole’ so God leads us into places of unknowing, culminating in a ‘Gethsemane, where only God’s silence answers our fervent prayers for help’ (Ulanov, 2005: 141). In a longer passage Ulanov compares God’s remaking of our God-representations with resurrection writing:

We retreat from the fierce, piercing challenge of faith. If God is real, God will provide, and not in terms of what we can conjure up. The gap is crossed, but from God’s side, the God who stands real and well outside our versions of the Holy. Yet this is the same God who comes and gathers up all the little bits of our images, from the most personal to the grandest. Like the hen gathering her chicks... this God delivers all of ourselves back to us, made new because mixed with the reality that God now reveals. This is the revelation that Christians call resurrection. (Ulanov, 2005: 116).

These theological links hold rich potential, but Ulanov rarely dwells on them typically moving quickly on and returning to psychological analysis. Whereas Zahl exhorts theologians to provide thicker phenomenological descriptions to ontological phenomena, it strikes me that Ulanov’s work could be developed by providing thicker theological descriptions of the psychological dynamics she so deftly identifies.

Bringing these four thinkers together I will now, briefly, locate the contribution this thesis hopes to make in relation to these positions. This thesis looks to identify two material effects of participation in the Triune Life: a revised God-representation and a revised Internal Working Model. In doing so I acknowledge the importance of Zahl’s critique of theological abstraction. However, following McIntosh I give more weight to the intra-Trinitarian identity of the Triune persons than Zahl does. In doing so I argue that the material effects of participation in the Triune Life need to be rooted in the intra-Trinitarian identities of the persons. In developing an account of these material effects, I draw on a range of the same figures as Fraser Watts to provide a robust account of the ‘close up [psychological] picture’ by which participation in the Triune Life works. At the same time, I continually relate the close-up picture to the panorama, arguing that psychological phenomena are grounded in the Triune Life. In doing so, I attempt to more deeply

¹⁷ Ulanov references Augustine a number of times, and mentions theologians such as Julian of Norwich, St John of the Cross and Simone Weil.

ground my psychological analysis in both Trinitarian theology and a theological anthropology than Ulanov. Indeed, part of why Augustine and Aquinas make such rich conversation partners is because their anthropological commitments are always informed by their Trinitarian thought.

The Structure of the Argument

The first two chapters focus on my first claim, demonstrating the relevance of psychological work on the infant-parent relationship for a theology of participation in the Triune Life. To do so I construct two conversations between the theological and psychological sources. Chapter one focuses on ‘knowing’, making use of Thomas Aquinas and Winnicott, and my second chapter focuses on ‘loving’, using Augustine and attachment theory.¹⁸ These conversations are intended to perform three functions. First, mindful that few readers will be familiar with both the theological and psychological sources I draw on, they introduce the key material which will then be put to more constructive use in chapters three and four. Second, chapters one and two chart points of contact between the psychological and theological sources, paving the way for the more constructive dialogue which follows in future chapters. Third, these two chapters sketch a psychologically engaged theology of participation in the Triune Life which will be more fully developed in chapters three and four.

My first chapter begins by outlining the theological rationale for a psychologically engaged theology. Drawing on Aquinas’ principle that ‘grace does not destroy but perfects nature’ I argue that deifying participation in the Triune Life makes use of human psychology. With the aim of identifying a point of dialogue between the psychological and theological literature I explore the way in which participation in the Triune Life shapes our knowing of God. For Thomas, we come to know God through participation in the Word, by which we move from confused knowledge to faith, and then finally to the beatific vision. I argue that as human persons participate in the Word so their God-representation changes. To further explore the psychological dynamics involved in participation in the Word, I turn to Donald Winnicott’s Object Relations Theory and Ana-Maria Rizzuto’s application of Winnicott’s thought to God-representations. On the basis of Winnicott and Rizzuto’s thought I suggest that a God-representation might be revised through playing with

¹⁸ In establishing these two conversations I am in no way seeking to argue that Aquinas is a proto-Winnicottian, nor that Augustine is a proto-attachment theorist. Though there are reasons why I have constructed these specific pairings, it would have been very possible to bring Aquinas into conversation with attachment theory and Augustine into conversation with ORT. By way of brief summary, Aquinas’ clarity in the relationship between the intellect and the will in the act of faith made him a fitting conversation partner for ORT given its particular focus on acts of knowing. Augustine’s doctrine of the *totus Christus* and his engagement with the psalms made him a particularly good conversation partner for attachment theory. On a less important note, I find Augustine’s psychology of the emotions simpler than Aquinas’ which makes Augustine an easier figure to bring into conversation with psychological discussions on affect and emotion.

Godself. I also emphasise that the reformation of a God-representation will require the reshaping of the affectively laden patterns of relationality established in the infant-parent relationship.

My second chapter further explores the relationship between a God-representation and the affectively laden patterns of relationality established in the infant-parent relationship. On the basis of ICS and attachment theory I argue that the patterns of relationality in the infant-parent relationship shape the implicational subsystem providing a non-propositional and affectively encoded sense of self and others, what attachment theory calls the Internal Working Model. Attachment theory provides a strong empirical evidence base for the claim that the Internal Working Model persists into adulthood. In addition to this, attachment theory also provides a strong empirical evidence base that the Internal Working Model shapes a God-representation. In doing so attachment theory provides a robust account of *how* the infant-parent relationship shapes a God-representation, i.e. through the Internal Working Model. To explore how participation in the Triune Life might shape the Internal Working Model I turn to Augustine's theology of the emotions which argues that participation in the Spirit reshapes our emotional experience of the world. Importantly ICS understands emotions as materially shaped by the implicational subsystem. Attachment theory also understands the Internal Working Model to shape emotion production. Based on ICS, attachment theory and Augustine's theology, I argue that participation in the Spirit reshapes the implicational code of the Internal Working Model. In short, participation in the Spirit reshapes the affectively-laden patterns of relationality established in the infant-parent relationship.

Across chapters one and two I argue that participation leads to a changed God-representation and a changed Internal Working Model. Clearly we should not limit participation in God to result in *only* these 'practically recognisable' signs, nevertheless identifying them strikes me as a meaningful contribution. The next two chapters move to consider *how* these changes are brought about. To do so I develop two of Winnicott's concepts theologically: holding and play. Chapter three argues that the participation in the Spirit's holding reshapes the Internal Working Model and chapter four argues that a God-representation is revised in the Church's liturgy¹⁹ through which human beings come to participate in the play of the Word. In making these claims I am

¹⁹ I follow the likes of Romano Guardini (1922), Odo Casel (1932), Aidan Kavanaugh (1992) and David Fagerberg (2013; 2016) in understanding liturgy as inherently participatory in the Triune God. Fagerberg's definition is a helpful one: 'Liturgy is the Trinity's perichoresis kenotically extended to invite our synergistic ascent into deification' (2013: 9). While I focus on the cultic aspect of this liturgy (i.e. the Church's public, communal and ritual ceremonies) I follow all four thinkers in understanding the fullness of the liturgy to exceed its cultic aspects. As Fagerberg says, 'cultic liturgy animates our lived liturgy' (2016: 27; see also Kavanaugh 1992: 100-101). For a discussion of Guardini, Casel, Kavanaugh and Fagerberg in the context of Liturgical Theology see Geldhof (2013).

doing more than using Winnicott's work as a metaphor for participation in the Triune Life. Based on the principle that grace perfects nature I am suggesting that participation in the Triune Life makes use of the same psychological dynamics as those involved in the infant-parent relationship.

Chapter three develops sustained engagement between Augustine's pneumatology and Winnicott's concept of holding. My key claim is that the Spirit's holding, their loving attunement, reshapes the Internal Working Model. In doing so I draw on Augustine's account of the Spirit as the 'ineffable embrace' between the Word and the Spirit. Before going on to articulate an account of the material effects of participation in the Spirit, I suggest that such an account needs to be grounded in the Spirit's relationship to the Triduum. Here, I develop a constructive extension of Augustine's thought, reading the Spirit as the one who holds Christ throughout the three days. On Good Friday the Spirit holds Christ as Christ takes on the ultimate distance from the Father, deconstructing the possibility of our forsakenness. On Holy Saturday, the Spirit holds Christ in death and so can hold the death within us. The fruit of the Spirit's holding is new life, as Easter Sunday reveals. I argue that as we come to participate in the Spirit, so we share in this holding. There is no experience that the Spirit cannot hold, no death which the Spirit cannot bring into the Triune Life, no death the Spirit cannot hold to new life. Further developing the material effects of this holding, I emphasise the way in which the Spirit reveals new patterns of relationality, new patterns of love, by which the Internal Working Model might be reconfigured.

My final chapter explores how participating in the Word reforms a God-representation, further developing Winnicott's concept of play theologically. In doing so I again begin by looking at the intra-Trinitarian identity of the Word following Aquinas in understanding the Word as God's knowing of Godself. Again, before going on to articulate an account of what it means to participate in this knowing, I turn to the way in which the identity of the Word is revealed in creation. Drawing especially on the Gospel of John I argue that God's knowing of Godself expresses itself within creation doxologically. Significantly, play is well suited to holding together the noetic and the doxological. Winnicott has already stressed the noetic nature of play and many theologians have drawn connections between play and liturgy. Extending this further I investigate whether liturgy might help us understand the nature of participation in the Word. In doing so I argue that liturgy functions as a kind of play with the Word in which we come to know the world as it truly is. Indeed, drawing on Proverbs 8:30-31 I argue that we can understand the Word's knowing of Godself as a kind of play. Applying this to God-representations I argue that in participating in the Word we come to share in the play of the Word before the Father, a play which revises our God-representation. In this account, participation in the Word's play involves both

the deconstruction and the reconstruction of a God-representation. I finish by arguing that participating in the Word brings about a Christoform God-representation in which God is known as perfectly attuned to human experience.

Chapter One. Thomas Aquinas and Object Relations Theory

Introduction

My first chapter makes two key claims. First, I argue that deifying participation in the Triune Life makes use of human psychology. Second, I argue that participation in the Triune Life leads to a changed God-representation. Applying the first claim to the second, I argue that participation in the Triune Life reshapes a God-representation through the same psychological dynamics as those involved in the infant-parent relationship.

Section 1 begins by providing an overview of how theology might be related to psychology. I clarify that while a number of theologians have recently suggested that participation in the Triune Life makes use of psychological systems, there have been dissenting voices. In particular I note theologians who have suggested that human psychology has little to do with participation in the Triune Life. In contrast, I ground my account of the relationship between human psychology and the Triune Life in Thomas Aquinas' understanding of the relationship between nature and grace. This is exemplified in Thomas' principle that 'grace does not destroy nature but perfects it' (*ST*, I, 1.8). Drawing out the consequences of this I argue that, for Thomas, human psychology is grounded in the Triune Life which acts as the ground for all creation. This is especially true for human beings, whose will and intellect have a primordial participation in the Trinitarian processions. Significantly, Thomas does not only understand human psychology to be grounded in a graced participation in the Triune Life, he also understands grace to make use of human psychology (i.e. the intellect and the will) in the deification of the human person. In short, deifying participation in the Triune Life involves psychological processes.

With a theological basis for a psychologically engaged theology in place, section 2 explores Thomas' participatory account of knowing God. My reading of Aquinas here follows the likes of Anna Williams, Mark McIntosh, and Andrew Davison. Importantly, I am not attempting to establish a novel reading of Thomas' thought, rather section 2 has two key purposes. First it develops the general account of the relationship between nature and grace previously outlined, focusing on how Thomas understands the intellect to participate in God's knowing of Godself. Second, as we explore the way the intellect is led to participate more in God's knowing of Godself, I will identify a 'material effect' of this participation, proposing that participation in God's knowing of Godself leads to a changed God-representation. That participation in the Triune Life leads to a changed God-representation is particularly helpful in identifying a point of dialogue between Thomas' thought and the psychological literature.

Seeking to further explore the psychological systems at work in the development of a God-representation, Sections 3 and 4 turn to Object Relations Theory, paying particular attention to Ana-Maria Rizzuto's understanding of God-representations. Section 3 begins by outlining Donald Winnicott's thought. Not only does this provide a robust account of how object relations (representations) are developed but it provides an overview of the key psychological concepts which Rizzuto deploys in relation to God-representations. I make three key moves across sections three and four. First, I outline an account of representations as developed through the fusion of the internal and external world. Second, I argue that the pattern of interaction between infants and caregivers significantly shapes the internal world and therefore a God-representation. Third, I clarify that representations, including God-representations, can be revised through the deconstruction of previous representations and the construction of new ones. Winnicott calls this process 'play'.

My fifth and final section brings together the psychological and theological material discussed in previous sections. Section 5 is intended as a sketch of the psychologically engaged theology which will be further developed in later chapters. Here, based on Thomas' principle that grace perfects nature, I argue that deifying participation in the Triune Life will involve a reshaping of our basic sense of relationality first established in infancy. Moreover, I argue that God accomplishes this through a kind of holding. Second, I argue that just as representations are reformed through play, so a God-representation is reformed through playing with the Living God. Chapters three and four significantly develop these claims, looking at the Spirit's holding and the Word's play.

Section 1: Psychologically Engaged Theology

1.1. An Overview

This thesis argues that deifying participation in the Triune life makes use of human psychology. In doing so I follow a growing number of theologians who, like Kathryn Tanner (2010: 274) and Simeon Zahl (2020: 179), suggest that the same psychological systems or dynamics are operative in participation in God as in non-religious cognition. This assumption is of course a basic tenet of psychology of religion which investigates the psychological systems or dynamics operative in, for example, knowing God (e.g. Watts, 2002: 8-10; Zahl et al, 2013: 97-98).

Theologians have not always celebrated the use of psychology within theology. Deborah van Deusen Hunsinger, for instance, argues for the importance of distinguishing theology from psychology, stressing the importance of not equating theological and psychological concepts. By way of an example, Hunsinger stresses that 'salvation' should not be reduced to 'emotional

healing' (1995: 73). In doing so she sounds an important warning against a lazy use of psychology within theology in which psychological *concepts* are simply equated with theological *concepts*.

However, as Hunsinger expands on the relationship between psychology and theology, she advances a more substantial separation of psychology and theology, suggesting that human psychology and divine action are immiscible. Discussing psychoanalyst Ana-Maria Rizzuto's account of God-representations, to which I will turn later in this chapter, Hunsinger writes that 'the condition for the possibility of knowing God... is to be grounded in God alone, not in any kind of human experience, whether conscious or unconscious' (Hunsinger, 1995: 114). For Hunsinger, divine and human agency are to be strictly distinguished from one another. Reflecting this, Hunsinger argues that either God is known through divine agency *or* human agency, a God-representation is either the 'living God' or 'a particularly powerful re-emergence of a parentally based, self-created, internalised object' (1995: 147). In making this argument Hunsinger proposes that theologians not only distinguish between psychological and theological concepts, but that human psychology has little to do with knowing God. In basing her interdisciplinary methodology on Barth's Christology, it appears that Hunsinger has inherited Barth's thin 'account of mediations' which 'binds [his] Christology to the logic of dualism' (Ward, 2005: 14-15).

More recently Hunsinger's argument has been taken up by Adam Tietje who uses Hunsinger's interdisciplinary methodology to critique Shelly Rambo's pneumatology, which I will discuss further in chapter three. Tietje uses Hunsinger's work to distinguish between 'soul wounds' which 'are theologically the object of salvation' and 'psychological wounds [which] are the object of psychotherapeutic healing' (2019:35). This does beg the question of how 'psychological wounds' were healed before the nineteenth century, but leaving this aside for a moment the important point is that both Hunsinger and Tietje create a hard distinction between human psychology and divine agency. For Hunsinger and Tietje things are either divine (e.g. salvation) or human and psychological (e.g. psychological healing).

In separating divine and human agency in this way, I am concerned that Hunsinger and Tietje implicitly understand the psychological and theological as working within 'non-overlapping magisteria' (Perry and Leidenhag, 2023: 5).²⁰ In this kind of account, psychology and theology

²⁰ While recognising that not all the psychological sources I draw on are 'scientific', I am drawing on work in the *After Science and Religion* movement to help to clarify my methodology. The pivotal text here has been Peter Harrison's *The Territories of Science and Religion* (2015). For further theological development see, for example, Perry and Leidenhag (2021; 2023), Harrison, Tyson and Milbank (2022), and the special issue of *Modern Theology* vol.37, issue 2 (2021), including contributions from Cockayne and Salter, Davison, and Zahl.

refer to wholly separate domains of reality and as such have little to contribute to one another. Within this kind of account the ministering of the Spirit has little to do with psychological wounds, and psychological processes have little to do with salvation. In contrast, along with the likes of Kathryn Tanner and Simeon Zahl, I understand deifying participation in the Triune Life to make use of human psychology. Indeed, in the following section I will argue that human psychology arises from, and is shaped by, participation in the Triune Life. This means that rather than understanding human psychology and the Triune Life as competing powers like fire and water, I understand human psychology to be inherently open to, and in fact perfected by, participation in the Triune Life.

To ground the claim that deifying participation in the Triune Life makes use of human psychology, I turn to Thomas Aquinas' theological anthropology. Thomas is a helpful figure to turn to not only because of his towering importance within Systematic Theology (both historically and in contemporary conversations), but because his account of the relationship between nature and grace naturally opens a conversation between human psychology and the Triune Life.

In what follows I read Thomas as understanding human psychological faculties as already grounded in and open to participation in the Divine Life. To my knowledge, the use of Thomas' theological anthropology to ground dialogue between psychology and theology is a genuinely original contribution to the literature, providing a theological grounding for psychologically engaged theology. Importantly while my application of Thomas' thought to this question is novel, I understand my reading of Thomas' key theological concepts as well grounded in the secondary literature. My intention is not to provide a new *reading* of Thomas, but to apply Thomas' thought to a new *question*. Having outlined Thomas' thought, sections 3 and 4 draw on the work of Donald W. Winnicott and Ana-Maria Rizzuto to further specify the psychological dynamics operative in deifying participating in the Triune Life.

1.2. Theological Foundation: Grace Perfects Nature

In investigating the relationship between human psychology and the Triune Life the obvious place to begin in Thomas' thought is his principle that 'grace does not destroy nature but perfects it' (*ST*, I, 1.8). Let me start with a brief definition of how Thomas understands grace. Following Anna Williams I understand grace in Thomas' thought as the 'divine favour', the divine love, by which God establishes the shape of creation and by which God brings creation to its ultimate end – Godself (Williams, 1999: 85; Davies, 2014: 157). In capturing both of these elements Thomas distinguishes between two senses of grace. The first sense, he writes is:

common, whereby He loves "all things that are" (Wisdom 11:25), and thereby gives things their natural being. (*ST*, I-II, 110.1)

The second sense of grace is:

a special love, whereby He draws the rational creature above the condition of its nature to a participation of the Divine good; and according to this love He is said to love anyone simply, since it is by this love that God simply wishes the eternal good, which is Himself, for the creature. (*ST*, I-II, 110.1)

The first element of grace for Thomas is the act of creation, the divine love which 'gives things their natural being'. The second element is the 'special love' by which God draws creatures to participate in 'the Divine Good', Godself. In essence, we can understand grace as God's sharing of Godself with creatures (Williams, 1999: 84).

It is helpful that Thomas refers to participation in *ST*, I-II, 110.1, for grace and participation are closely related in Thomas' thought. For Thomas, participation in the Divine Life is always a gift, it is always graced. Also, like grace, human beings can be understood to participate in God in two senses. First, there is a sense in which all creatures participate in God by their very being. Second, the perfection of human nature requires an additional depth of participation in the Divine Life. Framed in these terms, graced participation in Godself is revealed as both the foundation of creation and beatitude. Such a reading of Thomas' theology of grace is hardly isolated to *ST*, I-II, 110 but flows through his theology of creation, his theological anthropology and his theology of beatitude. The remainder of section 1.2 further develops the relationship between grace and participation in both the act of creation and the deification of the human person.

Grace, Participation, and Creation

I begin by looking at the relationship between grace, participation and creation. Following the likes of Anna Williams (1999), Giles Emery, (2003), Mark McIntosh (2012; 2021), and Andrew Davison (2019), I read Thomas as working within a Trinitarian, participatory ontology. Davison, whose own study on participation is grounded in Thomas' thought, emphasises the appropriateness of such an approach writing that 'historically speaking, Aquinas has come to play the leading part in Christian participatory thought, at least in the Western Church' (2019: 7).

Such an ontology is significant because it reveals that all of creation is, for Thomas, inherently graced. For Thomas, all creatures are gifted their existence by God who invites creatures to share in the Divine Life. Thomas understands God as existence itself (*ST*, I, 8.1) and, as such, all

creatures exist through a graced participation in the One who is existence. This means ‘all beings apart from God are not their own being, but are beings by participation’ (*ST*, I, 44.1). This participation is not something peripheral to the nature of creatures but is at the core of the creature. Describing this Thomas writes that ‘being is innermost in each thing and most fundamentally inherent in all things... God is in all things, and innermost’ (*ST*, I, 8.1). By this Thomas means that because it belongs to each creature ‘innermost’ to exist, and God is existence itself, it belongs to all things ‘innermost’ to participate in God by grace. This reflects Thomas’ understanding of creation, which refers not only to the act by which God initially brings creation to be, but also to the way God preserves and sustains all creation in its existence, for ‘God causes this effect in things not only when they first begin to be, but as long as they are preserved in being’ (*ST*, I, 8.1).

Moreover, Thomas understands the creature’s participation in God to grant not only the fact of its existence but to grant the creature its nature. This is, again, reflected in Thomas’ understanding of the way in which God is innermost in creatures. He writes that the way God is innermost in all creatures ‘is formal in respect of everything found in a thing’ (*ST*, I, 8.1). The form of a thing is its ‘character, structure, or nature as a coherent whole... To call God the formal cause is to say that he is the ultimate origin of characters and natures’ (Davison, 2019: 85). In saying that God is innermost in all things in a formal manner, Thomas means that the way in which God shares Godself with creatures determines their true nature. This is at the core of Thomas’ proposal that each creature participates in God ‘according to its mode of being’ (*ST*, I, 8.1). For human beings to participate in God according to their mode of being suggests that God will use human psychology as a vehicle to lead human persons ever deeper into Godself. Again, this emphasises the radically non-oppositional way in which Thomas understands God and creatures. As John Milbank puts it, ‘there is never any competition between divine and finite causality according to a “zero sum” game of struggle for a single shared territory’ (Milbank, 2005: 91; see also Davison, 2019: 29). Rather, as the creature comes to share more deeply in the Life of God, so it becomes more deeply itself. Grace perfects nature.

This starts to deconstruct a binary understanding of nature and grace, and indeed of human psychology and the Triune Life. If graced participation in the Divine Nature structures human nature, including human psychology, then human psychology like human nature is from its very inception not only open to the Triune Life but grounded in the Triune Life. That human psychology is grounded in the Triune Life reflects Thomas’ proposal that even the basic operations of the intellect and the will require ‘divine help’ for ‘the knowledge of any truth whatsoever’ (*ST*, I-II, 109.1). Expressing a similar sentiment, Thomas writes that ‘every truth by whomsoever spoken

is from the Holy Ghost as bestowing the natural light and moving us to understand and speak the truth' (*ST*, I-II, 109.1). For Thomas there is no such thing as a purely psychological operation of the human mind, no such thing as ungraced nature. Every psychological movement is structured by the Triune God, every psychological movement is made possible by the human person's natural, graced participation in Godself.

Thomas further emphasises the way human psychology is shaped by the Triune Life in his theology of the *imago dei*. In the following passage Thomas emphasises how the Trinitarian processions structure the faculties of the human mind, writing:

as the uncreated Trinity is distinguished by the procession of the Word from the Speaker, and of Love from both of these, as we have seen; so we may say that in rational creatures wherein we find a procession of the word in the intellect, and a procession of the love in the will, there exists an Image of the uncreated Trinity, by a certain representation of the species. (*ST*, I, 93.6)

As the Word is the procession of the Divine Intellect and the Spirit is the procession of the Divine Will, so Thomas can say that the human person contains a human procession of intellect and will. This is reflected in Thomas' understanding of the *imago dei* as an image of the Trinity (*ST*, I, 93.5). Indeed, for Thomas, the relevant faculties within the human person are grounded and have a primordial participation in the relevant divine processions (Williams, 1999: 62; Emery, 2007: 68-9). That is to say that the human intellect takes its shape through a primordial participation in the Divine Word, and the human will through a primordial participation in the Spirit. Thomas' theology of the *imago dei* reveals that creation in its very inception is graced, as the Triune Life structures human psychology.

Indeed, this reflects a broader relationship between the Trinitarian processions and creation. For Thomas, all creatures have a Trinitarian ground. For the Father's speaking of the Word (i.e. God's knowing of Godself) includes the Father's speaking of and knowing of all creatures. Similarly the spiration of the Spirit, God's loving of Godself, includes God's loving of all creatures (Davison, 2019: 53; 62-63; and McIntosh, 2021: 12-13). These two ideas are clearly expressed in the following passage:

As the Father speaks himself and every creature by his begotten Word, inasmuch as the Word begotten adequately represents the Father and every creature, so he loves himself and every creature by the Holy Spirit, inasmuch as the Holy Spirit proceeds as the love of the primal goodness whereby the Father loves himself and every creature. (*ST*, I, 37.2)

In emphasising the Trinitarian ground of all creation Thomas further emphasises the participatory and graced foundations of nature. In the Trinitarian processions God shares Godself with creatures in such a way that it ‘gives things their natural being’ (*ST*, I-II, 110.1; see also *ST*, I, 45.6). More specifically Thomas understands the ultimate identity of all creatures to lie in their ‘exemplar forms’ (*ST*, I, 44.3) contained within the Word.²¹ This is to say that the creature’s ultimate identity is determined by the way she is known by the Word and loved by the Spirit. I will return to the theme of the Trinitarian truth of creatures at key moments throughout this thesis.

Grace, Participation and Deification

For Thomas therefore, human nature is itself graced. This reflects Thomas’ understanding of grace which ‘gives things their natural being’. However, there is also a second sense in which Thomas uses ‘grace’. Grace not only establishes the shape of human nature but draws human nature to perfection, leading human beings to a fuller participation in ‘the Divine Good’, Godself. Through grace, human persons are invited into a deeper participation in the Divine Good ‘above the condition of its nature’ (*ST*, I-II, 110.1; see also *ST*, I-II, 113.10). This movement about the condition of its nature consists in the perfection of the human person which Thomas understands as ‘deification’.²²

The central tenet of deification is characteristically expressed in scripture’s promise that by Christ we might ‘become partakers of the divine nature’ (2 Pet. 1:4).²³ Reflecting this, Athanasius expressed deification in the famous principle that God became human that human beings might become God (*De Inc.* 54.3).²⁴ Thomas understands deification in a similar way but further stresses its Trinitarian dimensions. For Thomas, deification is the graced process begun in this

²¹ For more discussion of the ‘exemplar forms’ also called the ‘divine ideas’ in Thomas’ thought see Jordan (1984); McIntosh (2012; 2021), Hughes (2013) and Davison (2019: 103-105).

²² I follow the likes of Williams (1999), Keating (2004a) Spezzano (2015) and Townsend (2015) in understanding Thomas as having a doctrine of deification. For a critique of this reading see Hallonsten (2007), Gavrilyuk (2009) and Porter (2023). For a convincing response to Hallonsten and Gavrilyuk see Keating (2015).

²³ Adolf von Harnack bemoaned the Hellenisation of scripture, citing deification as one of the distortions brought about by Greek Philosophy (1901/2020: 45-6). More recently there have been important efforts to emphasise the biblical roots of deification, see for instance: Keating, (2007: 16–21); Russell, (2009: 55–71); and Collins, (2010: 27–48). Key passages in this discussion include: Psalm 82:6, John 10:34 (quoting Psalm 82), Romans 8:11, 1 Corinthians 15:49, 2 Corinthians 8:9 and 2 Peter 1:4 (Williams, 1999: 27). For further discussion of the scriptural basis for deification from biblical scholars see Crump (2006) and Gorman (2009).

²⁴ For an excellent discussion of deification in the Greek patristic tradition see Russell (2004 and 2007), for discussions of Catholic thought and deification see Keating (2007 and 2015). Over the last thirty years studies on the theme of deification have emerged on Catholic and Protestant theologians as varied as Augustine (Meconi, 2013), Aquinas, Martin Luther (Mannermaa, 1995; 2005), John Calvin (Mosser, 2002; Canlis, 2004; Billings, 2007; Lee, 2010), John Wesley (Drury, 2005; Christensen, 2007), and Jonathan Edwards (McClymond, 2003; Withrow, 2011).

life and completed in the beatific vision in which the life of the human person comes to resemble the procession of Word and Spirit. The perfection of the human person lies in their knowing and loving God (and creation) in a manner resembling God's own self-knowing and self-loving, the very Life of God. This resemblance is neither nominal nor voluntarist but has a real ontological foundation to it, made possible through the human person coming to share ever deeper in the Triune Life, a participation which ultimately culminates in the union of the human person with God. This is a union in which distinction between the human person and God remains. Anna Williams refers to 'this simultaneous emphasis on the unbreachable divide between creature and Creator' and 'the creature's likening to the Utterly Other' as 'the two poles of deification' (1999: 28). Andrew Davison makes a helpful comment here about the language of likeness, language which 'already implies some degree of "unlikeness" as it is not the "language of identity"' (2019: 147). Deification emphasises the realness of the ways in which human persons participate in the Triune Life and are made like God in this, while also emphasising that they do so as *creatures*. Deification does not hold that creatures become the Creator. Indeed, the very grace of deification is that human persons need not relinquish their humanity in order to share in the Life of God. Christ is our guide here, for Christ's divinity does not compete with his humanity but rather perfects his humanity in its union.²⁵

As incarnation demonstrates, the grace which leads to deification continues to work according to the creature's 'mode of being'. In doing so, human nature is shown to be naturally open to supernatural fulfilment. Importantly, deification does not require human beings to relinquish the nature with which they were created, rather deification is the perfection of this nature (De Lubac, 1949/1996: 298; Williams, 1999: 62-4).²⁶ To move this in a more psychological direction, I propose that just as the Trinitarian life structures the foundations of human psychology, so it is through human psychology that God leads human persons ever deeper into the Triune Life. Such a proposal receives an initial support in the way Thomas understands the perfection of the *imago dei*.

In reflecting on what it means for the image of God to be made perfect, Thomas cites Augustine's famous proposal that human persons image God when they know and love God, for 'the Image of God exists in the mind, not because it has a remembrance of itself, loves itself, and understands itself; but because it can also remember, understand, and love God by Whom it was

²⁵ For a particularly helpful interpretation of Thomas on this point see Austin Farrer (1976: 126-130).

²⁶ De Lubac playfully portrays the consequences of pulling apart creation and beatitude, as if there were 'a particular instant when God would intervene, either in order to assign me an end left in suspense up until then or in order to change the end that he had first of all assigned me' (De Lubac, 1949/1996: 298)

made' (*De Trin.* 14.12.15; cited in, *ST*, I, 93.8). In unpacking this Thomas proposes that the Image of God is truly expressed in the human person by her union with the Triune Life, that is a graced sharing in God's act of self-knowing and self-loving: which for Thomas are the processions of the Word and the Spirit.

As the human person comes to love and know God more deeply, a movement only possible through a sharing in God's knowing and loving, so she comes to embody in some way the nature of the Trinitarian life. She is deified. Anna Williams captures this movement when she writes that in coming to share in the Divine Life so 'the inner structure of the sanctified comes to resemble the inner life of God' (Williams, 1999: 63). In coming to resemble the inner life of God 'Grace... does not add to the human person by creating new faculties and thus changing essentially the structure of the human being but by extending the range of possibility of those faculties the person already possesses' (Williams, 1999: 37). Applying this to human psychology we might expect grace to unite the human person to the Triune Life through the human person's psychological faculties.

Indeed, the proposal that deification makes use of the human person's psychological faculties receives further weight if, as Anna Williams suggests, we turn to *ST*, I, 43 to further explore the nature of deification.²⁷ Discussing the indwelling of the Trinity Thomas writes that:

there is one special mode belonging to the rational nature wherein God is said to be present as the object known is in the knower, and the beloved in the lover. And since the rational creature by its operation of knowledge and love attains to God Himself, according to this special mode, God is said not only to exist in the rational creature but also to dwell therein as in His own temple. (*ST*, I, 43.3)

Thomas here describes a 'special mode' by which rational creatures might be joined to God, a mode in which God is present as 'the object known is in the knower' and the 'beloved is in the lover'. That is to say that God shares Godself with a human person's intellect and will. I will discuss the intellect and the will in more detail below, but for now I simply want to note that this 'special mode of belonging' works, according to Thomas, in and through the natural psychological faculties of the human person. Indeed, such is the way that the intellect and the will can be joined to God that Thomas goes on to say that God comes to dwell in the human person. Here, the human person's natural psychological faculties, which are themselves

²⁷ Torrell also argues for a link between the *imago dei* and the indwelling of the persons in Thomas' thought (1996: 90-4).

grounded in the Trinitarian processions, come to share so deeply in the Triune Life that they become a human expression of this Life.

In summary, Thomas provides a theological vision in which nature is both inherently participatory and inherently graced. Rather than pitting the divine and human in opposition, Thomas argues that the deeper human beings come to participate in God, by grace, the more fully human they become. The way God leads human persons into this fullness of humanity is according to the creature's mode of being, i.e. God uses the nature established by grace, which is already grounded in the Trinitarian processions as the vehicle to lead the human person ever deeper into the Divine Life. In doing so we have a firm theological foundation from which to propose that participation in the Triune Life will make use of the psychological systems established by grace through God's creative agency.

Section 2: Knowing the Trinitarian God

With this account of the relationship between nature and grace in place, section 2 has two objectives. First, it develops the general account of the relationship between nature and grace previously outlined, focusing on how Thomas understands the intellect to participate in God's knowing of Godself. Second, as we explore the way the intellect is led to participate more in God's knowing of Godself, I will identify a 'material effect' of this participation, arguing that participation in God's knowing of Godself leads to a changed God-representation. Such a proposal creates a point of connection with the psychological literature on God-representations.

To begin, I provide an overview of Thomas's account of how human beings know God. Thomas understands human knowledge of God to ascend through three graced stages. First, Thomas understands all human persons to have a natural, though confused knowledge of God. Second, by faith, human persons can come to an imperfect knowledge of God. Finally, human persons come to know God face to face in the beatific vision. While these three movements are distinct there is also an important continuity between them. Each of these stages is determined by the degree to which the human person participates in God's knowing of Godself. As the previous section established, the intellect in its very creation has a primordial participation in the Word. In faith God intensifies this as the human person is led to increasingly share in God's knowing of Godself and this is ultimately completed in the beatific vision. While both faith and the beatific vision provide a supernatural fulfilment to the intellect, they do so neither through the destruction of nor the bypassing of psychological faculties, but through the supernatural fulfilment of them. While there is a supernatural fulfilment of the human person, it is the supernatural fulfilment of the human person's nature – a nature which is created for glory. As

Thomas says, 'the soul is naturally capable of grace; since from its having been made to the likeness of God, it is fit to receive God by grace' (*ST*, I-II, 113.10).

In unpacking this movement from nature, through faith, to glory I begin by looking at how human persons know God in the 'light of nature'. With this established I turn to the 'light of glory', focusing on Thomas' discussion in *ST*, I, 12. Looking at Thomas' account of the beatific vision is appropriate because Thomas understands the graced gift of faith as teleologically oriented towards glory. As Thomas says, 'grace is nothing else than a beginning of glory in us' (*ST*, II-II, 24.3). As such, we understand Thomas' account of faith best if we understand it in respect to the beatific vision.

2.1. The Light of Nature: Confused Knowledge

In looking at Thomas' account of 'confused knowledge' there are two key points I want to make. First, Thomas understands the knowledge of God by the 'light of nature' to involve human persons' natural psychological faculties. Second, Thomas understands there to be a difference between our natural knowledge of God and Godself. To be fully human will involve coming to know God more clearly.

For Thomas, all human persons have a kind of natural knowledge of God. This natural knowledge orders people in a basic way towards God, their final end in which the perfection of their nature lies. We see this, for instance, in Thomas' discussion of beatitude in which he describes how 'man is ordered to an intelligible end partly through his intellect, and partly through his will: through his intellect, insofar as a certain imperfect knowledge of the end pre-exists in the intellect: through the will, first by love which is the will's first movement towards anything' (*ST*, I-II, 4.2). Before parsing this passage let me say a little by way of definitions. Briefly, Thomas understands the intellect (*intellectus*) as the faculty which makes the world intelligible to the human person, apprehending the forms of objects (*ST*, I, 86.1; see also Gilson, 1986: 250; Jenkins, 1997: 130). The will (*voluntas*) is the faculty which tends to or inclines to things; Thomas describes it as the 'rational appetite' (*ST*, I-II, 8.1) and it is the will which loves and delights, which hates and shuns. While these faculties *are* involved in our knowing and loving of God, they are also involved in our basic acts of knowing and loving more generally. Thomas here would agree with Zahl's proposal that 'divine grace' works 'through the same biological and psychological structures of feeling and desiring that are at work in "non-religious" experience' (Zahl, 2020: 179).

With this in mind let me further specify how Thomas understands the intellect and the will to order the human person to God. To do so I take Thomas' comments on the will and intellect in turn. For Thomas, the first hint that the final end of the human person lies outside of herself is the

fact that the human person loves at all. The fact that she has any kind of desire for the good outside of herself reveals the graced ordering of human nature to beatitude outside of herself.

Thomas' proposal that human beings have an 'imperfect knowledge of the end' is a little more complicated. In the opening of the *Summa*, Thomas refers to a kind of 'natural knowledge' that human persons have of God. He writes that 'to know that God exists in a general and confused way is implanted in us by nature inasmuch as God is man's beatitude' (*ST*, I, 2.1). Thomas here is not suggesting that human persons have a natural, propositional conception of the creedal, Trinitarian God. Rather, Thomas is proposing that human beings have a natural knowledge of God insofar as they have an implicit conception of the end in which their ultimate beatitude lies. Again, the graced ordering of human nature leads human persons to God, however it is insufficient by itself and requires a deeper participation in Godself. Continuing the passage further, Thomas emphasises both the realness of this knowledge and its insufficiency writing that 'just as to know that someone is approaching is not the same as to know that Peter is approaching, even though it is Peter who is approaching; for many there are who imagine that man's perfect good which is happiness, consists in riches, and others in pleasures, and others in something else' (*ST*, I, 2.1).

For Thomas, our vision of human flourishing acts as a kind of proto-conception of God. This should not bring about a kind of complacency about confused knowledge. Confused knowing can contribute to behaviours, habits and ways of experiencing the world which inhibit personal, communal and creational flourishing in very real ways. Rather than orienting us to the truth and goodness for which our hearts and minds so deeply yearn, we find ourselves seeking that which will never let our desiring hearts rest. Seeking our fulfilment in the wrong place inevitably leads us to the instrumental use of both others and ourselves. I will discuss this in greater detail in my next chapter as I look at the way in which Augustine's notion of *uti* and *frui* give us a basis on which to distinguish between a flourishing and languishing affective life. For now though I simply want to note the way in which Thomas' thought contains the ability to clearly distinguish between who we *think* God is and who God *actually* is, between 'the true God' and 'God in opinion' (*ST*, I, 13.10).

2.2. The Light of Glory: Vision

The possibility that the end to which our lives are directed might be confused lends a strong impetus to an investigation into how our confused knowledge of our final end might be clarified. Prior to the beatific vision Thomas understands our confused knowledge to be clarified through faith. However, we will understand faith best if we begin by looking at how human persons know

God in the beatific vision. In doing so I again make two points. First, just as Thomas understands our confused knowledge of God to involve psychological faculties so Thomas understands the perfection of our knowing of God to involve psychological faculties. Thomas does *not* propose that our confused knowledge of God involves human psychology but the perfection of our knowing abandons these faculties. Rather, Thomas proposes that God uses the psychological faculties with which we are created to lead us to Godself. Second, God perfects the intellect by God's sharing of God's knowing of Godself with human persons. In this we see that God delights to use human psychology in the graced deification of God's people.

For Thomas, the ultimate end of the human person lies in a vision of the divine essence (*ST*, I, 12.1). But how might human beings see the divine essence? The two key principles of Thomas' thought I want to stress are apparent in the following short passage in which Thomas writes that, 'God by His grace unites Himself to the created intellect, as an object made intelligible to it' (*ST*, I, 12.4). Critically here we see that God unites Godself to the 'created intellect', God reveals Godself by means of the psychological faculties with which human persons were created. At the same time, it is obvious to Thomas that human persons cannot obtain vision of God by their own efforts, for 'the natural power of the intellect is not sufficient to see the essence of God' (*ST*, I, 12.5). Rather it is 'by His grace' that the created intellect is united to Godself.

Here we see the same doctrine of grace at play as in the passage with which I began section 1.2. For Thomas, human psychological faculties are grounded in the Triune Life, and as such are graced from their very creation. At the same time, the beatitude of the human persons requires a movement deeper into the Life of God 'above the condition of its nature to a participation of the Divine good' (*ST*, I, 110.1). Again, as previously cited, Thomas holds that the soul is naturally capable of this movement 'above'. Human nature is, for Thomas, not static, but in moving above itself it moves ever deeper into itself 'since from its having been made to the likeness of God, it is fit to receive God by grace' (*ST*, I-II, 113.10).

For Thomas, God's grace unites the intellect to Godself, leading the human person to share in God's own knowing of Godself. Describing the union of the intellect with Godself in an important passage, Thomas writes that:

When however a created intellect sees the essence of God, that very divine essence becomes the form through which the intellect understands. Hence there must be some disposition given to the understanding beyond its own nature so that it can be raised to such sublimity. Since we have shown the natural power of the intellect is not sufficient to see the essence of God, this power of understanding must come to it by divine grace.

Now this increase of the intellectual powers is called the illumination of the intellect, as we also call the intelligible object itself by the name of light of illumination. And this is the light spoken of in the Apocalypse (Apocalypse 21:23): "The glory of God hath enlightened it"—viz. the society of the blessed who see God. By this light the blessed are made "deiform"—i.e. like to God, (*ST*, I, 12.5)

Here Thomas echoes the point made in *ST*, I, 12.4, that to see the divine essence will require God to unite Godself to the intellect by grace. Adding further detail to what happens in this graced union, Thomas describes how the created intellect is able to see the divine essence through 'some disposition' being given to it which raises it 'beyond its own nature' so that it might achieve its final end. This disposition is called the 'illumination of the intellect', and Thomas associates it with God's glory, writing that in this light the 'blessed are made deiform'. This happens through 'that very divine essence becom[ing] the form through which the intellect understands'. This is a critical phrase for our investigation. To understand it, it is helpful to remember that Thomas understands the role of the intellect to lie in seeing the essence of things. In seeing the essence of things, the intellect takes on the form of the one perceived (*ST*, I, 86.1). For Thomas there is no created intellect which is capable of seeing the divine essence by its own power (*ST*, I, 12.4). To allow the human person to see God Thomas proposes that God joins Godself to the intellect in such a way that the intellect is united with Godself. In this union the human person not only comes to see God, but the intellect is perfected such that it comes to be a human expression of the Divine Word, 'by this light the blessed are made deiform'. As Anna Williams puts it, 'we know God because we become like God. The knowledge of God we are said to possess is actually God's own knowledge of himself' (Williams, 1999: 38).

That Thomas understands seeing God to be made possible by the strengthening of the intellect through a sharing in God's knowing of Godself is made even clearer in *ST*, I, 12 where he writes that:

in order to see God, there must be some similitude of God on the part of the visual faculty, whereby the intellect is made capable of seeing God... That is the human person does not simply see the divine essence but the human person comes to see the divine essence through God sharing God's own knowing with the human person. In this sharing the human person is made deiform. (*ST*, I, 12.2)

Together these passages further affirm the participatory nature of the beatific vision, emphasising that the human person can only see God through God sharing God's knowing of Godself (the Word) with human persons. Alongside this, Thomas' thought also emphasises the

way in which participation in Godself respects the curves and contours of human psychology. For Thomas, participation in God's knowing of Godself is the strengthening of the intellect by leading it more deeply into the Trinitarian realities which ground its very existence. Thomas understands the 'intellectual light which is in us' as 'nothing else than a participated likeness of the uncreated light, in which are contained the eternal types' (*ST*, I, 84.5). By this Thomas means that the intellect is able to know creation through the intellect's participation in the Word's 'uncreated light', by which the intellect comes to recognise the divine ideas, the truth of creatures within the Word. The beatific vision is a radical extension of this in which the light of the intellect comes to share in the Word *Godself*. While radical in its extension of the intellect, the beatific vision is also radically fitting insofar as it is an intensification of the primordial participation of the intellect in the Word which already grounds all human acts of knowing.

2.3. The Light of Faith

In examining Thomas' understanding of confused knowledge and the beatific vision I have argued that human psychological faculties are operative in both our confused knowing of God and in the perfection of our knowing of God. The movement from confusion to clarity takes place through the outpouring of God's grace, which is God's sharing of Godself. In this, human psychological faculties become more fully themselves, as they enter further into the divine realities which structure their *quotidian* acts of knowing. We might expect therefore for the act of faith to involve the graced participation of the intellect in God's knowing of Godself by which we begin to move from confusion to clarity. This is precisely what we find in Thomas' thought.

Thomas understands faith to act as the step between our natural, confused knowledge of God and the perfection of this knowing in the beatific vision. Reflecting this, Thomas emphasises both the similarity and dissimilarity between faith and the beatific vision. Linking faith to the beatific vision Thomas defines faith as 'the habit of the mind whereby eternal life begins in us' (*ST*, II-II, 4.1). Elsewhere Thomas also emphasises that the knowledge brought about by faith is 'more perfect' than that held by nature (*ST*, I, 12.13). At the same time, Thomas ensures we do not confuse faith with the beatific vision, clarifying that faith is about things which are not seen (Heb. 11:1 cited *ST*, II-II, 1.4). We hold faith while we *wait* to see God face to face (1 Cor. 13:22; Rev. 22:4) and until then we see God through a glass half darkly (1 Cor. 13:12, see also *ST*, I, 12.2). Holding these two elements of Thomas' thought together, I read faith as possessing the same structure as the beatific vision. Just as the beatific vision brings about knowledge of God through the intellect's participation in God's self-knowing, so I propose that faith works in a similar manner. Nevertheless, faith's participation in God's knowing of Godself is imperfect and awaits final consummation.

Importantly not all commentators understand Thomas' conception of faith in participatory terms. In light of faith concerning things not seen, Elenore Stump (2003: 363) and Andrew Pinsent (2012: 69) both read Thomas as proposing that faith concerns propositions about God rather than a sharing in God's knowing of Godself. Nevertheless, a significant number of scholars have developed readings of faith as an imperfect participation in God's knowing of Godself.²⁸ Moreover, there are good reasons for doing so.

A particularly important text on the nature of faith is Thomas' proposal that 'the act of the believer [faith] does not terminate [is not brought to fulfilment] in a proposition but in a thing [God]. For as in science we do not form propositions, except in order to have knowledge about things through their means, so is it in faith' (*ST*, II-II, 1.2). Indeed Thomas is explicit that the object of the theological virtues is God and that they are infused by God (*ST*, II-II, 1.1., see also *ST*, I-II 62.1). Expanding this further Thomas goes on to emphasise the participatory nature of the theological virtues. In doing so he identifies how the theological virtues direct us towards a beatitude which exceeds our natural powers, and which is only possible by a 'kind of participation of the Godhead' (*ST*, I-II, 62.1). Indeed, Thomas explicitly cites 2 Peter 1:4, the central biblical text on deification in this article which speaks of 'becom[ing] partakers of the divine nature'.

As this reference to 2 Peter 1:4 suggests, Thomas understands the act of faith as springing from deifying participation in the Triune Life. In keeping with his general discussion of theological virtues in *ST*, I-II, 62 Thomas repeatedly emphasises the way faith involves a participation of the human person's natural psychological faculties in the Triune Life. For instance, Thomas describes faith as a 'supernatural participation in the divine goodness' which prepares the human person for the 'supernatural vision of God' (*ST*, II-II, 2.3). While faith does not grant this ultimate vision of God it becomes a preparation of the intellect 'in order that a man arrive at the perfect vision of heavenly happiness' (*ST*, II-II, 2.3.). Similarly, describing the infusion of faith, Thomas writes that it is 'from God moving man inwardly by grace' (*ST*, II-II, 6.1). As we have seen previously, Thomas understands grace as closely related to participation, describing how it brings about 'a partaking of the Divine Nature' in which God deifies the human person, bringing about 'a participated likeness' (*ST*, I-II, 112.1). In short, Thomas understands faith as an imperfect but very real participation of the human being's psychological faculties in the Triune Life by which the intellect is transformed in preparation for the beatific vision.

Summary

²⁸ See for instance: Romanus Cessario (1996: 72), Avery Dulles (1997: 33), Josef Pieper (1997), Anna Williams (1999: 85), Rik van Nieuwenhove (2021: 124) and Mark McIntosh (2021: 35).

In the account I am developing, human psychological faculties are grounded in the Triune Life. It is the intellect's participation in the Word which provides its shape and contours. Just as the Triune Life shape everyday acts of cognition, so Thomas understands human psychology to be at work in our knowing of God. As the intellect moves through confused knowing, to faith, and then into the beatific vision, the intellect is continually strengthened by the Uncreated Light of the Word. In doing so the human person comes to know God with increasing clarity. Indeed, it strikes me as reasonable to conclude that one of the 'material effects' of participation in the Triune Life will be a change in the way we know God. Participation in the Word, I suggest, changes our God-representation.

To further develop Thomas' account of the way in which participation in the Triune Life shapes our psychological faculties, sections 3 and 4 will engage with Object Relations Theory. Object Relations Theory makes a strong argument for the way in which our God-representation is shaped by infant experience of caregivers. On the basis of this research, I will suggest that participation in the Triune Life makes use of the same psychological dynamics as the infant-parent relationship.

Section 3: Object Relations Theory: Donald Winnicott

Based on Thomas' proposal that participation in the Triune Life leads to greater clarity in knowing God, I proposed that it is reasonable to think that participating in God's knowing of Godself involves a changed God-representation. This proposal is productive because it allows us to investigate psychological work on the formation of God-representations to better identify the psychological processes and dynamics which deifying participation in the Triune Life makes use of. To this end the next two sections look at Donald Winnicott and Ana-Maria Rizzuto's thought. I begin by looking at Donald Winnicott's analysis of the infant-parent relationship.

Winnicott makes three important claims for this thesis. One, Winnicott provides a sophisticated account of how representations are developed, arguing that representations are the fusion of the internal and the external world. Second, Winnicott emphasises the way in which the internal world is shaped by infant-caregiver interactions, what Winnicott calls holding. Third, Winnicott provides an account of how representations are reformed through 'play'. This section takes each of these claims in turn.

Before outlining Winnicott's work it will be helpful to make some introductory remarks concerning both ORT and Winnicott.²⁹ ORT developed in response to the Freudian notion of

²⁹ For further discussion of Object Relations Theory see Greenberg and Mitchell (1983); Dohering (1993:19-27); Gomez (1997); Fonagy (2019: 93-103).

‘drive’ and as such it will be helpful to say a little about the latter by way of context. For Freud a drive ‘is a stimulus to the psyche’ which ‘emanates not from the outside world, but from inside the organism’. This stimulus exerts a ‘*constant* force’ which can only be removed through ‘*satisfaction*’ (Freud, 1915/2005: 20-21, emphasis original).³⁰ For Freud, ‘all facets of personality and psychopathology are understood essentially as a function, a derivative, of drives and their transformations’ (Greenberg and Mitchell, 1983: 3). Within Freud’s thought psychic life is the product of drives, and therefore both psychological health and pathology are the consequence of these internal stimuli and how the psyche responds to them.

ORT proposes an alternative basic building block of the human psyche. Rather than biological drives acting as the central engine of psychic experience, ORT proposes that the central aspect of psychic life is the creation or recreation of certain forms of relatedness. For ORT, certain forms of connectedness with the external world and particularly with persons in the external world form the foundation of the psyche (Greenberg and Mitchell, 1983: 3). In the psyche these significant relationships take the form of mental representations or ‘object relations’. Our representations of our parents, for example, typically capture something of who they truly are and are shaped by real interactions with them. However, ORT also emphasises that these representations can be shaped by our basic relational needs which may obscure, exaggerate, or even invent certain elements of our representation. In the language of Aquinas, we might say that our object relations can be confused.

This chapter focuses on the work of OR theorist Donald W. Winnicott (1896-1971). Winnicott’s thought is worthy of attention in its own right, but its utility is further heightened by its application to God-representations by Ana-Maria Rizzuto (b.1932), whose work I will look at in section 4. Winnicott develops an account of the human psyche in which the infant’s relationship with their mother is of paramount importance. This has led to both praise and critique from feminist commentators (e.g. Gerson, 2004). A detailed exploration of Winnicott’s relationship with gender is beyond the scope of this thesis. Suffice to say Winnicott’s focus on the role of the mother can lead to a sense of the mother as solely responsible for the development of the infant. Although Winnicott does address the role of the father,³¹ his reflections on the father remain underdeveloped. For clarity, I base my account of object relations in Winnicott’s thought because of its sophisticated account of representations and not because of his account of gender.

³⁰ Jones (1982: 146) draws out the influence of Newtonian physics on Freud’s thought here.

³¹ For example, see Winnicott’s paper ‘What about the Father?’ (CW, II: 271-6).

To provide some initial biographical remarks, Winnicott studied medicine at Cambridge University, becoming a member of the Royal College of Physicians in 1922 and specialising in paediatrics. Over the course of the next decade his interest in psychoanalysis gradually increased until he started training at the British Psychoanalytic Society in 1927. He was one of the first psychoanalysts to train in both adult and child psychoanalysis, qualifying in 1934 (Abram, 2008: 1193-4). After qualifying Winnicott went on to receive psychoanalysis from the Kleinian analyst Joan Riviere and later from Klein herself (Greenberg and Mitchell: 1983: 190). Though initially close with Klein, Winnicott later distanced himself from some of her ideas and this move is reflected in Winnicott remaining unaligned with either the formal grouping of Anna Freudians or Kleinians in the British Psychoanalytic Society during the early 1940s.³² Winnicott's thought is shaped by his own experience of psychoanalysis as well as his observation of children both as a paediatrician and as a psychoanalyst. Capturing the interplay of these factors, Winnicott describes how taking case histories as a paediatrician gave 'all the confirmation that anyone could need for the psycho-analytic theories that were beginning to have meaning for me through my own analysis' (CW, VI: 326). Yet Winnicott also finds a 'certain deficiency' (CW, VI: 326) in psychoanalytic thought and these case histories become a fertile ground from which Winnicott makes a new contribution to psychoanalytic thought, giving greater attention to the role of infancy for the development of the psyche. Before exploring this contribution, it is worth highlighting that we do not know a huge amount about Winnicott's relationship to Christianity. While he grew up in a devout Wesleyan Methodist household and converted to Anglicanism in his twenties, it appears that 'he never embraced Christianity as a personal faith' (Ross, 2010: 63).³³

3.1. Representations: Fusion of the Internal and External World

Winnicott develops his understanding of representations through analysing the infant's emergence from the mother-infant dyad through their adoption of a Transitional Object. Within this Winnicott records how the infant begins under an 'illusion of omnipotence' convinced that they create the external world. The formation of representations involves a 'bargain' in which the infant sacrifices their demand for allness, developing representations of the world through the fusing of the internal and external world. Capturing this, Winnicott refers to representations as

³² The question of alignment became particularly contentious during the 'Controversial Discussions' between 1940 and 1944 which debated whether the theories of Melanie Klein were a genuine and faithful extension of Freudian analysis. The dividing lines were drawn between the Anna Freudians and the Kleinians. The issue was especially relevant because of strong disagreements over the curriculum of the British Psychoanalytic Society. For further discussion see King and Steiner (1991: 1-7) and Abram (2008: 1197-1199).

³³ For biographical discussion of Winnicott's relationship to Christianity see: Rodman (1987: xiii, 3; 2003: 54) and Phillips (2007: 23).

both 'created and found'. Ana-Maria Rizzuto goes on to apply Winnicott's thinking on Transitional objects to God-representations. If Rizzuto is correct then Winnicott's understanding of representations will be important for understanding the natural psychological processes which grace makes use of, and therefore the psychological dynamics involved in participating in the Triune Life.

The Mother-Infant Dyad

To understand Winnicott's account of representations it will be helpful to begin with his understanding of the mother-infant dyad. Winnicott famously claimed that 'there is no such thing as an infant' (CW, VI: 157). This is a practical observation, reflecting the infant's dependence on her mother. More than this though, it reflects Winnicott's theory of how the infant develops a sense of self (me) and the external world (not-me).

Winnicott proposes that at birth the infant does not have an individual sense of self. We must be careful in how we understand this. For Winnicott, there is no sense of self because at birth there is no sense of not-self. This reflects the fact that prior to birth, the infant and the mother's bodies are interwoven. This sense of union continues after birth, and the infant's sense of self remains 'merged in with the mother' (CW, VIII: 224). This is facilitated by the 'mother's adaptation to the infant's needs' which 'when good enough' gives the infant an illusion of 'omnipotence' (CW, IX: 275). Remembering that at this time the infant has no concept of the external world, Winnicott theorises that the infant understands itself as creating the means of its own desire fulfilment – the breast. Thus, he writes that 'the breast is created by the infant over and over again' (CW, IX: 275). Within the infant's understanding of the world 'there is no interchange between the mother and the infant' (CW, IX: 275) because there is no not-me for there to be an interchange between.

Although ultimately not true – the infant does not create the breast – this 'illusion' serves a valuable purpose. It establishes a link between the infant's internal world and the external world. Summarising this, Ann Belford Ulanov writes that 'without the illusion that an external object matches our creative potential, no link exists between our psyches and the world. To be real, reality requires an illusion' (2001: 94). Paradoxically the illusion of omnipotence, in establishing a link between the infant and the external world, lays the foundations for the infant's discovery of the world and her distinguishing between the me and the not-me. Winnicott is explicit on this, writing that 'the basis for the infant's gradual recognition of a lack of magical control over external reality lies in the initial omnipotence that is made a fact by the mother's adaptive technique' (CW, XI: 124). So, we see the way in which a form of confused knowledge provides the foundation for a relationship with the external world.

The Fusion of Internal and External

To encounter reality will require the infant to relinquish 'magical control' over the world, and this is a difficult transition to make. To relinquish this requires a recognition that the world does not align with our own desires, wants and needs. In doing so it creates a space for desire frustration. If I do not create the breast then the breast is not subject to my control, and there is the capacity for my desires to be frustrated. Equally, if I do not create the means of my own beatitude then I require the grace and the mercy of another. To help the infant transition, the infant engages in a series of strategies which Winnicott calls 'transitional phenomena' and may adopt a 'Transitional Object' (CW, XI: 123-4). These concepts are at the centre of Winnicott's thinking on object relations.

By Transitional Object, Winnicott is referring to the 'special object' which infants often become very attached to 'after a few months'. Indeed his language is very strong proposing that infants often 'become, as it were, addicted to such objects' (CW, IX: 265). Although Winnicott does give examples of Transitional Objects and much attention has been paid to the adoption of blankets and teddy bears, it is important to remember that his thinking is focused 'not so much [on] the object used as the use of the object' (CW, IX: 262).

Equally Winnicott defines transitional phenomena primarily through the function they have, rather than specific infant behaviours. Indeed, I think this is why Winnicott is hesitant to give specific examples of transitional phenomena (CW, IX: 273), because to become fixated on specific examples (like those given in CW, IX: 268) is to misunderstand Winnicott's point.

In introducing 'the transitional', Winnicott is not only making an observation about child development, he is also raising a question about the categories we use to describe experience. While not rejecting the conceptual value of an internal and external world, Winnicott is questioning their sufficiency for understanding the full breadth of human experience. In 'Transitional Objects and Transitional Phenomena' Winnicott explains that he has introduced the language of Transitional Objects and transitional phenomena 'for designation of the intermediate area of experience' (CW, IX: 266). On the next page of the same paper he elaborates on this, writing that:

My claim is that if there is a need for this double statement [the internal and external world], there is also need for a triple one: the third part of the life of a human being, a part that we cannot ignore, is an intermediate area of experiencing, to which inner reality and external life both contribute. It is an area that is not challenged, because no claim is made on its behalf except that it shall exist as a resting-place for the individual engaged in the

perpetual human task of keeping inner and outer reality separate yet interrelated. (CW, IX: 267)

For Winnicott the representations of the world we develop in the intermediate area are always a fusion of the internal and the external world, as 'inner reality and external life' are joined together. In understanding this we should not think of the 'intermediate area' in terms of Euclidean space (Deri, 1988: 52). Winnicott is not establishing a third world which is separate from the internal and external world. Rather the transitional is the space in which internal and external world are 'fused', where a genuine integration of the two takes place (Jones, 1991: 123). As Susan Deri writes, transitional space is 'interwoven seamlessly' within the external world, 'it can be lifted out only for the sake of conceptualisation' (Deri, 1988: 52).

To understand the nature of the representations developed in the intermediate area, we can look at Winnicott's thinking on Transitional Objects. The Transitional Object is a meeting place of the internal and external world. As the infant's psyche begins to approach the concept of a reality outside of the illusion of omnipotence, the Transitional Object becomes the way they manage the need to engage with the external world, without letting the size of its externality subsume them. We might think of the Transitional Object as a stepping stone between the illusion of omnipotence and the external world (Winnicott says something similar in CW, VII: 433-4). James Jones uses the language of a 'cushion', and this captures the potentially protective function of a Transitional Object (1997: 113).

As already mentioned, prior to the adoption of a Transitional Object the infant believes that she creates the breast – the means of her own desire fulfilment. As the infant develops a growing sense of the external world, she increasingly senses that her own desires and needs are fulfilled by something outside of herself. In response the infant looks to find the means of her own desire-fulfilment in an external object. This is a significant moment, in which a genuine contact with the external world is created. To achieve this, the infant creates a symbol for the breast, the Transitional Object. Indeed, Winnicott calls the Transitional Object the child's 'first symbol' (CW, VII: 430). The nature of this symbolisation is complex. It is important that the Transitional Object both stands in for the breast, and yet is distinct from it. Winnicott writes that the Transitional Object 'not being the breast (or the mother), although real, is as important as the fact that it stands for the breast (or mother)' (CW, IX: 273). I think it is clear why the Transitional Object needs to represent the breast. The investment of the meaning of the breast into the Transitional Object establishes the external world as meaningful to the infant. Without this, 'there is no meaning for the human being in the idea of a relationship with an object that is perceived by others as external

to that being' (CW, IX: 275). To put this positively, the investment of meaning in the Transitional Object establishes 'relationship' between the infant and the external world (CW, IX: 275).

Winnicott is less explicit on why it is necessary for the object *not* to be the breast. My reading is that were the object to be identified wholly as the breast then there would be a sense of the infant regressing into the mother-infant dyad and the illusion that the infant creates the world. In moving to the Transitional Object there is a sense that the infant is already moving on from this illusion. Muensterberger describes the move to a Transitional Object as the infant's 'first bargain' in which she is 'sacrificing [her] demand for allness' (1988: 11). In particular, the infant is giving up her previous claim of total control over the breast. For Winnicott the function of a symbol is already to distinguish 'between fantasy and fact' (CW, IX: 270), as such it brings together the internal and external world. Without either of these the object cannot be a genuine Transitional Object. It is the function of Transitional Objects to unite these two in an 'inner relatedness' (Deri, 1998: 50).

Winnicott's description of Transitional Objects can be used to understand the nature of representations more generally. The intermediate area is the site in which all representations are developed, and all representations are the product of the joining together of the internal and external. The latter is reflected in Winnicott's 'essential paradox', which he asserts must be accepted and cannot be resolved: 'the baby creates the object, but the object was there waiting to be created' (CW, VIII: 358). By this, I understand that the representations created in the intermediate area are simultaneously the product of the internal world (created) and the external world (found). Our representations of the world genuinely reflect the external world but they do so in such a way that is meaningful to the individual psyche.

For Winnicott, the development of representations derived from the fusion of the internal and external world is an ever-present phenomenon. He writes that the human person is 'from birth... concerned with the problem of the relationship between what is objectively perceived and what is subjectively conceived of' (CW, IX: 275). Although this might take a specific form within infancy, and Winnicott writes a lot about this, the intermediate area extends to incorporate art, religion, literature, cultural experience and the development of scientific theories (CW, XI: 125; see also CW, IX: 267).

Illusions

In this reading, the production of representations establishes a relationship with the external world ultimately enabling the human person to encounter reality. To maintain this reading, it is important to address the fact that Winnicott refers to the representations produced in the

intermediate area as ‘illusions’. Before looking at what Winnicott means by ‘illusion’, let’s look at two examples. In ‘Transitional Objects and Transitional Phenomena’ he writes:

I am therefore studying the substance of *illusion*, that which is allowed to the infant, and which in adult life is inherent in art and religion. (CW, IX: 267, my emphasis; see also CW, IX: 275; CW, IX: 276, 278)

Notably religion is explicitly referred to as an ‘illusion’. However, the key question is not whether Winnicott refers to transitional phenomena as ‘illusions’, but what he means when he does so.

Antony Flew in a critical essay on Winnicott interprets him as using a pre-established understanding of ‘illusion’. Flew assumes that ‘illusion’ must be equated with ‘not true’, writing that ‘the defining beliefs of the sane man must be not illusory but true; and those typical of the mad man, illusory and false’ (1988: 493). For Flew, the purpose of referring to certain beliefs as illusions is to distinguish between true and false beliefs. Importantly he goes on to ascribe this understanding of illusion to Winnicott’s thought, writing that the:

defender [of Winnicott] must be reminded that the third world of transitional phenomena is supposed to be located and defined by reference to misappreciation of the truth of the universe around us. (1988: 494)

Flew interprets the intermediate area as giving rise to an understanding of the world which is not true, to the ‘misappreciation of the truth of the universe around us’. Notably Flew develops this understanding of the meaning of ‘illusion’ from outside of Winnicott’s work. To do so Flew uses his understanding of the meaning of ‘illusion’, supplemented by a certain reading of Freud. Namely, the ‘Freudian conviction that religious beliefs are illusions’, with illusion understood as set out above (Flew, 1988: 493-4). In doing so Flew misreads the role which ‘illusion’ plays, not only in Winnicott’s thought system, but in Freud’s as well. This is important because it shows that Flew fails to recognise the history of the term ‘illusion’ within psychoanalysis.

Looking at Freud’s use of ‘illusion’ will help to clarify matters. In *The Future of an Illusion* Freud distinguishes between an ‘illusion’ and a ‘delusion’. For Freud, both illusions and delusions are the product of desires influencing rational judgement (Freud, 1927/2008: 29). However, Freud makes an important distinction between the two. Whereas ‘the key feature of the delusion’ is ‘its inconsistency with reality’, an ‘illusion is not necessarily false, i.e. unrealisable or in conflict with reality. For example, a middle-class girl may entertain the illusion that a prince will come to carry her off to his home. It is possible cases of the sort have occurred’ (Freud, 1927/2008: 29). Flew confuses Freud’s understanding of illusion and delusion, and in doing so assumes that by

'illusion' Winnicott is referring to the misapprehension of the external world. Importantly, within Freud's thought, the fact that religious belief is an illusion does not in and of itself make religious belief untrue.

This raises the important question of the relationship between Freud and Winnicott's understanding of 'illusion'.³⁴ Flew assumes a univocal use of the term across the two thinkers. Indeed, there are some points of common ground, Winnicott would agree with Freud in his general distinction between a delusion as inconsistent with reality, and an illusion as not necessarily false. However, the same distinction operates within two very different epistemologies. In *The Future of an Illusion*, Freud suggests that human persons should only accept those beliefs which are scientifically verifiable, proposing that 'scientific work is the sole avenue that can lead to knowledge of the reality outside ourselves' (1927/2008: 31). Susan Deri characterises this as Freud's desire to separate the 'inside-subjective' from the 'outside-objective'. For Freud, science belongs to the 'outside-objective' and therefore should be trusted, illusions belong to the 'inside-subjective' and, therefore, cannot be used to justify beliefs about the external world. In contrast to Freud's desire to separate the 'inside-subjective' from the 'outside-objective', Deri writes that 'Winnicott delights in showing how well these two universes harmonise, intermingled within the same act, the same perception, or the same physical object' (1988: 46).

In contrast to Freud, Winnicott's use of 'illusion' does not, primarily, aim at separating the internal-subjective world from the objective-external world. Rather, Winnicott's use highlights the way the two intermingle. As has been proposed throughout this chapter, Winnicott understands the transitional as that which bridges the internal and external world. In intermediate space the internal and external world fuse together. Contra Flew, in referring to the results of this fusion as an 'illusion' Winnicott is not making a statement about the ontological status of the representations derived from this fusion. Rather, he is making an observation about the conditions necessary for the human person to establish a meaningful relationship with the external world. This is particularly apparent when Winnicott refers to transitional phenomena as 'the use of illusion' and goes on to say that without these illusions 'there is no meaning for the human being in the idea of a relationship with an object' (CW, IX: 275). For Winnicott, 'illusion', like the transitional, is defined by its use (developing a relationship with the external world) not by its content (ontological status). Alfred Flarsheim makes this point in his response to Flew,

³⁴ For an excellent discussion of the differences in Freud and Winnicott's use of 'illusion' see Meissner (1990).

proposing that when Winnicott uses the term *'illusion'* he does not imply a "misappreciation" of the external world. It is rather that illusion refers to an *expanded perception'* involving the fusion of the internal and external world (1988: 508).

3.2. Holding: The Shape of the Internal World

If our representations are the fusion of the internal and the external world then it raises a question about how the internal world is formed. For Winnicott, the mother's holding is central to the shape the internal world takes on. Again, if Winnicott is correct then his work may detail the natural psychological processes by which a basic sense of relationality is formed in human persons. Indeed, Rizzuto's work will go on to emphasise the relationship between early experiences of caregivers and God-representation. As the thesis progresses, I will argue that just as a basic sense of relationality is developed in the mother's holding, so participation in the Spirit makes use of the same psychological dynamics, 'holding' the human person, and in doing so reshaping their basic sense of relationality.

By 'holding' Winnicott refers to both the physical act of holding which the mother undertakes, as well as the broader environment in which the mother cares for the infant. Indeed, this environment is often referred to as the 'holding environment'. In Winnicott's own words, "the term "holding" is used here to denote not only the actual physical holding of the infant, but also the total environmental provision' of the mother (CW, VI: 147; see also CW, VI: 201). Holding may seem a trivial activity but reflecting on the fact that, at least initially, the infant is not able to sit or stand, we should remember that the mother's holding plays an essential role in presenting the world to the infant. It is in the mother's holding of the infant that the infant first gains a sense of the world, as the infant can only see, touch, or taste that which they are held near to.

More than this, holding does not only provide a sense as to what the world is like, but it communicates to the infant what *she* is like. Holding 'is a form of loving. It is perhaps the only way in which a mother can show the infant her love' (CW, VI: 151). The way the infant is held establishes a foundational sense as to what the infant and the world is like, it gives a sense of the pattern of relationship between the two. Capturing this, Winnicott writes, 'the whole relationship of this new individual [the infant] to the actual world has to be based on the way things start up and the pattern that gradually develops according to the experience that belong to this human interrelationship of baby and mother' (CW, VIII: 85). This template is not held in the form of conscious propositions but is typically 'taken for granted' and goes 'scarcely noticed' (CW, VI: 151-2). In other words, the way an infant is held shapes the pre-reflective basis upon which they experience the world and themselves. When the infant is held lovingly, she develops a sense of

self which has value and significance, and when the infant is neglected, or when she is held unlovingly, the infant is told from its earliest days to question her value and significance.

Critical to the mother's holding is an attunement between herself and the infant. By 'attunement' Winnicott does not mean that there is an isomorphic mapping between the mother and the infant's experience, as if the mother feels happy when the infant feels happy, or tired when the infant feels tired, hungry when the infant feels hungry. Clearly this is not the case. Rather the mother's holding is based on the mother's ability to 'identify with her infant' (CW, VI: 91). It is often an 'instinctive' understanding of how the infant feels and what the infant might need (CW, IV: 252).

Winnicott extends his analysis of the role of attunement in his discussion of the 'mirror stage'. A critical way in which the infant develops a sense of her own internal world is through the mother mirroring back to her what she gives out. The mother constructs a model of the infant's internal world and presents this back to the infant in such a way that the infant comes to experience their internal world as having value. Thus the mother "takes on" the infant's internal world, and it is in this sense that the mother can 'integrate the various feelings, sensations, excitements, angers, griefs, etc. that go to make up an infant's life but which the infant cannot hold' (CW, IV: 252). This integration happens in the mother's attunement. Sadly, Winnicott notes that 'many babies, however, do have to have a long experience of not getting back what they are giving. They look and they do not see themselves' (CW, VIII: 212). Though the mirror stage is a specific stage of infancy it continues into adolescence and adulthood in important ways. In Winnicott's analysis, as I gaze at my reflected face in the mirror, I am seeking the gaze of the (m)other who will declare that I am beautiful, that I am worthy to be loved (CW, VIII: 213).

3.3. Play: Reformation of Representations

For Winnicott, the mother's holding and mirroring provide the infant with a foundational sense of self, a sense of whether they are valuable or not. Moreover, they provide the infant with a foundational sense of self in relation to the external world, providing a pre-reflective sense of what the world is like. Depending on the holding the infant has experienced, the world might be presented as full of goodness, inviting exploration, or it might be presented as a place of threat and uncertainty. Together this pre-reflective sense of the self and the world provides the foundations for play. Play is an essential category for Winnicott, and indeed for this thesis. For Winnicott it is in play that the human person develops and revises their representations of the world, other people and even themselves. Again, if Winnicott is correct in this, then his account of play will help us to understand the natural psychological process which grace works to perfect

in the reformation of a God-representation. Developing this in chapter four, I argue that participating in the play of the Word reshapes a God-representation.

For Winnicott, play is a ‘direct development’ of transitional phenomena (CW, VIII: 311) and follows the central role of the transitional in helping the individual to fuse together the internal and external world. Critically, in discussing play Winnicott is not only referring to the activity of children but writes that ‘whatever I say about children playing really applies to adults as well’ (CW, VIII: 301). As I outline Winnicott’s account of play I pay particular attention to the fact that, in play, the individual both constructs and revises their representations of the world.

Section 3.1 outlined Winnicott’s claim that representations are developed within the context of the infant’s relationship with her mother. Play occurs within the same context and Winnicott emphasises that the infant’s first play relationship is with her mother. Indeed, he calls the ‘potential space between the mother and the baby’ a ‘playground’ (CW, VIII: 308). In this play the mother moves “to and fro” between being that which the baby has a capacity to find and (alternatively) being herself and waiting to be found’ (CW, VIII: 307). Here we see the way in which play is the fusing of the internal and external world. The mother is herself, she is genuinely a member of the ‘external world’. At the same time, she can only be ‘found’ to the extent that the infant’s internal world can fuse with the external world, i.e. to the extent that the infant has the capacity to find her. Here, we see again the importance of representations (Deri, 1988: 54). The infant cannot approach the mother as she is in herself. Not only does the full sense of who the mother is transcend the infant’s cognitive abilities, but an unaffected concept of the mother would lack the necessary meaning for the infant. To approach the mother the infant needs to create a representation of her by which the infant can relate their internal world and the mother.

Object-Relating and Object-Use

The central role that representations have in providing a relationship with the external world has led a few commentators to provide a pessimistic analysis of ORT. Benjamin Beit-Hallahmi is particularly strong when he suggests that ORT leads to a ‘total distortion of reality’ (1994: 256). Beit-Hallahmi’s concern is driven by his understanding of the nature of the interaction between the internal and external world in ORT. Specifically, he is concerned by the emphasis on ‘projection’ from the internal world to the external world (Beit-Hallahmi, 1994: 256). This underlines the importance of clarifying the nature of the interaction between the internal and external world in Winnicott’s thinking.

In responding to this, it is helpful to separate Winnicott’s thinking from the language of ‘projection’. Projection, as Beit-Hallahmi uses it, implies that the external world is a blank canvas

upon which the infant's internal world appears. This is similar to what Winnicott refers to as 'object-relating' in which 'projection mechanisms' allow 'something of the subject [to be] found in the object' (CW, VIII: 357). In object-relating, the experience of the subject 'can be described in terms of the subject as an isolate' (CW, VIII: 357), i.e. the character of the experience does not depend on the object in the external world. It is similar to Beit-Hallahmi's projection.

Significantly, Winnicott's theory of development proposes that the infant moves from object-relating to object-use. He suggests that to use an object requires a sense of 'being part of shared reality, not a bundle of projection' (CW, VIII: 357). To develop an understanding of an object as external to the self, Winnicott hypothesises that when a sense of the external world develops the infant starts to test this externality through aggressive impulses.

To clarify, when Winnicott uses the term 'aggressive' we should not think of the infant as violent, but nor should we employ a naive, hallmark image of infancy. For Winnicott, aggression is 'an innate developmental energy' which 'could be used to describe the movements of the foetus, the baby's hand grasp, and the chewing activities that would eventually turn into biting' (Philips, 2007: 105). Aggression denotes the liveliness of human activity and movement, indeed Winnicott writes that 'motility is the precursor of aggression' (CW, V: 328 cited Philips, 2007: 105). However, Winnicott's use of aggression also reveals the affective diversity present within play, the anger and frustration that play can incorporate, as well as its joy. The role of aggression in play will be particularly important to bear in mind in chapter four. For our present purposes it is significant that Winnicott understands aggression to reveal the externality of the world. He writes that it is the 'aggressive component that more surely drives the individual to a need for a Not-Me or an object that is felt to be external' (CW, III: 344, cited Philips, 2007: 109).

In Winnicott's claim that the infant starts to test externality through aggressive impulses, we can see Winnicott's reformulation of the reality principle. Previous formulations of the reality principle had understood aggression as 'a reactive encounter with reality'. But for Winnicott the infant's aggression 'plays its part in making the reality, placing the object outside the self' (CW, VIII: 359). The key moment is when the object survives the infant's aggressive activity. This reveals to the infant that the object is truly external to her, highlighting that the infant does not have omnipotent control over it. Winnicott amusingly captures this thought process as follows:

The subject says to the object: 'I destroyed you', and the object is there to receive the communication. From now on the subject says: 'Hullo object!' 'I destroyed you.' 'I love you.' 'You have value for me because of your survival of my destruction of you'. (CW, VIII: 357)

The object's survival of the aggressive impulse lays the foundation for a genuine 'interaction' between the internal and external world in intermediate space (Jones, 1991: 120). In this interaction neither the internal nor external world dominate. The representations developed through intermediate space arise 'neither from the external world impressing itself on our passive minds nor from the projection of our subjective ideas onto a blank screen' (Jones, 1997: 117).

Object-Use and Play

That the representations formed in play are open to revision can be seen by drawing together Winnicott's thinking on object-use and his account of the play between the infant and her mother.

Winnicott writes that the mother goes through a similar experience to the object in object-use, giving the following account: 'the object [mother] is repudiated, re-accepted, and perceived objectively' (CW, VIII: 307). In the infant's aggression towards the mother, the infant is confronted with the externality of the mother. This is a reassuring experience for the infant, which Winnicott captures above in the infant's profession of love following this realisation. Indeed, the mother's survival of the child's aggression becomes part of the foundation for the child's understanding of the external world more generally, 'only after such reassuring experiences can the child use objects freely for his own creative enjoyment' (Deri, 1988: 54-5).

This is to say that, in play, there is a to and fro movement between the construction of representations, the investing of 'chosen external phenomena with dream meaning and feeling' (CW, VIII: 311) and the repudiation of this infusion in the discovery of the externality of the external world. In the infant's play, the external world, like the mother, moves 'to and fro' between being created and found. Deri develops this point very helpfully, writing that this 'to and fro' highlights the need for play to hold constructive and deconstructive moments. Both are essential components of the creative process. The creation of representations allows for the fusion of the internal and the external world, and the destruction of previously constructed representations ensures that these representations can be revised in an iterative attempt to more deeply fuse the internal and external world. As Deri puts it:

the aggressive element is required for the capacity to destroy previous gestalts, without which innovative creation cannot take place. The child who cannot enjoy throwing over his building blocks when he has finished playing with it, will not be able to begin a new one; all the constructive elements will be tied up in the old creation. (1988: 55)

The destruction of previous representations allows for play to be genuinely constructive, allowing the individual to develop new representations with which they can establish a relationship with the external world. Pivotal though, the individual is never trapped within these representations, they remain open to reformulation through a confrontation with the external world. The representations developed in the intermediate area are always open to 'reality testing' (Pruyser, 1991: 164). Within Winnicott's thought there is a sense in which the representations of the world generated in the intermediate space must always be open to correction from the process of living.

Summary

Winnicott has given us a theory in which representations are formed by the fusion of the internal world with the external world. Because representations are formed in the fusion of the internal world and the external world, representations both capture something of the realness of the world while also failing to capture or distorting important elements of the world. Whether the realness of the world is distorted or not is significantly influenced by a person's internal world, which in turn is meaningfully shaped by the mother's holding of the infant. The loving holding of the mother provides the foundation for play. In play, a broad category not simply applying to the activity of infants, Winnicott describes a way of relating to the external world where the person opens themselves up to the externality of the external world, allowing their previous representations to be questioned and for new representations to be constructed. While these reflections are interesting in and of themselves, they are particularly relevant because of their capacity to detail the natural psychological processes which might be operative in participation in the Triune Life. As the argument of this thesis progresses, I will go on to propose that being held by God can reshape the internal world of the human person, and that playing with God can lead the human person to know Godself.

Section 4. God-Representations: Ana-Maria Rizzuto

Section four looks at how Ana-Maria Rizzuto applies Winnicott's work to God-representations.³⁵ As already suggested I understand participation in God's knowing of Godself to lead to a changed God-representation. As such, if Rizzuto is correct in her identification of the psychological dynamics at work in the formation of a God-representation, and if Thomas is correct in thinking

³⁵ This section focuses on Rizzuto's use of Winnicott. For other examples of psychologists using Winnicott's thought within the Psychology of Religion see Jones (1982; 1991; 1997), Meissner (1990), Ulanov (2001), and Parker (2008; 2011).

that grace perfects nature, then Rizzuto's work gives us an account of the psychological processes by which grace deifies the human person.

To develop this claim section four looks at three elements of Rizzuto's work. In its structure, I seek to show how Rizzuto is making use of Winnicott's work with the first three sections mapping onto sections 3.1-3.3. In 4.1 I emphasise that Rizzuto understands God-representations as the fusion of the internal and external world, 4.2. examines how Rizzuto thinks the internal world shapes a God-representation, and 4.3. looks at how Rizzuto thinks a God-representation might be revised. Moreover, each of these sections gives rise to a theological claim. Based on Rizzuto's work and the principle that grace perfects nature in section 4.1, I argue that participation in Godself reshapes the internal world in section 4.2. I further refine the previous claim by suggesting that participation in Godself revises our basic sense of relationality, and in section 4.3, I suggest that God-representations are revised in play.

Before outlining Rizzuto's work, I will again begin with some biographical remarks. Rizzuto's work has had a profound impact on the Psychology of Religion, as reflected in her recognition by both the American Psychological Association and the American Psychiatric Association for 'outstanding contributions' to Psychology of Religion. Like Winnicott, she began her career in physical medicine before going on to specialise in the 'private realm of the human mind' (Rizzuto, 2007: 27). In developing her account of God-representations Rizzuto makes use of psychoanalytic theory, drawing heavily on Winnicott as well as detailed qualitative case studies. For example, while researching her hugely significant *The Birth of the Living God*, Rizzuto analysed twenty participants' God-representations, looking at medical records, an average of eighteen hours of pre-recorded psychodynamic evaluation and an additional, personal, two-hour interview in which participants described themselves through birth to present. After this Rizzuto wrote a 'comprehensive life history' for each participant, with special attention paid to parental and self-representation' (Rizzuto, 1979: 9).³⁶

While there is much linking Rizzuto and Winnicott, at least one important difference is their own relationship with Christianity. While Winnicott remained somewhat disengaged from Christianity refraining from any meaningful engagement with theology, Rizzuto is deeply committed to her Roman Catholic faith and writes about its connections with her psychoanalytic thought. For instance, recording her childhood she describes how 'in ordinary days, God, Jesus, the Virgin

³⁶ While no doubt the sample size of Rizzuto's methodology could have been expanded, her research design as well as the conclusions were commended by Meissner (1979), Pruyser (1980), West (1981) and Hackett (1981).

Mary, and numerous saints were ever present in the language, farewell greetings, and the habits of the population. God and His entourage were as real as the rest of life, even when no one could see God' (Rizzuto, 2004: 436). Moreover, Rizzuto's interest in psychiatry was, in part, birthed by an invitation to teach a course on the psychological foundations of belief and pastoral care to seminarians (Rizzuto, 2007: 26). Though much of Rizzuto's work is conducted under methodological naturalism, including *The Birth of the Living God* (1979), there are important places where she connects her psychoanalytic thought with theology (e.g. 1979: 181; 1996; 2004: 38). Moreover, we know that Rizzuto's work was itself influenced by theology (2004: 438-9), a fact I will discuss further in section 5.

4.1. God-Representations: Fusion of the Internal and External World

In developing an account of God-representation, Rizzuto proposes that God-representations are developed through natural psychological processes, making comparisons between the processes by which a God-representation is formed and those involved in the infant-parent relationship. In doing so, Rizzuto, like Winnicott, proposes that these natural psychological processes do not distort reality but give access to it.

I will take these points in turn, but before doing so it is important to emphasise that Rizzuto strongly distinguishes between a God-representation and Godself. Indeed, not only does she begin *The Birth of the Living God* with the claim that 'this is not a book on religion' (1979: 3), she repeats the claim verbatim at the beginning of her conclusion (1979: 177). Moreover, in discussing the psychological processes involved in developing a God-representation, Rizzuto is not arguing that God is a delusion. Rather, Rizzuto is simply exploring the psychological processes involved in the phenomenology of knowing God. In a later article, Rizzuto clarifies that 'the psychoanalytic method is phenomenological and does not have the tools to decide on matters of the being or existence of a divine reality' (Rizzuto, 2007: 31).

With this clarified I can now turn to the first element of Rizzuto's thought I want to highlight: that the formation of a God-representation involves natural psychological processes. Describing the formation of a God-representation Rizzuto makes a comparison between a God-representation and the maternal representation. Just as Winnicott describes the infant's representation of the mother as both created and found, so Rizzuto describes a God-representation in a similar way. She writes:

What I have described in my work is that the child who has grasped in a certain manner the word "God" offered to her for the first time and who finds no tangible referent for it, as she has for other words such as "chair" or "doll" must become creative in her own

mind... The God “found” in the culture of the parents comes without a photograph. It has to be “created” by the child through internal processes capable of integrating the God offered by the culture with what the child has available to bestow upon this God as a private personally and psychologically significant internal form. (Rizzuto, 2017: 58)

Rizzuto is suggesting that, just as in Winnicott’s account, the infant develops a representation of the mother through the fusion of their internal world with the mother, so the child develops a God-representation through a fusion of the internal world and the God found in culture. A God-representation is found insofar as there is a pre-existing understanding of God “found” in the culture. However, a God-representation is also created insofar as the child bestows upon this God a ‘private personally and psychologically significant internal form’. A God-representation is a genuine fusion of the internal and external.

Indeed Rizzuto frequently references Winnicott’s work on Transitional Objects and play, directly comparing the development of a God-representation to the child’s representation of their mother:

In Winnicott’s understanding, “the [maternal] object is created, not found... A good object is not good to the infant unless created by the infant... Yet the object has to be found to be created. This has to be accepted as a paradox.” What Winnicott is saying is that there is a need in the child to find a mother in the real world, while the child feels that his or her own creative powers have brought the mother about. To represent her is to create her from inside oneself. (1991: 53)³⁷

Though mentioned already, it is worth repeating that Rizzuto is writing in a psychoanalytic vein. I think this is a key reason why she identifies the ‘object’ in the external world which provides the material for a God-representation as ‘the God “found” in the culture of the parents’. In contrast, for the theologian, revelation cannot be understood in solely human terms. Indeed, on the basis of Aquinas’ description of all psychological actions as grounded in the Trinitarian processions we have reason to doubt whether any psychological phenomena is *only* human. In section five, and at greater length in chapter four, I will argue that while God-representations can be shaped by participation in God’s knowing of Godself, the expanded lens of theology means that we can endorse Rizzuto’s proposal that culture shapes a God-representation while also exploring the way in which a God-representation is shaped by Godself. The key point we can take from Rizzuto’s thought is that a God-representation is formed using the same natural, psychological

³⁷ Other examples of Rizzuto referencing Winnicott’s work can be found in Rizzuto (1979: 83, 178; 1991: 54)

processes as any other symbol – the fusion of the internal and the external world. Such a proposal emphasises the importance of the internal world being shaped to reveal the truth of reality.

Importantly Rizzuto, far from understanding the internal world to distort reality, understands the fusion of the internal and external world to give access to reality in important ways. Reflecting this, Rizzuto likens a God-representation to an ‘illusory Transitional Object’ (Rizzuto, 1979: 177). For Winnicott, the purpose of a Transitional Object is to establish a point of contact with the external world, Rizzuto is suggesting that a God-representation performs the same function. In interpreting Rizzuto’s proposal that a God-representation is ‘illusory’ we should understand ‘illusory’ in the same sense which Winnicott used it. Recalling my earlier discussion, an ‘illusory’ belief is not necessarily a false one, but simply one in which desire has played a role in its genesis. Winnicott clarified that illusory beliefs work to fuse together the internal and external world and therefore open up the individual to encountering reality. Rizzuto nicely captures this and in doing so distinguishes her thinking from Freud when in the conclusion to *The Birth of the Living God* she writes that:

I have arrived at the point where my departure from Freud is inevitable. Freud considers God and religion a wishful childish illusion... I must disagree. Reality and illusion are not contradictory terms. Psychic space – whose depths Freud so brilliantly unveiled – cannot occur without that specifically human transitional space for play and illusion. (1979: 209)

Rizzuto frequently stresses the necessity of illusion, arguing that an integral component of being ‘truly human’ is ‘our capacity to create nonvisible but meaningful realities capable of containing our potential for imaginative expansion beyond the boundaries of the senses’ (1979: 47). She goes on to say that without these invisible realities ‘life becomes a dull animal existence. Without unseen atoms, imaginary chemical formulas, or even such fictive entities as id, ego and superego, the entire domain of culture becomes a flat, irrelevant world of sensory appearance’ (1979: 47). Rizzuto, I think, primarily means this as a continuation of Winnicott’s observation that human existence requires a meaningful engagement with the world through the fusion of the internal and external world. So it is with God-representations. The human being needs a way to engage with God in a way which is meaningful to her. Of course, as Winnicott’s thought emphasised, such a representation is open to revision in play. Before looking at how Rizzuto understands the revision of a God-representation it will be helpful to spend more time looking at how Rizzuto thinks the internal world shapes a God-representation.

4.2. God-representations: The Shape of the Internal World

If God-representations are the fusion of the internal and the external world then it is important to understand exactly how the internal world shapes a God-representation. Understanding this will give an initial account of the natural psychological processes involved in deifying participation in the Triune Life.

Further specifying the way in which the internal world shapes a God-representation, Rizzuto argues that God-representations are significantly shaped by primary objects. By 'primary objects' Rizzuto means the child's representation of the most significant person(s) in their life. This may be the child's mother or father, but in some cases could include grandparents or other members of the community (1979: 209). This distinguishes a God-representation from other Transitional Objects. Rizzuto writes that 'unlike teddy bears, dolls, or blankets made out of plushy fabrics, [God] is created from representation material whose sources are the representations of primary objects' (1979: 178). What is most important is not what the child's primary caregiver is actually like 'but rather what the interpretation of them is like', which in turn comes from 'the child's interpretive action of what the parent feels or thinks about the child' (Rizzuto, 1991: 54).

Rizzuto's proposal that a God-representation is materially shaped by primary objects establishes an important link between the caregiver's holding and a God-representation. We should remember that Winnicott understood the holding of the mother to establish a 'pattern' of interaction between the infant and the external world which the infant gradually uses as a basis for its interactions with the external world (CW, VIII: 85). Similarly, it appears that the caregiver's holding establishes a pattern of relationality which goes on to meaningfully shape a God-representation. Indeed, both Winnicott and Rizzuto emphasise the way in which the holding and mirroring of the mother provides the infant with an implicit sense of self. This sense of self, Rizzuto argues, then meaningfully shapes the God-representation which an infant, child or adult can take on.

Capturing this, Rizzuto describes the way in which any God-representation must be 'accepted emotionally' (Rizzuto, 1979: 48). To be 'accepted emotionally' a God-representation needs to 'fit into' the pattern of relationality established by the mother's holding and mirroring. Clarifying this further Rizzuto proposes that *all* representations, including God-representations, contain a self-representation, 'because to perceive a person is to perceive oneself in relation to the other' (Rizzuto, 1991: 52). The act of forming or believing in a God-representation becomes an inherently relational act:

Belief is never only something to be believed *in*, a fact of knowledge or dogma alone. It is an interpersonal disposition that affirms the existence of a *mode of relatedness* between the believer and others, be it people, the universe conceived as a living reality or a divine being. Thus belief as a human fact of attribution is always, by its very nature, an affective act of connection. (Rizzuto, 1995, cited McDargh, 1997: 191)

For Rizzuto, the ability of an individual to form a God-representation is materially shaped by the patterns of relationality by which the internal world has been shaped, patterns first experienced in the mother's holding. These patterns of relationality between the infant and the caregiver are 'affect-laden' and come to shape a God-representation which is equally 'affect-laden' (Rizzuto, 1991: 54). We might say that a God-representation is partly composed of affectively laden patterns of relationality which, according to Rizzuto, are shaped by the child's first experiences of their caregivers.

Rizzuto gives a particularly helpful example of how the affectively laden patterns of relationality established in the infant-parent relationship go on to shape a God-representation in the case study of Bernadine Fisher. I provide a brief review of this case study below. I will refer back to this case study as a worked example at important points in future chapters.

Rizzuto records that Bernadine is 'a twenty-seven-year old married woman' (1979: 152). Bernadine grew up being told she was a "pretty bad and demanding baby" or even a "terrible baby" by her mother (1979: 153). This kind of verbal abuse continued throughout Bernadine's life with her mother telling Bernadine that Bernadine's behaviour was the key barrier to the family's happiness (1979: 153). Bernadine can report memories of being told that all of her children would be murdered because of her badness. Despite this, Bernadine continued to 'need to believe that her mother was capable of loving' and Bernadine's 'massive effort to save the goodness of the object [mother] blinded her capacity to see herself separately from her mother's evaluation of her' (1979: 166). To deny the truth of her mother's claims would be to admit that her mother had not loved her. So Bernadine finds herself trapped between accepting that she never received love and accepting a self-concept which does not deserve to be loved.

In analysing Bernadine's God-representation Rizzuto identifies Bernadine's mother as the primary object through which the representation is developed (1979: 160). As such we see a similar relationship between Bernadine and her mother object, and Bernadine and her God-representation. Rizzuto writes that 'Bernadine's God-representation is based on exchanges with very difficult objects, real people whom she perceived as seeing her as she feels she is, hopelessly bad, the "wrong person"' (1979: 169). These interactions come to materially shape

Bernadine's self-representation as she comes to know herself as the 'wrong person'. As is fitting given the mode of relatedness involved in a God-representation, Bernadine develops a God-representation which can mesh with this psychodynamic landscape. This results in a God-representation which only provides an 'ever-present frustration of not deserving him'. Rizzuto goes on to write that 'the only thing that could relieve her pain and guilt would be for God to cease to exist. He does not. He remains an eternal painful reminder of her unredeemable badness' (1979: 152). Bernadine feels that this God wants nothing to do with her and 'is totally external to her' (1979: 169). Rizzuto in her analysis clarifies that Bernadine's acceptance of her badness, and the development of a God-representation which is totally outside of her is itself a 'defensive manoeuvre'. Through it, Bernadine keeps 'the hope that there is love available in the universe, in her mother and God. She is not getting it because she is bad' rather than it not existing. In doing so 'hope remains, however, that the world has something to give. Her defence denies that her parent's home was empty, indifferent to cries of emotional hunger' (1979: 173).

Bernadine's God-representation demonstrates the way in which patterns of relationality in the infant-parent relationship can materially shape the internal world, shaping primary objects and self-representations. In turn this also affects a God-representation, as a God-representation needs to be developed which can be made sense of according to the basic sense of relationality recorded in the internal world, the pattern of interaction established in the parent's holding and mirroring.

While a God-representation may initially be shaped by the infant's experience of caregiver attunement (or the lack of it) we might well expect participation in the Triune Life to revise a God-representation such that a God-representation comes to be modelled on the Love of the Triune Life. The movement from confused knowledge of God to faith would then involve the reshaping of our basic sense of relationality in which, through participating in the Trinitarian life, the foundations of the internal world are reshaped. In sharing in the Spirit and the Word the human person's sense of self, others, creation and God are reformed as she comes to know and love in a human expression of the Trinitarian Life. Based on Rizzuto's proposal that all representations are a mode of relation, we can also expect that a new God-representation will involve a new self-representation. Such a suggestion would receive ontological affirmation in Thomas' proposal that the Word contains the truth of all creatures. As human beings come to share in God's knowing of Godself, they not only come to know God more truly, they come to know themselves as God knows them.

Indeed, the proposal that participation in the Triune Life can rework the mode of relatedness contained within a God-representation receives initial support from Thomas' thought. For Thomas, knowledge of God is in some sense dependent on a form of relationality with God – friendship. This can be seen in the way that Thomas understands knowledge of God to be 'perfected and formed by charity' (*ST*, II-II, 4.3).³⁸ By way of clarity, Thomas understands charity (*caritas*) as a specific love, the love of God as the object of beatitude (*ST*, I-II, 109.3; *ST*, II-II, 23.4, see also Torrell, 2011: 52-3). Further specifying the nature of charity Thomas invokes John 15:15 'I have called you friends' to propose that charity is friendship, specifically 'friendship of man for God' (*ST*, II-II, 23.1). In other words, Thomas understands knowledge of God to be perfected by coming to share in a certain mode of relatedness to God – friendship. This mode of relatedness prevents the human person from prematurely settling for an incomplete knowledge of the beloved (*ST*, I-II, 28.2).

Outlining how human persons might come to share in this mode of relatedness, Thomas proposes that the will's participation in the Holy Spirit empowers the human person to love God with a 'mutual return of love' (*ST*, II-II, 23.1). Capturing this Thomas writes that the Holy Spirit superadds 'some habitual form to the natural power, inclining that power to the act of charity' (*ST*, I-II, 23.2; see also Davies, 2014: 161; Kimbriel, 2014: 150-1 and Christianson, 2018: 514). In this description Thomas is at pains to emphasise that the indwelling of the Holy Spirit doesn't deify the human person by bypassing their psychological faculties but by superadding to them.³⁹ God's grace leads to a mode of relatedness which is both beyond the human person's 'natural' powers and yet which is brought about through the graced expansion of the human person's psychological faculties. As Thomas says, charity remains 'connatural' with the human person (*ST*, II-II, 23.2).⁴⁰

³⁸ This is clear in both Thomas' discussion of faith (*ST*, II-II, 2.1; *ST*, II-II, 4.1) and his discussion of the beatific vision (*ST*, I, 12.6)

³⁹ This is why Thomas rejects Peter Lombard's proposal that charity is the Holy Spirit dwelling in the soul (*ST*, II-II, 23.2). Thomas agrees with Lombard's proposal that the Holy Spirit comes to dwell within the human person but rejects the sense of immiscibility between humanity and God in Lombard's account. As Thomas understands him, Lombard's account has the Spirit dwelling within the soul almost as oil sits upon water. In contrast, for Thomas the Spirit dwelling within the soul expands and perfects the will just as the Word expands and perfects the intellect. In short, Thomas emphasises that the human person comes to love God in friendship through the perfection of their psychological faculties.

⁴⁰ That friendship with God might be both beyond the human person's natural powers and connatural with them reflects De Lubac's reading of Thomas Aquinas in *The Mystery of the Supernatural* (1949/1996). See also Kerr (2002: 134-148) and Milbank (2005). In short, this reading proposes that the human person is naturally open to supernatural grace. For a reading of Thomas' account of friendship in line with the proposal that the human person is made deiform in keeping with human nature see Christianson (2018). Christianson's key point is that 'friendship with God implies deification, meaning the human person's

Thomas' thinking on the relationship between faith and friendship is important because it gives further theological rationale to the proposal that participation in the Triune Life reforms the patterns of relationality recorded in the internal world. Though these patterns might be first established in the infant-parent relationship, participating in the Spirit is able, according to Thomas, to rework these patterns of relationship such that the human person's sense of relationality is deified. In doing so the human person comes to know God not according to the patterns of human relationality, but according to the patterns of the Spirit's love.

4.3. Revising a God-Representation

The proposal that a God-representation begins by being shaped by human caregivers and is then shaped by the patterns of relationality in the Divine Life requires a God-representation to be capable of being revised. Helpfully, Rizzuto emphasises that it is natural for a God-representation to be revised through the life course of an individual. Capturing this, Rizzuto writes that 'each epigenetic phenomenon offers a new opportunity to revise the representation or leave it unchanged. Each new crisis or landmark – illness, death, promotions, falling in love, birth of children, catastrophes, wars and so on – provide similar opportunities' (1979: 200). Just as Winnicott understood the human person as constantly tasked with relating the internal and external world in intermediate space, so Rizzuto writes that:

The psychic process of creating and finding God – this personalised representational Transitional Object – never ceases in the course of human life. It is a developmental process that covers the entire life cycle from birth to death. (1979: 179)

Rizzuto is aware that not everyone does this writing, 'some of us never get [a God-representation] out of the magician's box where we placed him in childhood' (Rizzuto, 1979: 180). Where this updating is not done the God-representation will be 'experienced as ridiculous or irrelevant or, on the contrary, threatening or dangerous' (1979: 200).

Rizzuto does not devote substantial space to discussing exactly how a God-representation is updated. However, it is clear that God-representations are updated in the same way that other representations are updated – in play. Intriguingly given the way that Winnicott likened play and religion, Rizzuto explicitly proposes liturgy as a space in which God-representations can be updated: 'just as psychoanalysis provides an opportunity for reworking one's internal objects, for

intended state is to be deiform. When [the human person] is deified through theological friendship, she does not become something more than human: rather, she becomes most fully human. She lost the capacity to be fully human because of sin, so God infuses graced forms into her to give her the capacity to reclaim her intended state' (2018: 523, my emphasis).

redescribing the past such that a new relation is achieved with parents and other significant people, so similar opportunities exist for reworking the God image. Ritual, for example, is not seen necessarily as a sign of unresolved repetition compulsion but as a source of real renewal, an opportunity to gain a new relationship with one's internal objects' (1979: 181). Critical to liturgy's ability to play this role is its ability to 'dramatise the breaking of old bonds and the making of new bonds' (1979: 181). Such a proposal contains echoes of Winnicott's description of play as both deconstructive and constructive.

In chapter four I will develop these similarities between play and liturgy further by suggesting that, in participating in the Word, grace makes use of the psychological dynamics by which God-representations are formed – play (i.e. the fusion of the internal and external world), perfecting our knowing such that human persons come to know God in a human expression of the way God knows Godself.

Section 5. A Psychologically Engaged Theology

So far this chapter has argued that participation in the Triune Life makes use of human psychology. We saw this in Thomas Aquinas' thought in which the intellect participated in the Word and the will participated in the Holy Spirit. Looking at Thomas' theology of knowing God we saw an account in which the human person comes to know God with increasing clarity, moving, by grace, from confused knowledge to faith and then ultimately to the beatific vision. Such increased knowledge of God was founded on a new mode of relatedness to God: friendship, in which the human person was brought into a union of affections with Godself.

In the previous two sections I turned to ORT in the hope of further clarifying the natural psychological processes involved in participation in the Triune Life. Based on Winnicott and Rizzuto's work, I have outlined an account in which knowing God leads to a changed God-representation, which I suggested was the 'material effect' of deeper participation in Godself. A changed God-representation will require, according to Rizzuto, a reformation of the internal world, such that the human person is brought into a new basic sense of relationality. While the holding of primary caregivers initially sets a template by which the human person receives a sense of self, a self-representation, and a sense of relationality, participation in the Triune Life will, if Rizzuto is correct, require a new mode of relatedness. A mode of relatedness not primarily shaped by caregiver attunement (or the lack of it) but by the patterns of the Triune Life.

This final section extends this analysis further, arguing that the concepts of 'holding' and 'play' by which the internal world is first shaped and through which representations are revised, can be used to develop a psychologically engaged theology of participation in the Triune Life. This claim

is of course based on my reading of Aquinas in section one, in which I argued that deifying participation in the Life of God made use of human psychology. Importantly, this section proposes more than simply a metaphorical relationship between the human-God and infant-parent relationship. I am suggesting that God's grace works to bring human persons to a knowledge of God through the perfection of the psychological processes involved in the infant-parent relationship.

5.1. Holding and Play

Here I argue that the psychological sources considered in this chapter have the capacity to add further specificity to *how* a God-representation, and the sense of relationality linked to it, is changed. In doing so I suggest that just as, according to Winnicott, the infant's initial sense of relationality is established through the holding of caregivers, so God's holding, God's loving attunement, can revise this sense of relationality. Similarly, I suggest that just as, according to Winnicott, representations are revised in play so human beings come to play with God.

Held by the Living God

If Rizzuto is correct in understanding God-representations as materially shaped by the internal world (and especially by primary objects), and if Thomas is correct in thinking that grace perfects nature, then it is reasonable to propose that participating in the Life of God involves the reformation of the internal world. More specifically, Rizzuto identified that a God-representation would be shaped by a 'mode of relatedness' and as such we can imagine that truly knowing God will require an internal world shaped for a certain kind of relatedness. This proposal receives an initial support from Thomas' theology which also proposed that knowing God was grounded in a certain mode of relating to God – friendship. For Winnicott and Rizzuto, the internal world is significantly shaped by the attunement shown by the infant's caregivers. Bringing this again into conversation with Thomas' principle that grace perfects nature, I suggest that just as the psyche is originally shaped by the caregiver's loving attunement (or the lack of it), so in grace, God's loving attunement (i.e. God's holding) reshapes the human psyche according to the pattern of Divine Love. Clearly 'holding' here is being used analogically, and as such will have the limitations of all analogical, theological language. Nevertheless, as I will go on to argue in chapter three, the language of holding helps us better understand the experience of participating in the Spirit.

Playing with the Living God

The importance of reconfiguring the internal world is further emphasised by remembering that a God-representation is the fusion of the internal and the external world. In addition to this, drawing

on Winnicott's thought there is a second dynamic which will be important to the revision of a God-representation: play.

For Winnicott, representations can be iteratively revised through play. Similarly, Rizzuto emphasises the importance of updating a God-representation as the internal world changes. Moving in a theological direction I argue that just as the internal world will be shaped by God's holding, so the human person will need to update their God-representation by playing with the Living God. In chapter four I will argue that this amounts to participation in the Word's play. With Aquinas, we might understand this process in participatory terms. As the human mind comes to participate more deeply in God by grace, so the mind is transformed more into God's likeness, and in obtaining more of God's likeness so it comes to see God more clearly (*ST*, I, 12.2).

The proposal that human beings can participate in the Word's play represents a theological development of Rizzuto's thought. Whereas Rizzuto, writing psychoanalytically, describes the development of a God-representation as the fusion of the internal world with the God found in culture, here I am arguing that a God-representation is the product of the fusion of the internal world with Godself.⁴¹ As mentioned previously Rizzuto is explicit on the fact that she is not writing theologically, beginning the introduction and conclusion to *The Birth of the Living God* by stressing that her work concerns object relations (Rizzuto, 1979: 3; 177). Most helpfully she clarifies that because of this method, 'questions about the actual existence of God do not pertain here. My method enables me to deal only with psychic experiences' (1979: 4). While accepting that the psychoanalytic method is phenomenological, my research methodology seeks to draw connections between Rizzuto's phenomenological observations and Christian theology. The theologian approaching Rizzuto's work can acknowledge the value of the conclusions she derives using the psychoanalytic method while also recognising that the phenomena she explores can be discussed theologically in ways which go beyond a psychoanalytic frame of reference. As Fraser Watts says, while psychology gives us 'a close-up picture' it is up to the theologian to relate this to the 'panoramic view' (2002: 8). The task of theology is to 'relate whatever it is concerned with to God' (Watts, 2002: 8). Drawing on this approach of relating psychology and theology I believe that the theologian can and should argue that a God-

⁴¹ Such a claim is similar to Moshi Spero (1992) who proposes that God-representations can refer to an objective God. While the Jesuit psychoanalyst Williams Meissner (2009) may well be right to object to this on the grounds that it oversteps what psychoanalysis can know, it seems a wholly appropriate move for a psychologically engaged theology. For further discussion of Spero see also Doehring (1993:7-8) and McDargh (1992: 172-193).

representation is not only the fusion of the internal world with the God found in culture, but that a God-representation can be changed by fusing the internal world with Godself.

In arguing that the human person plays with the Living God, and not only the depiction of God in culture, I am moving into theological terrain. Importantly the possibility of a dialogue between Rizzuto's psychoanalytic work and theology is hinted at within her own work. Although *The Birth of the Living God* is written within a psychoanalytic framework, there are other places in her *corpus* where she hints at the relationship between her psychoanalytic thought and theology more broadly. In a 2004 article, 'Roman Catholic Background and Psychoanalysis', Rizzuto discusses the influence the liturgical theologians, Odo Casel and Romano Guardini, had on her thinking. In addition to these writers, we also know that Rizzuto's psychoanalytic thought was significantly influenced by her participation in a year-long reading group on 'the evolution of dogma in the Catholic Church' in which she read Yves Congar, Gustav Thils, Jacques Leclercq, Henri de Lubac, Hans Kung and Karl Rahner. Through this she developed an idea of the church as 'a living and growing social organism' (McDargh, 2017: 16). Commenting on the impact of Guardini and Casel, Rizzuto writes:

Casel affirmed that liturgy introduced us into the mystery of divine life not as a static truth but as an essentially dynamic transformative participation in the mystery itself. Liturgy is made not out of dogmas assented by faith but out of dynamically lived life. Guardini spoke of liturgy as the insertion of culture into the form in which people participate in the divine mysteries. For him, liturgical activities shared in the human need to play with utmost seriousness in God's presence. This play expresses itself in gestures, movements, actions, vestments, cultic objects, places, and times. (2004: 438)

Here, Rizzuto is speaking in a register in which God need not *only* be thought of as the self-construction of the individual. Just as the mother is not dependent on the existence of the infant, so our God-representation might be the result of fusion of the internal world and Godself, the result of participation in the divine mysteries and shaped by 'God's presence'.

Indeed, the reference to Romano Guardini's thought in this passage, and especially to his proposal that liturgy can function as a form of play, is particularly suggestive. Given the prominence of Winnicott in Rizzuto's thought, I read this passage as an invitation to read Winnicott's concept of 'play' in conversation with Guardini's theological reflections on the liturgy as a form of play. In doing so Rizzuto provides an invitation for a theological reading of her thought. Such an invitation is compounded by Rizzuto's comments on play and liturgy detailed above. While I have begun to respond to Rizzuto's invitation, a more extensive discussion of the

relationship between liturgy, psychoanalysis, play and God-representations will take place in chapter four.

Concluding Thoughts

This chapter has used Aquinas' principle that grace perfects and does not destroy nature as a foundation from which to begin constructing a psychologically engaged theology of participating in the Triune Life. Based on Aquinas' proposal that all of creation participates in the Triune God according to its mode of being, and especially his theology of the *imago dei*, I argued that human psychology has a theological foundation to it. Moreover, based on Thomas' understanding of deification I argued that deifying union with God makes use of the human beings' psychological faculties. Looking specifically at knowing God, Thomas understands knowing as a movement from confused knowledge to ever greater clarity as to who God is. I suggested that we understand the material effects of this movement to ever greater clarity as involving a changed God-representation.

This not only served to identify one of the material effects of participation in the Triune Life but acted as an invitation to explore more contemporary psychological work on God-representations. If deification makes use of natural psychological processes, then it makes sense that the psychological literature might help to identify the psychological processes which grace perfects. Drawing on both Winnicott and Rizzuto I made three theological proposals which further chapters will seek to substantiate. First, to facilitate the development of a more true God-representation I suggested that participating in the Triune Life would lead to a reformed internal world. In particular we might expect participation in the Divine Life to reform the affectively laden patterns of relationality in the internal world. This reflects, I think, the relationship Rizzuto observed between primary objects and God-representations. Second, reflecting Winnicott's proposal that the mother's holding provides the foundation of the psyche I suggested that God's holding provided the basis for this reformed sense of relationality. Third, I proposed that God's holding would lead a person to play with the living God revising their God-representation. The following three chapters will take each of these claims in turn.

Chapter Two. Augustine and Attachment Theory

Introduction

The previous chapter argued, on the basis that grace perfects nature, that we should expect deifying participation in the Triune Life to make use of natural, psychological systems. On the basis of Winnicott and Rizzuto's work I argued that there was reason to think that deifying participation in God would involve the same psychological systems as those present within the infant-parent relationship. More specifically, I drew on the relationship Rizzuto observed between God-representations and primary objects to suggest a link between the affectively laden patterns of relationality formed by the caregiver's holding and the affectively laden patterns of relationality expressed in a God-representation. So, for example, Bernadine Fisher's experience of her abusive mother shaped her internal world according to an affectively laden pattern in which she was not worthy of love, subsequently she developed a God-representation which reflected this dynamic. Based on Rizzuto's work I argued that the reformation of a God-representation would also include the reformation of the affectively laden patterns of relationality which shape the internal world.

This chapter argues that participating in God's loving of Godself reforms these patterns of relationality such that the internal world comes to be shaped by the patterns of love in the Divine Life. To use the technical language which I will introduce in this chapter, I argue that participating in the Triune Life reshapes the affectively laden patterns of relationality recorded in the Internal Working Model.⁴²

In making this argument this chapter has three objectives. First, it further conceptualises the 'affectively laden patterns of relationality' present in both a primary object and a God-representation. Second, it further explores how the patterns of relationality in the infant-caregiver relationship come to shape a God-representation. Third, I set out an initial account of how we might make sense of the claim that these patterns are reshaped by participating in the Triune Life. Mirroring these three objectives, the chapter is composed of three sections.

Section 1 draws on dual process cognition to argue that the patterns of relationality which make up both a primary object and a God-representation are part of the implicational subsystem. In doing so I use Philip Barnard and John Teasdale's work on Interacting Cognitive Subsystems

⁴² In doing so I follow the likes of Joanna Collicutt (2015: 102) and Todd and Elizabeth Hall (2021), all of whom argue that the love of God reshapes the Internal Working Model. This chapter extends this proposal by making sense of this claim in the context of deifying participating in Triune Life.

(ICS), and especially their distinction between the propositional subsystem which is affect light, and the implicational subsystem which is affect laden and non-propositional. These two systems do integrate but they are also able to work independently leading to the possibility of two distinct representations of the same 'object'. I go on to apply this to God-representations, distinguishing between an implicit God-representation (affect-laden and non-propositional) and an explicit God-representation (affect-light and propositional). Interpreting Rizzuto's work through the lens of ICS I suggest that the affectively laden patterns of relationality which the implicational subsystem captures in infancy are then used to shape an implicit God-representation. Such a proposal further emphasises the importance of these patterns being reshaped if we are to truly know God.

For my purposes, ICS is hugely helpful in further developing: the nature of a God-representation, the psychological systems at work in the production of a God-representation, and in further affirming a link between infant experience of caregivers and a God-representation. Psychologically, ICS is particularly notable because there is important work on God-representations emerging at the intersection of dual-process cognition and attachment theory. Attending to ICS therefore gives important context for section 2 which turns to attachment theory. In addition to this, ICS' account of emotion production is particularly helpful because it establishes a point of convergence between the psychological literature and theologies of emotion, a point I develop in section 3.

Drawing on attachment theory, section 2 develops an explanatory link between the affectively laden patterns of relationality which are developed in infancy and an adult God-representation by introducing the concept of the Internal Working Model. The Internal Working Model proposes that early experience of caregivers creates a relational model which then shapes the perception of and experience of future relationships. Significantly, there is a strong empirical evidence base that the Internal Working Model influences persons' God-representations. Significantly, the Internal Working Model also emphasises the importance of caregiver attunement in the formation of a God-representation, an important claim in the previous chapter.

While attachment theory and ORT can sometimes be framed in oppositional ways (e.g. Granqvist, 2006a), this chapter uses attachment theory to complement the analysis of the previous chapter.⁴³ Such a reading of attachment theory reflects John Bowlby's training as a psychoanalyst, as well as the connections Bowlby regularly draws between attachment theory

⁴³ For further discussion of the relationship between ORT and attachment theory see my introduction, and especially n.5.

and psychoanalysis. For instance, Bowlby proposes that his understanding of the attachment processes reflects ‘the “internal worlds” of traditional psychoanalytic theory seen in a new perspective’ (1969/1997: 82). Even more significantly, in a critical passage Bowlby proposes that what he calls ‘attachment’ and ‘attachment figure’ are in more traditional theory ‘object relations’ (1969/1997: 177).⁴⁴ In essence, Bowlby affirms the possibility for a constructive dialogue between ORT and attachment theory. Developing this dialogue I suggest that the Internal Working Model provides a helpful extension of Rizzuto’s proposal that primary objects shape God-representations. The Internal Working Model provides a conceptual link explaining *how* early relational experiences shape future relational experiences. Early experiences of caregivers form an implicit schema (the Internal Working Model) which shapes the interpretation of future experiences.

Section 3 argues that it is reasonable to think that participation in the Life of God will reform the Internal Working Model. To develop such a claim requires a careful engagement with the psychological sources used in sections 1 and 2. To develop such an engagement I turn to Augustine. I turn to Augustine instead of continuing to work with Aquinas for two reasons. First the elegance of Augustine’s theology of emotion makes him particularly well suited to engaging with ICS. As mentioned above, the engagement between ICS and Augustine is critical in establishing a constructive dialogue between my theological and psychological sources. Specifically, I will argue that Augustine’s proposal that participation in the Holy Spirit reforms emotional experience, when read in a psychologically engaged mode, suggests that participation in the Holy Spirit reforms the implicational subsystem. Moreover, emotions are particularly relevant given research which suggests that the Internal Working Model shapes emotional experience. Drawing on Augustine, ICS and attachment, I argue that participating in the Triune Life reshapes the affectively laden patterns of relationality first captured in infancy and which go on to shape a God-representation. In short, participation in the Spirit reshapes the Internal Working Model.

The second reason for engaging with Augustine is that, as we will see in the next chapter, his pneumatology is particularly well suited to a dialogue with Winnicott’s concept of holding. Engaging with Augustine in this chapter has the advantage of preparing the ground for chapter three.

⁴⁴ Notably Bowlby and Ainsworth use the language of representation, so evocative of Winnicott, to describe attachment figures. See for instance Bowlby (1969: 49) and Ainsworth (1972: 110).

By way of clarity, in developing an engagement between Augustine and the psychological sources I am not suggesting a new reading of Augustine's thought. Indeed, my reading of Augustine follows the likes of Rowan Williams (1989; 2016), Sarah Stewart-Kroeker (2014), and Michael Lamb (2023: 32-47). With this reading in place, I bring Augustine into conversation with new questions raised by contemporary psychology. From this I seek to develop genuinely constructive theological proposals which go beyond a pure exegesis of Augustine's thought. In constructing these theological proposals, I continue to use the principle that deifying participation in the Triune Life makes use of human psychology. Importantly, such an approach moves with the grain of Augustine's thought, reflecting his proposal that 'you have made us for yourself' (*Conf.* 1.1.1). Indeed, both Joshua Hordern (2012) and Simeon Zahl (2020: 207-226) read Augustine through the lens that grace makes use of human psychology, focusing as I do on the way grace shapes affective experience.

Section 1. Interacting Cognitive Subsystems

My first section further conceptualises the affectively laden patterns of relationality which are contained in both a primary object and a God-representation. On the basis of ICS, I argue that these patterns of relationality are forms of implicational code based on previously observed patterns. ICS goes on to emphasise that implicational code not only captures historic experience but goes on to shape future experience. In doing so ICS provides a stronger conceptual foundation to the claim that the patterns of relationality established in the infant-parent relationship go on to shape a God-representation, suggesting that the implicational code established in the infant-parent relationship goes on to shape a God-representation. Moreover, ICS's emphasis on the role of the implicational subsystem in emotion production is helpful in establishing a constructive dialogue between the psychological and theological literature. As we will see in section three, Augustine understands emotions to be shaped by participation in the Holy Spirit. Developing Augustine in a psychologically engaged manner, I will argue that participation in the Life of God reforms the implicational subsystem. More specifically I argue that participation in the Life of God comes to shape the affectively laden patterns of relationality first developed through the infant-caregiver relationship.

Dual-Process Cognition

The last twenty years has seen growing support for the need to distinguish between at least two distinct cognitive⁴⁵ systems. In particular there is widespread support for there being one system

⁴⁵ This chapter follows contemporary psychology in using 'cognition' to include both conscious and nonconscious, explicit (propositional) and implicit (holistic and potentially affected) processes. What I

which is fast and automatic, and another which is slow and conscious. While most dual-process accounts do not consider affect, those which do identify affect as a component of the fast and automatic system (Watts, 2013: 127). Dual-Process accounts are intended to account for both neurological and phenomenological realities. Iain McGilchrist has recently provided an extensive survey of left and right brain lateralisation, arguing that left and right brain processes provide an embodied basis for these different forms of cognition (McGilchrist, 2009; see also discussions in Hall, 2007b; Watts, 2013 and Teasdale, 2022). Phenomenologically a dual-process account of cognition is intended to account for parallel and even contradictory elements of human experience. Fraser Watts for instance gives the example that:

someone who is afraid of spiders may at one level (a head level) “know” that spiders are harmless, but nevertheless find themselves terrified by them at the “heart” level. Such discrepancies can only be handled by a theory that postulates at least two levels or systems. (2013: 126)

Nicholas Gibson gives another example which specifically draws out one way in which this discrepancy relates to God-representations. A proposal which Watts also endorses (2017: 155). Gibson tells an anecdote from his time at St Aldates, an Anglican Church in Oxford:

Andy Buckler (curate at the time) asked us all, “Who thinks God loves you?” Without hesitation, we all raised our hands. “That’s great,” he said, “now—who thinks God likes you?” This time we weren’t so sure! Plenty of uncertain glances were traded before eventually only five people put their hands up. Right away we realised that there was a discrepancy between what we said we believed about our relationship with God (that he loved us) and the beliefs about our relationship with God that guided our thoughts, feelings, and behaviour (that he probably didn’t much like us). These two questions and the reactions they elicited seemed to encapsulate the distinction between head-knowledge and heart-knowledge of God... Why was this group of intelligent, committed believers able to answer one question about the way God related to them so quickly, yet unable to answer a similar question that probed at a more emotional level? (Gibson, 2005: iv)

As Gibson goes on to develop at length, one potential answer to the question he poses is that human cognition makes use of at least two cognitive systems. Such a proposal has received support from within psychology of religion, with Todd Hall (Hall, 2004; Noffke and Hall, 2007; Hall

mean by explicit and implicit will become evident as the chapter progresses. For examples of similar usage of ‘cognition’ see (Watts, 2013: 125; Teasdale, 2022: 2).

et al, 2009; Hall and Hall, 2021) drawing on Wilma Bucci's distinction between symbolic and sub-symbolic cognitive systems (Bucci, 1997). Fraser Watts has consistently drawn on Philip Barnard and John Teasdale's work on ICS to develop an account of religious cognition (Watts, 2002; 2013; 2014; 2017). Commending ICS, Watts expresses its 'clear advantages' describing how ICS 'is more rigorous, detailed, and explicit in its assumptions than the other two-system models that have been applied to religion; indeed it is probably more rigorous than any other comprehensive model of cognitive architecture. It has also given rise to a very broad range of psychological applications, including psycholinguistics, human-computer interaction, depression, and evolutionary psychology' (2014: 115-116).⁴⁶ Following Watts' commendation the next section provides an overview of ICS giving particular attention to ICS's account of emotion production.

1.1. An Overview

As the last quote from Watts alludes to, ICS primarily provides an account of human 'cognitive architecture' as opposed to the neurological foundation upon which this cognitive architecture functions or the behaviour which flows from this (Watts, 2014: 116). Watts provides a hugely helpful summary of ICS which I cannot improve on for either its clarity or succinctness:

ICS sets out a general cognitive architecture consisting of nine distinct subsystems. Each subsystem has its own code, representing a different kind of meaning. Information can be transferred from one system to another, though that involves a change of code. Much of the work of the cognitive system as a whole is done through transfer from one subsystem to another. Two of the subsystems constitute the "central engine" of cognition — the "propositional" and "implicational" subsystems... The other subsystems include two intermediate subsystems: the morphonolexical subsystem (primarily concerned with speech forms) and the object subsystem (concerned with visual space). Each of these is linked to more peripheral subsystems: two sensory subsystems (the acoustic and visual subsystems respectively) and two effector subsystems (the articulatory and limb subsystems respectively). In addition, in the revised version of ICS, there is also a body-state subsystem that is linked directly to the implicational system. (2013: 131)

Importantly each of these subsystems is also related to a specific form of subjective experience, for 'each of the different information codes corresponds to a distinct quality of subjective experience' (Teasdale and Barnard, 1993: 50-1). So, for instance, the acoustic subsystem gives

⁴⁶ Mark Wynn has also provided validation of ICS' utility for theological reflection on the nature of emotional experience (2005: 108-114).

rise to the experience of hearing, the visual subsystem to seeing. The two most complex subsystems and the two most relevant for our exploration of God-representations are: the propositional and implicational systems. By way of a brief, orienting definition: ‘within ICS, “intellectual” and “emotional” belief correspond, respectively, to meanings at the Propositional and Implicational levels. The former corresponds to the sense of knowing something “with the head” while the latter corresponds more to a holistic, intuitive, or implicit sense of knowing something “with the heart” or “having a gut feeling for it”’ (Barnard and Teasdale, 1991: 24).

Propositional Subsystem

Teasdale and Barnard clarify that the propositional subsystem captures ‘concepts’ and the ‘relationships’ between them. The propositional subsystem works with meanings which are ‘relatively easy to grasp as it corresponds fairly closely to the kind of meanings conveyed by sentences of language’ (Teasdale and Barnard, 1993: 53). As such the propositional subsystem can easily interact with the morphonolexical subsystem (Watts, 2013: 131; Watts, 2014: 116-117). Subjectively propositional knowledge amounts to ‘being aware of specific semantic relationships (“knowing that”)’ (Barnard and Teasdale, 1991: 4). So, for instance, I know that I am sat on a chair, typing on a keyboard, and that I am in the British Library. These meanings are to do with concepts like ‘keyboard’, ‘chair’ and ‘British library’ as well as relationships like ‘being in’. As these statements show, the propositional subsystem gives rise to knowledge which is easily verifiable.

Importantly, within ICS, propositional knowledge is not affectively coded, nor can it (directly) give rise to affective experience. To apply this to the phenomenological examples with which I began this section, ‘spiders are harmless’ and ‘God loves me’ would be examples of propositional knowledge. Clearly both of these statements *could* give rise to affective experience, such as the experience of not being afraid of a spider or the experience of knowing you are loved by God. However, the critical phenomenological observation with which we began this chapter is that this propositional knowledge is not *enough* in and of itself to give rise to this emotional experience. Moreover, ICS provides an account of cognitive architecture which helps to explain the fact that propositional knowledge is not enough to give rise to emotional experience. I will speak more about ICS and emotion in section 3.3.

1.2. The Implicational Subsystem

The implication subsystem is ‘the most difficult form of information to describe’. Subjectively the code of the implicational subsystem is associated with ‘holistic “senses” of knowing (e.g. of “familiarity” or “causal relatedness” of ideas), or of affect (e.g. apprehension. desire)’. Its

‘principal dimensions encompass both ideational and affective content’ constructing ‘schematic models of experience’ (Barnard and Teasdale, 1991: 4). In conceptualising implicational schema, I have found the example of ‘how-to-be-with-someone’ helpful. The schema provides a holistic sense of how to interact with one another, providing a sense of the causal connections between how we might interact with someone and the kind of reactions which might follow from this. The content of the schema will inform our emotional reactions to specific scenarios, do we feel comfortable and relaxed in the situation, or given the overarching context is it a cause for apprehension and anxiety (Stern et al, 1998).⁴⁷

Pattern Recognition

There are two elements of implicational code I particularly want to highlight: pattern recognition, and pattern completion. First pattern recognition: describing the development of implicational code, Teasdale and Barnard propose that implicational code develops through the ‘abstraction’ of recurring patterns (1993: 54). This reflects implicational knowing as ‘holistic’. Returning to the nature of the ICS will help make sense of this. In the following extract Teasdale and Barnard describe the way in which the implicational subsystem draws together sensory, perceptual, and semantic codes. Each abbreviation represents a different subsystem:

Within ICS, multiple representations of the same event can be captured by a particular information code. So, for example, an upsetting interpersonal encounter could be encoded and stored in parallel (1) in separate sensory codes describing the scene in terms of, respectively, the qualities of sound (AC), light (VIS), and proprioceptive (BS) patterns involved; (2) in more perceptual codes that encode the scene in terms of the visual objects (OBJ) and speech components (MPL) present; (3) in a semantic code (PROP), which captures the meaning of the situation in the form of sequences of propositional elements; and (4) in an integrative schematic code (IMPLIC), which captures prototypical features of the situation corresponding to generic aspects of experience extracted from previous episodes. IMPLIC code might represent, for example, the schematic model related to the prototypical ‘argument with person I care for but who does not understand me’ theme. (Teasdale and Barnard, 1993: 56)

Here the implicational subsystem works to capture the common features of a situation in an ‘integrative schematic code’. In the implicational subsystem information encoded in other

⁴⁷ Todd Hall also proposes that *implicit relational knowing* functions at a ‘gut level’ (2007b: 33). Though Hall utilises Bucci’s account of cognitive architecture rather than ICS, Hall proposes that implicit relational knowing makes use of the fast and automatic level of cognition rather than the slow and conscious.

subsystems is drawn together to develop an overarching sense of what the world, the self, and others are like. Though the implicational subsystem makes use of sensory and perceptual codes, as well as the semantic meanings expressed in propositional code, in keeping with the broader theory of ICS the COPY of these codes into the implicational subsystems transforms the code into implicational code. However, the COPY process changes the original source code. For instance, in the COPY from propositional to implicational code, Teasdale and Barnard write that ‘the construction of an Implicational representation from Propositional content (PROP → IMPLIC) replaces the details of many individual propositions with a yet more abstract and holistic representation of their content’ (Teasdale and Barnard, 1993: 66). More than this, the abstraction of meaning and the development of a holistic representation leads to ‘configurations of specific meanings and coherent sensory patterns [which] is qualitatively different from the sum of its constituent parts’ (Teasdale and Barnard, 1993: 66). Watts helpfully adds further detail to the qualitative difference between propositional and implicational code describing how ‘the [implicational] code of these latent meanings is more compressed and dense and does not lay everything out explicitly and sequentially in the way that language does’ (Watts, 2013: 131-2). It is this qualitative difference which makes implicational code so difficult to convey in language.

To apply this to infant-parent interactions, I suggest that we understand the affectively laden patterns of relationality as ‘integrative schematic code’, which draw together the common features of a situation. Based on Winnicott and Rizzuto’s work in the previous chapter I suggest that these common features provide the infant with both a sense of self, a sense of the caregiver/s, and the patterns of relationality which the infant might expect between them. We might say that a caregiver’s early holding provides the self with an implicit sense of how-to-be-with-someone. As we will see in the next section, these patterns not only reflect historic experience but come to shape the way future situations are perceived.

Pattern Completion

Second, pattern completion. Teasdale and Barnard propose that the implicational subsystem can perform ‘pattern completion’ on partial fragments of code, completing them to cohere with previously encountered patterns. Which patterns are ‘completed’ and how they are completed will vary depending on the historic patterns stored in the implicational subsystem. As Teasdale and Barnard put it ‘the patterns which the implicational system has stored as holistic schema of the world are then deployed to interpret similar patterns’. Moreover, it is not just that implicational knowledge ‘extends’ partial information to conform to pre-existing patterns, it is also capable of ignoring information which does not fit with previously established patterns

(Teasdale and Barnard, 1993: 72). Significantly, this process of pattern completion happens without ‘conscious awareness’ (Hall, 2007b: 33).

As an example of pattern completion Teasdale and Barnard give the example that ‘most people reading or hearing “the cat sat on the...” would complete it with “mat”’. While such pattern completion is harmless, the following example emphasises the ability of implicational knowing to materially shape our experience of the world. Teasdale and Barnard suggest that ‘if in the past one has repeatedly formed schematic models related to (“myself as a total failure”), a fragmentary pattern consisting of elements derived from currently processed depressive Body-state feedback... and Propositionally derived elements related to a single specific failure, may be completed to produce the (“myself as a total failure”) pattern’ (1993: 71). To apply this to a God-representation, if you have formed a schematic model related to “myself as not worthy of love” you may well ignore information that God is loving, or like Bernadine we may reinterpret such information to produce the model related to “God is loving, but God does not love me”.

The fact that the implicational subsystem works to synthesise incoming information with previously observed patterns gives ICS a certain similarity with Winnicott’s proposal that representations are the product of the internal and external world. Indeed, Watts makes this connection in passing, suggesting that the implicational subsystem’s ability to connect the internal and external world ‘is comparable to the... the “transitional” domain, postulated by Winnicott (1971) in psychoanalytic theory’ (Watts, 2013: 133). Reflecting this comparison, Teasdale has recently put forward an account of experience which is remarkably similar to Winnicott’s proposal that the world is both ‘created and found’. Teasdale writes:

The worlds we experience are not simply faithful, accurate reflections of what is “actually” out “there” and in “here”—around us and within us. On the contrary, my world of experience emerges from a dynamic interaction between what my mind brings and what the “world” offers. If we imagine a geologist, a property developer, a farmer, and an artist all visiting the same hillside, they will each pay attention to quite different aspects of the same “objective” reality: one will look for evidence of the kinds of underlying rock formations, another will focus on aspects related to building houses or holiday cabins, another will look at the soil, gradients, and drainage to assess their suitability for growing crops or grazing livestock, and another will tune in to the harmony of the patterns of color

and textures in the scene. Different individuals, focusing on different aspects of the “same” situation, will create different worlds of experience. (Teasdale, 2022: 76)⁴⁸

1.3. ICS and God-representations

Reflecting further on the consequences of ICS for a God-representation, the distinction between the propositional and implicational subsystems suggests that human persons may hold two qualitatively distinct God-representations. The first will be held at a propositional level and the second will be held at the implicational level. Indeed, Bonnie Poon Zahl and Nicholas Gibson put the point matter of factly when they write: ‘that there should be at least two types of content regarding God follows straightforwardly from the application of one or other multilevel processing model of cognition’ (Zahl and Gibson, 2012: 217). Indeed, the last fifteen years has generated a significant evidence base for distinguishing between a propositional and implicit God-representation (Hall et al, 2009; Zahl and Gibson, 2012; Zahl et al, 2013; Hall & Fujikawa, 2013; Davis et al, 2013; 2021; Augustyn et al, 2017; Tung et al, 2018; Stulp et al, 2018; Sharp et al, 2021). In distinguishing between a propositional and implicit God-representation we need to be careful. While the two representations might be distinct, we need not, nor should we, wholly separate them.⁴⁹ Indeed throughout our discussion of ICS we saw that propositional knowledge *did* influence implicational knowledge. However, as the phenomenological examples with which I began this chapter emphasise, propositional and implicational knowledge can also become detached from one another (Barnard and Teasdale, 1991: 24).

In addition, in distinguishing between a propositional and implicit God-representation ICS has helped us to further conceptualise the way in which the infant-parent interactions might shape a God-representation. In short, the infant-parent relationship establishes patterns of interaction between the infant and parent which are recorded in the implicational subsystem. The implicational code which these interactions generate provide the self with an implicit sense of self, sense of others, and the patterns of relationality which the self might expect. These patterns shape the information which the implicational subsystem pays attention to and might cause

⁴⁸ Teasdale cites McGilchrist making a similar point: ‘we neither discover an objective reality nor invent a subjective reality, but... there is a process of responsive evocation, the world ‘calling forth’ something in me that in turn ‘calls forth’ something in the world... If there is no ‘real’ mountain, for example, separate from one created by the hopes, aspirations, reverence or greed of those who approach it, it is equally true that its green-ness or greyness, or stoniness lies not in the mountain or in my mind, but comes from between us, called forth from each and equally dependent on both; as music arises from neither the piano nor the pianist’s hands, the sculpture neither from hand nor stone, but from their coming together’ (McGilchrist, 2009: 133-4 cited in Teasdale, 2022: 133–134).

⁴⁹ For more on the interaction between implicational and propositional God-representations see Davis et al (2013; 2021) and Sharp et al (2021).

certain forms of information to be ignored or caveated. So for example, Bernadine's implicational subsystem, shaped by the patterns of relationality established by her mother, will come to recognise that God *is* loving but conclude that God does not love *her*. Bernadine's conclusion reflects the patterns of relationality she experienced as an infant and which I have suggested shape the implicational subsystem. The next section draws on attachment theory to further conceptualise the way in which patterns of relationality in the infant-parent relationship shape a God-representation.

Section 2. Attachment Theory

Attachment Theory makes an important contribution to this thesis, helping to further conceptualise the link between infant experience of caregivers and a God-representation. The critical contribution of attachment theory is the concept of the Internal Working Model. As expressed already, attachment theory proposes that early experience of caregivers creates a relational model, what attachment theory calls the Internal Working Model. This relational model goes on to shape the perception of and experience of future relationships. Attachment theory is particularly appropriate to turn to because there has been a huge amount of work over the last thirty years suggesting that a God-representation functions psychologically as a non-corporeal attachment figure.⁵⁰ In particular, this research has generated a significant evidence base that the Internal Working Model meaningfully shapes a God-representation.

To put the point simply, work in attachment theory has further strengthened Rizzuto's proposal that infant experiences of primary caregivers shape a God-representation. Recent work on God-representations and attachment theory has increasingly made use of dual-process cognition, with a number of psychologists specifically proposing that the Internal Working Model shapes our implicit God-representation (Noffke and Hall, 2007; Hall et al, 2009; Hall and Hall, 2021; Davis et al, 2013; 2021; Granqvist and Kirkpatrick, 2016; Sharp et al, 2021).⁵¹

Attachment theory also provides an account of how the Internal Working Model might be refashioned, suggesting that the attunement of a surrogate attachment figure can reshape it. Using the principle that grace perfects nature, section 3 will argue that participating in the love of God makes use of both the implicational subsystem and the attachment system. I argue that, as

⁵⁰ As examples of psychological research working within a paradigm of God as an attachment figure see: Kirkpatrick (2005); Hall (2007a; 2007b), Noffke and Hall (2007); Hall et al (2009); Hall and Hall (2021); Zahl and Gibson (2012); Zahl et al (2013); Davis et al, (2013; 2021); Granqvist and Kirkpatrick, (2016) Sharp et al (2021).

⁵¹ That the Internal Working Model functions as a form of implicational code coheres with the finding that the implicational subsystem develops in children more quickly than the propositional subsystem (Watts, 2013: 137-8).

human persons come to participate in the Holy Spirit, so the implicational code of the Internal Working Model comes to be shaped according to the patterns of love expressed in the Triune Life.

Section 2 lays the foundation for this argument. In doing so, section 2.1 provides an overview of attachment theory, which is important given the little engagement with attachment theory from theology.⁵² Section 2.2. focuses on the Internal Working Model, further examining how the parent-infant relationship shapes relational experience more broadly. Section 2.3. sets out the evidence that a God-representation is shaped by the Internal Working Model.

2.1. Introducing Attachment Theory

Attachment theory is the joint work of John Bowlby and Mary Ainsworth.⁵³ By way of a brief introduction, John Bowlby was initially trained in child psychiatry and psychoanalysis. He was particularly influenced by Melanie Klein, not only through his Kleinian training analyst, Joan Riviere (who also supervised Winnicott), but also through direct supervision by Klein herself. Reflecting this training, Bowlby frames attachment theory as a conversation with psychoanalysis, engaging especially with Sigmund Freud.⁵⁴ However, Bowlby also sees himself as developing psychoanalysis in new and meaningful directions. In particular he enters into conversation with a broad range of other disciplines, most notably information processing theory and ethology. Moreover, whereas Klein understood psychopathology as primarily the product of the child's internal fantasies, Bowlby is convinced that the child's actual interactions with their caregivers significantly shape their psychic life. In this Bowlby is thoroughly in agreement with Winnicott, and he regularly cites Winnicott approvingly on this point (see especially Bowlby,

⁵² For exceptions to this see Kaufman (1981); and more recently Bosworth (2013; 2015); Marandiuc (2018: 75-94); and the short discussion in Simeon Zahl (2020: 220-224). These more recent works are significant because of the orthodox theological frameworks in which they operate. Kaufman's (1981) discussion of attachment theory is notable for its early theological engagement with attachment theory. However, it is questionable theologically for the way it equates God with the sum of all reality (1981: 29), in contrast orthodox Christianity holds 'God is God without respect to the universe's existence' (Williams, 2014: 117). Moreover, it is also questionable to the extent that Kaufman understands attachment theory. In particular, Kaufman holds that God as an attachment figure cannot be experienced (1981: 21). In contrast a central tenet of attachment theory is that representations of attachment figures are derived from experience and shape experience. Both Bosworth and Zahl read attachment theory more closely on this point, emphasising the relationship between God as an attachment figure and experience.

⁵³ This introduction to John Bowlby and Mary Ainsworth is much indebted to Inge Bretherton's hugely helpful discussion of the origins of attachment theory (1992).

⁵⁴ Bowlby's relationship with Freud is complicated. For instance, he appeals to Freud as an authority on which to found his interdisciplinary engagement, and for the importance of developing a theory of instinctual behaviour (1969: 37). At the same time, Bowlby is exceedingly critical of the Freudian notion that the child's tie to the mother is merely the product of physiological need satisfaction (Bowlby, 1958; 1969: 179, 210-211). The key point for my purposes is that Bowlby's framing of attachment theory as a conversation with psychoanalysis gives an invitation to continue the dialogue by drawing Winnicott and attachment theory into conversation.

1988/2005). Reflecting Bowlby's proposal that the infant's real interactions with their caregivers shape their emotional life, when Bowlby became the head of the Children's Department at the Tavistock Clinic, he renamed it the 'Department for Children and Parents' (Bretherton, 1992).

Mary Ainsworth (née Salter) was pivotal in attachment theory's conceptual development, in the development of methodologies to identify attachment styles, and in the development of an empirical evidence base by which to assess her and Bowlby's theoretical claims. Ainsworth conducted her graduate studies at the University of Toronto, writing her dissertation on 'security theory' a central tenet of which was that a child requires a sense of security with their parents before being able to explore unfamiliar situations. Ainsworth moved to London in 1950 and began working with Bowlby on the relationship between personality development and maternal separation in early childhood. In 1953 Ainsworth conducted the first empirical investigation into maternal sensitivity, observing 26 families with unweaned babies in Uganda ('The Ganda Project'). Following this, Ainsworth designed and conducted the *Strange Situation* Experiment further validating her initial findings concerning the relationship between attachment and maternal sensitivity ('The Baltimore Project'). The Strange Situation Experiment provided a landmark methodology for the identification of childhood attachment style.

The Attachment System

The first formal statement of attachment theory came with a paper Bowlby gave at the British Psychological Society in London. Whereas Sigmund Freud and Anna Freud had both proposed that the child's tie to the mother was primarily based on drive satisfaction, in 'The Nature of the Child's Tie to his Mother' Bowlby proposed 'that there is more in the infant's relation to his mother than the satisfaction of physiological needs' (1958: 354). Instead, drawing from ethology Bowlby proposed that the human infant has a collection of behaviours (sucking, clinging, following, crying, and smiling) which are independent of the satisfaction of physiological needs. At the centre of the child's development is the child's relationship with a specific attachment figure, which Bowlby identified as the mother. Bowlby writes that the infant 'quite early, by a process of learning... comes to centre his instinctual responses not only on a human figure but on a particular human figure. Good mothering from any kind woman ceases to satisfy him – only his mother will do' (1958: 370). Infants do not only require the satisfaction of physiological needs they have a basic need for a specific form of relationality, attachment. Bowlby compounds these proposals in his work on separation anxiety in which he proposes that the infant has an instinct to maintain a certain proximity to their primary caregiver. This proximity seeking is a form of attachment behaviour, an 'elemental' component of experience (1960: 267).

In the first volume of his attachment trilogy (1969) Bowlby goes on to propose that there is an 'attachment system' which governs this behaviour (crying, calling, clinging, following, and protest at being separated). Developing the nature of the attachment system Bowlby draws on information processing theory introducing the concept of a 'control system'. Bowlby defines a control system as 'a regulator, the purpose of which is to maintain some condition constant'. As an everyday instance of a control system, Bowlby gives the example of a thermostat whose function is to maintain the room at a specific temperature (Bowlby, 1969/1997: 66). In a similar way Bowlby proposes that humans have an attachment control system, the function of which is to maintain a stable proximity between the mother and the infant (Bowlby, 1969/1997: 288; 1979: 129). From an evolutionary perspective, Bowlby comments that attachment behaviour would have the benefit of protecting infants from predators by keeping them within a safe distance of their mother (Bowlby, 1958: 369; 1979: 131).

Alan Sroufe and Everett Waters helpfully develop the goal of the attachment system in a more phenomenological direction when they describe its goal as 'felt security' (1977: 1186; see also Mikulincer and Shaver, 2007; 2016). In doing so Sroufe and Waters further emphasise the affective role of the caregiver. The caregiver's physical presence is not enough to fulfil their role as an attachment figure, but rather they need to provide an environment of security. The infant's psychic life (including their representation of the caregiver) will play an essential role in this. Conceptualising this further, Sroufe and Waters emphasise Bowlby's description of attachment as an 'affective bond' between the infant and their caregiver. It is this affective bond which allows the infant to use the caregiver as both a safe haven and a secure base (Sroufe and Waters, 1977: 1186), the defining features of an attachment figure.

Safe Havens and Secure Bases

Bowlby is quite clear that an attachment figure is not simply a synonym for a close relationship. An attachment figure is defined by their provision of a safe haven in times of threat and a secure base from which to explore the world. While we can distinguish between the attachment figure's role as a safe haven and a secure base, the two are best conceptualised as intimately related. Indeed, both Bowlby and Ainsworth proposed that the two function in 'dynamic equilibrium' (Bowlby, 1969/1997: 236; Ainsworth, 1972: 118).

As a safe haven, the attachment figure offers 'solace and comfort' in times of threat (Kirkpatrick, 2005: 32). Importantly Bowlby emphasises that the need for comfort and love as an adult is not an infantile regression but 'an integral part of human nature throughout adult life as well as earlier' especially in times of sickness and calamity (1979: 157). Indeed, this reflects empirical

research on the nature of adult romantic relationships which has found that adults use romantic relationships as 'safe havens' (Collins and Feeney, 2000). Collins and Feeney's work is particularly helpful because it emphasises the importance of both the objective interactions between those who seek and provide support, and the subjective representation those who seek support hold of their caregivers. In particular, they found that the affective impact of caregiving was the product of objective signs of support (e.g. active listening and communicating understanding) and representations of the caregiver, 'beliefs and expectations about their current relationship' (Collins and Feeney, 2000: 1069-1170). This would cohere with Winnicott's understanding of experience as the fusion between the internal and external world.

In addition to acting as a safe haven, attachment figures also act as a secure base (Ainsworth, 1972; Bowlby, 1979: 132). Describing the attachment figure's role as a secure base, Ainsworth observes that, in an unfamiliar environment, an attachment figure's presence is 'a necessary condition of the activation of exploratory behaviour' and she proposes that the attachment figure's presence increases the child's 'threshold for fear of the unfamiliar' (1972: 117). Drawing again on Sroufe and Waters we might say that the attachment figure provides a sense of felt security which allows the child to engage in exploratory behaviour. However, if the infant's felt security becomes compromised and she becomes frightened, exploration will stop and she will return to the attachment figure, using the attachment figure as a safe haven.

Feeney and Thrush (2010) have further clarified the nature of a secure base identifying three features. First, a secure base supports exploration by being available. If the parent cannot be accessed they cannot provide a secure base to return to in case the infant is frightened or tired. Second, the secure base should not unnecessarily interfere. Unnecessary intervention risks undermining confidence, concentration and diminishing the enjoyment of the goal striving and exploration. Finally, a secure base encourages and accepts exploration, not doing so has the potential to threaten the attachment relationship and in doing so undermine the ability of the attachment figure to play the role of a secure base.

Importantly Bowlby directly links his own thinking on exploration with Winnicott's account of play (1979: 156). Indeed, we can see a similar dynamic in both Winnicott's ORT and attachment theory. For Winnicott the mother's holding (her loving attunement) creates an environment in which the infant is able to play, fusing their internal world with the external world. Likewise,

Ainsworth goes on to identify maternal sensitivity as critical for the development of a secure attachment and the capacity for exploration (Ainsworth, 1978: 312-314; Bretherton, 1992: 773).⁵⁵

2.2. The Internal Working Model

With this overview of attachment theory in place I will now explore attachment theory's key conceptual contribution to this thesis: the Internal Working Model. Attachment theory proposes that historic experience of caregivers contributes to the production of the Internal Working Model, a predictive model for future relational settings. Bowlby outlines how, through the infant's attempts to use the caregiver as a secure base and a safe haven, a 'pattern of interaction... gradually develops between an infant and his mother' (Bowlby, 1969/1997: 204). Bowlby proposes that the infant uses historical interactions with caregivers to predict how they will respond both in the moment and in future interactions (1969/1997: 81). According to the level of attunement within this pattern of interaction the infant will either 'fee[l] confident that his attachment figures are in general readily available or... he [will be] more or less afraid that they will not be available – occasionally, frequently, or most of the time' (1973/1988: 236-7).

The attunement and availability of the attachment figure not only contribute towards a sense of what the attachment figure is like, they also provide an implicit self-concept, a sense of 'how acceptable or unacceptable he himself is in the eyes of the attachment figure' (Bowlby, 1973/1983: 236). While the Internal Working Model is capable of being updated, as the child develops, the Internal Working Model increasingly becomes harder to change (Bowlby, 1969/1997: 82). As the Internal Working Model solidifies so the self-concept implicit within it becomes 'a property of the child himself' (Bowlby, 1988/2005: 143). As the Internal Working Model solidifies, so it also shapes the perception of and experience of other significant relationships. Describing this, Todd Hall refers to the Internal Working Model as a 'filter' (Hall et al, 2009: 231-232). In short, the Internal Working Model captures the patterns of relationality which exist between the infant and the caregiver, and then uses these patterns to build a predictive model of who the infant is and how others might interact with her.

Described in this way the Internal Working Model clearly bears some resemblance to implicational schema. Indeed, the last fifteen years have seen a number of important studies argue that the Internal Working Model works on an implicit level reflecting non-propositional and affect laden cognition (Hall, 2009; Davis et al, 2013, 2021; Granqvist and Kirkpatrick, 2016; Stulp et al, 2020; Sharp et al, 2021). That the Internal Working Model can be understood as a form of

⁵⁵ For a helpful discussion on the similarities between Winnicott and attachment theory in regard to attunement see Fonagy (2019: 96-7).

implicational code (non-verbal and affectively rich) is further affirmed by the fact that the Adult Attachment Interview⁵⁶ assesses the Internal Working Model by paying particular attention to the way in which the participants tell their story, rather than simply the propositional content of the narratives (Hall, 2007b: 33; Hesse, 2008; 2016; Stulp et al, 2020). Following the Boston Change Process Study Group, I understand the Internal Working Model as capturing *implicit relational knowing* (Stern et al, 1998), a form of knowledge about how to be with others composed of ‘representations of interpersonal events in a non-symbolic form’ (Stern et al, 1998: 905; see also BCPSG, 2010; Hall et al, 2009; Davis et al, 2013) which shapes expectations, behaviours and the emotional experience of situations.

Importantly, the claim that infant-caregiver interactions go on to shape the pattern of relationality between the infant and the caregiver has received significant empirical validation, most significantly through Mary Ainsworth’s Strange Situation Experiment.⁵⁷ Analysing infant behaviour in this experiment Ainsworth identified three attachment styles – patterns of interaction between the infant and the caregiver, each of which is shaped by historic infant-caregiver interactions. The three styles are: secure, anxious/ambivalent, and anxious/avoidant. Amongst securely attached infants Ainsworth et al found that the sensitivity of the caregiver allowed the infant to engage in greater exploratory play. Conversely anxious/ambivalent and anxious/avoidant infants were both found to have non-responsive caregivers. Since Ainsworth’s work Main and Solomon (1986; 1990) have proposed a fourth, widely accepted category by which to understand infant behaviour in the Strange Situation Experiment: disorganised. Disorganised attachment is used to categories infants who show conflicted, disoriented or fearful behaviours on reunion with their caregiver. In considering the types of caregiving behaviour which give rise to such behaviour, Granqvist et al write that ‘it has been theorized that infants may show

⁵⁶ The Adult Attachment Interview (AAI) is a tool researchers use to assess attachment styles in adulthood. The Interview takes a prespecified format in which the interviewer asks questions in a set order, with specific follow-up probes. The interview typically lasts an hour. For further detail on the AAI see Hesse (2008; 2016). The AAI has been subject to a huge amount of scrutiny. Fifteen years ago, there were 200 AAI studies amounting to 10,500 interviews, 160,000 hours, or 100 full-time work-years (Bakermans-Kranenburg, and van IJzendoorn, 2009; see also van IJzendoorn, 1995; see also Hesse, 2008; 2016).

⁵⁷ The *Strange Situation* is designed to allow researchers to explore the attachment bond between a 1-year-old and their primary caregiver. To do this the 1-year old, accompanied by their mother, enters an unfamiliar playroom, exploration behaviour is facilitated by the infant finding a large amount of toys with which to play. Next, a stranger enters the room, following this the mother leaves the baby with the stranger – the first separation experience. After a brief amount of time, the mother returns and the infant is reunited with their mother. Next, there is a second separation and the mother (again) leaves the infant alone in the room. After a short period the stranger re-enters, and after a brief pause the mother then enters. Again, there is a time of reunion between the infant and the mother (Ainsworth et al, 1978: xi).

disorganized attachment in the Strange Situation because they have had experiences of their caregiver as a regular source of alarm' (Granqvist et al, 2017: 540).

These different attachment styles can be evident from as early as 6 months, and while they can be revised (Bowlby, 1969/1997: 112), longitudinal studies have found them to remain fairly stable (barring a traumatic event) when reassessed fifteen to twenty one years later (e.g. Waters, et al, 2000; Hamilton, 2000; Main, 2001; Main et al., 2005; see Hesse, 2008: 585-586 for an overview). Indeed, it is well accepted that attachment persists into adulthood and attachment theory has been used to analyse adult romantic relationships (e.g. Collins and Feeney, 2000; Feeney and Thursh, 2010; Zeifman and Hazan, 2016) adult caregiving (Mikulincer, Gross, Stern, and Cassidy, 2016), God-representations (Granqvist and Kirkpatrick, 2016), and adult emotion-regulation (Mikulincer and Shaver, 2007; 2016).

Through the concept of the Internal Working Model, attachment theory provides a strong explanatory link as to *how* the patterns of relationality in the infant-parent relationship go on to shape a God-representation. The patterns of relationality in the infant-parent relationship meaningfully shape the Internal Working Model, which in turn shapes the perception of relational settings, including relationship with God. In the previous chapter I proposed that participation in the Life of God would involve the reformation of these patterns of relationality. If I am correct that these patterns of relationality are captured in the Internal Working Model, then it would make sense that participation in the Triune Life reforms the Internal Working Model. This makes the question of how the Internal Working Model can be changed particularly important.

More recent work within attachment theory has emphasised the importance of attunement not only in establishing the Internal Working Model but in changing it too. Although, as mentioned previously, empirical research has shown that attachment styles remain relatively stable over a significant period of time, one notable exception to this is the phenomenon of 'earned security' (Hesse, 2016: 570-571). Earned security was added to the classification of the Adult Attachment Interview to capture the fact that a group of interviewees shared very difficult childhood experiences but in a collaborative and cohesive way, matching the narrative styles of securely attached individuals. In essence, while the events of their childhood were relationally difficult, it appears that the implicit schema reflected in their narratives reflected felt security and attunement. This led researchers to conclude that while the Internal Working Model in childhood had initially reflected the difficult environment, the Internal Working Model had been reshaped through the attuned sensitivity of a 'surrogate' attachment figure. The phenomenon of 'earned security' is particularly significant because it introduces the conceptual possibility that

participation in the Triune Life might lead to the reworking of the Internal Working Model. In section three, and at a greater length in chapter three, I will argue that just as human love reworks the Internal Working Model, so participation in the Love of God refashions the Internal Working Model according to the pattern of Divine Love.

2.3. God-Representations

The claim that participating in the Life of God reforms the Internal Working Model is based on the presupposition that grace perfects the natural psychological processes involved in the formation of a God-representation. In other words, it is based on the presupposition that the Internal Working Model shapes a God-representation. This section briefly reviews the evidence for such a presupposition.

As already mentioned, there has been a huge amount of work on God-representations from within attachment theory. Fraser Watts provides an assessment of recent research when he describes the use of attachment theory to better understand persons' relationship with God as 'one of the most fruitful developments in the psychology of religion in recent years' (2017: 114). Given the vast literature on God-representations and attachment theory, it is not possible to provide an exhaustive review of the literature.⁵⁸ My more modest aim in this section is to outline: one, the arguments for thinking of God as an attachment figure; and two, the arguments for the claim that an implicit God-representation corresponds to the Internal Working Model.

For the sake of clarity I do not discuss the compensation hypothesis: the hypothesis that God-representations might function inversely to an insecure attachment style.⁵⁹ This omission is due to the fact that this section focuses on the relationship between the Internal Working Model and an *implicit* God-representation. Studies which have distinguished between implicit and explicit God-representations (see especially Hall et al, 2009, Zahl and Gibson, 2012; Davis et al, 2013, 2021; Sharp et al, 2021) have found correspondence between an implicit God-representation and the Internal Working Model. There is not, to my knowledge, meaningful evidence for a compensation relationship between the Internal Working Model and an implicit God-representation.

Reasons for thinking of God as an attachment figure

⁵⁸ For a helpful overview see Granqvist and Kirkpatrick (2016).

⁵⁹ For studies exploring the compensatory role of God as an attachment figure see Kirkpatrick and Shaver (1990); Kirkpatrick (1997, 1998); Granqvist, Ivarsson, et al. (2007), Schnitker et al. (2012); and Halama et al. (2013).

That God-representations function psychologically as a non-corporeal attachment figure is uncontroversial in the attachment literature. The reasons for thinking that God-representations function in this way is primarily based on the argument that spiritual practices function as forms of attachment behaviour in which God is treated as both a safe haven and secure base.⁶⁰ This section provides a summary of this argument, drawing out how certain psychological claims might be evidenced by the Psalter. Engaging with the Psalter is appropriate given its centrality to both Jewish and Christian prayer and worship.⁶¹ In addition to this the biblical scholar David Bosworth has identified that three quarters of the psalms contain attachment related content (Bosworth, 2015: 698).⁶² Indeed, going further than this and remembering that ‘calling’ is an attachment behaviour, insofar as the Psalms *are* Israel’s calling on God there is good reason to understand *all* the Psalms as forms of attachment behaviour.

Psychologically Granqvist and Kirkpatrick understand both worship and prayer as a kind of proximity seeking to God (Granqvist and Kirkpatrick, 2016: 919). We see evidence of this throughout the Psalter, expressing a desire for God’s face in (Ps. 4:6; 17:15; 24:5; 27:8-9; 31:16; 69:17; 80:3, 7, 19; 102:2; 119: 135, 143:7) and lamenting the absence or hiddenness of God’s face in (Ps. 13:1; 30:7; 42: 2; 44:24; 88:14; 104:29). The theme of God’s presence and proximity is perhaps *the* dominating theme in the Psalter, providing ‘the thematic point of coherence [to its] varied elements’ (Terrien, 2003: 55). The content of the psalms frames the Psalter as springing from a desire for and an experience of closeness to God suggesting that this is an important dimension of Christian prayer and worship.

Remembering Sroufe and Waters’ proposal, that the attachment system works to the set point of felt security, helps to further emphasise the centrality with which the Psalter presents God in attachment figure terms. Indeed, Jerome Creach has argued that the shape of the Psalter is designed to encourage ‘readers to seek refuge in Yahweh, that is, to choose the eternal king as a source of protection and sustenance vis-a-vis human power’ (Creach, 1996: 18). While Creach does not refer to attachment theory in his argument, translating his claim into the language of

⁶⁰ While my focus here is on the Psalms and attachment theory, for examples of psychologically engaged theological commentary on the Psalms more broadly see: Bruggemann (1995: 103-4), Collicutt (2012), and Brown and Collicutt (2022).

⁶¹ For examples of historical critical biblical research which has situated the *sitz-im-leben* of the Psalms in Israel’s liturgical worship see Sigmund Mowinckel (1962: 1-22), his student Hermann Gunkel (1998: 7) and Arthur Weiser, (2002: 21).

⁶² Note that Bosworth combines counts Pss 9-10 and 42-32 as two rather than four psalms. This means that he counts 111 out of 148 psalms as containing attachment language or behaviour.

attachment theory we might say that the shape of the Psalter is designed to lead the human person into an experience of God as a safe haven (i.e. as a 'refuge').

Moreover, that God functions as a safe haven and secure base reflects the contexts in which God is most likely to be sought. Attachment theory holds that the attachment system is most likely to be activated in the context of frightening events, illness, and the threat of separation and loss (Kirkpatrick, 2005: 61). If God were to function as an attachment figure we would expect attachment behaviour to be activated in these contexts. Empirically this tends to be the case: prayer acts as a common coping method for serious physical illness, tends to increase following the death of a loved one, and those in threatening situations pray frequently (Granqvist and Kirkpatrick, 2016: 919-920). That separation from God is likely to activate the attachment system has been further affirmed by Birgegard and Granqvist (2004) who found that subliminal exposure to the phrase 'God has forsaken me' activated the attachment system. Similarly, the Psalter is full of moments of God's people turning to God in frightening environmental events (e.g. Ps. 7), illness (e.g. Ps. 41), and separation from God (e.g. Ps. 22).

While there has been less focus given to the role of God as a secure base, studies have also found that subliminal priming of participants with the word 'God' increased access to secure-base related concepts (Granqvist et al, 2012). As Kirkpatrick (2005: 66-67) points out we also find the Psalms presenting God in secure base-like ways. Kirkpatrick draws attention especially to Psalm 23, where God is described as 'my shepherd' (v.1), the one who 'lets me lie down in green pastures' and who 'leads me beside quiet waters (v.2). We also find the presentation of God as a secure base in the very opening of the Psalter (Ps. 1). Here the righteous person is the one who delights in the Law of the Lord, who meditates on God's Law day and night (v.3) and who flourishes like a tree planted by water (v.4). Indeed, the Psalms regularly present God as a secure base, the one whose presence enables right relationship with and the flourishing of creation (see e.g. Ps. 8; 19; 24; 32; 37; 45; 48; 65; 84; 95-99; 104; 116; 125; 148).

God-Representations and the IWM

In short, it is uncontroversial within the psychological literature to understand God as a non-corporeal attachment figure. If this is true then it suggests that the attachment system might be one of the psychological systems by which graced participation in the Triune Life works to bring the human person into deifying union with Godself. Further exploring the potential for participation in the Triune God to make use of the attachment system, the next subsection homes in on the relationship between a God-representation and the Internal Working Model.

If we accept that God functions psychologically as an attachment figure, then it would be reasonable to expect our attachment style to affect our God-representation. In essence, we would expect the Internal Working Model developed in infancy to shape a God-representation. Indeed, this has been a significant finding over the last thirty years, in which a vast array of studies have found correspondence between attachment style and God-representations (Kirkpatrick, 1992; Kirkpatrick and Shaver, 1992, Granqvist, Ivarsson, et al., 2007; Hall et al, 2009; Hall & Fujikawa, 2013; Davis et al, 2013; and Granqvist and Kirkpatrick, 2016; Augustyn et al, 2017; Davis et al, 2021). These studies have, for instance, found that securely attached individuals perceive God as more loving and less controlling, in contrast insecurely attached individuals were more worried that God might not love them (Kirkpatrick & Shaver, 1992; Augustyn et al, 2017). In a complementary insight, Granqvist, Ivarsson et al have also found positive associations between Adult Attachment Interviews and God-representations. Adults who reported experiences of loving parents were more likely to perceive God as loving than those who reported experiences of parental rejection. Conversely Adult Attachment Interviews which were encoded as reflecting experiences of parental rejection were more likely to perceive God as distant (Granqvist, Ivarsson, et al. 2007). These findings cohere with the core of Rizzuto's proposal that God-representations are shaped, at least partly, by early experiences of caregivers.

Looking at studies on God-representations and attachment which have engaged with dual-process cognition can further clarify the nature of the correspondence between God-representations and the Internal Working Model.⁶³ These studies present a consensus that implicit God-representations are largely nonconscious, non-propositional, affect-laden, and shaped by the Internal Working Model. Explicit God-representations are conscious, propositional, and affect-light representations which are typically used in discourse about God, while showing some degree of alignment with the Internal Working Model they are capable of greater disparity (Zahl and Gibson, 2012; Zahl et al, 2013; Davis et al, 2013, 2021; Sharp et al, 2021). Though the research is still in its early stages, by distinguishing between implicit and explicit God-representations these studies suggest a correspondence relationship between attachment styles and implicit God-representations. Indeed, attachment styles predict implicit God-representations better than explicit God-representations (Hall, 2009; Zahl and Gibson,

⁶³ The literature has not yet reached a point of convergence on the language used for the distinction between the 'head' (propositional) and 'heart' (implicational) knowledge of God-representations (Zahl, 2013; Watts, 2013). For instance Davis et al (2013) use 'God concept' (propositional) and 'God image' (implicational); Zahl and Gibson (2012) and Sharp et al (2021) use 'doctrinal representation' (propositional) and 'experiential representation' (implicational). Following Hall et al (2009) I have used explicit (propositional) and implicit (implicational), as this helpfully coheres with the language of the ICS.

2012), further emphasising the implicational nature of the Internal Working Model. On the basis of this research it appears that a change in an implicit God-representation will require a change in the Internal Working Model.

In summary, looking at attachment theory has further strengthened the previous chapter's claim that God-representations are shaped by our early experience of caregivers. Drawing on ICS and attachment theory we can further specify the way that these early experiences shape the Internal Working Model (an affect-laden, non-propositional, gut-sense of both the self and other people). If sharing in the Life of God reforms our God-representation, then it is reasonable to propose that this will happen through the reshaping of the implicational subsystem, specifically the Internal Working Model. Were this to be the case then we might understand the reformation of the Internal Working Model through participating in the Life of God as akin to 'earned security'.

Section 3. Augustine, Participation and Emotions

To argue that participation in the Life of God reshapes the implicational subsystem, and the Internal Working Model in particular, I turn to Augustine's theology of the emotions. Augustine's theology of the emotions is helpful because it proposes that emotional experience is shaped by participation in the Life of God. As we will see, ICS understands the implicational subsystem as the central aspect of emotion production. Helpfully, attachment theory also understands the Internal Working Model to meaningfully shape emotional experience. In essence emotion acts as a point of convergence between the psychological and theological literature. In conversation between Augustine, ICS, and attachment theory I argue that just as participation in the Spirit shapes emotional experience, so participation in the Spirit shapes the implicational subsystem. Given my understanding of the Internal Working Model as a form of implicational code and its contribution to emotion production, I go on to argue that it is reasonable to think that participation in the Spirit will reshape the Internal Working Model.

In using Augustine to engage with contemporary work on 'emotion' I follow the likes of Joshua Hordern (2012; 2020) and Simeon Zahl (2020: 207-226).⁶⁴ While following both thinkers in

⁶⁴ In using 'emotion' language I am not suggesting a one-to-one mapping between Augustine's complex affective vocabulary (e.g. affections, passions, movements) and contemporary psychological work on emotion. For further discussion on this see Thomas Dixon (2003; 2011). Dixon has three principal concerns with the modern category of emotion. First, Dixon argues that contemporary work on 'emotion' makes it difficult to distinguish between movements of the soul which are virtuous and those which are not. Second, Dixon is concerned about accounts which present emotion as 'just' a feeling, and as such sever the link between emotions and the world. Finally, Dixon disagrees with the popular opposition between 'emotion' and reason. I sympathise with Dixon on all three points, nevertheless, following Hordern and Zahl, I continue to use the term 'emotion' to facilitate engagement between Augustine, ICS and attachment

establishing a point of conversation between Augustine and psychological accounts of emotion, I seek to develop their work by bringing Augustine into conversation with psychological material which neither thinker considers. In particular, neither Hordern nor Zahl consider the relationship between emotion, implicational code and the Internal Working Model. My use of Augustine to propose that participation in the Spirit reshapes the implicational code of the Internal Working Model is a genuinely original contribution.

While it is common to begin accounts of Augustine's thinking on emotion with his distinction between *uti* (use) and *frui* (enjoyment), Augustine's thinking makes most sense when we begin with his account of creation and move from this to consider the relationship between creation and emotion. As such I begin by looking at Augustine's participatory ontology, reading Augustine as working within a complementary ontology to the previous chapter. With this established I make some initial remarks on how Augustine understands emotional experience, and this gives us the necessary building blocks to engage with Augustine's distinction between *uti* and *frui*. As we press deeper into Augustine's thought we will see that human persons emotionally experience creation truly when they come to participate in God's loving of creation. There is, I think, a deiform shape to Augustine's thinking on emotions – human persons experience creation correctly when they love in a human expression of Divine Love. Space prevents me from providing a sustained account of the importance of deification in Augustine's thought, thankfully a significant strand of Augustinian scholarship has drawn attention to this.⁶⁵

3.1. Creation and Participation

Augustine, like Aquinas, understands creation's participation in the Trinity as both the foundation and culmination of creaturely life. Indeed, Mark Clavier has proposed that participation is the 'key' to understanding Augustine's thought (2014: 113 cited in Davison, 2019: 6).

Let us begin by looking at how Augustine understands participation in the Triune Life to ground creation's existence. For Augustine, the Trinitarian processions both establish creatures' existence and preserve them in existence. Both activities are essentially participatory, intimately

theory. Notably, the psychologically engaged theology this chapter develops is one where we can distinguish between 'good' and 'bad' emotions, where emotions should refer to something real, and where emotion and reason can very much enter into conversation with one another.

⁶⁵ The classic account of Augustine's conception of deification is Bonner (1986). Since then David Meconi's *The One Christ: St Augustine's Theology of Deification* (2013) has become the definitive study. See also Anna Williams (1999: 29), Russell (2004: 329–32), Keating (2004b: 227–250), Rogers (2005: 47–52), Puchniak (2006), Meconi (2014), Rosenberg (2017), and Iacovetti (2018).

involving the Trinitarian processions. Augustine captures a number of important themes in the following passage. He writes:

For these things which have been created are not known by God because they have been made; rather they have been made, even though changeable, because they are known unchangeably by Him. This ineffable embrace of the Father and the Image [i.e. the Son] is, therefore, not without pleasure, without love, or without joy. Consequently, this love, this delight, this happiness, or this blessedness... it is the Holy Spirit, who was not begotten but is the sweetness of the begetter and the begotten, pouring out upon all creatures, according to their capacity, His immense bounty and the fullness of His gifts, in order that they may keep their proper order and rest content in their proper place. (*De Trin.* 6.10.11).

In this passage Augustine argues that both the Word and the Spirit have an essential role in creation. God's knowing of Godself (the Word) is the foundation of creation, for creatures are not known by God because they exist, rather 'they have been made... because they are known unchangeably by Him'. For Augustine, creatures are brought into existence through the procession of the Word. Moreover, Augustine understands creatures to be sustained through their participation in the Word. We see this especially in Augustine's understanding of the Divine Ideas, the pre-existing forms of all things, which Augustine locates within the Word. Referring to the Divine Ideas Augustine writes that 'it is by participation in them that a thing exists, in whatever way it exists' (*Div. qu.* 46.2). By this, I take Augustine to mean that the procession of the Word establishes both the fact of creatures' existence and the mode of their existence. Creatures are maintained in their existence through their participation in the Word (McIntosh 2021: 23).

As the passage we began with indicates, Augustine also gives the Spirit an integral role in creation, for at the heart of each creature is the embrace of the Father and the Son: the Holy Spirit. That the Spirit is the embrace of the Father and the Son reflects Augustine's understanding of the Spirit as the love shared between the Father and the Son (e.g. *De Trin.* 6.5.7, 14.6.8). That the Spirit is poured out on all creatures, and in doing so holds them in the embrace between the Father and Son, is important for Augustine's theology of creation. For Augustine, the Father confers existence, the Word shapes the nature of existence (determining the type of creature a creature is) and the love of the Spirit holds the creature in this embrace, continually uniting the creature to the Father's speaking of the Word (Meconi, 2013: 12-14). As we will see below, the embrace of the Spirit is vital in sustaining creation for it is in the embrace of the Spirit that the creature is united to its truth, the divine archetype, in the Word.

Alongside the Spirit's holding of each and every creature in the embrace between the Father and the Son, the Spirit also has a more cosmic role in creation. Sharing in the Spirit, the creature is led into their proper place in creation as a whole. In essence, the Spirit confers proper relationality on creation. As Augustine writes in the passage above, the Spirit pours themselves out on creation that creatures 'may keep their proper order and rest content in their proper place'. That the Spirit performs this function is wholly in keeping with Augustine's understanding of the Spirit as love (*De Trin.* 15.17.27-31; *Ep. Io.* 7.6).⁶⁶ That the Spirit as love is able to draw creatures into the order of creation reflects Augustine's understanding of the order of creation as an *ordo amoris* (Meconi, 2013: 13). Capturing this, Augustine goes on to say that:

All these things, therefore, which have been made by the divine art, manifest a certain unity, form, and order in themselves. For each of them is some one thing... as are the figures and qualities of bodies and the sciences and arts of souls; and either seeks for or maintains a certain order, as are the weights and arrangements of bodies and the loves and delights of souls. (*De Trin.* 6.10.12)

For Augustine, the Spirit leads the creature into the truth spoken by the Father in the Word and in doing so the Spirit brings about a personal integrity. The Spirit performs a similar role in cosmically ordering all of creation, shaping the loves of the soul, and weighting the human person to the Triune Life for whom she is created. Another way to put this is that the Spirit leads all of creation into the goodness for which creation was intended. Indeed such a proposal undergirds the following passage in which Augustine writes that:

When it says, *God saw that it was good*, it signifies clearly enough that God did not make what he made out of any necessity, or out of any need for something useful to himself, but simply out of sheer goodness; that is, he made what he made because it was good. This is said after the thing had been made, rather than before, previously in order to indicate that the thing made does, in fact, correspond to the goodness on account of which it was made... this goodness is rightly understood as the Holy Spirit. (*De Civ. Dei*, 11.24)

The first point to make in unpacking this passage is that Augustine understands creation as good. In investigating how it is good, Augustine proposes that the goodness of creation corresponds to the Divine Goodness, which previously Augustine has identified as the Spirit (*De Civ. Dei* 11.24).

⁶⁶ For further discussion of Augustine's significant claim that the Spirit is love see Ayres (2001: 86-88) and Smith (2011: 567; and 2016: 55).

Augustine safeguards against the conclusion that this correspondence between creaturely and divine goodness might be purely nominal when he uses strongly participatory language, writing that creation:

receives its mode of being by subsisting in God, its enlightenment by beholding him, its joy from cleaving to him. It exists; it sees; it loves. It is strong with God's eternity; it shines with God's truth; it rejoices in God's goodness. (*De Civ. Dei*, 11.24)

Drawing this together with the passage in *De Trinitate* I examined above, we can summarise by saying that creation is good through its participation in the Spirit, by which creatures are led into their form within the Word, spoken by the Father. In the Spirit, the embrace between the Father and the Son, the creature is held to this identity, and led into both personal and cosmic flourishing as the creature takes up its proper place in creation. Creation is good and it is good by participating in God's goodness.

3.2. A Theology of the Emotions

As our discussion develops we will see that Augustine's participatory account of creation provides essential context for his theology of emotions. For Augustine, it is in coming to participate in the Spirit that the human person's love comes to be directed towards God, weighted towards the Triune Life. Augustine understands the proper directing of our love as the essential foundation for the proper experience of creation. When human persons love God in this way their emotions accurately appraise the goodness of creation and their desires follow the grooves of the *ordo amoris* by which creation was established.

To develop this further it will be helpful to say a little more about how Augustine understands emotions. For Augustine, all emotions spring from love. As examples, Augustine mentions how enjoyment springs from the beloved's presence, fear from the beloved or the beloved's presence being threatened, and sadness from separation from or the harming of the beloved (*De Civ. Dei*, 14.7). For Augustine it is the will (*voluntas*)⁶⁷ which loves, and in its loving it plays an evaluative role. The will evaluates whether an object, a person, or an event is good or bad, better or worse. Capturing this, Augustine describes the way in which a person's 'will is attracted or repelled in accordance with the varied character of different objects which are pursued or shunned' (*De Civ.*

⁶⁷ Augustine's understanding of *voluntas* is a notoriously tricky term to pin down. Djuth helpfully highlights that Augustine provides three different definitions of *voluntas*: (1) will as a free movement of a rational soul, (2) will as consent and (3) will as love. While these are non-competitive I follow Djuth (1999) and Wetzel (2007: 351) in reading Augustine as using *voluntas* in his discussion of emotion in *De Civ. Dei*, book 14 primarily in the third sense, will as love. Such a reading is supported by Augustine's proposal that 'a rightly directed will is love in a good sense and a perverted will is love in a bad sense' (*De Civ. Dei*, 14.7). For further discussion of Augustine's use of *voluntas* see Djuth (1999).

Dei, 14.6). Clearly our emotional appraisal of the world may well be mistaken but this does not prevent us from understanding emotions as appraisals even if they are not always accurate appraisals of the world.

Augustine is well aware of the way our loves can misguide us. In his *Confessions*, Augustine powerfully captures the pernicious role of desire describing how ‘I was quickly drawn over the cliffs of desire and sucked down by the eddying currents of vice’ (*Conf.* 2.2.2). Augustine expands on the potentially misguided nature of our loves in describing his arrival at Carthage where:

a frying pan of sinful loves was spitting all about me. I was not yet in love, but I was in love with love; such was my inner need that I hated myself for not being more in need. I was looking for something to love, in love with love and hating the safety of a path free from pitfalls; for inside I was starving for lack of inner food – you, my God – and yet starving I was, I felt no hunger. I felt no lack of the foods that do not perish, not because I was full of them, but because the more empty I was, the more nauseating I found them. For this reason, my soul was sick; covered with sores, it turned itself outwards, pathetically eager to scratch itself with the touch of sensible objects. (*Conf.* 3.1.1)

In this passage Augustine introduces the notion of ‘sinful loves’, loves which, rather than directing us to the good, lead us into the eddying currents of vice. There is a kind of restlessness to this love, Augustine is ‘looking for something to love’ and this gives a circularity to his experience as he is ‘in love with love’. There is little contact here between Augustine’s love and the realness of creation, indeed, it is as if his love hides the truth of creation from him. Reflecting this reading, Augustine understands his experience of Carthage as opaque, hidden from himself. Though he is ‘starving’ he ‘felt no hunger’, and as such his loves fail to helpfully inform him about either his internal or his external world.

As hinted at in Augustine’s arrival at Carthage, for Augustine the will is only capable of informing us truly about creation if it is directed to God. The true end of the will is God, the ‘inner food’ the soul truly desires. There are echoes here of the famous passage with which the *Confessions* begins ‘you have made us for yourself, and our heart is restless till it finds rest in you’ (*Conf.* 1.1.1). For Augustine, human persons are designed for God and reflecting this, the proper operation of our emotions requires a heart which is oriented to God.

Augustine unpacks this further in Book 14 of the *City of God* where he writes that the will needs to be directed to God if it is to appraise creation correctly, for human beings are designed to be ‘a lover of the Good’ (*De Civ. Dei*, 14.6). As set out in section 3.1, God is the Good, and all of

creation is good through its participation in God's goodness. Drawing this together with Augustine's proposal that human beings are designed to be lovers of the Good provides further validation that Augustine understands the will as designed to be directed to God. When the will is directed to God then the will appraises creation properly, when it is directed to anything else the emotions and desires which flow from the will become misguided. Indeed, Augustine is explicit on the direction of the will determining whether an emotion is either good or bad, writing that 'a rightly directed will is love in a good sense and a perverted will is love in a bad sense... Consequently, these feelings are bad if the love is bad, and good if the love is good' (*De Civ. Dei*, 14.7).

The complexity of the will's appraisals is multiplied by the fact that the will does not provide a simple, binary analysis, appraising objects as only good or bad. The will's evaluation of the world is analogue rather than binary. Our emotions, desires and feelings need not only recognise whether an object is good but should evaluate *how* good the object is. Capturing the need for the will to distinguish goodness in this way Augustine writes:

The person who lives a just and holy life is one who is a sound judge in these things. He is also a person who has ordered his love, so that he does not love what it is wrong to love, or fail to love what should be loved, or love too much what should be loved less (or love too little what should be loved more), or love two things equally if one of them should be loved either less or more than the other, or love things either more or less if they should be loved equally. (*De Doc.* 1.59)

The notion of 'ordered' loves lies at the centre of Augustine's thinking on emotion. Although everything God has created is good 'it can be loved in the right way or in the wrong way – in the right way, that is, when the proper order is kept, in the wrong way when the order is upset' (*De Civ. Dei*, 15.22; see also *De Doc.* 1.59). As I set out in 3.1, this order is established by the Spirit who pours himself out on creation that all creatures might rest in their 'proper order and rest content in their proper place'. So, we start to see the inherently participatory shape of Augustine's thinking here. In the reading I am developing there is an emerging sense, which will be developed below, that true emotional experience is made possible through a sharing in the Spirit by which human persons come to recognise and enter into the order established by the Triune act of creation.

Use and Enjoyment

To further appreciate Augustine's understanding of the ordering of loves it will be helpful to draw on a distinction Augustine makes in *De Doctrina Christiana* book one, between the *uti* (use) and

frui (enjoyment) of a good. It is helpful to hear the distinction in his own words: 'to enjoy something is to hold fast to it in love for its own sake. To use something is to apply whatever it may be to the purpose of obtaining what you love' (*De Doc.* 1.8). Developing the distinction Augustine introduces the image of a traveller returning to her homeland, an image which recurs regularly throughout *De Doctrina Christiana*, book one. Augustine writes:

Suppose we were travellers who could live happily only in our homeland, and because our absence made us unhappy we wished to put an end to our misery and return there: we would need transport by land or sea which we could use to travel to our homeland, the object of our enjoyment. But if we were fascinated by the delights of the journey and the actual travelling, we would be perversely enjoying things we should be using; and we would be reluctant to finish our journey quickly, being estranged in the wrong kind of pleasure and estranged from the homeland whose pleasures could make us happy. (*De Doc.* 1.8)

Notably Augustine casts the image in emotional terms, the stakes of the journey are 'happiness' or 'misery'. Similarly the perils are affective, on the journey to the place our hearts most desire to be there is a danger that our attention is misdirected, that we forget the desires of our hearts, and in our forgetfulness that our love, our desires and our emotions become misdirected, focusing not on the ultimate end but on the 'delights of the journey'. In doing so not only do we become 'estranged in the wrong kind of pleasure' but this affective alienation is matched by the fact that we are 'estranged from the homeland', a homeland 'whose pleasures could make us happy'. As such Augustine directly links our use and enjoyment of goods to our emotional experience of the world (see also *De Doc.* 1.7 and 1.40).

In language which may initially sound harsh to contemporary ears, Augustine holds that only the Father, Son and Holy Spirit should be enjoyed and that creation should be used in our return to this homeland (*De Doc.* 1.10). However, this is a vital move and, as observed by Rowan Williams (1989), Sarah Stewart-Kroker (2014), and Michael Lamb (2023: 32-47), flows from the participatory logic of Augustine's thought. For Augustine the Spirit is the love which unites the Father and the Son and which is shared with all of creation, uniting each creature to its truth in the Word, and in doing so positions the creature in its proper place in the cosmos. To enjoy the Trinity therefore is to love God (and creation) in a human expression of the Spirit. Augustine's participatory logic means that there is no opposition between God and creation's goodness. As long as our loves are properly ordered to God then, in loving God, we come to love creation in a human expression of the love which God breathed into creation: the Spirit.

To hold fast to any element of creation, rather than to let our love move from creation to the Trinity, is to deny creation the love for which it was intended – the Trinitarian love for which all creation yearns. To say that God is the only one whom human persons should enjoy is, therefore, *not* to say that human persons should be ambivalent about creation. Rather, it is to call human persons to a deeper love of creation, a love of creation which is only possible through a participation in the love by which God loves creation. Moreover, in loving creation in this way there is no competition between creation and Creator, but all our love is allowed to flow through creation to God – no part of our heart is left restless, it all comes to rest in the Life of God (*De Doc.* 1.64 and 1.70).

Augustine’s thought can be further appreciated by looking at the type of love which is produced when human persons do not relate all their love to God. To do so it will be helpful to return to Augustine’s image of love as a weight:

If we were stones, waves, wind, or flame, or anything of that kind, lacking sense and life, we would still show something like a desire for our own place and order. For the specific gravity of a body is, in a manner, its love, whether a body tends downwards by reason of its heaviness or strives upwards because of its lightness. A material body is borne along by its weight in a particular direction, as a soul is by its love. (*De Civ. Dei*, 11.28)

Building on the metaphor of love as a weight we might understand God as the only one who can carry the weight of our love. God is the only one whom it is safe for us to build our loves around, to order our loves in relation to (Mt. 7:24-27). All other orderings risk our love being dropped, or that we might leave the beloved crushed by the weight of our desire. Augustine tells firsthand of the way that disordered love can obscure another person. In Book Four of his *Confessions*, Augustine describes the love he held for an unnamed friend from his youth.⁶⁸ The friend becomes very sick and ultimately dies. Retelling the experience, Augustine remembers ‘loving a mortal as if he were immortal’ (*Conf.* 4.7.12). This disordered love leads to a disordered grief in which Augustine becomes consumed with self-referential emotion in which ‘the actual and independent reality of my mortal friend is swallowed up in an absorption with my state of mind and heart, including my memories and images of what I have lost. My love is incapable of letting the loved one be free of my subjectivity’ (Williams, 2016: 193). In seeking to let my love rest in the finite beloved I ask the beloved to hold a weight of desire which they ultimately cannot take. As Augustine puts it ‘a part is loved under the false assumption that it is the whole’ (*Conf.* 3.8.16). In

⁶⁸ For further discussion of the unnamed friend in the context of *uti/frui* see Bowlin (2010: 295-299); Stewart-Kroeker (2014: 218-220); and Williams, (2016: 193).

doing so we make the finite beloved hold an infinite love, a situation which can only lead to a delusional projection onto the beloved. Only God can hold the weight of our loves, and because God loves creation with a selfless and beautiful love, to love God leads us to love the creature in a way which celebrates the creature as another self, one who exists separately to our own projections and agendas. In loving the Trinity I come to love creation with a deiform love, a love which reflects the creature's placement in creation. We can hear echoes of the previous chapter where sharing in the Divine Life brings about an 'affective affinity' between God and the human person.

3.3. Participation and Implicational Code: A Psychologically Engaged Proposal

For Augustine, creation is loved and experienced truly when the will comes to participate in the Holy Spirit, and in doing so is deified. This deiform love meaningfully changes the way human beings emotionally experience the world. That Augustine understands participation in the Spirit to be capable of shaping emotional experience is significant because, when read in conversation with ICS and attachment theory, it provides a theological basis for understanding participation in the Holy Spirit to reform the Internal Working Model. To appreciate the logic of such a proposal, it will be helpful to further examine the role of the implicational subsystem and the Internal Working Model in emotion production.

As mentioned at numerous points throughout this chapter, ICS theory proposes that the implicational subsystem is the 'central aspect' of emotion production (Barnard and Teasdale, 1991: 22). That the implicational subsystem is central to emotion production reflects the widespread psychological conception of emotions as appraisals of events.⁶⁹ Smith and Kirby are indicative of many psychologists when they describe emotions as 'appraisals [based on] an evaluation of what the stimulus circumstances imply for the person's well-being in relation to that person's specific configuration of needs, goals, resources, abilities, etc.' (Smith and Kirby, 2009: 1354). This understanding of emotion nicely coheres with Augustine's insight that our emotions act as appraisals in which the 'will is attracted or repelled in accordance with the varied character of different objects which are pursued or shunned' (*De Civ. Dei*, 14.6). In order to make these appraisals ICS emphasises the need for different elements of experience to be synthesised. This naturally emphasises the role of the implicational subsystem in emotion production because the 'integration of all aspects of an experience' which these appraisals

⁶⁹ See for example the work of psychologists such as LeDoux (2004); Fridja (2009); Scherer (2009); and Smith and Kirby (2009).

require 'is, of course, precisely what is encoded at the Implicational level' (Teasdale and Barnard, 1993: 91).

ICS proposes that the appraisal generated by the implicational subsystem then generates an emotional response. To do so the implicational code is 'distributed' over the COPY process of several subsystems generating the phenomenological content of the emotional reaction. In their own words, 'holistic 'senses' or feelings... are the phenomenal experience corresponding to activity in the Implicational subsystem, just as phenomenal experiences of pitch or timbre mark activity in the Acoustic subsystem' (Teasdale and Barnard, 1993: 84). In essence ICS understands our emotional experience of the world as the phenomenological product of the appraisals conducted by the implicational subsystem.

For Augustine, not all appraisals are equal, rather appraisals can be judged according to the extent to which they accurately appraise a given context. Developing Augustine's conception of 'sinful loves' in a psychologically engaged mode, we might understand a malformed love as implicational code which misinforms us about the truth of reality, obscuring or neglecting important aspects of the world. Moreover, if Augustine is correct that participation in the Life of God reforms our emotional experience, and if ICS is correct in identifying the implicational subsystem as central to emotion production, then it is reasonable to propose that participation in the Life of God reshapes the content of the implicational subsystem (i.e. reshapes implicational code). As the patterns captured by the implicational subsystem come to more accurately reflect the patterns of love in the Triune Life, so the human person comes to appraise reality more truly.

Attachment and Emotions

If I am correct in proposing that participation in the Spirit reshapes implicational code, then it provides an initial basis upon which to understand how participation in the Holy Spirit would reform the Internal Working Model. As outlined above, the Internal Working Model functions on an implicit level, providing an affect-laden, non-propositional, gut-sense of both the self and other people. Moreover, the possibility that participation in the Spirit reshapes the Internal Working Model is further supported by research which has found an important link between the Internal Working Model and emotion production.

That the Internal Working Model shapes emotion production can be seen in Bowlby's famous proposal that 'the psychology and psychopathology of emotion is found to be in large part the psychology and psychopathology of affectional bonds' (1979: 130; see also 1969/1997: 104-123). This is further reflected in the titles of the second and third volumes of Bowlby's attachment

trilogy, *Separation: Anxiety and Anger* (1973/1983) and *Loss: Sadness and Depression* (1980/1997).

Expanding on how the attachment system shapes emotional experience, Mikulincer and Shaver theorise that repeated interactions between the infant and caregiver create ‘scripts’ for the way in which situations are experienced. These scripts ‘shape a person’s reactions to the situation and allow him or her to forecast how the situation will develop and whether the threat will or will not be removed. Depending on the details of a particular individual’s script, activation of the script can be beneficial or detrimental to emotion regulation in a particular situation’ (Mikulincer and Shaver, 2016: 510). When caregivers have been responsive, sensitive and attuned, the infant (and later adult) receives a basic sense that it is possible to cope with threat and distress. Secure individuals operate with something akin to the following script “‘if I encounter an obstacle and/or become distressed, then I can approach a significant other for help; he or she is likely to be available and supportive; I will experience relief and comfort as a result of proximity to this person; I can then return to other activities.” Once activated, this script, by itself, can mitigate distress, promote optimism and hope, and help a person cope effectively with stressors’ (Mikulincer and Shaver, 2016: 510).

That attachment style (i.e. the configuration of the Internal Working Model) shapes the appraisal of a given situation and therefore emotion production has been further affirmed by empirical studies.⁷⁰ Mikulincer et al (2009) and Ein-Dor et al (2011) found that attachment style shaped persons’ appraisals, attention, inferences, judgements and memory of a given situation (see also discussion in Mikulincer and Shaver, 2016). More specifically Mikulincer et al (2009) found that securely attached individuals expected to find more secure-base script material (e.g. support seeking and support availability) when composing a story, generated additional security-supporting inferences and conjectures, and were quicker and more confident when making judgements about secure-base script information. Moreover, this was true amongst secure individuals even five days after being exposed to the initial information, suggesting a depth of processing. Furthermore, secure individuals’ ability to remember this information was not affected by depletion of cognitive resources, suggesting that secure-base script information was processed easily. Mikulincer et al concluded that secure individuals were ‘experts’ in deploying the secure-base script (2009: 630). Conversely, anxiously attached individuals have been found to deploy a ‘sentinel’ script (noticing danger before other people do and warning others about

⁷⁰ In addition to the studies cited in this paragraph see also Mikulincer and Orbach (1995); Mikulincer and Shaver (2007); Seedall and Wampler (2012). For overviews of the empirical evidence see Mikulincer and Shaver (2016).

danger). Ein-Dor et al (2011) found that anxious individuals wrote more about danger when writing a story about a threatening event, remembered details related to danger more effectively, reacted quickly to sentinel script information and were more likely to recall schema-biased false memories. Anxiously attached individuals were also quicker than others in detecting potential threats (the study used a computer which was designed to ‘malfunction’, emitting smoke). Ein-Dor et al (2011) also found that avoidant individuals more quickly accessed a rapid fight or flight script (e.g. escaping a dangerous situation without helping others, acting rapidly without depending on others’ actions, not deliberating or cooperating with others). Similarly, this was associated with including more of these elements when writing a story, recalling schema-biased false memories, processing information relevant to the script more quickly and deeply. The study also found that avoidant individuals were slower to detect and broadcast information about a potential threat (again using a computer which was designed to ‘malfunction’, emitting smoke).

While only possible to provide a brief overview of the literature on attachment and emotion production, this discussion establishes an evidence base for the proposal that the Internal Working Model (along with other implicational schema) is involved in emotion production. In doing so it further emphasises the potential relevance of Augustine’s theology of emotion for the reformation of the Internal Working Model. If the Internal Working Model is involved in emotion production, and if participating in the Holy Spirit reshapes the implicational code involved in emotion production, then it strikes me as conceptually plausible to extend Augustine’s thought by suggesting that participating in the Holy Spirit reforms the implicational code of the Internal Working Model. Indeed, it strikes me that we have a case study of such a reformation of the implicational code in Augustine’s *Confessions*.

Following his conversion Augustine has a powerful experience of the Church’s liturgy as the Psalter is sung in the cathedral in Milan. Augustine tells of the way he was ‘set on fire’ at the reading of the Psalter (*Conf.* 9.4.8) and describes:

How I wept at the hymns and sacred song (Eph. 5:19) of your Church, how moved I was at its tuneful voices! Those voices flowed in through my ears, and the truth pressed and strained out of them, entered my heart and from my heart a pious longing came boiling up and overflowed. My tears ran; I wept, and it was well with me. (*Conf.* 9.7.15)

Elaborating on this, Carol Harrison suggests that Augustine’s experience of the songs of the Church reflects the way in which grace works at the level of emotional cognition, changing our non-verbal ‘felt knowledge’ and in doing so allows us to respond to God in ‘affective devotion’ (2019: 107). This felt knowledge is not provided by new propositional knowledge but through the

establishment of a new form of relationality. Indeed, Rowan Williams proposes a similar understanding of Augustine's experience of the Psalter describing how the voice of the Psalmist 'unseals deep places, emotions otherwise buried' and allows these buried histories to be woven into the unified story of Christ (2004: 18). It is particularly noteworthy that Williams draws attention to the way in which the Psalms might reform layers of identity which we do not have conscious access to. Instead, the Spirit can work at the level of the non-propositional, the gut-sense of who we are, who others are, and the patterns of interaction we might expect to encounter.

My suggestion is that one material effect of participation in the Spirit is the reformation of the implicational subsystem according to the pattern of the *ordo amoris*. More specifically I propose that participating in the Spirit reshapes the implicational code of the Internal Working Model, reforming our 'felt knowledge' of who we are (i.e. our implicit self-concept), and the patterns of relationality which we expect to enter into. The purpose of this chapter has been to establish the credibility of such a proposal. The following chapter will further develop *how* participation in the Spirit might reshape the Internal Working Model.

Concluding Thoughts

The core claim of this chapter has been that it is plausible to believe that participation in the Holy Spirit reforms the Internal Working Model, understood as part of the implicational subsystem.

To make this argument, I began by investigating Rizzuto's claim that God-representations are, at least partly, composed of affectively laden patterns of relationality. I suggested that one way we could make sense of this was to draw on dual-process cognition. Drawing on ICS's account of the implicational subsystem I suggested that it was plausible that the patterns of relationality which were experienced in the infant-parent relationship went on to shape an implicit God-representation. Drawing on attachment theory, and particularly the concept of the Internal Working Model, helped to further substantiate this claim. Recent work in attachment theory has conceptualised the Internal Working Model as an implicit (non-propositional, affect-heavy and gut-level) sense of self, others, and the patterns of relationality between them. The Internal Working Model is based on the patterns of interaction in the infant-parent relationship and then goes on to shape experience in relational settings. Moreover, there is meaningful and growing empirical evidence for a correspondence between the Internal Working Model and an implicit God-representation.

Reflecting on how we might understand an Internal Working Model to be changed, I turned to Augustine's theology of emotions. Here Augustine proposed that emotions are the product of our

loves and that emotions truthfully appraise reality to the extent that we participate in God's loving of Godself (the Holy Spirit), which includes God's loving of creation. Turning to Augustine's theology of emotions was significant because ICS understands the implicational subsystem as the engine room of emotion production. Similarly, attachment theory understands the Internal Working Model to materially shape emotional experience. As such, emotion provided a point of meeting between the theological and psychological literature. On the basis that Augustine proposed participation in the Holy Spirit to reform emotional experience, and ICS' identification of the implicational subsystem as central to emotion production, I proposed that we understand participation in the Spirit to rework the implicational subsystem. Given the relevance of the Internal Working Model for emotion production and its implicational nature I then went on to propose that it was reasonable to think that participation in the Holy Spirit reformed the Internal Working Model.

Having argued that it is reasonable to believe that participation in the Holy Spirit will lead to the reformation of the Internal Working Model, the next chapter looks at *how* participation in the Spirit might accomplish this. In doing so I construct a pneumatology of holding, establishing a dialogue between Winnicott and Augustine.

Chapter Three. The Spirit Holds

Introduction

Chapter one began by arguing, based on Thomas' principle that grace perfects nature, that deifying participation in the Triune God makes use of human psychology. Based on Donald Winnicott and Ana-Maria Rizzuto's work, chapter one also argued that the patterns of relationality in the infant-caregiver relationship, i.e. the caregiver's holding, would go on to shape a God-representation. I finished chapter one by suggesting that just as these patterns of relationality are shaped by a parent's holding, so they might be reformed according to the Spirit's holding. To further conceptualise these patterns the previous chapter argued that the patterns of relationality in the infant-caregiver relationship were captured in the implicational code of the Internal Working Model. Establishing a dialogue between ICS, attachment theory and Augustine I made the psychologically engaged proposal that participation in the Spirit reshapes the implicit patterns of relationality captured in the Internal Working Model. Drawing chapters one and two together, this chapter develops a pneumatology of holding, arguing that the Spirit's holding reshapes the implicational code of the Internal Working Model.

In making this claim I am doing more than simply using the psychological work previously discussed as a metaphor for participation in the Spirit. Based on the principle that grace perfects nature I am suggesting that participation in the Spirit works in and through the psychological dynamics involved in the infant-parent relationship. Importantly, in arguing that participation in the Holy Spirit reforms the Internal Working Model I do not mean to suggest that the attuned holding of a human attachment figure cannot also reform the Internal Working Model. Indeed, the previous chapter drew attention to the wealth of evidence that the attuned love of surrogate caregivers can reform the Internal Working Model leading to 'earned security'. My intention is not to dispute this evidence, but rather to investigate how understanding the Spirit to 'hold' might enrich pneumatology.

To develop a pneumatology of holding this chapter makes three claims. First, I argue that the Spirit's intra-Trinitarian identity is to hold the Father and the Son. Second, I argue that the Spirit holds Christ through the Triduum. Third, I argue that the Spirit's holding reshapes the Internal Working Model. The common thread across each of these claims is that the Spirit is the Love of God. The Spirit is the Love of God in the Triune Life, the mission of the Spirit is the outworking of this Love, and when we come to participate in the Spirit we come to participate in perfect Love.

As this chapter unfolds I will suggest that understanding the Spirit to *hold* not only emphasises the Spirit as love, but helps to further characterise the nature of this love.

To substantiate these three claims, section one begins by situating my proposal within contemporary pneumatology. I start by outlining a conversation between Eugene Rogers and Simeon Zahl on how pneumatology should be done. Rogers argues that pneumatology must focus on the intra-Trinitarian identity of the Spirit, while Zahl argues that pneumatology should focus on the presence of the Spirit and especially the material effects of this presence. As is fitting given the nature of this thesis, I argue that these two approaches are in fact complementary. More precisely I propose that the Spirit's mission (and its material effects) is grounded in the Spirit's intra-Trinitarian identity. As such a complete pneumatology will need to consider both the intra-Trinitarian identity of the Spirit and the material effects which flow from this identity.

Before going on to develop a pneumatology which holds together the Spirit's intra-Trinitarian identity and the material effects of the Spirit, section 1.2 considers the importance of the economic Trinity for pneumatology. Such a move is relevant because of the general principle that the economic Trinity flows from the immanent Trinity. More specifically, I focus on the Spirit's relationship to the Triduum. Addressing the Spirit's relationship with the Triduum is particularly appropriate given my desire to investigate how the Spirit interacts with privation (which includes both death and sin). To apply this specifically to my research project: looking at the Spirit's relationship to the Triduum is necessary to answer the question of how the Spirit interacts with patterns of misattunement, neglect, and abuse held in the Internal Working Model.

In section 2 I develop a pneumatology of holding, examining the Spirit's intra-Trinitarian identity, the Spirit's relationship to the Triduum, and the material effects of the Spirit's presence. Such ordering is intentional, as the immanent Trinity shapes the Spirit's relationship to the Triduum and therefore the material effects of participating in the Spirit.

In developing an account of the Spirit's intra-Trinitarian identity, I continue my engagement with Augustine, exploring his understanding of the Spirit as the love between the Father and the Son. In doing so, I draw attention to an often-underappreciated aspect of Augustine's thought, his identification of the Spirit as the 'ineffable embrace of the Father and the Image' (*De Trin*, 6.10.11). Drawing from this image, I propose that we understand the Spirit's intra-Trinitarian identity as the loving embrace of the Father and the Son. This is what it means for the Spirit to be God's loving of Godself.

With this established, section 2.2 creatively develops the image of the Spirit as the embrace of the Father and the Son to construct an account of the Spirit's relationship to the Son throughout the Triduum. In doing so I raise a question which Augustine does not devote substantial time to, and this part of my argument is not an exegesis of Augustine but a constructive development of elements of his thought. First, I argue that the Spirit holds Christ throughout the Cross, ensuring that no human experience is beyond the love of God. Second, I argue that the Spirit holds Christ through death and that this reveals the way in which God's love interacts with death. Third, I argue that this holding ultimately brings forth life, developing a reading of the resurrection grounded in Augustine's Trinitarian theology and his theology of creation.

My final section, 2.3, turns to the question of the material effects of participation in the Spirit. In doing so I develop a psychologically engaged pneumatology arguing that the holding of the Spirit allows previously experienced negative realities to surface. I develop this by focusing on the Internal Working Model, arguing that the holding of the Spirit deconstructs our psychological defences to more accurately reveal our histories. Once these histories have arisen the Spirit holds them, meeting them with attunement and love. In doing so the Spirit gives the human person access to new patterns by which their implicational code might be revised, i.e. the Spirit attunes to our experiences and in doing so can revise our Internal Working Model. As I develop this psychologically engaged pneumatology I draw connections between the intra-Trinitarian identity of the Spirit, the Spirit's relationship with Christ throughout the Triduum, and the experience of the Spirit's embrace.

Section 1. Constructing a Pneumatology: Foundations

The last half century has seen a host of important contributions to pneumatology. Significant work has been done on the way scripture presents the Holy Spirit,⁷¹ the historical development of the divinity of the Holy Spirit,⁷² and the filioque controversy.⁷³ Alongside this we have also seen the emergence of Pentecostal and charismatic scholarship.⁷⁴ It is beyond the scope of this chapter to summarise these topics and instead I would direct readers to the footnotes below.

⁷¹ See Congar (1983a: 2-64), Frey (2014), Holmes (2020), Gupta (2020), Long (2020), and Wall (2020).

⁷² See Congar (1983a: 73-84), Frey (2014) and Lashier (2020).

⁷³ For some of the most important ecumenical statements on the filioque see the World Council of Churches' Faith and Order Paper, *Spirit of God, Spirit of Christ: Ecumenical Reflections on the Filioque Controversy* (1981) which includes contributions from Moltmann, Garrigues, and Staniloae.

⁷⁴ While the charismatic renewal has not historically been focused on the production of academic texts, the last two decades has seen this starting to change. Notable examples of Pentecostal pneumatology include Amos Yong (2005), and Simeon Zahl (2020; 2024). For early examples of engagement with the charismatic renewal from within Catholicism see Congar (1983b: 161-212), and Weinandy (1993); from Anglicanism see Coakley (1991); and from Reformed Theology see Moltmann (2001: 180-195).

This chapter will instead focus on the material effects of participating in the Spirit, constructing a psychologically engaged pneumatology.

1.1. Presence or Identity?

Before developing this pneumatology, it will be helpful to start by situating my approach in contemporary scholarship. One recent discussion which is particularly relevant for my purposes is whether it is best to conceptualise the Spirit in terms of ‘presence’ or in terms of ‘intra-Trinitarian identity’. Below I set out the core claims of both approaches, using Simeon Zahl’s (presence) and Eugene Rogers’ (intra-Trinitarian Trinity) work as representatives of the two positions. Zahl and Rogers are particularly helpful to draw on not only for the quality of their scholarship but because Zahl frames elements of his argument in response to Rogers. Ultimately, I will argue that there is no need to choose between a pneumatology of intra-Trinitarian identity and a pneumatology of presence. Indeed, I propose that a complete pneumatology will draw connections between the two, examining how the material effects of the Spirit are grounded in the Spirit’s intra-Trinitarian identity.

Simeon Zahl helpfully characterises pneumatologies of presence as conceptualising the Spirit in terms of the ‘mediation of divine “presence.”’ (Zahl, 2020: 55). So, for instance, Wolfhart Pannenberg writes that ‘the Holy Spirit is the medium of the immediacy of individual Christians to God’ (2004:134, cited Zahl, 2020: 56) and Yves Congar says ‘the Spirit makes it possible for us to know, recognize and experience Christ. This is not simply a doctrinal statement. It is an existential reality which comes from a gift and involves us in our lives’ (1983a:37 cited Zahl, 2020: 56). Indeed, the central element of a pneumatology of presence, that the Spirit mediates God’s presence, has garnered significant support in the last fifty years across both biblical studies and systematic theology.⁷⁵

Indeed, pneumatologies of presence also hold a degree of ecumenism about them with theologians from the Catholic, Orthodox and Reformed traditions all subscribing to them. No doubt this reflects the attention these theologians give to scripture’s presentation of the Spirit as making Christ present, especially the New Testament’s willingness to attribute the same activities to both Christ and the Spirit (Gal. 4:4 and 4:6; Rom. 8:9–11; Lk. 12:12 and 21:15), or else, in a more Johannine mode, to describe the ministry of Christ as being carried on and

⁷⁵ For examples of theologians understanding the Spirit as the one who makes Christ present see: Congar (1983a: 32); T. F. Torrance (1992: 125) Moltmann, (e.g. 2001: 18); Frey (2014: 359-361); Long (2020: 55); Loyer (2020: 108); Zahl (2020: 53-79). Zahl is particularly notable for the sheer range of scholars he identifies as working with a pneumatology of presence, his citations include: Adolf von Harnack; James Dunn; Charles Moule; Maurice Wiles, Albert Schweitzer; Eberhard Jungel, Wolfhart Pannenberg, and Khaled Anatolios.

expanded by the Spirit in the period after the ascension (Jn. 14:16, 14:25–26, 16:7, 16:12–15) (Zahl, 2020: 64; see also Frey, 2014). Another particularly important strength of pneumatologies of presence is that they are well adapted to developing an account of the ‘material effects’ of the Spirit. As Zahl writes: ‘to a significant degree, the question of Christian experience of God is the question of God’s presence’ (2020: 53). For Zahl, to develop a pneumatology of presence is not simply to recognise that ‘the Spirit makes it possible for us to know, recognize and experience Christ’, but to ask about the material effects of the Spirit’s work by which Christ comes to be known, recognised and experienced. In doing so Zahl urges theologians to investigate the New Testament’s witness to ‘the particular effects the Spirit has on human beings in the world, especially in salvation, in sanctification, and in mission’ (2020: 67).

An alternative way of approaching pneumatology is through the question of Trinitarian identity. Such an approach reflects the patristic principle that the persons of the Trinity are distinguished from one another by their relations to one another (Emery, 2007b: 80-82; Levering, 2020: 183). So, for instance, Augustine writes that the Trinitarian persons are named ‘each in relation to the other’ (*De Trin.* 7.6.12). Indeed, the principle is not only found in patristic theology, but Aquinas writes that ‘real distinction between the divine relations can come only from relative opposition’⁷⁶ (*ST*, I, 30.2). Importantly the principle of distinguishing the persons of the Trinity by their relations is not only found in the Latin Fathers. Indeed the principle was first introduced by Basil of Caesarea (*Contra Eunomius*, II.22, see Emery 2007b: 80).

The weight with which the Christian tradition has understood the Spirit in terms of both presence and intra-Trinitarian identity means that we should be cautious about jettisoning either approach. Despite this some theologians have put the two approaches in opposition. Eugene Rogers is particularly pugilistic when he describes ‘accounts of the Spirit which start with presence [as] boring’ (2005: 6) instead arguing for beginning with the Spirit’s intra-Trinitarian identity. Zahl is similarly oppositional when he writes that there are ‘significant limits involved in pneumatologies that focus first and foremost on the trinitarian identity of the Spirit rather than on my own theme of the experienced presence of the Spirit’ (2020: 67). Developing this further, criticising Rogers, Zahl writes:

Rogers’ focus on the identity of the Spirit limits rather severely the range of pneumatological texts on which he is able to draw. For example, it is very striking that two

⁷⁶ By ‘relative opposition’ Aquinas means a unique Trinitarian relation. Both the Word and the Spirit proceed in ways which are unique, and it is in this distinctiveness that their intra-Trinitarian identity as Word and Spirit lies.

of the most important texts in the history of Christian pneumatology, Romans 5:5 (“God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us”) and Galatians 5:16–25 (on living by the Spirit and the fruit of the Spirit) are not cited once in *After the Spirit*. (2020: 67)

This passage should give us reason to pause. If pneumatologies which focus on Trinitarian identity have neglected the full breadth of scripture, then this needs to be rectified. Not only because such neglect risks theological error but, more positively, the fuller our engagement with scripture the more we are prepared for the One to whom scripture witnesses and into whom it beckons.

Helpfully, Augustine’s pneumatology provides strong evidence that a pneumatology of intra-Trinitarian identity need not neglect the full breadth of scripture’s witness. As we will see below, in developing an account of the Spirit’s intra-Trinitarian identity Augustine explicitly appeals to Rom. 5:5. Moreover, it strikes me that Zahl’s proposal could well be expressed as less an argument *against* beginning with intra-Trinitarian identity than an argument *for* theologians drawing connections between the Spirit’s intra-Trinitarian identity and the material effects of the Spirit. This would certainly be more in keeping with his broader argument in *The Holy Spirit and Christian Experience* (e.g. 2020: 75, 187)

My own view is that we need not choose between a pneumatology of presence and one of Trinitarian identity. We can and we must recognise that the New Testament speaks of the Spirit in terms which imply that the Spirit is the presence of God in communities. Moreover, we must recognise, as Zahl argues, that scripture records this presence in affective terms. Such a recognition will mean we take, for example, the description of the love of God being poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit (Rom. 5:5) extremely seriously. However, attention to the presence of the Holy Spirit in communities or to the experience of this presence need not come at the cost of reflection on the Trinitarian identity of the Spirit. Indeed, it makes paramount sense that the way the Spirit makes the Triune Life present to communities would reflect the Spirit’s Trinitarian identity. More strongly, I believe that we can only understand the material effects of the Spirit by attending to the intra-Trinitarian identity of the Spirit. This is the approach this chapter will take, arguing that the material effects of the Spirit flow from the Spirit’s intra-Trinitarian identity. In doing so I hope to combine the metaphysical depth of Roger’s work and the phenomenological sophistication of Zahl’s.

That the material effects of the Spirit flow from the Spirit’s intra-Trinitarian identity reflects the principle that the missions of the Trinitarian persons are essentially shaped by the intra-

Trinitarian identity of the Word and the Spirit. This is typically expressed by the assertion that the economic Trinity is the outworking of the immanent Trinity. Again, both Augustine and Aquinas hold to this principle with Augustine writing that ‘whatever things have been done in time for the sake of producing the faith... have been either testimonies of this mission or are the mission itself of the Son of God [or the Holy Spirit]’ (*De Trin*, 4.19.25; see also Ayres, 2010b: 179). Similarly, Aquinas writes that ‘the Son may proceed eternally as God; but temporally, by becoming man, according to His visible mission’ (*ST*, I, 43.2).⁷⁷

That the economic Trinity is the outworking of the immanent Trinity means that the missions of the divine persons in creation are the outworking of the Triune Life. Therefore, ‘the temporal missions of the Son and the Holy Spirit necessarily disclose the inner life of the Trinity itself’ (Weinandy, 1993: 5). Indeed, this was Aquinas’ point, the temporal and visible mission of the Son reveals the Son’s invisible procession within the Triune Life. Weinandy is particularly interesting because he goes on to apply this principle to the *experience* of the Spirit writing that ‘baptism in the Spirit [i.e. the experience of the Spirit] is nothing more, and nothing less, than the experience of this life within the Trinity’ (1995: 105). In other words, Weinandy is saying that the experience of the Spirit bears the marks of the Spirit’s intra-Trinitarian identity. Understood in this way the principle that the economic Trinity is the outworking of the immanent Trinity gives us a foundation for holding together pneumatologies of presence and pneumatologies of intra-Trinitarian identity.

1.2. Pneumatology and the Economy: The Spirit and the Triduum

The principle that the economic Trinity is the outworking of the immanent Trinity naturally directs our attention to the way scripture records the interactions between the Holy Spirit and Christ because these instances ‘give glimpses of the intratrinitarian life as it dilates – delays and opens up – to include human beings within it’ (Rogers, 2005: 11).

More specifically I intend to focus on what the Triduum might reveal about the Spirit. Why the Triduum? Indeed, Eugene Rogers (2005) considers the annunciation, Christ’s baptism, the transfiguration, resurrection, and Christ’s ascension. I fully recognise that all of these can act as fruitful sites of pneumatological reflection. However, I have a specific question about the Spirit which makes the Triduum a natural place to turn to: how does the Spirit interact with privation, sin, and death? To apply this specifically to my thesis, my question is ‘how does the Spirit interact

⁷⁷ This proposal is widespread throughout systematic theology. In the Twentieth Century the claim was made by Yves Congar (1983c: 11-17), Herbert McCabe (1991: 100), T. F. Torrance (1992: 111). More recent examples include Adonis Vidu (2015: 34-35), and Christopher Holmes (2020: 77).

with the misattunement, neglect, and/or abuse held in the Internal Working Model?’ Attending to the relationship between Jesus and the Spirit throughout the Triduum will help to shed light on this question because here we have a concrete example of the Spirit’s interaction with death.

Before developing my account of how the Spirit engages with death, I briefly examine two theologians who have considered this question, looking at the work of Shelly Rambo and Jurgen Moltmann. I take Rambo and Moltmann’s work as broadly representative of two possible accounts of the Spirit’s relationship to death. The first, exemplified by Moltmann, associates the Spirit with the resurrection and in doing so emphasises the Spirit’s ability to defeat death. Here the Life of the Spirit and death are presented in broadly oppositional terms. Alternatively, Shelly Rambo emphasises the Spirit’s relationship to the dead Christ on the Cross and in the Tomb. In doing so Rambo argues that the Spirit is capable of entering into pain and death, but in doing so a degree of uncertainty is introduced regarding the Spirit’s ability to reconfigure human experience.

In addition to setting out two ways of approaching the Spirit’s relationship to death, both thinkers are intriguing because, in their broader work, they both briefly consider the Spirit’s relationship to other days in the Triduum: Moltmann looks to Good Friday in *The Crucified God*, and Rambo considers Easter Sunday in *Resurrecting Wounds*. Drawing from this I argue that the Spirit’s relationship to death cannot be understood by reflecting on any single point within the Triduum, rather the Spirit reveals themselves in their relationship to the Triduum as a whole.

Jurgen Moltmann: The Spirit of the Resurrection

Potentially the most obvious place to begin reflecting on the Spirit in the economic Trinity is the resurrection. Indeed, Romans 8, a pivotal passage of scripture for pneumatological reflection,⁷⁸ establishes a clear relationship between the Spirit and the resurrection:

if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you. (Rom. 8:11)⁷⁹

Reflecting the association between the Spirit and the resurrection, the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed (381) gives the Holy Spirit the title ‘Giver of Life’. In fact, this is the only

⁷⁸ For examples of contemporary pneumatology using Rom. 8 see: Rowan Williams (2000: 119-123), Dabney (2001: 256), Coakley (2014: 112-115 ff.), Weinandy (1995: 36-38), and Rogers (2005: 75-80).

⁷⁹ Other notable scriptural passages which make a connection between the Spirit and life-giving include: Gen. 1:2; Ezek. 37; Jn. 20:22; 1 Pet. 1:18.

title the Creed gives the Spirit. The joint witness of scriptures and creeds provides a strong reason to use the resurrection to reflect on the Holy Spirit.

As an example of grounding pneumatological reflection in the resurrection, I turn to the late Jurgen Moltmann. Throughout his pneumatological works Moltmann explicitly equates the Spirit with the resurrection, writing, for instance, that 'it is from Christ's resurrection that the Spirit proceeds' (1997: 29; see also 2001: 95-6; 146; 155).⁸⁰ Moreover, Moltmann's understanding of the Spirit as proceeding from the resurrection appears to significantly shape the way he understands the material effects of the Spirit. Writing in a phenomenological key Moltmann writes that experiencing the Spirit 'means being freed from anxiety for trust, being born again to a living hope, loving life without reserve' (2001: 132). Speaking even more strongly Moltmann writes that in participating in the Spirit 'an undreamt-of love for life awakens in us, driving out the bacillus of resignation, and healing painful remembrances. We go to meet life expecting the rebirth of everything that lives, and with this expectation we experience our own rebirth, and the rebirth we share with everything else' (2001: 113). In sum, experiences of the Spirit bring forth joy, and Moltmann cites Pascal's testimony of the experience 'Joy, joy, joy, tears of joy' as an example of this (Moltmann, 1997: 31).

Importantly, Moltmann does maintain that the Spirit gives rise to our 'sighs over this unredeemed world' (2001: 76) just as much as our rejoicing over the signs of God's coming Kingdom. Capturing the Spirit's relationship with painful realities, Moltmann writes that by the Spirit we 'suddenly perceive that things can be changed after all, and that we do not have to put up with life's denials, then we become restless, and begin to suffer, and to contradict, and to resist... The chains begin to hurt, for we already sense that we have the power to break them' (2001: 75). Though the Spirit brings about resistance, it is not clear whether the Spirit can hold pain and death. Where is the Spirit before the chains begin to hurt? Where is the Spirit in the moment of silence, despair, and resignation? If God's attunement is to perfect the Internal Working Model then we need a pneumatology which better accounts for the radical intimacy of the Spirit *within* painful emotional experiences than Moltmann's thought gives space for.

That Moltmann associates the Spirit only with the resurrection in his pneumatological works is surprising given the prominence he gives the Cross in *The Crucified God*. Indeed, we might expect Moltmann to develop a theology in which the Spirit sensitively interacts with the experience of

⁸⁰ My sense is that this is a development of Moltmann's previous thinking on the Spirit in *Theology of Hope*, in which, for instance, he writes: 'the "Spirit" in question here does not fall from heaven and does not soar ecstatically into heaven, but arises from the event of the resurrection of Christ and is an earnest pledge of his future, of the future of universal resurrection and of life' (1964/1993: 213)

dereliction and forsakenness that Christ has on the Cross. Critically, at points Moltmann has admitted struggling to carry over his insights in *The Crucified God* into his pneumatology (Moltmann, 1985: 235-57; cited in Dabney, 2000: 521). Although *The Crucified God* does not contain a developed pneumatology, the work does contain hints of an alternative understanding of the Spirit's relationship to the Triduum.

In *The Crucified God* the Spirit is not only the Spirit of the resurrection, instead the Spirit proceeds from the Cross itself.⁸¹ Capturing this Moltmann writes:

What proceeds from this event between the Father and the Son is the Spirit which justifies the godless, fills the forsaken with love and even brings the dead alive, since even the fact that they are dead cannot exclude them from the event of the cross (1974/2021: 252-3)

And again, Moltmann refers to Golgotha as:

the event of the love of the Son and the grief of the Father from which the Spirit who opens up the future and creates life in fact derives. (Moltmann, 1974/2021: 255)

This presents us with a strikingly different account of the Spirit's relationship to the Triduum. Here, the Spirit is not the Spirit of the Resurrection, but the Spirit of the Cross. As already mentioned, these insights are left broadly undeveloped in Moltmann's pneumatological works but they hold rich potential. To further explore the Spirit's relationship with the Cross I turn to Shelly Rambo's pneumatology which locates the Spirit as the death breath of Christ.

Turning to the Cross

Before looking at Shelly Rambo's thought an important question arises: why turn to the Cross to understand the work of the Spirit? The first reason is, again, the scriptural witness that on the Cross Christ hands over his Spirit (Jn. 19:30). Indeed, Rambo makes this passage central to her thinking. T. F. Torrance also emphasises the Spirit's relationship to the Cross (1992: 109-110; see also Dabney, 2000; 2001; and Novello 2011: 93-106) drawing attention to the Apostle John's interpretative aside: 'this he said about the Spirit, whom those who believe in him were to receive, for as yet the Spirit had not been given, because Jesus was not yet glorified' (Jn. 7:39).

Nevertheless, the question of why to turn to the Cross is relevant given the significant recent critique that theologies of the Cross have received from womanist and feminist theologians (e.g. Brown and Parker, 1989, and Schüssler Fiorenza, 2015: 97-107). Delores Williams, for instance, argues that substitutionary readings of the Cross further reinforce or even idealise the

⁸¹ Bauckham (1995: 154), Dabney (2000: 520) and Kärkkäinen (2011: 226) read Moltmann in a similar way.

exploitation and enforced surrogacy of African-American women. Responding to this she rejects any soteriology grounded in the 'death of God's innocent child on a cross erected by cruel, imperialistic, patriarchal power', instead basing her account of redemption on Chirt's 'perfect ministerial vision' (1993: 163-4). Williams' work meaningfully problematises certain soteriologies, drawing attention to the interplay of soteriology, ecclesial power, discipleship, and politics.

However, the Cross need not only be a symbol of 'cruel, imperialistic, patriarchal power' but can also be a symbol of resistance against this power. Indeed womanist theologians M. Shawn Copeland and Karen Baker Fletcher (2011: 159-160), as well as black theologian James Cone (2011/2019: 120-152) all reflect on the potentially life-giving properties of turning to the Cross amidst suffering. Copeland writes:

And if the makers of the spirituals gloried in the singing of the cross of Jesus, it was not because they were masochistic and enjoyed suffering. Rather, the enslaved Africans sang because they saw on the rugged wooden planks One who has endured their daily portion. The cross was treasured because it enthroned the One who went all the way with them and for them. The enslaved Africans sang because they saw the result of the cross – triumph over principalities and powers of death, triumph over evil in this world. (2011: 149)

With the likes of Copeland, Baker-Fletcher and Cone, I turn to the Cross not as a site in which God celebrates the punishment of Jesus Christ, but as the place in which God joins Godself to suffering, sin and death that they might be overthrown. Capturing this sentiment in a Good Friday sermon Augustine described how Christ 'struck a wonderful bargain with us, a mutual give and take: ours was what he died by; his was what we might live by' (*Serm.* 218c.1).

But how might the Spirit specifically be related to the Cross, to suffering and pain? As an example of a potential response to this question I turn to Shelly Rambo, who develops her pneumatology by focusing on Good Friday and Holy Saturday. As such Rambo's thought provides a corrective to Moltmann's exclusive focus on the resurrection. As we look at Rambo's thinking though we will see that reflecting only on the crucifixion and death of Jesus provides an incomplete account of the Spirit. Nevertheless Rambo's thought is hugely productive for exploring the Spirit's interaction with death, indeed I will return to it towards the end of the chapter.

Shelly Rambo: The Spirit Remains

It is particularly appropriate to turn to Rambo's work because she frames her pneumatology, at least in part, as a response to Moltmann's. Rambo is particularly concerned about the way Moltmann's thought constructs a binary of death and life, cross and resurrection (Rambo, 2010: 3). Such binaries fail to account for the experience of those who live in the aftermath of trauma. Those who like Deacon Julius Lee, a survivor of Hurricane Katrina, recounts how although 'the storm is gone... "after the storm" is always here' (Rambo, 2010: 2). For Deacon Julius Lee, the traumatic event continues to shape his present experience. This kind of testimony leads Rambo to define trauma as 'an event that continues, that persists in the present. Trauma is what does not go away' (2010: 1). Indeed, this is a widely observed element of post-traumatic experience, capturing this one of the leading medical experts on trauma describes 'being traumatised as continuing to organise your life as if the trauma were still going on – unchanged and immutable – as every new encounter or event is contaminated by the past' (Van der Kolk, 2014: 53).

Though Rambo uses trauma as a test case, her thinking has broader relevance. For although there is a particular way in which traumatic events persist, it is not only traumatic events which remain in the present. That the past intrudes on the present is a feature of human psychology more broadly. The previous chapter drew out how the implicational subsystem works to form patterns based on previous experience which are then used for the sake of pattern recognition. We might say that our implicational code is one way in which the past remains in the present. More specifically we can understand the Internal Working Model as that which remains from our experience of caregivers. To apply Rambo's thought to the Internal Working Model we can ask – how does the Spirit interact with what remains of the experience of our caregivers?

To develop an account of how the Spirit interacts with that which remains, Rambo constructs a pneumatology from Good Friday and Holy Saturday. Looking at Good Friday, Rambo develops John the Evangelist's description of the crucifixion in which Jesus 'bowed his head and gave up his *pneuma*' (Jn. 19:30). The Greek here is ambiguous with *pneuma* being able to be translated as both 'spirit' and 'breath'. For Rambo, the death breath from the Cross becomes the moment life and death intermingle (Rambo, 2010: 114-5). Christ's breath of death is given to those who stand at the foot of the Cross, giving them the power to 'witness to what is unsaid, unspoken, and inaccessible through language. Witnessing in this space between death and life, those who stand there experience the inarticulable terrain of middle-ness' (Rambo, 2010: 132). In this exegetical move Rambo creates the space necessary to deconstruct the dialectic of life and death which shapes Moltmann's thought. Life and death do not sit upon one another like oil and water, rather the Spirit, like ink in water, can grasp hold of, bear and hold our experiences of death. As such,

Rambo's thought introduces a conceptual framework which has the potential to make sense of why the Spirit is able to enter into experiences of death.

Such a reading of death and life intermingling is further affirmed in Rambo's reading of Holy Saturday in which she develops a substantial engagement with Hans Urs von Balthasar and Adrienne von Speyr. Balthasar and von Speyr's theology of Holy Saturday resolutely holds death and life together. They unflinchingly look at the horror of Holy Saturday, unwilling to understand Christ's descent into hell as the descent of the victorious Christ, rather on Saturday 'the Son is a dead man in hell' (Rambo, 2010: 69). For Balthasar and von Speyr it is only in looking with such honesty at Holy Saturday that we can understand the fullness of Easter Sunday. Reading Holy Saturday as a Trinitarian event, von Speyr and Balthasar use an Augustinian account of the Spirit as the one who maintains the bond of love between the Father and the Son through Holy Saturday and therefore makes it possible for all humanity to move from death to life. Rambo notes that the Spirit as the love between the Father and Son 'is critical to warding off the theological dangers that surround current theologies of the cross. The Spirit makes the godforsakenness possible without compromising God's nature' (2010: 75). For Balthasar and von Speyr, the Spirit, as the bond of love, means that there is no place, not even Hell, to which God's resurrecting love cannot reach.

Importantly, Rambo stages a significant departure from von Speyr and Balthasar's thought by making the risky theological move of questioning the security with which the Spirit links the Son and the Father. The Spirit, for Rambo, is not the one who forges a way from death to life, where death and life are understood as a dialectic. Rather, the Spirit is the one who establishes the possibility of life within death, in which life does not destroy death but makes it possible to *persist* even within death. Rambo depicts the Spirit 'not as a figure who secures love between death and life but rather as one who witnesses to what remains— what *persists*— between them' (2010: 83, my emphasis). For Rambo, the Spirit works not by raising the survivor 'out of the depths' of death but by transforming the 'depths themselves' (2010: 181).

That the Spirit's entry into death changes death reflects the nature of attunement in the previous chapter where we saw that attunement *does* change the way histories remain. The attunement of a surrogate attachment figure has the capacity to reform the Internal Working Model leading to earned security. The psychological sources I have been drawing on have emphasised that our histories are capable of being reconfigured. Indeed, we see this not only with the Internal Working Model but also in the growing literature around post-traumatic growth (Tedeschi and Calhoun,

1995, 1996, 2004; Collicutt, 2006). It will, therefore, come as little surprise to find that I agree with Rambo's proposal that the Spirit is able to transform the depths of death.

However, just as Moltmann's thought had difficulty in explaining the Spirit's presence amidst death, I suggest that Rambo's thought has difficulty in explaining the Spirit's relationship with Life. I am worried that, without further work being done, Rambo's Spirit of the Cross and the Tomb remains trapped in the histories of violence which need to be reconfigured. Yes, the Spirit enters into death but without a meaningful relationship to the resurrection I wonder how the Spirit can reconfigure the death it meets? Indeed, it is telling that although Rambo intentionally refrains from commenting on the Spirit's relationship to Easter Sunday in *Spirit and Trauma* (2010: 152), her second monograph, *Resurrecting Wounds*, focuses on the resurrection. Though Rambo provides a mainly Christological reading of the resurrection she does hint at the ways in which the resurrection might be understood pneumatologically, appealing to Christ's breathing on the disciples (Jn. 20:22) as a basis for the Spirit's work in reconstituting histories (Rambo 2017: 141). Though this proposal is underdeveloped, it again suggests the value of developing a pneumatology from the Triduum as a whole.

The Spirit of the Triduum

In summary, both Moltmann and Rambo develop their pneumatology by proposing that the Spirit has a partial relationship to the Triduum. Rambo focuses on Good Friday and Holy Saturday; Moltmann celebrates Easter Sunday. Despite this both Rambo and Moltmann's broader corpus contains hints that the Spirit has a broader relationship to the Triduum. Rambo's second monograph briefly uses the resurrection to hypothesise how the Spirit might transfigure histories, while Moltmann's *The Crucified God* suggests a relationship between the Spirit and the Cross.

Learning from these examples I believe that limiting pneumatological reflection to a specific point in the Triduum introduces a frame of reference which struggles to account for the reality of the Holy Spirit. To put things perhaps too simply, neglecting Good Friday means that we will miss the way the Spirit enters into suffering, eliding Holy Saturday means we will miss the way the Spirit works within time, and neglecting Easter Sunday means that we will neglect the very real changes that the Spirit brings about. We need the Spirit of the Triduum. Moreover, such an approach better reflects the Gospel of John in which the Spirit is both the *pneuma* breathed forth from the Cross (Jn. 19:30) and the Spirit of the resurrected Christ given to the disciples in the upper room (Jn. 20:22). It also better reflects the Pauline witness of the Spirit of the crucified and the risen Christ (cf. Rom. 7:4; Rom. 8:3ff; Gal. 2:19; 3:13; 4:5; 2 Cor. 5:21; see also Balthasar, 1970/2005: 53-56).

Section 2. A Pneumatology of Holding

My first section has outlined three criteria important to a pneumatology. One, a pneumatology should give an account of the Spirit's intra-Trinitarian identity. Second, a pneumatology should explore the Spirit's relationship to the Triduum. Third, a pneumatology should give an account of the material effects of participating in the Spirit. Moreover, any pneumatology will need to show how the Spirit's identity in the Triune Life flows through the Spirit's relationship to the Triduum and then finally how the material effects of the Spirit are shaped by the Spirit's relationship to the Triduum. Taking up this task, section 2 uses the image of the Spirit as the one who holds, arguing that the Spirit's holding shapes its Trinitarian identity, its relationship to the Triduum and the material effects of participation in the Spirit.

Critically, in suggesting that the Spirit is the One who Holds I am attempting to further clarify the content of what it means to understand the Holy Spirit as God's loving of Godself. Specifically, I am suggesting that just as the mother or the psychotherapist's attuned love can reform the Internal Working Model so can the Holy Spirit. However, in drawing attention to this similarity between the mother and the Spirit's holding we should not make the mistake of thinking that the Spirit is another psychological subject. Moreover, in suggesting that the Spirit holds I am not trying to import a psychotherapeutic dynamic into the Triune Life. Rather, in keeping with the nature of a true theological analogy I am suggesting that all holding, all attuned love, flows from the Trinitarian Life of God. Shortly I will provide an overview of Augustine's exegesis of 1 John 4, which includes the climactic statement 'God is love' (1 Jn. 4:8). Christian theology has long held that all love has its source, its shape and its end in God, similarly I would suggest that all holding is a participation in the Spirit's holding.

To develop a pneumatology of holding, section 2.1 develops Augustine's proposal that the Spirit is the embrace of the Father and the Son. Section 2.2 goes on to explore how the Spirit holds Christ through the Triduum, arguing that the Spirit holds Christ through the Cross, through death, and into resurrection. In section 2.3 I examine the material effects of participating in this holding, proposing that the Spirit holds us through the death we encounter in creation and the death present within us, holding us always towards resurrection.

2.1. The Identity of the Spirit

It is a well-rehearsed feature of Christian theology that Augustine identifies the Spirit as the love shared between the Father and the Son (e.g. Congar, 1983a: 85-92; Ayres, 2001; 2008; 2010; 2011; Levering, 2016: 62-82; 2020). Given the familiarity readers will likely have with Augustine's account of the Holy Spirit as the Love between the Father and the Son I will simply give a brief

overview of his exegesis in *De Trinitate*, Book 15.⁸² Following this I will draw attention to the fact that Augustine understands this Love as the embrace of the Father and the Son, a rarely commented on feature of his thought. In attending to the Spirit as the Love between the Father and the Son, I fully recognise that this is not the only way to understand the Spirit's intra-Trinitarian identity. Indeed, Augustine also identifies 'Gift' as a proper name for the Spirit (Levering, 2016: 51-70). However, given my desire to develop a pneumatology of holding it is particularly appropriate to explore the Spirit as the Love between the Father and the Son.

For the great North African bishop, the Holy Spirit is 'the common love by which the Father and the Son mutually love each other' (*De Trin.* 15.17.27). Matthew Levering (2016: 62-82) helpfully draws attention to how Augustine's identification of the Spirit as the Love between the Father and the Son in Book 15 of *De Trinitate* is grounded in his exegesis of 1 John 4. Here, Augustine begins by asking what it means that 'God is Love' (1 Jn. 4:16). Specifically, Augustine asks whether we should interpret this to mean that the Father is love, that the Son is love, or that the Spirit is love? Or indeed, whether the three Persons together are love (*De Trin.* 15.17.27)? The answer Augustine gives is that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit can each be called love, as can the Trinity itself, just as each are called God and the Trinity itself is God (*De Trin.* 15.17.28). Nevertheless, Augustine proposes that it is fitting to appropriate⁸³ the term Love to the Holy Spirit, writing, 'if, then, anyone of these three is to be specially called love, what more fitting than that this should be the Holy Spirit?' (*De Trin.* 15.17.29). In a similar way we call the Word the 'wisdom of God' despite the Father and the Spirit also being wisdom itself.

Augustine then moves on to asking why is it particularly fitting to appropriate love to the Spirit? Developing an answer to this, Augustine (*De Trin.* 15.17.31) begins an exegesis of 'beloved let us love, for love is from God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God' (1 Jn. 4:7-8) and asks, who is the love who is from God, the Son or the Spirit? Augustine notes that 1 John further specifies the nature of this love for 'by this the love of God was manifested in us, that God

⁸² *De Trinitate* Book 15 is a well-worked example of Augustine's mature thought. Of course, Augustine's pneumatology is not static and it develops both before and after *De Trinitate* Book 15. For helpful discussions of the development of Augustine's pneumatology see Barnes (2008) and Ayres (2011). Importantly Augustine's understanding of the Spirit as the Love between the Father and the Son is present in both his early and later thought (Ayres, 2010a: 57).

⁸³ In orthodox Trinitarian thought the Trinitarian persons work inseparably, and yet certain names or actions can be appropriated to specific persons based on their intra-Trinitarian identity. The Love of God can be appropriated to the Spirit because the Spirit is God's loving of Godself. In this appropriation both the Son and the Father, as the fullness of God, remain love. For more on this see Congar, (1983b: 85-101), T. F. Torrance (1992: 113), Ayres (2004: 296-300), Rogers (2005: 7-9) and Zahl (2020: 62-63). Adonis Vidu puts the point particularly well when he describes the operation of the Triune persons as inseparable but not undifferentiated (2015: 26). In a similar vein Congar writes that the Triune persons act 'according to the order and characteristics of their hypostatic being' (1983b: 89).

has sent His only begotten Son into the world so that we might love through Him' (1 Jn 4:9). That this love sent the Son means that it is not the Son, and instead we should infer that this love is the Spirit. Indeed, this is confirmed for Augustine in v.13 when the Apostle writes through this love 'we abide in Him and He in us, because He has given us of His Spirit' (1 Jn 4:13). v.13 is pivotal for Augustine, revealing to the reader that it is the Spirit who is Love.⁸⁴

It is particularly notable that Augustine goes on to link the Trinitarian identity of the Spirit with the material effects of the Spirit, arguing that because the Spirit is the love between the Father and the Son, the sending of the Spirit is God's bringing of creation into this love. Indeed, this is how Augustine understands 'we abide in Him and Him in us, because He has given us of His Spirit' (1 Jn. 4:13). Augustine goes on to link this with Rom. 5:5, 'the charity of God is poured in our hearts by the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us' (*De Trin.* 15.17.31),⁸⁵ the passage which Zahl criticised pneumatologies of Trinitarian identity for neglecting. In doing so Augustine provides an exemplary account of how to link Trinitarian identity with the material effects of the Spirit, and thereby links the identity of the Spirit with the experience of the Spirit. To put this more bluntly, because the Spirit is the love between the Father and the Son, to participate in the Spirit is to come to share in the love of the Trinity.

The Augustinian account of the Spirit as the Love between the Father and the Son is, of course, not without its detractors. Eastern Orthodox theologians have often expressed concern that Augustine's understanding of the Spirit as the 'bond of love' between the Father and the Son is both insufficiently personal, and at risk of subordinating the Spirit (e.g. Lossky, 1976: 103; Staniloae, 1981; 176–7).⁸⁶ Indeed, the critique is not unique to Eastern Orthodoxy, with Weinandy, a Roman Catholic, critiquing the impersonalism of Augustine's account, arguing that 'the Holy Spirit assumes a rather passive function. The Spirit is merely the Love or Gift shared by the Father and the Son. It is therefore difficult to see why, in the Western conception of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit is a distinct person or subject – a who' (1993: 8, see also Rogers, 2011: 220).

While it is not possible to meaningfully respond to these criticisms here, I do want to offer a brief response to the claim that Augustine's thought necessarily leads to an impersonal vision of the

⁸⁴ For a complementary discussion of Augustine's pneumatology using his *Homilies on the First Epistle of John*, see Ayres (2001).

⁸⁵ For a more in-depth discussion of Augustine's use of Rom. 5:5 and its links to 1 John 4 in the context of his pneumatology see Ayres (2011: 354-55).

⁸⁶ Boris Bobrinskoy (1981: 142) provides a dissenting Orthodox voice suggesting that the Spirit can be thought of as the mutual love between the Father and the Son. Reinhard Flogaus (2008) too charts Gregory Palamas' use of Augustine's Trinitarian theology suggesting that the rift between Augustine and Eastern Orthodoxy may not be as significant as some have suggested. For a helpful discussion of Orthodox theology and Augustine see Iacovetti (2018: 73-76).

Spirit. While I agree that the conception of the Spirit as the ‘bond of love’ is not the most personal of images, the theologian who wants to remain committed to the Spirit as the love between the Father and the Son can draw on other images to capture this. In a passage I also cited in the previous chapter, Augustine provides the image of the Spirit as the ‘embrace’ (*complexus*) of the Father and the Son:

This ineffable embrace of the Father and the Image is, therefore, not without pleasure, without love, or without joy. Consequently, this love, this delight, this happiness, or this blessedness, if indeed it can be worthily expressed by any human word... is the Holy Spirit, who was not begotten but is the sweetness of the begetter and the begotten. (*De Trin*, 6.10.11)

That Augustine refers to the Spirit as the embrace of love between the Father and the Son is helpful in responding to charges that Augustine’s account of the Spirit is insufficiently personal. While bonds are not persons, those who embrace certainly are. The Person of the Spirit is the Person who embraces. As such the Spirit is the one who brings about union while also preserving distinction (Iacovetti, 2018: 73). This is how Augustine uses *complexus* elsewhere in *De Trinitate* (*De Trin*. 9.8.13; see also 9.12.18). Indeed, Eugene Rogers, otherwise critical of Augustine’s pneumatology, praises the image of the Spirit as the One who embraces, arguing that it captures both the Spirit as Person and the Spirit as ‘principle of unity’ (Rogers, 2005: 67). Moreover, the notion of the Spirit as the One who embraces appears to hold ecumenical potential between Augustine and the Orthodox church, with Orthodox theologian Dimitru Staniloae also proposing the Spirit as the embrace between the Father and the Son. Staniloae, perhaps surprisingly, echoes Augustine (without referring to him) when he writes that the Spirit ‘unties Father and Son in one embrace’ (Staniloae, 1980: 23 cited in Rogers, 2005: 67). On the basis of Augustine’s thought as well as its potential for broader ecumenical appeal, I understand the Spirit as the One who holds the Father and Son in loving union.

2.2. The Spirit and the Triduum

Having set out an account of the Spirit’s intra-Trinitarian identity as the embrace between the Father and the Son, the next question I turn to is the Spirit’s relationship to Christ across the Triduum. In doing so it is important to clarify that I do not develop a complete theology of the Triduum, nor of the Spirit’s relationship to it. Here I develop a partial account, focusing on the elements of the Spirit’s relationship to the Triduum which will be relevant for understanding how participation in the Spirit reforms the Internal Working Model. To develop this account, I continue a dialogue with Augustine’s thought. I begin by providing a very brief survey of Augustine’s

thinking on the Triduum. Such a survey cannot do justice to the intricacies of Augustine's thought nor the variety of the images he uses for the atonement, images which include the victorious Christ, debt, payment, and sacrifice (Meconi, 2019: 138-9). Instead of trying to catalogue these images, following Michael Cameron (2005, 2015) and David Meconi (2013, 2019), I emphasise the role of deification in Augustine's thinking on the Triduum.

With this established I turn to reflect on what it might mean for the Spirit to hold Christ through the Triduum. While understanding the Spirit's work across the Triduum as a single work, for the sake of conceptualisation I look at what it might mean for the Spirit to hold Christ through each of the three days.

Augustine and the Triduum

For Augustine, the Triduum makes deifying participation in the Triune Life possible. While all of creation participates in the Triune Life by its very existence, it is the Triduum which restores the possibility of union with the Trinitarian God. Augustine reads Christ's crucifixion, death, and descent to the dead as the completion of Christ's taking on of flesh (Jn. 1:14; Cameron, 2005: 64; Meconi, 2019: 130). Here, the work begun in the annunciation is completed as Christ fully assumes humanity's burden. As David Meconi puts it, it is in 'going to the cross [that] Christ assumes human brokenness in all its dimensions' (2013: 117-8). The resurrection then begins a rescue operation, as Christ exchanges death and distance for deifying participation in the Triune Life.

Augustine draws together much of this thinking in his reading of Psalm 22. Indeed, Michael Cameron has emphasised the importance of this text for Augustine, writing that 'it is impossible to overstate the importance' of this Psalm for Augustine (2015: 217; see also Drobner, 2006). In a sermon on Psalm 22 delivered on Good Friday, Augustine preaches that:

And yet when this God-Word had become flesh, he hung on the cross and cried, *My God, my God, look upon me, why have you forsaken me?* For what other reason was this said than that we were there, for what other reason than that Christ's body is the Church? Why did he say, *My God, my God, look upon me, why have you forsaken me?* unless he was somehow trying to catch our attention, to make us understand, "This psalm is written about me"? *The tale of my sins leaves me far from salvation.* What sins could these be, when it was said of Christ, *He committed no sin, nor was any guile found on his lips* (1 Pt 2:22)? How, then, could he say, *the tale of my sins*, except because he himself intercedes for our sins, and has made our sins his own, in order to make his righteousness ours? (*En.* 21.ii.3)

The logic of this passage is that Christ takes on the fullness of being human, a fullness which includes suffering and death, so that in return he can lead us into deifying participation in the Triune life. Were Christ not to have taken on the fullness of death, then there would have been a space of dominion which the Triune Life could not touch. However, taking on the burden of sin on the Cross and descending into Hell⁸⁷ (*Ep.* 164.2) Christ went the ultimate distance from the Father, and because of this there is no space, not even death itself, that Life cannot reach (cf. Rom. 8:37-9). Capturing this in another Good Friday Sermon Augustine explains:

That was how the immortal one was able to die, that was how he wished to bestow life on mortals; aiming later on to give us shares in himself, having first of all himself taken shares in us. I mean, we had nothing of our very own by which we could really live, and he had nothing of his very own by which he could really die. Accordingly, he struck a wonderful bargain with us, a mutual give and take: ours was what he died by; his was what we might live by. (*Serm.* 218c.1)

Here Augustine maps out the way in which Christ's descent into suffering and death, his 'tak[ing] shares in us' provides a foundation by which human persons might come to share in the Life of God. Christ is the means by which God comes to 'give us shares in himself'. Augustine consistently thinks in terms of a wonderful exchange, 'a mutual give and take', especially in his *Expositions on the Psalms*.⁸⁸ As an example, Augustine expresses the point succinctly when he writes that 'we died in him... and in him we have risen from the dead' (*En.* 62.2; see also *En.* 68.i.1). The second half of this quote emphasises the importance of the resurrection for Augustine. By Christ's Cross and his descent to the dead the Life of God has fully entered into the lot of human beings who live amidst sin and death. The resurrection reveals the consequences of the Word's entering into death. In entering into death, God has 'killed death' (*En.* 63.8). In defeating death, Augustine proposes, Christ opens the way to deifying participation in the Divine Life for it is 'because [Christ's] flesh has received resurrection and eternal life... [that] this has been promised to us also' (*Serm.* 22.10.10, cited Bonner, 1986: 375). Numerous commentators have reflected on the healing of the human person which the Triduum makes available. David Meconi helpfully homes in on Augustine's *medico* language, describing Christ as 'the healing agent' who 'wholly enters into the ongoing destruction, reversing it by uniting it to its own

⁸⁷ Augustine's most extended treatment of Christ's descent to the dead comes in *Ep.* 164. Other references include *En.* 3.5 *En.* 87.5, 87.10, *En.* 88.ii.13 and *De Civ. Dei* 20.15. For a helpful discussion of Augustine's understanding of this descent see van Geest (2018). For a discussion of the biblical basis for the descent to the dead see Balthasar (1970/2005: 148-160). The key passages include 1 Pet. 3:19; Matt. 12:40; Rom. 10:7 ff; Eph. 4:8 ff; Rev. 1:18.

⁸⁸ See also Augustine's sermons on Good Friday (*Serm.* 218a.1 and 218c.1) and *De Trin.* (4.3.5.-4.3.6).

perfection. The healthy doctor, for example, stoops to the level of the infirm and risks illness in order to cure' (Meconi, 2013: 98; see also Cameron, 2005: 64; Cameron, 2015: 215-216; and Beeley, 2016: 133-5).

In this account Augustine's thought remains broadly Christocentric. Indeed Augustine even occasionally cites passages of scripture which would naturally lead him to consider the role of the Spirit in the Triduum and yet interprets them Christologically (O'Collins, 2017: 5-6; 27). Nevertheless, I believe that Augustine's theology of the Triduum holds real pneumatological potential especially when put in conversation with his account of the Spirit as the embrace between the Father and the Son.

To develop a truly Trinitarian account of the Triduum the next three subsections develop a pneumatological reading of the Triduum. This is thoroughly appropriate given that the Triduum is an inherently Trinitarian event, indeed we must not make the mistake of thinking that the Triduum is only the work of the Son to which the Spirit is added only after the event (Holmes, 2020: 90). Rather the Triduum *is* an inherently Trinitarian event because God is Trinitarian. This makes an exploration of the Spirit's relationship to the Triduum a thoroughly appropriate enquiry. Moreover, an exploration of the Spirit's relationship to the Triduum is perhaps especially appropriate because in many 'Trinitarian' accounts of the Triduum the Spirit fades into the background.⁸⁹

The Spirit Holds Christ on the Cross

In Augustine's account of the Triduum, the Son goes an ontological distance from the Father, for '*the tale of my sins leaves me far from salvation*' (En. 21.ii.3). More precisely the Son takes on humanity's sin and in doing so takes on *our* distance from the Father. This is paradigmatically expressed in Christ's cry of dereliction 'My God, My God, why have you forsaken me' (Ps. 22:1; Mk. 15:34; Mt. 27:46).

Understanding the Spirit as the embrace between the Father and the Son allows us to understand the Cross as creating a genuine ontological distance⁹⁰ within the Life of God while also rejecting accounts in which this distance is the result of an ontological abandonment of the Son by the

⁸⁹ For work emphasising the need for a Trinitarian account of the Triduum see Moltmann (1974/2021: 251), McCabe (1991: 100), T. F. Torrance (1992: 109-125), Novello (2011: 93-106), Vidu (2015), and Holmes (2020). In terms of accounts which neglect pneumatology, Moltmann argues for a Trinitarian account of the Cross, but goes on to read it predominantly as an event between the Father and the Son. Similarly, McCabe and Vidu in otherwise excellent essays neglect to attend to the relationship between the Son and the Spirit.

⁹⁰ A similar proposal has been made by both Simone Weil (1942/2009: 75) and in many of Balthasar's works (e.g. *TD*, IV: 320 *TD*, V: 245; 1995: 138).

Father (Moltmann, 1974/2021: 251).⁹¹ Augustine is explicit on both: clear that Christ took on our distance from the Father and that even in this distance the Father did not abandon the Son (*En.* 21.ii.3).

Developing Augustine's thought by turning to his pneumatology, I suggest that such a proposal is possible precisely because the Spirit is the One who holds the Father and the Son in an ineffable embrace. The Spirit, as the one who holds the Son in the love between the Father and the Son, ensures that the Son remains united to the Father even in his taking on the sin of the world. Even as Christ takes on our distance from the Father, he remains united to the Father by the Spirit.

Moreover, it is because the Spirit holds the Son as the Son goes the ultimate distance from the Father that the Spirit can hold the death within us. In holding the Son throughout the Cross, so the Spirit establishes a point of contact between the Life of God and death. In holding Christ on the Cross, so the holding of the Spirit, the Spirit's attuned love, comes to cover all of reality. To unpack this a little further, as Christ goes the ultimate distance from the Father there is a sense in which the Spirit travels this distance with Christ. The Spirit 'accompanies Jesus all the way into the horror of death' (Novello, 2011: 95; see also Torrance, 1992: 118). In accompanying Christ in this way, the Spirit's embrace comes to cover any possible distance from the Father. Because the Spirit held Christ as the Son took on the ultimate distance from the Father there is no distance the Spirit cannot gather up in their embrace, there is no experience which the Spirit cannot hold, there is no experience beyond God's love.

To put this another way, we might say that the Spirit's holding of Christ on Good Friday deconstructs the possibility of forsakenness. Forsakenness remains phenomenologically possible, as Christ's cry of dereliction gives paradigmatic voice to. However, the embrace of Christ on the Cross reveals the presence of God even in experiences of felt absence. Whereas Moltmann argues that Christ dies outside of the gate and dies *for* those who are 'outside the gate' (Moltmann, 1974/2021: 258), if there is an ontological rupture between Father and Son it remains unclear how the Son can return from this abandonment. In contrast, the Spirit as the embrace of love between the Father and the Son, 'places the bond of supreme union' (Weil, 1942/2009: 75) over the distance between the Father and 'outside the gate'. That the Spirit is able to do this reflects both the image of the Spirit as the bond of love and the embrace between the Father and the Son. Bonds span distances, and embraces unite that which is different. To do either the Spirit needs to be both with the Father and the Son.

⁹¹ For criticisms of Moltmann on this point see McIntosh (1998: 154); Williams (2000: 121), and Novello, (2011: 94).

That the Spirit is able to hold human beings is, of course, critical if the attuned love of the Spirit is to reform the Internal Working Model. It is the Spirit's holding of the Son through the Cross, I propose, which makes it possible for the Spirit to lovingly attune to the pain, suffering and death in our lives. Expanding on this in section 2.3, I will argue that the Spirit's holding of Christ enables the Spirit to hold us and in doing so creates the conditions for the Spirit to rework the Internal Working Model, leading the human person to know God more truly as Godself. We might say that because the Spirit held Christ, so the Spirit can lead us to Christ.

The Spirit Holds Christ in Death

If the Spirit holds Christ through forsakenness then we might expect the Spirit to perform a similar role on Holy Saturday. Turning explicitly to how the Spirit interacts with Christ's death is significant because it will help reveal how the Spirit interacts with our own experience of death. In short, I propose that throughout Holy Saturday the Spirit holds the dead Christ.

To understand what it might mean for the Spirit to hold death, it will be helpful to say a little more about how Augustine understands the death of Christ. Preaching on the Creed Augustine parses the line 'under Pontius Pilate crucified and buried':

What? The only Son of God, our Lord, crucified? The only Son of God, our Lord, buried? The man was crucified, God wasn't changed, God wasn't killed; and yet, as man, God was killed. (*Serm.* 213.4)

Augustine's comments here are reflective of a common patristic strategy for speaking of the hypostatic union. While each nature remains distinct, because Christ is genuinely one person, it is possible to use predicates for one nature to describe another. This pattern of speech is often referred to as the *communicatio idiomatum*.⁹² Applying this directly to Christ's death, with the creeds Augustine is at pains to emphasise that we can wholly affirm that Christ is the one who was crucified. Yet God is Life itself and therefore God cannot die. As Augustine says, 'God wasn't changed, God wasn't killed', rather 'the man was crucified'. Expanding on how we should understand 'the man was crucified', a little later in the same sermon Augustine clarifies that 'he was crucified, but in the flesh, and buried in the flesh alone' (*Serm.* 213.4). In speaking of the death of Christ we should understand that it is Christ's flesh which dies – Christ's divinity cannot die, because it is an essential category error to attribute death to God who is Life. The scandal of the Cross is not that divinity can die but that God can unite Godself to humanity, and not only

⁹² For further discussion of the *communicatio Idiomatum* see especially Beeley (2016:133-135). Other helpful sources include Higon (2011), Novello (2011: 185-199), and Cross (2019: 1-31).

humanity that lives but humanity which dies. However, because Christ is genuinely *one* person we can say that ‘God was killed’, we can say that ‘God died’.

Christopher Beeley helpfully explains this further, describing the patristic notion of divine suffering as composed of two important elements:

(i) It is human or creaturely suffering that we are talking about, suffering within the realm of creation and according to its terms, or, as the Greeks say, “in the economy,” not divine suffering per se. (ii) Nevertheless, it is God who directly and immediately undergoes creaturely suffering in Jesus Christ, a belief that calls forth a whole range of theopaschite expressions from the second to the eighth century. (2016: 132-3)

To apply the first principle to Augustine’s thought, in saying that ‘God was killed’ Augustine is referring to the fact that Christ took on creaturely death, and not to any death of the divine nature. However, the hypostatic union means that we can use theopaschite expressions to speak about God, because these expressions reflect the intimacy with which God has joined Godself to humanity in the incarnation. For Augustine:

all of Jesus’s acts and experiences reported in Scripture—and especially his suffering and death—are understood to be the human acts of the divine Son of God, and the second Person of the Trinity is the true subject throughout. There are therefore no merely human acts in Jesus, nor can we ascribe any of the events of his life to his human nature apart from his divine nature. As Augustine summarizes, all biblical statements about Jesus are “Scriptures about the [divine] Son of God.” (Beeley, 2016: 135)

Augustine’s reflection on the death of Christ is characteristically Christological, focusing on the Word’s relationship with human suffering and death. Nevertheless, these reflections hold rich resources for understanding the Spirit’s relationship with death as well. I suggest that we understand the Spirit to continue holding Christ throughout Holy Saturday. Indeed, based on the Spirit as the embrace of the Father and the Son, such a proposal reflects the economic Trinity’s grounding in the immanent Trinity. Developing Augustine’s claim that, in the death of Christ, the Word takes on creaturely death, I suggest that on Holy Saturday the Spirit holds dead flesh in the Life of God. Holy Saturday reveals the possibility of God holding death in the Life of God.

If Good Friday establishes the ontological condition for the Spirit to have contact with that which was far off, Holy Saturday reveals something about the *manner* of this contact. The pause between Good Friday and Easter Sunday reveals a form of Jesus’ union with the Spirit in which the death of the creature is not immediately resurrected. Holy Saturday emphasises a

temporality to the action of the Spirit within creation and in doing so it ‘attest[s] to a form of divine presence that is difficult to see, to feel, and to touch’ (Rambo, 2010: 83). Indeed, this was essential to Winnicott’s reflections on holding in which holding often works invisibly, shaping, forming, and integrating the psyche in ways which are not directly accessible to conscious awareness. Holy Saturday hints that the Spirit might work in comparable ways. Specifically, attending to the way that the Trinitarian Life of God manifests itself within creation (Holy Saturday) gives us reason to be cautious about pneumatologies in which the Spirit only works visibly and instantaneously. The work of the Holy Spirit on Holy Saturday is invisible and temporal. Holding does lead to new life but this is the visible culmination of a work which begins invisibly. It is particularly significant that the temporal and invisible work of the Spirit is revealed in the pattern of interaction between the Spirit and Christ, i.e. in the economic Trinity. As such it suggests that the invisible and temporal nature of the Spirit’s work might reveal something deep about the way in which the Spirit loves, i.e. that the Spirit’s love works temporally and, at times, invisibly. Of course, holding which begins invisibly can also culminate in powerfully visible ways, such as in Christ’s resurrection.

The Spirit’s Holding Brings Forth New Life

In my overview of Augustine’s thinking on the Triduum we saw that Augustine understands the Word’s union with flesh to mean that as Christ came to share in human death, so human beings come to share in Christ’s resurrection life. Just as Christ wholly shares in the plight of human beings, so we might wholly share in the Triune Life, into which Christ is both the vehicle and the way. While there is surprisingly little literature on Augustine’s understanding of the resurrection, Gerard O’Collins (2017) and Augustine Reisenauer (2023) have recently developed compelling accounts of how central the resurrection is to Augustine’s thought. Gerald O’Collins is particularly helpful in drawing out the way in which Augustine understands the resurrection in creational terms:

The creator who made all things from nothing, Augustine maintains, will not ‘lack the means’ when it comes to the work of resurrection (*De Civ. Dei*, 22.13). Since in his ‘wisdom and compassion’ God ‘created what was not’, he is also able to ‘free what he created from corruption’ (*De Civ. Dei*, 22.27). Through his ‘omnipotence’ the creator can ‘revive’ and ‘restore’ the dead to life (*De Civ. Dei*, 22.20). (2016: 327)

As O’Collins reads him, Augustine grounds the possibility of the resurrection in the act of creation. Just as in the beginning God created that which was not, so in the resurrection God brings life (being) where there was previously death (non-being). Writing in a similar vein Mark

McIntosh helps to show how a Trinitarian account of creation works to inform an account of Easter Sunday:

[It is] important to remind ourselves that God's life is not "stronger" than death as though it were a reality on the same plane as creaturely life or death – and just happens fortunately to be a bit more powerful than death. For God's life is the authoring source of all that exists and does not need to "overcome" the death of creatures by some sort of struggle, rather God simply knows and loves creatures everlastingly, with transcendent authority: the resurrection is a not a "reversal" of death but the manifestation of the infinite life of God within our world... The resurrection of Jesus is his raising of the Author of Life itself, of God: it manifests within our world the Father's infinite speaking of Godself in the Word, and therein the Father's infinite recognition of the imperishable idea of Christ's humanity in the Word, and indeed the imperishable idea of *all* creatures as they exist within God's knowing and loving of them. (McIntosh, 2021: 184-5)

In this paragraph McIntosh's basic point, echoing O'Collins' reading of Augustine, is that the resurrection has its ground in the same Trinitarian dynamics as creation. In the previous two chapters, on the basis of Augustine and Aquinas' thought, I have argued that creation both receives the fact of its existence and the structure of its existence through its participation in the Triune Life. Indeed, creatures are known in the Father's speaking of the Word and loved in the Father and the Son's spiration of the Spirit (*De Trin.* 6.10.11.). So, McIntosh argues that the resurrection of Jesus is grounded in these same Trinitarian dynamics. The resurrection is a matter of Christ's humanity being known by the Word and loved in the Spirit. In the knowing and loving of the Trinitarian processions, resurrection springs forth just as creation springs forth from them. In doing so the resurrection becomes the inauguration of the new creation (2 Cor. 5:17; Rev. 21).

The resurrection of the Word's flesh is not only the promise of the resurrection of all human flesh, but also the promise of the restoration of the true identity of all creatures (Col. 1:20). It is the promise that creatures might return to their truth contained in the divine ideas within the Word. This return to the truth of the creature, contained within the Word, happens through the Spirit. We saw this in chapter two where I drew out that Augustine understood the Spirit to hold the creature to the Father's speaking of the Word, uniting the creature to its truth in the Word. Applying this to the resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth we can understand the resurrection as the Father's speaking of the Word, of Jesus of Nazareth who is held to the Word by the Spirit. Understanding the Spirit in this way emphasises how the holding of the Spirit leads to life, to the resurrection life of Jesus of Nazareth, the first fruits of the new creation.

This provides a model for how the holding of the Spirit might lead to the transfiguration of death. The holding of the Spirit gathers up death into the Triune Life. In doing so the work of the Spirit is to hold the creature to the Word, to begin a temporal process, not wholly visible, which culminates in the union of the creature with its truth in the Word. This is the deification of the human person, as the human person is held by the Spirit until, united to the Word, she becomes a human expression of the Divine Life.

Based on my argument that deification makes use of human psychology, the next section proposes that the holding of the Spirit works to reform the implicational subsystem such that the creature is prepared to recognise who God is. In doing so the patterns by which the implicational subsystem reads creation come to be modelled on the *ordo amoris*. This means that the Internal Working Model comes to be reworked such that the human person becomes able to recognise the faithfulness, the goodness, and the mercy of God. The Internal Working Model becomes prepared to recognise God as the paradigmatic attachment figure, the one who is present amidst all our trials and tribulations, and who went the ultimate distance that we might come to rest in God (Ps. 57:1). In short, the resurrection of Christ reveals that the Spirit transfigures death into life. In making this claim I am not seeking to construct a dichotomy of death and life. Indeed, the very notion of holding resists such a dichotomy. However, I am wanting to be clear that the holding of the Spirit is able to radically reconfigure the way the past manifests itself in the present.

2.3. Participating in the Spirit: Reforming the Internal Working Model

My final section focuses on what Zahl calls the material effects of the Spirit's presence, arguing that the intra-Trinitarian identity of the Spirit shapes the experience of the Spirit. As this section develops though it will become clear that I understand the presence of the Spirit to work in ways which are not always accessible to conscious experience.⁹³ This invisibility, this lack of conscious experience, is as much an experience as a perceived presence. That the Spirit discloses itself in ways which cannot be consciously registered reflects the argument of the previous section in which I argued that the Spirit was present with Christ even when perceived to be absent. This was critical to my reading of both Good Friday and Holy Saturday, the latter especially emphasised the Spirit's ability to be present invisibly, in ways not accessible to conscious awareness.

⁹³ My proposal is similar to Jean-Yves Lacoste's account of 'non-experience' and 'vigil' (2004: 40-98) and his reflections on absence (2018: 113-134). See also Graham Ward's argument on the interplay between the visible and invisible (2016).

To develop an account of the material effects of participating in the Spirit I develop an account of how participating in the Spirit's holding reshapes the Internal Working Model. In doing so I develop a genuinely psychologically engaged pneumatology, bringing the Augustinian pneumatology developed throughout this chapter into conversation with Winnicott, ICS and attachment theory.⁹⁴ Winnicott's work is particularly relevant because it is his thought which first introduced the concept of 'holding'. However, the psychologically engaged theology which emerges in this section is grounded in more than a similarity in semantics. Continuing to deploy the principle that grace perfects nature and therefore that deifying participation makes use of human psychology, this section uses Winnicott's description of holding in psychotherapy to develop a phenomenological account of participation in the Spirit's embrace. In doing so, I am suggesting that participation in the Spirit makes use of the same psychological dynamics as psychotherapy, which itself is grounded, Winnicott argues, in the psychological dynamics of the infant-parent relationship.

With these introductory remarks in mind, let me provide a brief summary of the argument of this section. This section continues the argument begun in chapter two that participation in the Spirit reshapes the implicational code of the Internal Working Model. In doing so I propose that the implicational subsystem comes to be shaped according to the patterns of relationality in the Triune Life. In exploring the way in which participation in the Spirit reworks the Internal Working Model I chart two important movements. First, in coming to participate in God's loving of Godself I argue that human persons become more aware of the histories which make up the Internal Working Model.⁹⁵ In being truly and radically loved, the human person becomes able to recognise the difficult realities of their past. In making this proposal I am suggesting that this increased awareness is the phenomenological correlate of ontological participation in the Spirit. Second, in bringing these histories to God, the holding of the Spirit interacts with them in ways which reveal radically new patterns of relationality. These new patterns reform the implicational code of the Internal Working Model.

As I make this argument, I draw connections with how participation in the Spirit is shaped by the Spirit's relationship to the Triduum. In essence, the surfacing of histories is structured by the

⁹⁴ For early examples of psychologists and theologians using Winnicott's concept of 'holding' to understand the experience of God, see Parker (2008) and Swain (2014). Parker's work is primarily psychological and he does not directly associate holding with the Spirit. Swain's work is excellent, looking at the experience of providing pastoral care. However, Swain does not develop an extended account of the Holy Spirit as the One Who Holds, nor does she attend specifically to the participatory elements of Augustine's thought.

⁹⁵ I am indebted to Shelly Rambo for the image of wounds surfacing. This motif is present throughout *Resurrecting Wounds*, see especially (2017: 106).

Spirit's relationship to Good Friday, the Spirit's ministering made possible by Holy Saturday, and the transfiguration of histories enabled by Easter Sunday. I believe that there are solid psychological and theological foundations for such a proposal. Indeed there is, I think, a basic congruence with the Pauline conception of the Spirit leading human persons to share in Christ's death and resurrection (Rom. 6:1-11; Rom. 8:10-11; Col. 3:1-4; 2 Cor. 4:10-11). Nevertheless, in outlining a potential 'pattern' of pneumatological experience I am mindful of the danger of pneumatological 'overspecification' (Zahl, 2020:79). It is important to emphasise that section 2.3 is simply intended to identify one important pattern of pneumatological experience. It should not foreclose other ways of understanding the work of the Spirit. Indeed, it may be that those whose histories are not 'painful' find the Spirit working in distinctly different ways. While recognising this possibility, along with Augustine I believe that the nature of creation prior to Christ's return makes it almost inevitable that we will experience mourning, crying, pain and tears (Rev. 21:4; see also *De Civ. Dei* 19.4). At its core my proposal is that the holding of the Spirit allows the recognition of these painful realities, while also pointing us towards the One who, one day, will wipe away these realities as well as the tears they cause.

Holding: The deconstruction of defence mechanisms

The first component of the Spirit's holding involves a surfacing of the histories which have given rise to the Internal Working Model's current shape. As our histories, our wounds, come to the surface our relationship with them can be reconfigured.

That participation in the Spirit might cause our wounds to surface reflects Augustine's understanding of love as opening us up to both the goodness inherent in creation and creation's privation. For Augustine, perfect love does not make us immune from the pain and the suffering of the world (*De Civ. Dei*, 14.9; *De Civ. Dei*, 19.4). Rather, participating in perfect love reshapes the implicational subsystem such that, ordered to God, it becomes more aware of the presence of privation within creation. Like Christ, weeping at the death of Lazarus, we may well find that participation in the Spirit brings forth tears (Jn. 11:35; *De Civ. Dei*, 14.9). That love ordered to God develops this awareness of privation is, of course, not how love would function were we to live in a world without sin. Then there would be nothing to grieve. Such a clarification is important because it highlights that it is sin, death and privation which are the cause of wounds, not the Spirit's holding. The Spirit's holding simply causes wounds which already exist to surface that

they might be met with love.⁹⁶ This emphasises an important difference between the Spirit's intra-Trinitarian holding of the Word and the Spirit's holding of human beings. There is, of course, no privation within the Word, the Word is pure being. The Spirit's holding of the Word does not cause wounds to surface, embracing the Father and the Son the Spirit simply delights in the love of the Trinity. However, in the Word's assumption of death in the Triduum we can observe a pattern of interaction between the Spirit's holding and privation shaped by the Spirit's intra-Trinitarian identity as the One who Embraces. This is the pattern I mapped out in 2.2. and it this pattern which I will use to explore the material effects of the Spirit's holding.

To begin, I suggest that Augustine's proposal that love allows us to recognise the privation within creation gives us a foundation to understand why participation in the Spirit may cause previous histories to surface. As the Internal Working Model becomes shaped by the Spirit so, I suggest, we become more sensitive to the patterns of privation in our histories. In the holding of the Spirit, human persons are safe and loved enough to lower the barriers of denial and defensiveness which prevent us from recognising our histories for what they are. In doing so we come to recognise the wounds we carry. This recognition need not be propositional, but seeing our histories clearly could well give rise to knowledge which can then be articulated in propositional terms.

That holding allows wounds to surface is an important element of Winnicott's understanding of holding (*CW*, VI: 142; 198; 287; 361). While Winnicott introduces holding as an activity that happens in the mother-infant relationships, he also explores the way in which psychotherapists perform a holding function, by which Winnicott means that the therapist provides a space of loving attunement to the client (e.g. *CW*, IV: 252, 289; *CW*, VI: 201-203, 489). Such an environment is critical to overcoming the dynamics of 'forgetting and distorting, repressing and falsifying, exonerating... and blaming' which can contribute to the covering over rather than the exposure of wounds (Bowlby, 1979: 150). Shelly Rambo expresses a similar point, capturing how the dynamics of denial and blame can lead to the misrecognition of wounds and the emotions associated with them:

When histories of past harm surface in public, there are forces operating that threaten to push them away and to make them invisible once again. When they surface, there is

⁹⁶ Herbert McCabe makes a similar point about the crucifixion. The crucifixion, for McCabe, reveals the consequences of a life of love lived within a world has become deeply distorted. He writes: 'the mission of Jesus from the Father is not the mission to be crucified; what the Father wishes is that Jesus should be human... This is his obedience, an expression of his love for the Father, the fact that to be human means to be crucified is not something that the Father has directly planned but what we have arranged. We have made a world in which there is no way of being human that does not involve suffering' (1991: 93).

anger, confusion, fear, and uncertainty. The politics operating at the surface of the collective skin suggest that there are few who are equipped to discern the dynamics taking place. Instead, anger is misread. Shame goes unaddressed. (2017: 106)

In comparison, the loving holding of the therapist allows for the client 'to stage the... environmental failure' (Winnicott, *CW*, VI: 361). By this Winnicott means that the loving holding of the therapist creates an environment in which the wounds we have denied, repressed or forgotten can emerge. Held by the therapist, these wounds and the emotions associated with them can be recognised for what they are.

What might it look like for a wound to emerge? To develop a thick response to this question I provide a theoretical extension of the case study of Bernadine Fisher which I discussed in chapter one. We will remember that Bernadine had grown up with an abusive mother and this had led her to adopt a God-representation in which God was loving but did not love *her* (Rizzuto, 1979: 169). Rizzuto proposed that this itself was a defensive manoeuvre by which Bernadine kept 'the hope that there is love available in the universe, in her mother and God. She is not getting it because she is bad' rather than it not existing. In doing so 'hope remains, however, that the world has something to give. Her defence denies that her parent's home was empty, indifferent to cries of emotional hunger' (1979: 173). Such an effort reflects the 'desperate efforts to hide from oneself and others that which we find unbearable', such efforts are tragic precisely because sharing these experiences in relationships of love helps make them bearable. As Rizzuto goes on to say, 'in all of us is the desire to be found out', a desire 'not to be alone with our painful secrets' (Rizzuto, 2004: 440).

The surfacing of Bernadine's wounds will involve the deconstruction of the defence mechanism that 'she is not loved because she is not worthy of love'. In turn, the deconstruction of this defence mechanism will require a new implicit self-concept. To understand how participation in the Spirit might perform such a feat, it is helpful to return to the notion that participation in the Holy Spirit reshapes the implicational subsystem. Following Augustine's proposal that participation in the Spirit orders our love to God, I suggest that participation in the Spirit refashions Bernadine's implicational subsystem such that Bernadine comes to love herself in a human expression of the way the Spirit loves her. Bernadine's experience of her mother provided her with a self-concept in which she was not worthy of love. In contrast, the Spirit loves Bernadine with the love which accompanied Christ as Christ went the ultimate distance from the Father. Indeed, as Augustine argues in his exegesis of 1 John 4:9, the Spirit is the love by which Christ took on flesh. Participation in the Spirit reshapes the implicational subsystem such that

Bernadine comes to form an implicit self-concept shaped by this love. Participating in the Spirit, Bernadine comes to see herself as God sees her, as worthy of going to the Cross for.

Held by the Spirit, Bernadine finds that she is so loved, so wanted, and so cared for that she does not need her defence mechanisms. For Bernadine, the abundance of God's love makes the belief that 'she is not loved because she is not worthy of love' redundant. God's love reveals that she *is* loved and that she *is* worthy of love. At the same time, with love ordered to God, Bernadine becomes better able to appraise the reality of her past. Participating in the Spirit teaches Bernadine to recognise the privation of love in her history. In doing so the holding of the Spirit causes wounds to surface, not because of the paucity of the Spirit's love but due to its sheer abundance, this abundance frees us from the patterns of denial and repression. It is the gratuity of the Spirit's love which reveals the failures of the histories present in our Internal Working Model.

As already hinted, that the Spirit is able to deconstruct our defence mechanisms reflects the Spirit's relationship to Christ on Good Friday. Here, the Spirit holds Christ as he takes on the distance we bear from the Father. As I argued in section 2.2, the Spirit's holding of Christ makes the Spirit's holding available to human beings amidst their own experiences of death. As the Spirit holds us, the Spirit's abundant love unpicks the dynamics of 'forgetting and distorting, repressing and falsifying, exonerating... and blaming' revealing them as unnecessary. In the holding of the Spirit, we come to love ourselves as God loves us. In this love there is no need to exonerate, blame, or forget because we come to know that the ways we were failed in the past do not define our identity. These previous failures of love cannot separate us from the One who is Love, as St Paul writes, 'neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any created thing will be able to separate us from the love of God' (Rom. 8:38-39).

Bernadine believes that she has an 'unredeemable badness' (1979: 152) and that God 'is totally external to her' (1979: 169). The Spirit of the Cross holds Bernadine and in doing so deconstructs the possibility of 'unredeemable', just as the Spirit deconstructs the possibility of forsakenness. The Spirit's embrace of the infinite distance between the Father and the Son means that there truly is no longer an outside of the gate. Participating in the Spirit, Bernadine's Internal Working Model is shaped such that it becomes ready to discover a God who, instead of being 'external', is 'more inward than my most inward part' (*Conf.* 3.6.11). The Spirit's ability to deconstruct the defence mechanisms which keep us trapped in histories of lies is grounded in the Spirit's deconstruction of an outside of the gate. Held by the Spirit we no longer need to hide, rather we

can bring ourselves wholly before God, safe in the implicit knowledge that we are God's beloved child (Rom. 8:15-16). When God asks Bernadine, 'where are you?' (Gen. 3:10), she need not hide in the trees of the garden but, held in the love of God, she can respond, 'here I am' (Is. 6:8).

Holding: Internal Working Model Reconfigured

Critically, the holding of the Spirit does not only deconstruct our defence mechanisms allowing our histories to surface. Through the Spirit's attuned and loving holding of these histories, the Spirit reveals an alternate pattern of relationality by which the Internal Working Model can be refashioned.

Such a proposal strongly coheres with Winnicott's thought in which the holding of the therapist is capable of reshaping the client's basic relational schemata. In making this argument Winnicott again draws comparisons between the holding of the psychotherapist and the holding of the mother. Indeed, Winnicott proposes that therapy is the 'attempt to imitate the natural process that characterises the behaviour of any mother of her own infant' (CW, VI: 92). Here, the holding of the psychotherapist allows for a reconstruction of the client's relational maps. Just as the mother's holding provides the infant's first patterns of relationality, so the holding of the therapist can reform these patterns. As we stage the environmental failures contained in the Internal Working Model, the holding and mirroring of the therapist reveals an alternate pattern of relationality by which the Internal Working Model might be refashioned. Indeed, Winnicott uses very strong language to describe the impact of therapy writing that 'a "new" being is born, because of what we do' (CW, VI: 92). The echoes of the Johannine theme of being born again in this description are difficult to ignore (Jn. 3:3). Later I will draw a comparison between the holding of the therapist and the Spirit's holding, suggesting that the Spirit's steadfast love throughout the emergence of painful histories reveals a new pattern of relationality, a new depth of love, according to which our implicit relational schemata might be reshaped.

Before looking at how the holding of the Spirit reconfigures our Internal Working Model, it will be helpful to look further at how the Internal Working Model is reconfigured within psychotherapy. The work of the Boston Change Process Study Group (BCPSG), drawing on attachment theory, dual-process cognition, and object relations, provides a particularly helpful analysis of how the psychotherapeutic environment shapes the Internal Working Model.⁹⁷ In doing so the BCPSG

⁹⁷ The work of the BCPSG has received significant acclaim. Indeed, Google Scholar records that Stern et al (1998) has been cited over 2,300 times. When the article was republished in BCPSG (2010) it received significant acclaim with Dowling (2011), Ventimiglia (2011) and Freeman-Carroll (2012) all providing positive reviews. Dowling refers to the work as 'amazing', Freeman-Carroll as potentially 'life-changing'. Still, the work is not without its critiques and Dowling (2011) raises important concerns about whether the

characterise the typical experience of holding in therapy as a form of ‘moving along’. Moving along is the negotiation of verbal and non-verbal exchanges between the therapist and client, as both attempt to ‘grasp what is happening between them, and what each member perceives, believes and says in the particular context, and what each member believes the other member perceives, feels and believes’ (Stern et al, 1998: 910). Moving along is the temporal process of establishing, clarifying, and investing in an intersubjective space. It is a movement ‘towards intersubjective sharing and understanding’ (Stern et al, 1998: 910).

The moving along process is typically affectively cool, almost invisible. As Winnicott proposed, holding can go ‘scarcely noticed’ (CW, VI: 151-2). Importantly though holding’s invisibility arises not from a paucity between the therapist and the client but because of a certain excessiveness of meaning in their exchanges. The invisibility of the therapist’s holding lies in the provision of love in a mode which the client is not yet able to recognise. This love is wholly present but cannot yet be recognised because it is expressed in patterns not captured by the client’s implicational subsystem. Nevertheless, it is precisely this excess, an excess which is very difficult to perceive, which has the capacity to rework the Internal Working Model. Such a description is rich with pneumatological potential, providing a basis for understanding why the Spirit’s holding might begin invisibly. Before exploring this, it will be helpful to further discuss the way the moving along process leads to change.

While the moving along process is typically affectively cool it can give rise to intense moments of connection in which the intersubjective space between the therapist and the client materialises with new clarity. The BCSPG call these moments ‘now moments’. Now moments emerge suddenly when a specific moment ‘gets lit up subjectively and affectively’ (Stern et al, 1998: 911). The reason why now moments are affectively charged is important. The BCPSG write that now moments:

take on this subjective quality because the habitual framework – the known, familiar intersubjective environment of the therapist-patient relationship – has all of a sudden been altered or risked alteration. (Stern et al, 1998: 911-2)

As implicational schemata represent patterns based on previous experience, so ‘now moments’ call these patterns into question. In doing so, now moments hold the potential for the patterns

BCPSG have neglected the role of aggression in the psychotherapeutic encounter. Importantly, my next chapter will look at aggression in greater detail. Regardless, there is general consensus that the work of the BCPSG is hugely significant.

encoded within the implicational subsystem to be reconfigured, opening up new possibilities and new ways of understanding, perceiving, and experiencing the world. This sense of newness is critical to 'now moments' which are 'unfamiliar, unexpected in their exact form and timing, unsettling or weird' (Stern et al, 1998: 912). Referencing Winnicott, Stern et al go on to propose that now moments:

leave in their wake an "open space" in which a shift in the intersubjective environment creates a new equilibrium, a 'disjoin'... Individual creativity, agency emerging within the individual's configuration of open space, becomes possible, as the patient's "implicit relational knowing" has been freed of constraints imposed by the habitual (Winnicott, 1957). (Stern et al, 1998: 915)

The therapist's holding creates a space in which the client and the therapist can co-create an intersubjective environment – a shared sense of being together. When this happens well enough and for long enough, the patient's prior implicit relational schema, her Internal Working Model, can be challenged. The therapist has brought a sense of attunement, honour, respect, and care which are not captured in the implicational schemata which make up the client's Internal Working Model. The consistent provision of new patterns of relationality in therapy provides the possibility for transformation of implicational schemata. Phenomenologically this is experienced as a 'now moment', the conscious culmination of the historic, non-conscious process of holding. The change now moments offer is nuanced, not expunging past relational experience but recontextualising and redefining it. Holding does not change the fact that Bernadine grew up in an abusive home, but it can reconfigure her implicit schemata such that this experience does not become the primary lens by which she experiences and evaluates relationships. In doing so, sustained holding has the potential to transform the horizon of her present and future experience. In a balanced assessment the BCPSG clarify that now moments do not 'correct past empathic failures through the analytic empathic activity. It does not replace a past deficit. Rather something new is created in the relationship which alters the intersubjective environment' (BCPSG, 1998: 918).

Before developing these thoughts theologically, let me provide a brief summary: the loving holding of the therapist provides a new felt knowledge about the self, others, and the world. Holding creates an intersubjective environment in which the Internal Working Model can be refashioned. Much of the work of holding is hidden, unrecognised by our conscious processes. However, when done in the right way and for long enough, it has the capacity to give rise to intense emotional experience, which can include both the recognition of previously unrecognised

historic realities and their recontextualization. Such a proposal echoes my rejection of a dichotomy between death and life. Participation in the Spirit does not so much annihilate the 'past deficit' as it recontextualises it, allowing it to be observed in a new light and creating the conditions where the past need not determine the present nor the future. To use an example from scripture, Christ does not deny the fact that Peter denied him three times, but he does bring Peter into a new reality which radically reconfigures the meaning of Peter's past failure and has significant consequences for his present and the future which flows from this (Jn. 21:15-17).

In what follows I use the preceding psychological discussion to further explore how the holding of the Spirit reconfigures the Internal Working Model. In doing so I suggest that participation in the Spirit is made up of both 'moving along' and 'now moments'. In using these concepts, I am suggesting that they helpfully identify elements of the *human* experience of participation in the Holy Spirit. For the sake of clarity, I am not suggesting that in the moving along process the Spirit seeks to better understand human persons, the Triune God already perfectly knows and loves all human persons. That such a difference exists between the holding of the therapist and the holding of the Spirit reflects the analogical nature of all theological language in which the likeness which the analogy establishes is coupled with an unlikeness.

Based on the work of the BCPSG and the preceding argument that participation in the Spirit amounts to being held by the Spirit, I suggest an important element of participation in the Spirit is the human person seeking to align their loves with God's loves. To paraphrase the BCPSG, in coming to participate in the Spirit human persons attempt to grasp what is happening between them and God, attempt to understand what the Spirit loves, 'perceives', believes, and shares. In this process the human person seeks to hand over their histories to the Spirit, the human person seeks to love themselves, others, and Godself according to the way God loves.⁹⁸

This process of opening up can be fraught. Moving along can also be a moving backwards as human persons mistrust the Spirit. Instead of seeking God's wisdom we can seek after our own, forgetting that it is only God who can make us wise (Gen. 3:5-6). Significantly, human beings are also capable of deceiving themselves, convincing themselves that they are seeking Godself while pursuing small minded and petty projects. We may find ourselves praying, 'God, I thank You that I am not like other people: swindlers, crooked, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. I fast

⁹⁸ The 'moving along process' is similar to Andrew Pinsent and Eleonore Stump's proposal that participation in the Spirit makes use of joint attention (Pinsent, 2012; 2022; Stump, 2018: esp.121-142). Here participation in the Spirit amounts to a sharing in God's 'stance toward the object that is the focus of one's attention' (Pinsent, 2012: 40).

twice a week; I pay tithes of all that I get' (Lk. 18:11-12), a prayer which amounts to little more than self-exaltation (Lk. 18:14).

Regardless of whether we pray as the pharisee or the tax collector, the Spirit's activity through the moving along process can be characterised by a constant loving, a constant engaging with, and a constant creating space. The Spirit invites us ever deeper into the Triune Life, asking us to share in the love with which God loves Godself, and through sharing in this love to come to love the self, neighbour, creation and indeed Godself in a human expression of this love. In doing so the Spirit offers new relational patterns by which our implicational code might be rewritten. In doing so the Spirit can be understood to hold, in an analogous manner to both the mother and the psychotherapist.

Returning to the Spirit's relationship to the Triduum I suggest that it is the Spirit's holding of the dead flesh of Christ on Holy Saturday which establishes the possibility of the Spirit holding death within us. The Spirit's holding of Christ's dead flesh establishes a pattern of interaction between the Spirit and privation. The Spirit holds and meets with attuned love the gap between how creation is and how it should be. To apply this to the moving along process I propose that the Spirit is able to hold us, to continue to love us even amidst our failures to love. As we fail to recognise opportunities to love, and even as we mischaracterise the very nature of love, the Spirit continues to hold us, to minister to us, to represent truer, more vibrant, and more loving patterns of relationality. The Spirit bridges the death we have done and the death that others have done to us, and gathers us up into the Life of God. In doing so the abundance of God's love is disclosed in a way which is invisible. The Spirit discloses the patterns of God's abundant love whose excessiveness means that these patterns cannot be fully recognised by the implicational subsystem. This holding is never static, it is always towards resurrection, towards life, towards deification. The Spirit holds dead flesh on Holy Saturday and yet on the eighth day new life springs forth.

The holding of the Spirit, this moving along, creates the conditions for a 'now moment' to occur. Now moments are the conscious and 'visible' manifestation of the Spirit's invisible holding. In now moments, we come to recognise the gap that exists between our own conceptions of love and the sheer gratuity of the Spirit's love. We come to recognise that there is a different way of doing things. In these moments the Spirit presents Godself as a challenge to the patterns of relationality encoded in the implicational subsystem. In revealing Godself as more loving, more safe, more just, more merciful than we could have imagined, the Spirit's holding has the capacity to reform our foundational sense of relationality. Phenomenologically this is experienced as 'a

new equilibrium, a “disjoin”. In this disjoin the Spirit extends an invitation for our Internal Working Model to be reconfigured. The BCPSG describe a process in which our histories come to be shaped by the intersubjective space of therapy. In the Spirit’s holding our implicational code comes to be reworked according to the patterns of the Spirit’s love. As a result, the way we perceive, experience, and engage in relationships comes to be a human expression of the way the Spirit loves.

Such a reformation of the Internal Working Model is made possible by the Spirit’s relationship to the resurrection. In section 2.2 I developed a reading of the resurrection in essentially Trinitarian and creational terms, arguing that the resurrection is the Father’s speaking of the Word, in which the Spirit holds the dead flesh of the creature to the Word. Just as resurrection springs from the speaking of the Word and the spiration of the Spirit, so new creation springs from the Trinitarian processions. Resurrection is a new creation as the creature is held to its truth in the Word by the Spirit. Following the same logic, I propose that human beings are deified through the holding of the Spirit which unites them with their truth within the Word. As our implicational code is reshaped, we come to know on a deep level that we are loved and cared for, that we deserve to be treated with dignity and respect, that we are capable of loving others just as we are worthy of being loved.

This reformation of the Internal Working Model is the common core between the Spirit’s holding, the mother’s holding and the psychotherapist’s holding, all three of which, I suggest, can reshape our implicational, relational, schemata. However, that the Spirit unites Bernadine to her truth within the Word draws attention to an important difference between the Spirit’s holding and the holding of a human caregiver. The Spirit is the Spirit of Truth (Jn. 16:13) and as such, the way that the Spirit holds Bernadine represents not just another precarious human perspective on her value, but who she most truly is. In loving Bernadine, the Spirit not only reveals that she *can* be treated with love but that she deserves to be treated with love. The Spirit’s holding therefore makes a normative claim about the pattern of relationality by which Bernadine’s Internal Working Model should be formed in a way which no human caregiver’s holding can make. There is a weight to the Spirit’s holding which cannot be matched by any human caregiver.

Importantly, the holding of the Spirit does not only reveal these patterns of relationality to Bernadine, it invites her into them. It surrounds her with a love according to which her implicational code can be shaped, providing patterns which can then be used for future ‘pattern recognition’. For those who are insecurely attached this creates the possibility of moving towards earned security, for those who are securely attached there is an invitation ever deeper into

security as God's love is revealed as *semper major* than any human caregiver's. In doing so we are prepared to know God, to form a God-representation of the One who is Love. Coming to know God in this way is participating in Christ's resurrection through the Spirit who raised Him from the dead.

Before concluding I want to briefly contrast this account with both Rambo and Moltmann's pneumatology. In doing so I suggest that each neglects the way experience of the Spirit can be characterised as involving both moving along and now moments. Rambo's focus on the presence of the Spirit amidst death means that she gives less attention to the way that the Spirit's attunement might bring about radical changes in the implicational subsystem and therefore how it might change our emotional experience of the world. I suspect that recognising the way the Spirit can generate 'now moments' is made harder for Rambo because of her reticence to develop a detailed account of the relationship between the Spirit and the resurrection. Equally, Moltmann's pneumatology gives rise to an account of the Spirit predominantly characterised by now moments and appears to give little space for the Spirit's invisible work in the moving along process. Again, it strikes me that this flows from Moltmann's focus on the resurrection at the expense of Good Friday and especially Holy Saturday. In contrast, my focus on the Triduum as a whole has provided a theological basis for both the Spirit's invisible work of holding, and the way this holding can culminate in intense, transformative experience.

Concluding Thoughts

This chapter has developed a psychologically engaged pneumatology for the purpose of answering the question: 'how can the Spirit reform the Internal Working Model'? In response I have argued that the Spirit is the One who Holds. Just as the holding of the mother provides the infant with a basic sense of relationality, so the holding of the Spirit has the capacity to reform this sense of relationality. To make this argument I began by developing an account of the Spirit's intra-Trinitarian identity as the embrace between the Father and the Son. Reflecting the principle that the economic Trinity is the outworking of the immanent Trinity I went on to explore how the Spirit's intra-Trinitarian identity as the embrace between the Father and the Son manifested itself through the Triduum. In doing so I argued that the Spirit held Christ through the crucifixion. On the Cross Christ took on our distance from the Father and, through the Spirit crossing this intra-Trinitarian distance, the notion of forsakenness itself was deconstructed. This holding means that there is nothing a person can do, nor anything which could be done to a person, which the love of God cannot reach out and hold. I went on to argue that this was significant because it meant that the Spirit could deconstruct the psychological defences which prevented us from knowing and loving God.

Moving to Holy Saturday, I argued that the Spirit holds Christ's dead flesh. If Good Friday revealed the deconstruction of forsakenness, then Holy Saturday reveals the way in which the Spirit interacts with ongoing experiences of death. Specifically, it reveals the possibility of the Spirit to work invisibly and temporally, an important insight amidst pneumatologies like Moltmann's, which focus on the visible work of the Spirit. Drawing on the work of the Boston Change Process Study Group I argued that holding in psychotherapy also had a temporal and invisible dimension – as the psychotherapist and client worked to co-create an intersubjective environment – the moving along process. The invisibility in a therapeutic context lies in the provision of love which human persons are unable to recognise due to it employing patterns that the other's implicational code does not recognise. Nevertheless, it is precisely this excess, an excess which cannot be perceived, which has the capacity to rework the Internal Working Model. Similarly, I suggested that, as the Spirit invisibly holds the death within us, the Spirit provides the patterns of love which our implicational code has not yet learnt to recognise. It is precisely this invisible excess which gives the Spirit's holding the capacity to transform the Internal Working Model.

The holding of the Spirit, even on Holy Saturday, is teleologically oriented towards resurrection. In the Triduum this happens as the Spirit holds the dead flesh of Christ to the Father's speaking of the Word. Just as the Trinitarian processions are the ground of creation so they are the ground from which the resurrection springs. Human persons are invited into this movement, in the Spirit's holding they too are drawn into the Father's speaking of the Word, the Word which includes the truth of all creatures. Phenomenologically this amounts to the reconstitution of the implicational schemata which make up the Internal Working Model. The Spirit's holding, their abundant love which begins invisibly, comes to be recognised. In the therapeutic context we saw how the holding of the therapist which began invisibly could give rise to a now moment in which implicational schemata are challenged. Similarly, I suggested that the Spirit's holding challenges the Internal Working Model, inviting it to be revised such that the implicational schemata come to be modelled on the patterns of the Spirit's loving. This is the deification of the human person as she becomes a human expression of the Spirit.

Chapter Four. The Word Plays

Introduction

The previous chapter argued that the Spirit holds the human person, reforming the implicational schemata of the Internal Working Model according to the patterns of relationality in the Triune Life. This chapter investigates how a God-representation comes to be connected with this reformed Internal Working Model. In doing so, I remain primarily interested in the reformation of an implicit God-representation, though it may well be that this new implicit God-representation gives rise to knowledge which can be articulated in propositional terms. To explore how participation in the Triune Life reforms a God-representation, I return to the proposal I first made in chapter one: that God-representations are revised in play, with play being understood in the Winnicottian sense. More specifically I argue that God-representations are revised through participating in the Word's play.

To develop this argument I, again, make three claims. First, I argue that participation in the Word, God's knowing of Godself, can be understood as a participation in the Word's play. Second, I argue that human beings come to participate in the Word in play, understood liturgically. Third, I argue that participation in the Word's play revises a God-representation. The common thread across each of these claims is that the Word is God's knowing of Godself. Understanding the Word's knowing of Godself in terms of play helps to draw a clear line not only between liturgy and participation in the Triune Life, but between participation in the Word and the material effects of this participation.

Section 1 begins by arguing that participation in the Word can be understood as a participation in the Word's play. To do so I begin by following both Augustine and Aquinas in understanding the Word's intra-Trinitarian identity as God's knowing of Godself. With this established I ask how we might understand human persons to enter into this knowing. To develop a response, I draw on Winnicott's proposal that psychotherapy is the 'overlap of two areas of playing' (CW, VIII: 299). In this 'overlap' the representations developed in therapy are not only the product of the client's internal world, rather the client's representations become shaped by the intersubjective (play) world of therapy in which the psychotherapist and the client can co-create representations. In short, play allows our representations to be shaped by the knowing of another. I suggest we can understand this play dynamic, by which the knowing of another shapes our knowing, as the natural psychological dynamic which participation in the Word makes use of. Building from this

foundation, I argue that we can understand participation in the Word as participation in the Word's play.

To further specify how human beings come to participate in the Word's play, section 2 explores the relationship between participation in the Word, play, and liturgy. In doing so I limit my claims about liturgy to the Church's liturgy. This is not to suggest that participation in the Word is impossible outside of the Church. However, it does speak of the need for bespoke theological analysis of the different ways in which specific spaces outside of the Church participate in the Word. To engage in this question would be to stray into areas of significant complexity well beyond the scope of this thesis. On this basis, I have limited my analysis to the *Church's* liturgy.

In focusing on the Church's cultic *liturgy*, I am in no way suggesting that deifying participation in the Word is limited to *liturgy*. The activities the Word uses to lead human beings into deification are clearly more expansive than this. I might have, for instance, examined contemplative prayer as site of participation in the Word.⁹⁹ This chapter focuses on liturgy rather than contemplative prayer, or any other spiritual practice, for three reasons. One, the language of play is particularly prominent in the theological literature on liturgy (e.g. Wainwright, 1980; Flanagan, 1988; Chan, 2006: 54-6; Vondey, 2010; Johnson, 2015: 87-100; Williams, 2018; Zizic, 2020; Zahl, 2024). Second, as mentioned in chapter one both Winnicott and Rizzuto make comparisons between liturgy and play (Winnicott, *CW*II: 168; *CW*, VI: 338; *CW*, IX: 267; *CW*, XI: 125; Rizzuto, 1979: 181; 2004: 438), suggesting that liturgy would be a fruitful place for further theological reflection. Third, as I will argue in section 2.1. I understand there to be an important relation between revelation and doxology which makes liturgy a particularly appropriate place to reflect on how participation in the Triune Life reforms a God-representation.

To argue that liturgy springs from and leads ever deeper into participation in the Triune Life, section 2.1 draws on the work of Khaled Anatolios to argue that liturgy is the extension of the immanent mutual glorification of the Triune Life into creation. Noting the connection between glorification and revelation in the Gospel of John, I go on to argue that liturgy acts as a space of revelation of who God is. In liturgy human persons are drawn into how God knows Godself and how God knows creation. Section 2.2 emphasises that this is compatible with an understanding of liturgy as a form of play. Drawing on the work of Johan Huizinga and Eugen Fink, I develop an account of liturgical play in which play leads human persons more deeply into truth. Importantly,

⁹⁹ Indeed, Sarah Coakley (2016: esp.23) has emphasised the way in which contemplative prayer challenges our God-representations. Significantly though, Coakley develops her analysis in primarily pneumatological terms, whereas in this chapter I focus on the noetic effects of participation in the Word.

my aim in section 2 is not to independently justify Huizinga or Fink's work, but to show how their understanding of play can help draw connections between liturgy, play and participation in the Triune God.

To further develop these connections, I turn to Romano Guardini's extended discussion of the playfulness of the liturgy. On the basis of Guardini's work I go on to argue that liturgy leads the Church into the play of the Word. While not wanting to suggest that the notion of play is a major theme in scripture, it is appropriate to note that there is both a basis in scripture and in the tradition for speaking of the Word's play. Unpacking this I turn to Proverbs 8:30-31 which, in conversation with later developments in Trinitarian theology, I read as suggesting that the play of the Word consists in God's knowing of Godself, a knowing which includes God's knowing of creation.

In section 3 I explore what participating in the play of the Word might mean for a God-representation. In doing so I emphasise both the apophatic and the cataphatic dimensions of play. I argue that as we play with the Word so we come to recognise the way our God-representations fail to fully comprehend Godself. I suggest that such a recognition becomes the ground from which a new God-representation can spring. As an example of what a God-representation shaped by the play of the Word might look like I turn to Augustine's theology of the *totus Christus*. Turning to Augustine's account of the *totus Christus* is particularly appropriate given its liturgical grounding in the Psalms and in his own preaching. Moreover, turning to Augustine's Christology helps to emphasise a critical point: in participating in the Word's play, we come to know God as Christ. Such a suggestion is particularly appropriate given that Christ is the visible image of the invisible God (Col. 1:15). Moreover, as St Paul goes on to say, knowing Christ as the image of the invisible God means knowing Christ as the one who reconciled 'all things to Himself, whether things on earth or things in heaven, having made peace through the blood of His cross' (Col. 1:20). In short, I argue that in the play of the Word we come to know God as the saviour of the world (1 Jn. 4:14).

Section 1: Knowing God

In this chapter I work from an understanding of the Word as God's knowing of Godself. This characterisation of the intra-Trinitarian identity of the Word is so central to post-Nicene orthodoxy that it needs little defence. Nevertheless, by way of a brief summary, the association between the Word and God's knowing of Godself follows the association between the Word and knowing the Father in John's gospel (e.g. Jn. 8:19; Jn. 8:55; Jn. 10:15; Jn. 12:50; Jn. 13:3; Jn. 14:7;

Jn. 14:9; Jn. 16:3; Jn. 16:30; Jn. 17:25-26). Following the Gospel of John, the claim that the Word is God's knowing of Godself is widespread throughout both patristic and medieval theology.¹⁰⁰

Indeed, we have already seen Aquinas make this claim in chapter one. Expanding on this a little, Aquinas, following Augustine, compares the procession of the Word in the Divine Life to the formation of a word in human speech. Just as the word in human speech proceeds from the concept formed within the mind, so the Word 'proceed[s] from something other than itself—namely, from the knowledge of the one conceiving' (*ST*, I, 34.1). The knowledge which proceeds from the Father is the whole Trinity 'for the Father, by understanding Himself, the Son and the Holy Ghost, and all other things comprised in this knowledge, conceives the Word; so that thus the whole Trinity is "spoken" in the Word' (*ST*, I, 34.2).¹⁰¹

Towards the end of chapter one I suggested that human persons would come to know God through playing with God. In other words, I began to argue that we could understand participation in the Word to make use of the natural psychological dynamics of play which exist between human persons.¹⁰² Such a proposal establishes a natural link with the previous chapter, especially the analogy I have been developing between the Life of God and psychotherapy. Just as Winnicott understands psychotherapy as a kind of holding, so he also understands psychotherapy as a form of play. Capturing this, Winnicott writes that 'psychotherapy takes place in the overlap of two areas of playing, that of the patient and that of the therapist. Psychotherapy has to do with two people playing together' (*CW*, VIII: 299). In describing psychotherapy as a form of play, Winnicott is again emphasising that psychotherapy acts as an intersubjective space in which the psychotherapist is able to share 'other than me' material with the client, aiding their reformation of representations. In the play between the therapist and the client the psychotherapist constructs a model of the client's internal world and presents this back to the client in such a way that the client comes to experience their internal world differently. Winnicott compares this to the mirroring between the mother and the infant in which when the infant is confused, overwhelmed and unsure about how to interpret the world, the mother's mirroring presents the infant with a way of 'integrat[ing] the various feelings,

¹⁰⁰ For an excellent discussion of the Word as God's knowing of Godself see McIntosh (2021: 91-102).

¹⁰¹ See *De Trin.* 6.10.11, 7.3.5 and 15.14.23. for a complementary account of the Word as God's knowing of Godself. The Word 'has the primal and supreme intellect, since for it, to live is not one thing and to know another thing, but to know, to live, and to be are one and the same, and all together are one' (*De Trin.* 6.10.11).

¹⁰² In making this argument I continue to base my understanding of the psychological dimensions of play specifically in Winnicott's work. There are, of course, other psychological conceptions of play. See for example Piaget (1951/1999) or Pruyser et al (1991). For a very helpful theological exploration of Piaget's account of play, see Collicutt (2009)

sensations, excitements, angers, griefs, etc. that go to make up an infant's life but which the infant cannot hold' (CW, IV: 252).

As the Spirit holds human persons, reforming the implicational code of the Internal Working Model, so I suggest that we can understand participation in the Word as the 'overlap of two areas of playing', the first being the human person's and the second being the Word's. In suggesting that the Word has a 'play area' I am using the term 'play' analogically. The Word is not a psychologically subject, does not have 'representations' and has no need to iteratively fuse their internal world with the external world. The Word already knows Godself perfectly and in this knowing knows the truth of all of creation. This is the unlikeness inherent in the description of participation in the Word as an overlap of two play areas. The constructive contribution of the description though is to emphasise that in participating in the Word the human person does come to share in God's knowing of Godself, and in this sharing the human person's representations of self, others, creation and God do come to be perfected. The human person's representations come to more perfectly express the Word's knowing of creation and Godself in a way, I am suggesting, similar to the play between a psychotherapist and the client. This proposal has the benefit of according with the principle that grace does not destroy but perfects nature. To suggest that God representations are revised through play with the Word is to suggest that the deification of the human person makes use of the same psychological dynamics present in the infant-parent relationship, as I argued in chapter one.

One of the key tasks of this chapter will be to further develop what it might mean for the Word to play. Rizzuto provides a hint as to how we might go about investigating the Word's play when she likens psychotherapy to liturgy, writing that:

just as psychoanalysis provides an opportunity for reworking one's internal objects, for redescribing the past such that a new relation is achieved with parents and other significant people, so similar opportunities exist for reworking the God image. Ritual, for example, is not seen necessarily as a sign of unresolved repetition compulsion but as a source of real renewal, an opportunity to gain a new relationship with one's internal objects. (1979: 181)

For Rizzuto, liturgy is an opportunity to play with the representations we hold (2004: 438-9). In this play a genuinely new relationships with the self, neighbour, creation and God can be formed, because liturgy is a place of play it is 'a source of real renewal, an opportunity to gain a new relationship with one's internal objects'. Even more significantly, liturgy is not simply a place of individual play, but a place of the overlap of play areas. In an ambiguous aside, Rizzuto

comments that 'by making God or the gods active participants in the process, ritual provides a new opportunity for the reshaping of the God-representation and the individual's relation to it' (1979: 181).

If Rizzuto is correct in thinking that liturgy is a place of play and that it can lead to 'real renewal', then the theologian is invited to investigate the theological dynamics of both this play and the renewal which springs from it. To construct such an investigation, I propose that we understand liturgy not only as a place of human play with God-representations – though I do understand it in this way – but as a place in which human and divine play meet. Continuing to draw on the principle that deifying participation in the Triune Life makes use of natural psychological dynamics, I suggest that we understand liturgy as human persons' play with the Living God. Whereas in the infant-parent relationship the infant's representations come to be shaped by the mother's play, and in psychotherapy the psychotherapist's internal world shapes the clients', in liturgy I suggest that the Word's knowing of Godself comes to shape the worshipper's internal world. In short, I propose that in liturgy there is an 'overlap of two areas of playing'.

To give an example of what it might mean for the Church's liturgy to include an 'overlap of two areas of playing', I turn to the Church of England's¹⁰³ Eucharistic liturgy. Clearly there is a vast amount which could be said about the Eucharistic liturgy. My aim here is not to provide an exhaustive account but simply to use the Eucharistic liturgy as an example of how liturgy might act as a space in which human persons come to participate in the play of the Word. In doing so I focus on the epiclesis and the anamnesis.

In the epiclesis the priest says:

Accept our praises, heavenly Father,
through your Son our Saviour Jesus Christ,
and as we follow his example and obey his command,
grant that by the power of your Holy Spirit
these gifts of bread and wine
may be to us his body and his blood;

Immediately following this the priest continues the narration of the Last Supper, in the anamnesis, describing how Christ:

¹⁰³ As is common in liturgical theology I use the liturgy which I am most familiar with. While some insights may be specific to the Church of England's Eucharistic liturgy, I believe that much of my analysis will be applicable to other liturgies, especially the Roman Rite. A comparative analysis between liturgies is well beyond the scope of this thesis.

took bread and gave you thanks;
he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying:
Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you;
do this in remembrance of me.

...

In the same way, after supper
he took the cup and gave you thanks;
he gave it to them, saying:
Drink this, all of you;
this is my blood of the new covenant,
which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins.
Do this, as often as you drink it,
in remembrance of me.

Both the epiclesis and anamnesis suggest an interweaving of Christ and the Church (Ward, 2005: 106; O'Donnell, 2019: 157). Such a proposal reflects the core of Augustine's *totus Christus* theology which I will explore further in section 3.3. It also reflects the literary structure of the prayers which use the Last Supper, and the words of Christ to structure the liturgical act. In the movement between temporality and voice, the Church is invited to see itself as part of Christ. Both the epiclesis and anamnesis interweave the past and the present, the Last Supper and the present-day. Both prayers also move between 'voices' with the priest alternating between acting as a narrator and adopting the words of Christ. This interweaving is significant because it suggests that the liturgical act includes an invitation into a different way of knowing. To enter into the Eucharistic liturgy is to come to understand that Christ is present here and now in a way which might not have been previously understood. The giving of Christ's body and blood at the Last Supper is not simply a historic event, it is, according to the liturgy, an event which continues today (Cockayne and Salter, 2021: 279-282). The Eucharistic liturgy invites the congregation to the renewing of their mind (Rom. 12:2), such that they might recognise both that Christ is here, and that they are part of Christ. Both Christ's presence and the Church's union with Christ is, of course, paradigmatically expressed in the Church's reception of Christ's body and blood in the bread and the wine.

The possibility of recognising Christ's presence, and our identity as part of Christ is aided by, but goes well beyond, the literary structure of the Eucharistic liturgy. The liturgy itself reflects a conception of the Church's worship as made possible by, and leading ever deeper into, participation in the Triune Life. According to the epiclesis, it is the procession of the Spirit and the

Son which makes the Church's doxology possible. It is because of Christ that the Church *can* worship, our praises are accepted through the Son. Similarly it is by Christ that the Spirit is sent, and by this Spirit that Christ is made present amongst the congregation. I will return to the participatory nature of the liturgy in section 2.1, but for now the key point is that the different way of knowing which the liturgy invites us into is only possible because of participation in the Triune Life.

I propose that the liturgy not only invites us into the images and concepts contained within its literary structure but into God's knowing of Godself. It is our participation in Christ which enables a different way of knowing, as our knowing of self, creation and God is shaped by the Word. In other words, the liturgy acts as a place in which the play of human persons and the play of the Word meet. The liturgy functions as an overlap of two areas of playing, and in doing so the internal world of the worshipper can be shaped by participation in the Word. Playing with the Word enables the reformation of a self-representation and God-representation according to the Word's knowing at a depth, and with a personal specificity, which go far beyond the literary content of the liturgy. In this reformation, participation in the Word makes use of the same psychological dynamics as those involved in the mother-infant relationship or the psychotherapist-client relationship.

Section 2: Play and Liturgy

The previous section introduced the claim that the play of liturgy leads us into the Word's play. This section expands on the different elements of this claim. First, I develop the claim that liturgy is grounded in, and leads more deeply into, participation in the Triune Life. Second, I clarify what it means to understand liturgy as play, arguing that liturgy, like play, opens up a play world. As my argument progresses, I will claim that this play world is the Triune Life as known by the Word. Finally, I argue for the validity of using the language of play to describe the activity of the Word drawing on Proverbs 8:30-31, which the tradition has read as referring to the Word playing before the Father in the act of creation.

2.1. Liturgy as Participatory

My first claim is that the Church's liturgy springs from and leads to deifying participation in the Triune Life. In making this claim I follow the likes of Romano Guardini (1918), Alexander Schmemmann (1966/1986; 1973/2018), Aidan Kavanagh (1992) and David Fagerberg (2004; 2013; 2016).¹⁰⁴ Indeed, I follow Fagerberg in understanding liturgy as 'the Trinity's perichoresis

¹⁰⁴ For a helpful discussion of these thinkers, and the Liturgical Theology movement in which many identify them as part of, see Geldhof (2020).

kenotically extended to invite our synergistic ascent into deification' (2013: 9). This amounts to the claim that liturgy is the extension of the immanent Trinity into creation, in which human beings are taken up to share in the Divine Life and in doing so are deified. As I argued above, we can see the deifying role of liturgy in the Eucharist in which, by the Spirit, the Church is united to Christ. We also see it in baptism in which, by the Spirit, human beings enter into Christ's death and resurrection. However, it is not only these sacramental spaces which lead to deifying participation in the Triune Life, the liturgical practices of welcome, confession, absolution, prayer, silence, the peace, the reading of the word, preaching, and the dismissal to mission all act as spaces in which God leads the human person ever deeper into Godself.

That the Church's liturgy springs from participation in the Triune Life reflects Khaled Anatolios's recent work on the mutual glorification of the Trinity. Specifically, Anatolios' work provides a foundation for understanding the Church's liturgy as an extension of the immanent Trinity into creation. While the mutual glorification of the Triune Life has not been a central theme in the tradition, Anatolios emphasises both its presence and the scriptural foundation for this presence. For instance, Anatolios cites Gregory of Nyssa's characterisation of the Triune Life as a 'circle of glory' (Anatolios, 2020: 154). The theme can also be found in Athanasius (Anatolios, 2020: 154), and Cyril of Alexandria (Anatolios, 2020: 196). Moving to examine the scriptural basis for the mutual glorification of the Trinity, Anatolios focuses on the Gospel of John¹⁰⁵ writing that:

Jesus proclaims that the Father glorifies him (cf. 8:50, 54), that he does not seek his own glory but acts for the Father's glory (cf. 8:50; 12:28–29), and that the Spirit also glorifies the Son (cf. 16:14). The Father glorifies the Son by manifesting his saving power through the deeds and words of Jesus; the Son glorifies the Father by completing the work entrusted to him by the Father (cf. 17:4), including "the hour" of his sufferings (cf. 12:27–28; 17:1); and the Spirit glorifies the Son by manifesting and reactualizing the presence and proclamation of Jesus (cf. 16:13–14). (Anatolios, 2020: 191)

Significantly, the fourth gospel does not only present mutual glorification as an activity of the economic Trinity. Anatolios argues that the presence of mutual glorification in the economy is a result of and flows from the immanent Trinity. In advancing this argument, Anatolios draws particular attention to a passage in Christ's high priestly prayer in which Jesus says to the Father 'I glorified you on earth by finishing the work that you gave me to do. So now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with *the glory that I had in your presence before the world existed*' (Jn. 17:4–5). I follow Anatolios in using a post-Nicene hermeneutic to read this passage as a reference to

¹⁰⁵ See also Ford and Hardy (2005: 23; 152; 168-172).

the Father glorifying the Son before the world existed, i.e. in the immanent Trinity. This provides a scriptural basis to understand the glorification of the Son by the Father as not only the result of the mission of the Son, but as the outworking of an intra-Trinitarian reality. Anatolios goes on to argue that the immanent character of the mutual glorification between the Father and the Son is also captured in the epistle to the Hebrews where Jesus' divinity is expressed as the reflection of the Father's glory (Heb 1:3). As Anatolios writes, 'this formulation posits the Son's very being as integral to the Father's glory and associates the continuity of glory between Father and Son with a continuity of being' (2020: 192).

The mutual glorification of the Trinity is relevant for two reasons. First, it helps to ground the participatory account of liturgy I want to advance. Indeed, we might say that the mutual glorification of the Trinity is the metaphysical ground of the Church's liturgy. Fagerberg comes close to saying as much when he writes that:

The bulb from which the liturgical tulip grows is not a human decision, it is a divine decision intertwined with the reason why God created in the first place. We join a liturgy already in progress. The liturgy is not the activity of the Jesus Club, liturgy is rather coming to be connected into God's own life. The Father unveils the mystery of his will by giving his beloved Son and his Holy Spirit for the salvation of the world and for the glory of his name, and these two purposes are the classically named purposes of liturgy: the sanctification of man and the glorification of God. (Fagerberg, 2013: 4)

Interpreting this passage in the light of Anatolios' work, I suggest that we understand the Church's liturgy as structured by and made possible by the mutual glorification of the Triune Life. The Church's liturgy is its response to 'a liturgy already in progress'. The Church's liturgy is its coming to participate in the doxology of the Triune Life, the Trinity's rejoicing in all which is good and true. As the preface to the Eucharistic prayers puts it:

Therefore with angels and archangels,
and with all the company of heaven,
we proclaim your great and glorious name,
for ever praising you and *saying*:

Holy, holy, holy Lord,
God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.

As the Church gathers, as it praises the Living God, so we are drawn ever deeper into the procession of the Spirit, and in our loves being ordered to God so we come to love creation as it is designed to be loved. As we come to participate in the Word, so we come to know creation, to see it with the dignity and beauty with which it was created. In short, we are sanctified. Yes, this sanctification happens in the Eucharist as we come to recognise that the very nature of matter can be taken up into the Life of God (Schmemmann, 1973/2018: 143), but it is not limited to the Eucharist. We see it also, for instance, in the Peace. As the flesh of our hands comes to touch the flesh of another, so there is an opportunity to be taken up into the breath with which Christ breathed peace onto the disciples (Jn. 20:21-22). In this moment there is an opportunity to love the flesh of another with the love which, in the confession, we recognise we so often fail to do. When we respond to this invitation, we respond to the divine liturgy which has been celebrated since the foundation of the world.

The second reason the mutual glorification of the Triune Life is relevant is that it is connected to the Word's knowing of Godself in important ways. Looking at John's gospel again, we find that glorification and revelation are held closely together. In reading John's Gospel in this way, I again follow Anatolios who helpfully observes how in the Fourth Gospel 'the language of glory is closely correlated with that of revelation and visibility' (2020: 194). We see this in the prologue of John in which the language of visibility and glory are held together. John writes that 'we saw His glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father' (Jn. 1:14). The close relationship between glory and revelation is also present in the wondrous acts performed by Christ which act as signs, themselves manifestations of the Triune glory. Indeed, John explicitly links Christ's performance of signs with the revelation of glory, writing after the wedding at Cana that this was the 'beginning of [the] signs Jesus did in Cana of Galilee, and revealed His glory' (Jn. 2:11).

Read in this way John's gospel suggests that the Son's revelation of the Father is importantly related to the mutual glorification of the Triune Life. Based on an understanding of liturgy as a participation in the mutual glorification of the Trinity, the relationship between glorification and revelation in the Fourth Gospel suggests that participation in the Word will be closely related to liturgy. In participatory terms we might say that in the Church's liturgy we come to participate in the mutual glorification of the Triune Life by which we come to participate in God's knowing of Godself. More phenomenologically, I suggest that in the Church's liturgy we come to see God's glory, to know God as glorious. As this chapter unfolds, I will argue that a component of knowing God in this glory is to know God as the saviour of the world (1 Jn. 4:14).

2.2. Liturgy and the Play World

To further clarify the relationship between doxology and revelation, liturgy and God-representation, section 2.2 examines the relationship between liturgy and play. Before going any further it is worth noting that play is particularly well suited for holding together both the doxological and noetic nature of participation in the Word. In regard to the former, theologians have consistently linked play and liturgy (e.g. Wainwright, 1980; Flanagan, 1988; Chan, 2006: 54-6; Vondey, 2010; Johnson, 2015: 87-100; Williams, 2018; Zizic, 2020; Zahl, 2024).¹⁰⁶ In doing so play is evoked to communicate a range of ideas, the most significant for my purposes are theologians who have used play to emphasise that liturgy leads persons into realities which transcend themselves. Reflecting this Luke Timothy Johnson describes how religious ritual has a ‘sense of participation in a reality larger than the individual self – that element of transcendence we observed in all play – reaches a new level, because ritual involves communion with the divine’ (2015: 98). That play is able to lead into realities which transcend the individual self reflects the core of Winnicott’s conception of play, in which the play of the mother or the psychotherapist can reshape the self’s internal world. For Winnicott, play constructs space in which the self can be led into a knowing which transcends the limits of their internal world. Participation in the Word, I suggest, makes use of the same psychological dynamic, for in coming to play with the Word, human persons are led into the Word’s knowing of creation. Play with the Word is truly ‘transcendental’, as we come to know creation according to the divine archetypes within the Word. As such we come to know creation in a ‘hyper-real’ way, in a way which is more real than in the non-play world.

While Winnicott does suggest that religious ritual can be understood as a form of play (*CW* II: 168; *CW*, VI: 338; *CW*, IX: 267; *CW*, XI: 125), he does not give the relationship between liturgy and play sustained attention. To further articulate the nature of the relationship between liturgy and play I draw on the work of play theorist Johan Huizinga and philosopher Eugen Fink before using Romano Guardini to develop their thinking on play in a Trinitarian direction. Importantly, while both Huizinga and Fink discuss the relationship between liturgy and play in general terms, I limit my application of their thought to the Church’s liturgy. In doing so I follow the likes of Flanagan (1988), Chan (2006: 54-56), and Vondey (2010: 173-4) who read Huizinga for the same purpose.

In drawing on Huizinga, Fink and Guardini, I do not attempt to independently justify their work. Instead, I draw on them to show how Winnicott’s work might be developed in such a way that it

¹⁰⁶ Claims concerning a relationship between liturgy and play have, in part, been motivated by sociological analysis, see for example Bell (1997: 154); Bellah (2011: 89-116). For other theological examinations of play beyond its liturgical relevance see, see: Pieper (1965); Rahner (1965); Cox (1969); Moltmann (1973); Tracy (1984); Wariboko (2012); Walsh (2016); Whidden (2016); Vondey (2018a, 2018b).

can better contribute to a psychologically engaged theology of participation in the Triune Life. In doing so, I emphasise the way that play opens up a play world and in doing so reveals an alternate way of knowing to the non-play world. While in some forms of play the gap between the play and non-play world stems from the non-actuality of the play world, in the Church's liturgy the gap between the play and non-play world stems from the surplus of being which participation in the Triune God leads us into. Liturgy draws human persons into the Word's knowing of both Godself and creation and, in doing so, into what Fink calls the hyper-actuality of creation.

Three Elements of Play in Huizinga

Johan Huizinga's *Homo Ludens* has had a profound impact on the way play, and especially liturgical play, is understood. This makes it a natural place to turn to in order to develop an account of the relationship between liturgy and play. Moreover, attending to Huizinga is particularly important because of his thinking on the way play can 'create a world'.

Before looking at Huizinga's account of *liturgical* play, it will be helpful to clearly articulate the perspective from which he writes. Huizinga is clear that he is investigating the *experience* of play, looking at 'what it means for the player' (1938/2016: 2). Indeed he calls this play's 'primary significance' (1938/2016: 5). In doing so, Huizinga distances his work from ethological examinations of play, 'not looking at the natural impulses and habits conditioning play' (1938/2016: 5).

Huizinga begins his treatment of play by identifying three features of children's games: play must be entered into freely, play involves distinction, and play is importantly related to 'order'. I will take these in turn.

First, play is a 'voluntary activity' (1938/2016: 7). For an action to be play it must be entered into freely, it cannot be compelled or forced. Capturing this Huizinga writes that there is something abundant about the nature of play. Play happens when the work of the day is done. It is that which is gratuitous, outside of the logic of 'need' and 'must', 'by this quality of freedom alone, play marks itself off from the course of the natural process. It is something added to and spread out over it like a flowering, an ornament, a garment' (1938/2016: 7).

Second, and in a move which naturally follows on from play's gratuity, Huizinga describes play's distinctiveness. Huizinga writes that 'play is not "ordinary" or "real" life. It is rather a stepping out of "real" life into a temporary sphere of activity with a disposition all of its own' (1938/2016: 8). Exactly what Huizinga means by 'real' life is not entirely clear, and this lack of clarity is particularly unhelpful. For Huizinga, play manifests its distinction from 'ordinary' life both

temporally and spatially, certain physical spaces are set aside for play, as are certain times. However, there is another, subtler way in which play is distinct. Huizinga understands play as able to create 'a second, poetic world alongside' the ordinary world (1938/2016: 4). This poetic world need not operate according to the same rules or the same limitations as the non-play world, 'not being "ordinary" life it stands outside the immediate satisfaction of wants and appetites, indeed it interrupts the appetitive process' (1938/2016: 9). Thus we see how play's freedom and distinction are interrelated. Play's freedom gives it a distinction, an alternate logic and rhythm, meanwhile its distinction is observable by means of this logic and rhythm.

Play's freedom and distinction allow for the creation of an alternate world, one not governed by the same limitations and constraints as the non-play world. That play creates a play world is reflected in the way play is governed by rules, 'all play has its rules. They determine what "holds" in the temporary world circumscribed by play' (1938/2016: 11). These rules create a kind of 'order', an alternate order to the non-play world (1938/2016: 10). Though the order of the play world is distinguishable from the non-play world we should not erect a binary between the two. Huizinga observes that the 'order' created by play does not remain within the play world: rather 'into an imperfect world and into the confusion of life [play] brings a temporary, a limited perfection' (1938/2016: 10). The beauty of play has an ability to 'enchant' and, in this enchantment, play not only captivates the player in the distinct space in which the play takes place, but the order of the play overflows into the non-play world, potentially transforming it. Wolfgang Vondey puts the point particularly well when he writes that, 'in shaping its own reality, the execution of play casts its own rhythms over the world of non-play, creating a different order entirely and inviting all to share [in it]' (2010: 173-4).

Such a characterisation of play is particularly intriguing given the pneumatology I developed in the previous chapter. Chapter three argued that the gratuity of the Spirit's holding gave the Spirit a relational distinctiveness according to which the implicational subsystem was shaped. More specifically I argued that, through the Spirit's holding, the Internal Working Model came to be shaped according to the distinctive patterns of the Divine Life. Importantly, Winnicott proposed that the holding of the mother provided the foundation for play. Similarly, I propose that we can understand the holding of the Spirit to provide the foundation for playing with the Living God. Formed by the holding of the Spirit, human persons approach Godself ready for their God-representation to be fashioned according to God's likeness. The distinctiveness and gratuity of play creates a space in which the human person can recognise the way in which previous God-representations fail to align with who God truly is. In doing so there is an opportunity to connect the renewed Internal Working Model, shaped by the Spirit, to Godself.

Huizinga and Liturgical Play

Returning directly to Huizinga's thought, Huizinga goes on to observe a relationship between liturgy and play. Having made these opening remarks on the nature of play, Huizinga moves to discuss the extent liturgy might be understood according to these three criteria. One, that play must be freely entered into. Two, that play typically takes place in a distinct time and space, and three that it carries with it its own order. For Huizinga 'the ritual act has all the formal and essential characteristics of play which we enumerated above, particularly insofar as it transports the participants to another world' (1938/2016: 18). In doing so Huizinga shows how far from an understanding of play as marked by mere triviality he is operating; indeed he remarks how play is often characterised by a certain 'seriousness' (Huizinga, 1938/2016: 6).

A critical question for our purposes will be whether the play world of the liturgy involves a stepping outside of the 'real'. Here Huizinga complicates his analysis and, I suggest, distinguishes his analysis of liturgical play from non-liturgical play. Describing liturgical play, he writes that:

The sacred performance is more than an actualisation in appearance only, a sham reality; it is also more than a symbolic actualisation – it is a mystical one. In it, something invisible and inactual takes beautiful, actual, holy form. The participants in the rite are convinced that the action actualises and effects definite beatification, brings about an order of things higher than that in which they customarily live. (1938/2016: 14)

Again, it should be emphasised that Huizinga is not attempting to develop a detailed ontology of play. Despite this, it is still notable that Huizinga refers to the play world as one saturated by realness, and one capable of bringing about a higher order. Huizinga is even clearer on this in the following passage in which he describes liturgical play as 'the mystic repetition or representation of the event. The rite produces the effect which is then not so much *shown figuratively* as *actually reproduced* in the action. The function of the rite, therefore, is far from being merely imitative; it causes the worshippers to participate in the sacred happening itself' (1938/2016: 15, original emphasis). Indeed, we saw something similar in the Eucharistic liturgy I looked at above. Here, the liturgy does not simply imitate the Last Supper, it makes Christ's giving of himself present amidst the congregation.

Moreover, in understanding the play world as causing the 'worshippers to participate in the sacred happening itself', Huizinga raises the possibility that play be understood not as a stepping out of the real but as a stepping into it. The order which play brings about is distinct from the non-play world but it is an open question as to which order is truly *real*. As he writes in the passage

above, the play of the ritual has the capacity to lead the player into an 'order of things higher than that in which' the non-play world exists.

Such a claim is particularly helpful in making sense of the way in which play can be a helpful category for understanding the reformation of a God-representation. Applying Huizinga's account of play to the Church's liturgy, I suggest that the play of the liturgy is capable of leading human persons into a reality beyond themselves, beyond their own conceptions of who God is. It leads human persons into the liturgical play world which contains an 'order of things higher than that' which we previously knew. The play world of the liturgy introduces a certain distinction, it reveals the human person, their neighbours, creation and Godself to be different to how we imagined. That this play is structured by and amounts to a participation in Godself would mean that this distinctiveness, far from being that which is 'inactual', is that which is the most actual. Such an understanding of liturgy reflects Aidan Kavanagh's proposal that liturgy reveals the world as it truly is, 'enact[ing] a world rendered normal' amidst 'radical abnormality' (Kavanagh 1992: 159). In liturgy we come to know and love creation as it truly is, coming to share more deeply in the Word and the Spirit by which God knows and loves creation. My proposal is that, in liturgy, the Triune God uses the play structure of liturgy to draw human persons into God's own knowing and loving of creation. God uses the play structure of liturgy to bring about the deification of the Church.

Fink and the Play World

Huizinga's reflections on play helpfully disrupt any preconception of play as mere frivolity. Instead, Huizinga presents play as an activity in which we freely enter into the play-world, a world whose order can spill over to shape the non-play world. To further develop this account, I draw on the work of Eugen Fink who addresses the ontological status of the play world. Fink's work is particularly notable because he develops an understanding of the distinction between the 'actual' world and the liturgical (*kult*) play world as the result of the hyper-actuality of the liturgical world.

Notably, Fink's analysis has a broad compatibility with Huizinga's.¹⁰⁷ Along with Huizinga, Fink recognises that play can incorporate seriousness (1957/2016: 17). Indeed, he shows a much greater sensitivity than Huizinga to the affective breadth that play can encompass, describing the way in which play can even incorporate 'deep sorrow and abysmal grief' (1957/2016: 22). Fink

¹⁰⁷ Notably, Fink includes Huizinga's *Homo Ludens* in a bibliography of recommended works in *Play as Symbol of the World* (1960/2016: 298). Fink also includes Hugo Rahner's *Man At Play* but does not include Romano Guardini's *Spirit of the Liturgy*.

also agrees with Huizinga in the latter's description of play as 'free'.¹⁰⁸ As Huizinga did, Fink understands play to sit outside of the logic of needs and purposes; 'play does not allow itself to be incorporated without further ado into the complex architecture of purposes' (1957/2016: 20). However, Fink adds further clarity to what it might mean to say that play is outside of the logic of purposes when he writes that play can have internal purposes but not purposes which transcend it. For Fink, play may have motivations, movements towards certain activities and events, but these motivations cannot be understood by referring to purposes outside of the play world.

In addition to developing an understanding of play which can build on Huizinga's insights, Fink also develops an understanding of play which has real compatibility with Winnicott's thinking, especially Winnicott's description of play as the investment of 'chosen external phenomena with dream meaning and feeling' (*CW*, VIII: 311). Echoing Winnicott, Fink describes the way that in play, external phenomena come to take on a new meaning as they are gifted with a 'magical character':

The playing child lives in two dimensions. The plaything's character of being a plaything, that is, its essence, lies in its magical character: it is a thing within simple actuality and at the same time has another, mysterious "reality." It is thus infinitely more than a mere instrument, more than an incidental, foreign thing that we use to manipulate other things. (1957/2016: 24)

As Fink explores play further, he wrestles with the nature of the plaything and in doing so sheds new light on the relationship between the internal and external world. Despite the fact that the plaything takes on a 'magical character', this does not happen in such a way that the external phenomena can no longer be recognised. In essence, though the internal world might shape our experience of the external world, it does not do this by obscuring the external world *tout court*. Fink writes 'the play world does not present itself like a wall or a curtain in front of the beings surrounding us; it does not obscure or veil them' (1957/2016: 25). To give an example, though the bread and the wine might be recognised as the body and the blood of Christ, the recipient of the Eucharist never ceases to be able to recognise the elements as bread and wine. Indeed, they are recognised as both simultaneously, both bread and body, blood and wine. Indeed, Fink explicitly applies his reflections on play to the Eucharist (*PSW*: 145) and I will discuss this further below.

While agreeing with both Huizinga and Winnicott's analyses in important ways, Fink also extends their thinking, developing an account of the ontology of the play world. That play is capable of

¹⁰⁸ Fink describes play as a 'spontaneous activity, active doing, vital impulse; play is existence that is moved in itself, as it were' (1957/2016: 19)

creating a play world is absolutely central for Fink, 'every sort of playing is the magical production of a play world' (1957/2016: 25; see also *PSW*: 114). However, the play world's ontology poses 'an obscure and difficult problem' (1957/2016: 25) for although it takes place within the 'actual' world it is not synonymous with the 'actual' world. Although play takes place within 'actual time' it does not operate within the same temporal logic as the non-play world. Summarising his thoughts, Fink writes that play:

always has a real setting, but is, however, never a real thing among real things. Yet it necessarily requires real things in order to gain a foothold in them. This means that the imaginary character of the play world cannot be explained as a phenomenon of a merely subjective appearance, nor determined to be a delusion that exists only within the interiority of a soul but in no way is found among and between things in general. (1957/2016: 25-6)

To reflect further on the way that play brings together 'real' things while never being a 'real thing among real things', Fink turns to the 'appearance'. He suggests that play occupies a similar status to the appearance, giving the example of a poplar tree reflected on a lake. Fink proposes that the appearance of the poplar tree is an 'actual' object, 'as an image [*bild*] it is actual, an actual reproduction [*abbild*] of the actual, original tree' (1957/2016: 29). At the same time, the way the poplar tree's appearance appears contains within it a reference to the fact that it is a mirror-image, 'not in actuality' (1957/2016: 29). As we saw above, this non-actuality appears in such a way that it can be distinguished from the actual. As such it is not delusional and can be intersubjectively perceived and experienced. Fink writes that the play world, 'with its figures in their roles, truly occurs in the midst of the objective actuality of things, not indeed like a simply actual thing alongside other simply actual things, but rather as an objectively present "appearance," which rests on simply actual things and overlays them in an entirely unique way... It is objective – and yet not an object alongside other objects' (*PSW*: 92-3). We should not rush to interpret exactly what Fink means by actual and non-actual here. Indeed, this last quote with its reference to the non-actual's ability to overlay the actual in a 'unique way' helpfully hints at the ways in which the non-actual might be able to manifest itself in, importantly, real and truth-telling ways.

Fink and the Realness of the Liturgical Play World

So where does this leave the realness of the play world? Fink's thinking on this topic is broad ranging, but the area of his thought which is particularly relevant for my purposes is his reading

of the relationship between play and liturgy. Although Fink goes on to focus on how play acts as a symbol of the world, his reflections on liturgy contain rich theological potential.

Fink begins by identifying liturgy as a form of play (*PSW*: 169), and as such understands it as creating a play world. We will see similar ideas in Romano Guardini's thought below. In proposing that liturgy creates a play world Fink extends his discussion of the actual and non-actual to liturgical play. As with all play, Fink understands the play world of liturgy to contain elements of actuality and non-actuality. However, in liturgical play Fink proposes that the non-actual, rather than emerging from the 'non-being' of the play world, comes about because the play world 'does not exist like customary existing things' (*PSW*: 126).

In developing this further, Fink clarifies that play should *not* be understood as a kind of imitation of the serious world, where the non-actual would be considered *less* than the actual. Rather, for Fink, the non-actuality of play is more akin to the non-actuality of the symbol (*PSW*: 135). The symbol combines the actual and non-actual. To take the example of a nation's flag, the actual is the cloth and the dye, but in addition to this we have the non-actual: the way that a flag can point beyond itself perhaps inspiring pride, belonging, fear, or shame. Importantly, to recognise the non-actuality requires a recognition of the way the actual is incomplete. If we only recognise a flag as cloth and dye, then we cannot read it as a symbol. In reading a flag in this way we would fail to see how the actual can point beyond itself. Play draws attention to the way the world is made up of both the actual and non-actual, and in so doing highlights the inherent incompleteness in the 'actual'. In doing so, play can challenge our assumptions about what is truly real.

As such, play allows the human person to recognise and enter into an alternate order of actuality. This is important if we are to understand why *play* itself is important for knowing God. The gratuity of play, its distinctiveness, and the liturgical order present within it all prepare the human person to restructure their sense of what is real. Theologically we might say that liturgical play is a mode of being which allows us to recognise God in a new way (Alvis, 2019: 95). In other words, play is a mode of being which is naturally predisposed to new ways of conceiving of the world.

Though play is not the only way of being which enables the recognition of otherness, liturgical play is especially suited to this recognition. Describing this Fink writes that play creates a kind of 'breach' within the actual 'for a deeper and truer, genuine actuality' to enter into it (*PSW*: 162). Indeed, when this happens the "non-actual" becomes the locus of the hyper-actual' (*PSW*: 162). At the same time, the non-actual does not displace the actual, but rather adds to it. I began discussing the Eucharist above, and Fink explicitly develops his thinking on play in relation to this:

the bread that two or three who are assembled in the name of God break is not an external sign for a psychological sense that is thereby intended, but is rather, as this bread, the hidden god. The bread does not cease to appear to be bread and to taste like bread, and yet it coincides with God himself in a mysterious identity. God does not break through in his heavenly radiance by means of the inconspicuous loaf of bread; he remains concealed in it. By his superior, indeed, most superior actuality, he does not obliterate the actuality of the breadthing with which we are ordinarily familiar: he does not himself go into the phenomenon but holds himself at a remove from the unbelieving gaze. He is inaccessible to the everyday gaze, for which he is but a “non-actuality.” But it is precisely this structure that, in our context, interests us: how, so long as ordinary, everyday things are held to be the standard of being actual, something that is held to be “non-actual” can be conceived as a higher, superior mode of Being— how what is stronger in Being can conceal itself in the semblance of what is weaker in Being. (PSW: 145)

For Fink, the eucharistic liturgy presents hyper-actuality under the form of actuality. That which is known (the bread) becomes the mode by which the one who is unknown (God) discloses Godself. However, the nature of cultic play means that the way in which the hyper-actual is disclosed does not prevent the recognition of the actual. As Fink writes, ‘God does not break through in his heavenly radiance’. In the Eucharist we remain able to recognise the bread as bread. However, as we come to recognise Christ’s presence amidst the bread so our conceptions of the borders of the actual are expanded. Christ’s sacramental presence challenges any conception of reality in which being is defined solely by the visible, and instead urges us to read the visible as signs for the abundant reality of the invisible God. Developing this further in the next subsection I will argue that grace operates through this play structure to lead the human person into the hyper-actuality of God’s knowing of Godself.

Guardini: Knowing Liturgically, Knowing Truly

Together Huizinga and Fink’s work provides a scaffolding by which we might better connect the noetic and participatory nature of play. On the basis of Fink’s work, I propose that liturgical play leads us to know the world as it truly is, into the ‘hyper-actuality’ of creation. In the remainder of section 2.2 I develop a theological understanding of how liturgical play leads us into hyper-actuality. To do so I propose that the play world which is opened up by liturgy is the hyper-actuality of the Triune Life. Such a claim naturally flows from section 2.1 and the claim that liturgy is grounded in and leads human persons into deifying participation in the Triune Life. Moreover, the participatory nature of liturgy means that it is not liturgy itself which opens up the Triune Life. It is more accurate to say that the Triune Life discloses itself to us in liturgy. Liturgy is the vehicle

by which God shares Godself, and any claims I make about what 'liturgy' does should always be read as claims about what *God* does in liturgy.

To further develop the claim that liturgy leads human persons into the hyper-real, I turn to Romano Guardini's theology of the liturgy. Guardini is a natural conversation partner to engage with because of his extended description of the playfulness of the liturgy. Indeed, Guardini's thinking influenced Huizinga's description of play as distinctive (Huizinga, 1938: 19). Moreover, Guardini is particularly skilled at drawing out both the noetic and participatory nature of liturgy. To guide us through Guardini's thought I focus on his identification of two postures by which human beings might engage with reality.

The first posture is 'purpose', which Guardini understands as a way of interacting with creation in which creation only has value to the extent that it aids or contributes to the self's projects. Guardini writes that 'purpose' is 'the distributive, organizing principle which subordinates actions or objects to other actions or objects, so that the one is directed towards the other, and one exists for the sake of the other' (*SL*, 52). Under the lens of purpose creation only has value because of its relationship to the self and the self's project. We saw a similar posture identified in Augustine's discussion of *uti* and *frui* in chapter two. For Augustine, disordered loves always fail to recognise the goodness and agency of another creature. Disordered loves impose the self's projects, loving the other to the extent that they fulfil a role within the self's own construction of a world.

The danger of disordered love distorting human beings' knowing of creation has been a problem ever since Adam and Eve's taking from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Guardini fully recognises this, nevertheless he argues that the allure of purpose is exacerbated in the wake of the rapid technological progress throughout the twentieth century. Three decades after publishing *Spirit of the Liturgy*, Guardini would go on to write that:

The technological mind sees nature as an insensate order, as a cold body of facts, as a mere "given", as an object of utility, as raw material to be hammered into useful shape; it views the cosmos similarly as a mere "space" into which objects can be thrown with complete indifference. Technological man will remold the world; he sees his task as Promethean and its stakes as being and non-being. (1957: 74)

In the technological age creation comes to be seen as 'mere indifferent stuff' (Grant, 2005: 595). Within the logic of 'purpose' objects, and even people, only have value according to the extent to which they achieve an end outside of themselves. Under the lens of purpose, the world needs to

be shaped because there is no inherent meaning within it. Technology must remould the world, impose 'meaning' upon it. Purpose, Guardini writes, dictates that, 'every instrument has to prove in the first place whether, and in the second to what extent, it is fitted to accomplish the purpose for which it is employed' (*SL*, 52). As such, even liturgy can be seen through the lens of purpose. When this happens liturgy becomes merely a means, a technique by which to shape the world. To refrain from seeing liturgy as having a purpose is not the same as proposing that it achieves nothing as Christina Gschwandtner argues (2021: 21-22). Rather to say that the liturgy has no purpose is to say that the value of liturgy is revealed from within it. We do not start with another end and then worship God; we worship God and in doing so discover creation from within this worship. Within the lens of purpose the value of an object always exists outside of it, within a goal that can be accomplished (*SL*, 53). In contrast, the nature of liturgy lies not in a reality outside it, but in a movement ever deeper into its centre, into the mutual glorification of the Triune Life.

Liturgy, Guardini proposes, allows human persons to deconstruct the distorting lens of purpose and to encounter creation as God knows it, as creation truly is. That the play of liturgy involves the deconstruction of limited perspectives thoroughly aligns with Winnicott's understanding of play and especially play's relationship to object-use. In contrast to object-relating, Winnicott understands proper knowledge of the world to require the recognition of the world as more than 'a projective entity... as an entity in its own right' (*CW*, VIII: 358). Though Guardini does not emphasise the destructive quality of play in quite the same way as Winnicott, we can still find traces of it within his thought. Towards the end of his discussion of liturgy and play, Guardini writes that the play of liturgy teaches us 'not to see purposes everywhere'. The order contained within the playfulness of liturgy fundamentally resists the extrinsic treatment of creation present within purpose. In its place, liturgy contains within it a grace which gifts a permission to 'waste time for the sake of God, and to be prepared for the sacred game with sayings and thoughts and gestures... to play the divinely ordained game of the liturgy in liberty and beauty and holy joy before God' (*SL*, 61-2). Developing this passage from Guardini in a psychologically engaged mode, I suggest that the play of liturgy involves object-use in which the distorting projections we put onto creation (object-relating) are deconstructed such that human beings are enabled to encounter creation as it truly is.

The second posture Guardini identifies is meaning. For Guardini, meaning is a certain way of approaching, a certain way of being in the world by which we come to recognise the value that creatures have in themselves. Contrasting meaning with purpose, Guardini writes:

meaning is not realized by their extraneous effect or by the contribution which they make to the stability or the modification of another object, but *their significance consists in being what they are*. Measured by the strict sense of the word, they are purposeless, but still full of meaning. (SL, 53, my emphasis)

From within the posture of meaning, human persons come to encounter fellow creatures not only for the relevance that they have for the self's own projects, but as the creature is in and of themselves. In approaching reality in this way, the stakes are not 'being and non-being', not at least in the sense of the person imposing or establishing being in the world. From within the posture of meaning, being is not established so much as it is received. Underlying this proposal is Guardini's understanding of creation as having a specific shape to it. Indeed, for Guardini, liturgy leads human persons to recognise the meanings already pregnant within creation. In leading human persons into this recognition, the *telos* of liturgy surpasses its propositional content. As Guardini says, the liturgy does not function 'by means of an artificial system of aim-conscious educational influences'. Rather, in the play of the liturgy human persons are led into:

An entire spiritual world in which the soul can live according to the requirements of its nature... The liturgy creates a universe brimming with fruitful spiritual life, and allows the soul to wander about in it at will and to develop itself there. (SL, 56)

Here we see the play structure of liturgy at work in Guardini's thought, the play of the liturgy opens up 'an entire spiritual world'. I suggest that we understand this 'entire spiritual world' as the hyper-actuality of the Triune Life. In liturgy, I suggest that human beings come to share in God's knowing of creation, to come to know creation as it truly is. As I argued in section 1, we can see this in the Eucharist which teaches the Church to recognise Christ's presence. To give another example, we also see it in the Peace which teaches us that our bodies are intended to be used in friendship with one another. As Alexander Schmemmann writes, 'the world – in worship – is revealed in its true nature and vocation' (Schmemmann, 1973/2018: 143). David Fagerberg also expresses a similar sentiment, describing how liturgy 'reveals how God sees the world' (Fagerberg, 2004: 122). To understand *why* liturgy is able to reveal how God sees the world, it will be helpful to return to Aquinas' Trinitarian account of creation.

Returning to Aquinas' thought can help to further explain why liturgy, understood as the Church's participation in the Triune Life, would lead human beings into the hyper-actuality of creation. In past chapters we saw that both Augustine and Aquinas understood God to know all creatures in the procession of the Word. Expanding on this, Thomas uses the biblical image of the Creator

God as an artisan (e.g. Prov. 8:30), an image that will be central to the next subsection. Drawing on Proverbs 8:30, Thomas writes that:

The craftsman works through the word conceived in his mind, and through the love of his will regarding some object. Hence also God the Father made the creature through His Word, which is His Son; and through His Love, which is the Holy Ghost. And so the processions of the Persons are the type [*ratio*] of the productions of creatures. (*ST*, I, 45.6)

For Thomas, the *ratio* are the 'exemplar forms' (*ST*, I, 44.3) of all things. That the Word contains the exemplar forms of all things means that the ultimate identity of the creature is determined by the way she is known by the Word. The play of the liturgy is able to lead human beings into the hyper-actuality of creation because liturgy leads human beings to play with the Word. In this play, human knowing comes to be shaped by the play of the Word such that the human person recognises creatures according to their divine archetypes in the Word. To continue to use the example of the Peace, in the welcome of handshakes or in the embrace of friends we come to participate in the Word and in doing so come to recognise the truth of one another as children of God, created in the image of God. Equally in the Eucharist, as the Church is drawn into the Body of Christ, so she is invited to know God according to the way God knows Godself, as the One who is worthy 'to receive glory and honour and power, for you created all things, and by your will they existed and were created' (Rev. 4:11).

The Play of the Word

So far this chapter has argued that in coming to share in the mutual glorification of the Trinity human persons enter into the play of liturgy. In doing so we are led into a fundamentally renewed understanding of the world, into the hyper-actuality of the Word's knowing of creation. In section 1 I suggested that we understand participation in the Word as the overlap of two areas of playing, that of human persons and that of the Word. Section 2.2 has given substantial attention to the human play area, and this section changes tack to explore what it might mean for the Word to play.

In developing an account of the play of the Word, I turn to Proverbs 8:30-31 (NASB)¹⁰⁹, in which Wisdom says:

A1 And I was His delight daily,

¹⁰⁹ The NASB translates *měśaḥequet* as 'rejoicing' rather than 'playing', though it notes that playing would be an appropriate alternative translation.

- B1** Playing [měšaḥequet]¹¹⁰ always before Him,
B2 Playing [měšaḥequet] in the world, His earth,
A2 And having my delight in the sons of mankind.

I read the reference to Wisdom as a reference to the Word. In doing so I deploy a classic patristic hermeneutic with Origen, Athanasius, and Gregory Nazianzus specifically reading Proverbs 8 in this way (Rahner, 1965: 22-24; Anatolios, 2020: 151). Augustine would commend such a hermeneutic, holding that, ‘when anything concerning wisdom is said or recorded in the Scriptures, whether wisdom itself speaks or anything is said of it, then the Son is particularly meant’ (*De Trin.* 7.3.5.). Such a hermeneutic itself has an intra-biblical basis to it with Paul both referring to Christ as, ‘the Wisdom of God’ (1 Cor. 1:24) and elsewhere strongly associating Christ with Wisdom (Col. 2:2-3). A number of passages in the Gospels also associate Christ with Wisdom (e.g. Mk. 6:2; Lk. 2:40; 2:52). Given the intra-biblical basis for the hermeneutic as well as its adoption by the tradition it is not surprising that a number of modern theologians, including Romano Guardini (*SL*, 57), Hugo Rahner (1965: 1), and Khaled Anatolios (2020: 151-3), have read Proverbs 8 in a Trinitarian manner, understanding Wisdom as the Son. Indeed, Anatolios reads hints in this passage of the mutual glorification of the Trinity, suggesting that we could read the mutual delight between the Word and the Father as a reference to the mutual glorification of the Triune Life (2020: 151-3). The key point for my purposes is that reading Proverbs 8:30-31 in a Trinitarian manner provides a basis for understanding the Word to play.

When read in this way, Proverbs 8:30-31 also provides a basis for human beings to share in the play of the Word. This is reflected in the passage’s ABBA structure, in which an activity is attributed to the Word and then shared with creation. A1 refers to the mutual delight between the Word and the Father; this is then shared with ‘the sons of mankind’ (A2). Similarly B1 refers to the play of the Word before the Father; this is also shared with the ‘the world, His earth’ (B2). In short, Proverbs 8:30-31 suggests that human persons are invited to share in the play of the Word before the Father. I follow Romano Guardini in proposing that our participation in the Word’s play is the

¹¹⁰ Though most translations translate *měšaḥequet* in Proverbs 8:30-31 as ‘rejoicing’, there is no serious dispute about the possibility of translating *měšaḥequet* as ‘play’ (e.g. Weeks, 2006: 433; Timothy Johnson, 2015: 86-7; Moore, 2020). Indeed, although the LXX translated *měšaḥequet* as εὐφραίνετο (‘rejoicing’), the Vulgate preserves its ludic dimension translating *měšaḥequet* using *ludens*. Importantly, the possibility of translating *měšaḥequet* as play is affirmed by looking at other uses of *měšaḥequet* in the Hebrew Bible. Most notably 2 Samuel 2:14 where *měšaḥequet* is translated as ‘play’ (see also Davidson, 1850: 709), here the LXX also uses a form of the verb παίζω (‘play’). *Měšaḥequet* also appears in 2 Samuel 6:5 and 21 where David dances before the Lord. In translating 2 Samuel 6:5 the LXX again retains a link to play using παίζοντες from παίζω (‘play’).

Church's liturgy. As Guardini says, liturgy is 'the game which the Eternal Wisdom plays before the Heavenly Father in the Church, its kingdom on earth' (*SL*, 61).

Understanding liturgy as the Church's participation in the Word's play before the Father also helps to understand why liturgy is able to lead the Church into the hyper-reality of creation. Going beyond Guardini's thought, I propose that in the play of the Word before the Father the very meaning of creatures is established. Such a proposal reflects Wisdom's role in the act of creation. Prior to vv.30-31 Wisdom reports how they 'established the heavens', 'inscribed a circle on the face of the deep', 'made firm the skies above' and 'set a boundary for the sea' (vv.27-29). Developing this, I suggest that the Word's play before the Father is the Word's crafting of creatures according to the divine archetypes present within the Word. Such a proposal reflects the prologue of John's gospel in which, 'all things came into being through [the Word], and apart from Him not even one thing came into being that has come into being. In him was Life' (Jn. 1:3-4).

Moreover, understanding the divine archetypes as grounded in the play of the Word creates a fruitful dialogue with Augustine and Aquinas' proposal that God's knowing of Godself is the ground of the creative act. Indeed, above we saw that Thomas deploys the image of God as an artisan in Proverbs 8 to argue that the Word's knowing of creatures acts as the ground of creation. Developing this connection, I suggest that we can understand the Word's knowing of the Triune Life as a kind of play. In my proposal it is the Word's play before the Father which establishes the truth of creatures. Such a proposal helps to explain why liturgical play leads human persons into the hyper-actuality of the Triune Life. Liturgical *play* does this because it is a participation in the Word's play. The Church's play, I propose, is made possible and structured by a participation in the Word's play which deifies human persons, leading them to know creation in a human expression of the Word. Participating in the play of the Word in the Church's liturgy, human beings are led into the hyper-actuality of creation, into the meaning of creation established in the Trinitarian processions.

Moreover, understanding creation as an act of play emphasises the *kind* of knowing which participation in the Word brings about. As Hugo Rahner writes, understanding creation as an act of play emphasises that the creative act was free of compulsion, necessity, or transaction:

when, therefore, we speak of God the Creator "playing", there lies concealed in that phrase the metaphysical truth that the creation of the world and of man, though a divinely meaningful act, was by no means a necessary one so far as God himself was concerned. (1965: 11).

The Word's play before the Father abounds with meaning but is devoid of instrumental purpose. The Word rejoices in being the Word and in doing so knows creation in a way which is equally non-instrumental. As Fink drew attention to, such non-instrumentality does not negate the possibility of play including motivations, but it does negate the possibility that these motivations are driven by anything else apart from the Word's non-instrumental knowing of creation. God knows each creature for the creature that she is, and not for the extraneous goals, objectives, or achievements that she accomplishes. This is the truth which is established in the Word's creative act of play, this is how creatures are truly known, and this is how the Word reveals creatures. Moreover, the Word is able to reveal creatures in this way because this is how the Word knows creatures. To participate in the Word's play is to be invited to know creation in a way which is equally uncalculating and free.

Section 3. Play and God-Representations

To provide a brief review of the argument of this chapter, I have proposed that participation in the Word can be understood through the lens of play. Such a proposal was initially motivated by Winnicott's proposal that psychotherapy consists in the 'overlap of two areas of playing', i.e. the creation of an intersubjective space in which representations can be revised. Drawing on a comparison Rizzuto made between psychotherapy and liturgy, I suggested that liturgy might also involve the 'overlap of two areas of playing' in which human persons came to play with God. To develop these insights further, section 2 developed the claim that liturgy is the Church's play in which the Church comes to participate in the Word's play, understood as the Word's knowing of Godself. I argued that, as human beings come before God in liturgy, the play of the Word opens up the Triune Life, leading human persons into the hyper-actuality of both creatures and the Creator.

My third and final section takes this account of play and applies it to God-representations, asking how playing with the Word revises a God-representation. In doing so I argue that playing with the Word allows a God-representation to be connected to the Internal Working Model which has been shaped by participation in the Spirit. To substantiate this proposal, I make three claims. Section 3.1 argues that playing with the Word involves the deconstruction of a God-representation. Section 3.2 argues that playing with the Word involves a reconstruction of a God-representation. Finally, section 3.3 proposes that, in playing with the Word, a God-representation takes on a Christiform shape.

In each section I develop a conversation between Winnicott and a theological concept. Section 3.1 engages with Thomas Aquinas' theology of analogy, section 3.2 with Augustine's theology of

signs and section 3.3 with Augustine's theology of the *totus Christus*. In selecting the theological conversation partner for each section, I chose the thinker and concept which was most conducive to a productive conversation with Winnicott's work.

As the account of play develops in section 3 we will see an important difference emerge between the play of the Word and the play of the human person. The play of the human person involves the iterative deconstruction and reconstruction of a God-representation as God comes to be fully known. As I mentioned above, the play of the Word requires no such iterative movement, the Word simply knows Godself and creation perfectly. As we will see in section 3.1. this qualitative difference between the knowing of the Word and the knowing of the human being, is grounded in the Creator-creature distinction, a distinction inherent in the very nature of analogical language. Nevertheless, the productive value of understanding the Word as playing is that it emphasises the grounding of the journey of deconstruction and reconstruction in the Word. There is no moment in this noetic movement in which Christ is absent, not even in the apophatic 'ray of darkness'. Throughout this movement, Christ like a mother, is sharing as much of himself with the disciple as they can receive. Like the play of the infant and mother, the whole process is grounded in love. The love of the disciple for Christ, and the love of Christ for the disciple.

3.1. Deconstructing God-Representations

I begin by focusing on how participating in the Word's play might deconstruct a God-representation. The importance of deconstructing a God-representation is emphasised by the possibility of having the kind of God-representation which Bernadine Fisher held, a God-representation which does not love her because she is not worthy of love.

In addition to this, that God-representations might need to be deconstructed reflects the fact that all knowledge of God prior to the beatific vision will be imperfect. In accordance with this, chapter one proposed that faith consists in an imperfect participation in God's knowing of Godself. This imperfection means that human beings need to be open to revising their God-representations as they iteratively attempt to grasp more and more of God. However, the sheer abundance of Godself means that the divine essence will never be fully grasped, not even in the beatific vision (*ST*, I, 12. 12.7). I would tentatively suggest that in the beatific vision we will still play with God. God remains always more than we can imagine, and because of this the play of the liturgy need never end. The play is good, *deus semper major*.

Deconstructing our God-representations though is no easy feat. There is a danger that in clinging to our partial knowledge of God we prevent ourselves from seeing that our God-representations are meant to point us to Godself. Indeed, in section 3.2 I will draw on Augustine's thought to argue

that God-representations are intended to function as signs, designed to point us towards the One whom no sign can capture. With Augustine, I will suggest that we enjoy our God-representations correctly when we use them as vehicles by which we might know Godself. Using a God-representation in this way need not happen consciously, it may well happen pre-reflectively.

The difficulty of treating a God-representation as a vehicle to approach Godself is exacerbated by the fact that God-representations are inherently psychologically meaningful, invested with 'chosen external phenomena with dream meaning and feeling' (CW, VIII: 311). God-representations need not be positive nor healthy to be psychologically significant in this way. As in the case of Bernadine, God-representations might be deeply negative and yet provide an important psychological defence mechanism. Such a reality reflects the role of God-representations as transitional objects giving them an integral role to play in maintaining 'psychic balance' (Rizzuto, 1979: 7). The enmeshment of God-representations within the psyche creates psychologically powerful representations 'as idiosyncratically personal as is our hand-writing, our breathing, or our walking' (Ulanov, 2001: 96).

When we hold either our explicit or implicit God-representations too tightly, 'we take our psychic objects for reality... Images no longer serve as symbolic bridges between psyche and transcendent reality. Instead, we cling to them like fetish objects' (Ulanov, 2001: 38). In this we can recall the second commandment 'you shall not make for yourself an idol, or any likeness of what is in heaven above or on the earth beneath, or in the water under the earth. You shall not worship them nor serve them' (Ex. 20:4). As we do so we might read it as a 'permission'. The second commandment is a permission not to worship other gods; Ashley Moyse helpfully reframes it as, 'You may not worship other gods. You may not fashion idols. You may not trust these gods and conform to these idols. "You may" means we are liberated from such malforming devotion' (2021: 154).

To be liberated from malforming devotion, we need to risk playing with our God-representation, a play which can give rise to deconstruction. That play involves the deconstruction of representations is central to Winnicott's thought and exemplified in his concept of object-use. To draw out how play gives rise to deconstruction I will expand on Winnicott's understanding of object-use, before developing aspects of Winnicott's thought theologically.

Winnicott, play, and deconstruction

In chapter one we saw that the infant's aggression, her reality testing, led her to the realisation that the mother was truly external to her. In Winnicott's thought, as the infant plays with the mother, the infant moves from object-relating to object-use, where the mother is revealed as

more than a projective entity. Such a recognition of the mother as more than a projective entity requires a recognition of the incompleteness of a previous representation, and at least a partial deconstruction of it. Intriguingly, Winnicott proposes that the deconstruction of the previously held representation both arises out of and leads to love (*CW*, VIII: 361-4; see also Deri, 1988: 55; Ulanov, 2001: 144). Such a proposal aligns with Thomas' understanding of faith as formed and perfected by charity (*ST*, II-II, 4.3) and especially Thomas' proposal that charity prevents the human person from prematurely settling for an incomplete knowledge of the beloved (*ST*, I-II, 28.2). As I quoted in chapter one, Winnicott characterises the deconstruction of the mother-representation in the following way:

The subject says to the object: 'I destroyed you', and the object is there to receive the communication. From now on the subject says: 'Hullo object!' 'I destroyed you.' 'I love you.' 'You have value for me because of your survival of my destruction of you'. (*CW*, VIII: 357)

Here, we see that the deconstruction of a representation creates the conditions for a real relationship with the mother. The deconstruction of the mother representation reveals to the infant that there is a genuine reality beyond the infant's projection. Through the destruction of the representation the infant comes to know that the 'object is there to receive the communication'. Ultimately, it is the mother's realness, her externality, which makes her safe to receive the infant's destructive impulses, because even after the representation of the mother has been destroyed, the infant can find the mother again. Moreover, in surviving the infant's destruction, the mother creates the possibility for the infant to enter further into love, confident that there is a genuinely external recipient to this love. Such a proposal reflects Thomas' characterisation of love as ecstatic, as leading the human person outside of the confines of the self (*ST*, I-II, 28.3). Moreover, in deconstructing the previously held representation, the infant clears the way for the internal world to be more fully fused with the external world leading to a representation of the object which more fully captures the object.

Applying Winnicott's thinking on play to a participation in the Word, I suggest that participation in the Word can lead to the deconstruction of a God-representation such that we come to better know Godself. No doubt there are instances in which the deconstruction of a God-representation is unhealthy. However, there is also such a thing as a healthy deconstruction. A deconstruction which springs not from disordered desire but from the intimacy of participation in Godself. It is this kind of deconstruction which I focus on here.

In the deconstruction which springs from participation in God's knowing of Godself, 'God is revealed as other than what we thought or wished', and yet we realise that, 'we did not destroy God, only our picture of God' (Ulanov, 2001: 110). The deconstruction of our God-representation clears a kind of psychic space for a genuine encounter with Godself. In this deconstruction:

the child, and the child-in-us in every major relationship in our lives, discovers that destructiveness does not mean total destruction. The mother survives our destroying our picture of her. She rebounds out of herself and her own resource, not because the child withholds his ruthless instinct. For there she stands, external, real, *with* him. With God it is the same. (Ulanov, 2001: 110)

Along with psychiatrist Ann Belford Ulanov, I want to propose a similar relationship between the play between the infant and the mother, and the human person and God. As I outlined in my introduction Ulanov does not devote substantial space to *why* such a comparison is appropriate. Part of the contribution of this thesis has been to provide a theological, and especially a Trinitarian, basis for such a comparison. Understanding play, as I have proposed, in participatory terms helps to ground such a comparison. As the human person comes to participate in the play of the Word, the Word's play leads the human person into the hyper-actuality of Godself and in so doing shows the person that God is 'other than what we thought or wished'.

Just as play opens the infant to the *ipseity* of the mother and this has the capacity to reform previously held representations, I am suggesting that playing with the Word leads persons into the hyper-actuality of the Triune Life. To further investigate the theological basis for the deconstruction of a God-representation, I turn to Thomas Aquinas' theology of analogy emphasising the apophatic component of his thought. In doing so I argue that participating in the Word includes an apophatic dimension which we experience as the deconstruction of a God-representation. Before directly examining Aquinas' thought it will be useful to make a couple of preparatory comments about the nature of apophaticism and its corollary cataphaticism.

Participation and Apophasis

By way of a brief description Denys Turner helpfully describes the cataphatic as, 'the verbose element in theology, it is the Christian mind deploying all the resources of language in the effort to express something about God, and in that straining to speak, theology uses as many voices as it can. It is the cataphatic in theology which causes its metaphor-ridden character, causes it to borrow vocabularies by analogy from many another discourse' (Turner, 1995: 20). The apophatic is 'a strategy and practice of unknowing', importantly it is not 'a naive pre-critical ignorance of God, but... a kind of acquired ignorance, a *docta ignorantia*' (Turner, 1995: 19). Turner is

particularly deft at distinguishing the apophatic from simply negative assertions. The apophatic, he writes, 'is not done, and it cannot be done, by means of negative utterances alone which are no less bits of ordinarily intelligible human discourse than are affirmations'. The apophatic is not so much about the linguistic use of negation than it is the 'linguistic strategy of somehow showing by means of language that which lies beyond language' (Turner, 1995: 34-5). While it is tempting, and indeed not uncommon, to present the cataphatic and apophatic as if they were separate, even contradictory, ways of speaking about God, such a framing misses the way the two work together. Indeed, apophatic theology is not so much about, 'whether the divine is a clearly perceived or an obscurely perceived object of individual thought' as it is, 'that which explains and contextualises the sort of affirmations that theology as such makes' (Rowan Williams, 2024: 247). In other words, the apophatic frames all cataphatic statements about God.

With these preparatory comments in mind, I now turn to Thomas' theology of naming God. As mapped out in chapter one Thomas is clear that human persons know God prior to the beatific vision through participation in God's knowing of Godself, 'by means of a Divine light' (*ST*, I-II, 62.2). However, Thomas also maintains that even though grace deepens our knowledge of God (*ST*, I, 12.13), God remains 'above being named... because His essence is above all that we understand about God, and signify in word' (*ST*, I, 13.1).¹¹¹ In the psychologically engaged theology I have been developing, we might say that although our God-representations can come to more truly resemble Godself, our God-representations will never fully capture who God is for God's essence cannot be wholly captured by human cognition. As such, 'whatever our intellect conceives of God fails to represent him, and thus the divine essence always remains hidden from us' (*DV* 2.1.9 cited in Rocca, 2004: 31, n.15)

It is this recognition of the penultimacy of God-representations which, as Rowan Williams says, recontextualises them. Moving this in a more psychologically engaged direction, I suggest that the recognition of the penultimacy of our God-representations is inherent to the nature of play. Play approaches our God-representations as Transitional Objects, recognising that the purpose of a God-representation is to lead the human person deeper into the reality to which the object (the God-representation) points. Treating a God-representation as a transitional object allows

¹¹¹ Hewitt (2020) has provided a helpful rebuttal to those who doubt (e.g. Stump, 2003: 94) whether Aquinas is truly an apophatic thinker. The most extensive treatment of Aquinas' apophatic theology is Rocca (2004). For other treatments of Aquinas' apophaticism, see Davies (1993: 40-44), Johnson (1998), Turner (2002, 2013: 166-168) and O'Regan, (2020: 377-8). Passing references are also made by Andrew Louth (2012: 144) and Rowan Williams (2024: 233).

the eye to pass through them, rather than rest on them. In play we are led deeper into Godself, rather than demanding to return to the land of Egypt (Num. 14:1-5).

Indeed, the abundance of God's nature requires that we hold our God-representations as Transitional Objects. We might have a God-representation which has been well formed by the scriptures and by the creeds, a God-representation which conceives of God as merciful and righteous, loving and true, and yet even this would need to be destroyed. This is not because this God-representation is 'bad' but rather because of the sheer abundance of Godself. As Thomas says, 'perfections are in God in a more eminent way than in creatures' (*ST*, I, 13.3) and as such our God-representation always needs to be open to being expanded.

In advancing this position Thomas charts a path between applying concepts to God in the same way as they apply to creatures (univocity) and applying concepts to God in a wholly different way than to creatures (equivocity). So much greater are the way perfections exist in God that this means our concepts no longer operate in a univocal way (*ST*, I, 13.5). Nevertheless, it is still possible to use our creaturely concepts to express something true about God; when our God-representations present God as good they really do present something true about the Divine Essence. To put this in Aquinas' more technical language, God-representations are not equivocal (*ST*, I, 13.5). A God-representation which presents God as good, wise, true, just, and compassionate is true, it captures something of and springs from our participation in the Word. As Cyril O'Regan writes, 'Aquinas wants to say that the divine names... give us access to the divine nature and not simply God in his dealing with the world' (2020: 378).

In charting a way between univocity and equivocity, Thomas famously proposes an analogical relationship between the way predicates are used of God and creatures.¹¹² Parsing the nature of an analogy, Thomas describes how health is said to be in both the body and urine; 'healthy' urine though is simply a sign of the property which exists in the body. Similarly Thomas proposes that 'these names are applied primarily to God rather than to creatures, because these perfections flow from God to creatures' (*ST*, I, 13.6). For Thomas, it is because God is good that goodness flows from God to creatures, and as such the primary signification of 'good' is the Divine Essence. This establishes a continuous gap between what is signified (i.e. that God is good) and the mode

¹¹² For further discussion of Thomas' theology of analogy see Kerr (2002: 35-6); Rocca (2004); and Davison (2019: 171-198; 2021). While Aquinas' doctrine of analogy is a massive topic, the key point for my purpose is that it provides an account of representing God in which the way we signify God both captures something true of who God is, while also failing to comprehend who God is. As such we can say that God-representations function neither equivocally nor univocally but analogically.

by which it is signified (i.e. a creaturely concept) (*ST*, I, 13.3). Importantly this gap is not the result of human sin, rather it is baked into the creature-Creator distinction.

Recognising the gap between our God-representation (the mode of signification) and what is signified (God) requires an apophaticism which recontextualises all cataphatic claims about God. The way we represent God may well be true. When we represent God as good, loving, merciful, just, and righteous, we make genuinely true claims about God. However, the sheer abundance of the Divine Essence requires us to recognise that there will always be a failure in the mode by which we make these claims. Our God-representations will always fail to fully capture Godself. More specifically, when we claim that God is good, we need to recognise that our conception of goodness fundamentally fails to capture the fullness of God's goodness. Herbert McCabe puts it well when he writes that, 'when we say that God is good but good in some infinitely more intensive way than we can understand, we are really admitting that we don't know what it is for God to be good — which is natural enough since we do not know what it is for God to be God' (1991: 149). *Deus Semper Major*.

Play as Apophatic

My proposal is that in liturgy human beings participate in the Word in such a way that they are brought to recognise that gap between a God-representation and Godself. In the play of the Word, we are brought to recognise that, 'perfections are in God in a more eminent way than in creatures' and therefore the way that God's essence exceeds our God-representation. Such a proposal not only finds a basis in Aquinas' account of analogy, but it also finds a coherence with the account of play we find in Winnicott in which play leads the human person to recognise the mother as more than 'a projective entity' (*CW*, VIII: 357). Similarly, I am suggesting that in our participatory play with the Word, we are brought into the hyper-actuality of the Divine Knowing. In coming to recognise the hyper-actuality of Godself we come to recognise the way that our God-representations fail to capture the sheer abundance of Godself. We come to recognise that the mode by which we represent God is fundamentally flawed.

As Winnicott proposes, the recognition of the failure of our representations is itself grounded in love. Indeed, Winnicott calls the aggression from which deconstruction springs forth, 'the unconscious backcloth for love' (*CW*, VIII: 361). Similarly, Thomas understands love to ensure that 'the lover is not satisfied with a superficial apprehension of the beloved' (*ST*, I-II, 28.2). Participation in the Word is grounded in the love of God. Love urges the lover on to recognise the way in which Godself is always more than a God-representation, urging the human person into ever deeper participation in the Word. As Thomas observes, it is in charity that we search the

depths of God (1 Cor. 2:10; ST, I-II, 28.2). Indeed, love lies at the heart of all apophatic theology which ‘does not grow out of a fastidiousness about commitment to the practices of faith, but out of a different kind of anxiety, the proper fear of closing our selfhood to the immeasurable plenitude of that which is worshipped’ (Rowan Williams, 2024: 255). The deconstruction of a God-representation, the play of the Word, is grounded in the desire for the ‘immeasurable plenitude of that which is worshipped’, such that we too might delight in the Father as the Son does. Framed in this way we can understand play as inherently apophatic insofar as play is grounded in the desire for a deeper apprehension of the beloved.

To give an example of how participation in the play of the Word might lead to the deconstruction of a God-representation I return to the case of Bernadine Fisher. For Bernadine, coming to participate in the play of the Word means to recognise the gap between her God-representation and Godself. It means coming to recognise the way in which God’s love exceeds the implicational schema of her God-representation. In participating in the Word Bernadine is led into the hyper-actuality of Godself, and in doing so she comes to recognise the way in which the perfection of God far exceeds her God-representation. This recognition leads to the deconstruction of her God-representation. This deconstruction happens at the implicit level as Bernadine comes to sense that God is not like her non-propositional, affectively laden sense of who God is. God is not ‘totally external’ to her, God *is* present with her, God desires to be with her and sees her as worthy of love. The deconstruction of her previous God-representation provides the psychic space for a new God-representation to be formed, it clears space by which a God-representation might be connected with the Internal Working Model formed by the holding of the Spirit. As Bernadine’s God-representation comes to be increasingly modelled on Godself, she does not stop deconstructing her God-representation. Rather Bernadine’s love for God makes her ever ready to recognise the ways she does not know God, such that her God-representation might be ever more fashioned according to God’s knowing of Godself.

3.2. (Re)Constructing God-Representations

While it is tempting to end this thesis with this discussion of apophaticism, this temptation represents the attraction of false closure. For, in playing with the Word we do not only come to recognise the way that our God-representations fail to capture Godself. In coming to recognise the sheer abundance of God, our God-representation can be reconstructed such that it comes to more accurately reflect who God is.

There is a potential tension here as I am arguing both that our God-representations will always fail and that it is important that our God-representations more truthfully reflect who God is. This

tension points us back to the *telos* of God-representations. The *telos* of a God-representation, I argue, is not to perfectly capture Godself, rather God-representations are important because they can act as vehicles which enable us to approach God. Again, Ulanov captures this point, writing that:

we must send out our projections, our bridges to the good, because the good in itself as an external object or energy is so big compared to our little visions of it that it scares us. It could squash us... Without our bridges to this energy, it burns us up. Without our tiny ego-imaginings, this centre defeats us. (2001: 104)

The infant cannot approach the mother as she is in herself because the mother transcends the infant's noetic faculties. Nevertheless, the infant must approach the mother, and so the infant develops a representation of the mother, fusing the noetic faculties which the infant does have (her internal world) with the mother. Similarly, the infinite abundance of Godself prevents a complete comprehension of Godself. We develop God-representations not to deny this reality, but to use them to enter deeper into God's knowing of Godself.

God beyond all signs

To make sense of how a God-representation might be used to enter deeper into God's knowing of Godself, I suggest that God-representations are intended to act as a *sign* of Godself. In using the language of 'sign' I am drawing on the distinction Augustine makes between *signum* (sign) and *res* (thing). I will provide a brief overview of this distinction before applying it to God-representations.

In distinguishing between signs and things, Augustine understands signs as 'a thing which of itself makes some other thing come to mind, besides the impression that it presents to the senses' (*De Doc.* 2.1). From this definition we can see that 'every sign is also a thing, since what is not a thing does not exist' (*De Doc.* 1.5). Whereas things are those 'which are not employed to signify something' (*De Doc.* 1.4). So, for Augustine, there is a kind of completion or finality to things, and there is an incompleteness or a penultimacy to signs. As James K. A. Smith writes, 'the very structure of the sign is to point beyond itself, referring to that which exceeds it. As such, it is incomplete; however, its function is completed insofar as one is directed to then experience the thing itself' (2002: 120).

With these definitions established it should be clear that *res* and *signum* are not mutually exclusive. The *res* and *signum* of a creature are not in competition. Rather, for Augustine, we come to understand a creaturely *res* most fully when we come to appreciate the way it operates

as a *signum*. For Augustine all creatures are signs intended to point towards the only One who is not used to signify something else – the Triune God (Williams, 1989: 138-9). Although ‘things are learnt through signs’ (*De Doc.* 1.4), we know the world correctly when our knowing does not stop at signs, but instead uses signs to know God. The very nature of knowing God through signs emphasises the abundance of God. The incompleteness of signs means that they do not work to contain God but act as vehicles through which we can participate more deeply in Godself.

Applying this to God-representations, if all of creation is intended to act as a sign then it becomes clear God-representations should also function as signs by which we can know Godself. To use a God-representation as a sign requires that we recognise that God-representations are not ends in and of themselves. We were not created to worship our God-representations but to use our God-representations to worship God. As Augustine writes, the proper use of signs is to ‘relate all these things to the praise and love of God’ (*De Doc.* 2.138). This is what we do in liturgy. In liturgy we walk between the necessity and the insufficiency of our God-representations. We use our God-representation in ‘a non-objectifying, non-positivistic mode of conceptualisation which does not reduce God to a concept, but rather employs [signs] in such a way that respects God’s transcendence and *refers* the listener to experience the thing itself’ (Smith, 2002: 128-9; see also Harrison, 2018: 148). God-representations are intended to lead us deeper into Godself, to refer us to ‘experience the thing itself’.

Using Signs in Play

The recognition of signs as incomplete allows us to use them, to move through them to arrive at Godself. Similarly, recognising the inherent incompleteness within a God-representation in play provides the basis for the (re)construction of a God-representation. This reflects Winnicott’s understanding of the deconstruction of representations as integrally related to their reconstruction. The infant’s aggressive deconstruction of their representation of their mother leads them deeper into the mother’s reality. Winnicott develops the relation between deconstruction and construction in an important passage, writing that:

The destructiveness, plus the object’s survival of the destruction, places the object outside the area of objects set up by the subject’s projective mental mechanisms. In this way a world of shared reality is created which the subject can use and which can feed back other-than-me substance into the subject. (*CW*, VIII: 363-4)

For Winnicott our psychic deconstruction of our representation and the object’s survival of this psychic destruction acts as the foundation for intersubjectivity. Developing this in a theologically engaged way I propose that the apophatic recognition of the failure of our God-representations

provides the condition for an ever deeper participation in God's knowing of Godself. One way of interpreting this would be to understand the recognition of the inadequacy of signs as facilitating the use of signs for the praise of God. No doubt this is true, but Winnicott's work helps to develop this further and explain why recognising the inadequacy of signs is important for coming to know God.

For Winnicott the recognition of the failure of our representations draws the human person into a 'shared reality' in which the human person receives 'other-than-me substance' from the object. We might say that the recognition of our God-representations as incomplete (as signs) allows the human persons to enter into the 'overlap of two areas of playing'. In coming to recognise the way we do not know God, so space is created for us to play with the Word, allowing the Word's play to shape our God-representation. As Winnicott says, the deconstruction of a psychic object lays the ground for the reception of 'other-than-me substance'. This other than me substance is the Word's knowing of Godself, the hyper-reality of Godself. Participation in the Word makes use of the same dynamic as the play between the mother-infant and psychotherapist-client, in which the play of the psychotherapist and the mother shapes the infant and the client's representations.

In essence, as we recognise that we do not fully know God, so space is created for us to move ever deeper into Godself. In this journey the human person receives from God, through participation in God, a knowledge of God.

Signs and Love

To give an example of how a God-representation might be revised through playing with the Word, I anticipate the next section by turning to the public reading of scripture. For Augustine it is in the Church's liturgy, and especially in the communal reading of scripture, that we come to know Christ. Michael Cameron helps to draw out the way in which scripture acts as a vehicle into union with Christ, describing how:

[The] healing and nourishing of the soul is mediated exegetically, reasserted and rediscovered daily in reading and searching the Scriptures. The purpose of the exercises is to actualize the union of flesh between believer and Christ within consciousness, and to provoke responsive love. This union attaches the believing soul to the flesh of Christ. (2005: 66)

For Augustine scripture acts as a *signum* by which we might be drawn into loving union with God (*De Doc.* 1.86; see also *De Doc.* 1.84-5; 1.95; 2.17; 3.35). In reading scripture as a sign, I suggest

that the Church opens up a space for the overlap of two areas of playing. The inherent incompleteness of a sign invites God to teach the human person who God is. Reading scripture as a sign opens up scripture from a binary encounter between the human person and the text, to a trinitarian encounter between the human person, the scriptural image, and Godself. As we recognise the inherent incompleteness in images such as the 'good shepherd' (Ps. 23) we open up this image to Christ. We ask Christ to teach us who the good shepherd really is, to lead us into the hyper-reality of these images. In doing so we invite a movement into apophaticism, into the sheer abundance of God. However, in the recognition that we do not fully know God, there is also space created for God to teach us who God is. Again this reflects Winnicott's proposal that in the destruction of the psychic object, 'a world of shared reality is created which the subject can use and which can feed back other-than-me substance into the subject' (CW, VIII: 363-4). In this play, scripture becomes a place of encounter with the Living God, a place in which our God-representation can be radically reworked by the hyper-actuality of the Triune Life as the Word contributes other-than-me substance to our God-representation.

To return again to the case study of Bernadine, using scripture as a sign works not only to deconstruct her God-representation but to reconstruct it. In recognising that she does not know who the good shepherd is, space is created for the Word to teach her who God is. In doing so Christ comes to reveal himself as the one who loves her, and who desires union with her. Bernadine has been prepared for the recognition of this reality by the holding of the Spirit which has reshaped her Internal Working Model, and the deconstruction of her God-representation through playing with the Word. Now the play of the Word works to connect her new Internal Working Model with a God-representation shaped by the Word. In the deconstruction of her psychic object (i.e. God-representation) the Word receives the space to teach Bernadine who God is. In turn, Bernadine comes to know that she is loved by God and to know God as loving.

3.3. Knowing Christ

My final section further explores the way in which participation in the play of the Word is likely to shape a God-representation. This is an important component of investigating the 'material effects' of participation in the Word. In the account I develop I do not attempt to give a list of predicates which a God-representation might include, rather I focus on how God comes to be known according to a certain 'mode of relatedness'. That God-representations function as a mode of relatedness has been a point I have argued throughout this thesis. We saw it first in chapter one where, on the basis of Rizzuto's work, I understood a God-representation as 'never only something to be believed *in*, a fact of knowledge or dogma alone' but 'an interpersonal disposition that affirms the existence of a *mode of relatedness* between the believer and others'

(Rizzuto, 1995, cited McDargh, 1997: 191). Similarly, that God-representations contain a mode of relatedness was central to the concept of an implicit God-representation which, on the basis of ICS, I argued contained affectively encoded patterns of relationality. This section investigates what patterns of relationality we might expect a God-representation, shaped by participation in the Word, to contain.

To develop such an account, I continue to draw on Augustine's thought, this time turning to his theology of the *totus Christus*.¹¹³ Turning to Augustine's theology of the *totus Christus* is appropriate because it gives us a sophisticated account of the mode of relatedness which we might expect a God-representation to contain. Moreover, Augustine understands this mode of relatedness to be developed within the Church's liturgy, further emphasising the way in which God is known truly when known liturgically.

By way of a brief overview, Augustine understands the *totus Christus* as the ontological union of the ascended Christ (the head) with the Church (the body of Christ).¹¹⁴ Capturing this Augustine writes that 'head and body are parts of a whole, and cannot be divided from each other. What are these—head and body? The Savior and the Church' (*En.* 90.9). Again he writes, 'the fullness of Christ, therefore, is both head and members (*Io. Ev. Tr.* 21.8, cited in Fogleman, 2023: 305). Augustine deploys this principle in his reading of the Psalms, understanding the Psalter as prayed by both the Word and the Church.¹¹⁵ This union of voices while preserving distinction (Bonner, 1986. Fogleman, 2023: 309) reflects a broader union between the ascended Christ and the Church in which the ascended Christ is intimately present *within* the Church's experience. In advancing these claims Augustine helps to further emphasise liturgy as a space of deification. In the Church's liturgy the Church is led ever deeper into Christ, and in doing so comes to know the Father as Christ knows the Father.

¹¹³ For overviews of Augustine's theology of the *totus Christus* see especially *En.* 37.6 and *En.* 140.3. In developing this overview of Augustine's understanding of *totus Christus* I am particularly indebted to Rowan Williams' analysis of the way Christ is present in emotional experience (1979/2014: 80-84). For further discussion see also Rowan Williams (2004); Cameron (2005; 2015) and Alex Fogleman (2023).

¹¹⁴ For discussions of *totus Christus* as a metaphysical principle see Ayres (2010), Meconi (2014), Iacovetti (2018) and Fogleman (2023).

¹¹⁵ Michael Cameron (2015) helpfully draws out the biblical roots of this exegetical principle noting that writers of the New Testament read Christ's life through the Psalms (especially Ps. 2; 22; 69; and 110). Alongside this, the New Testament witnesses to Christ's identification with the Church, as seen in Christ's own words prior to his crucifixion (Matt. 25:40), the ascended Christ's words to Saul (Acts 9:4) as well as throughout Paul's writings (1 Cor. 12:12-27; Rom. 12:4-5; Eph. 1:22-23; Col. 1:18). Augustine brings these two themes together to read Christ as joining the Church in their praying of the Psalter. For another discussion of *totus Christus* as an exegetical principle see also Fogleman (2023: 307-310).

With this overview in place, the remainder of this section explores how Augustine understands the mode of relatedness between Christ and human persons. Based on Augustine's theology of the *totus Christus* I argue that in participating in the Word's play we come to know God as perfectly attuned to our emotional experience. To distinguish this from the previous chapter I suggest that while the holding of the Spirit reforms the Internal Working Model, it is the Word's play which connects a God-representation to the patterns of relationality revealed by the Spirit. Drawing the different elements of Augustine's thought together, I finish by suggesting that in participating in the Word we come to know God as 'saviour'. This is, of course, not to prohibit participating in the Word from reforming a God-representation according to other modes of relatedness in addition to this.

Augustine and the Totus Christus

To develop an account of how participation in the Word shapes the mode of relatedness contained within a God-representation I turn to Augustine's concept of the *totus Christus*, especially as set out in his *Expositions of the Psalms*.¹¹⁶ In his sermons on the Psalms Augustine emphasises that Christ is perfectly attuned to the Church's experience. For Augustine, such attunement is a continuation of Christ taking on flesh in the incarnation (Jn. 1:14), a continuation of the Word's union with humanity in which Christ binds humanity to himself (*En.* 62.2). Crucially, Christ's solidarity with humanity does not end at Christ's ascension but remains a perennial ontological reality. In making this claim Augustine is developing the ascended Christ's identification with the Church, an identification paradigmatically made in the ascended Christ's words to Saul, 'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?' (Acts 9:4).

Christ's union with the Church means, Augustine argues, that Christ enters into all of the Church's experience. As an example of this, commenting on 'because they persecuted someone whom you struck, and added to the pain of my wounds' (Ps. 69:26), Augustine writes that, 'the Lord is undoubtedly speaking here in the name of those whose body he had made his own, whose flesh he had assumed' (*En.* 68.ii.11). For Augustine, Christ is the one who is intimately present in and takes on not only the physical suffering we experience but the emotional dimension of suffering. Indeed, Augustine shows great sensitivity in how the two are linked (*En.* 87.3; *En.* 93.19).¹¹⁷ Importantly Augustine argues that there is no experience which is beyond Christ's

¹¹⁶ Augustine also deploys *totus Christus* in his *Homilies on the Gospel of John* and his *Homilies on The First Epistle of John*.

¹¹⁷ At conferences I have heard a number of people make passing reference to the claim that Augustine holds that Christ only suffered in the body. For a notable example of published work holding this position see Moltmann (1980: 46). At least in his *Expositions on the Psalms*, Augustine does not hold this position.

loving attunement, for 'whatever he suffered, we too suffered in him, and whatever we suffer, he too suffers in us' (*En.* 62.2). The ultimate expression of this principle, for Augustine, is the cry of dereliction which, as the previous chapter stressed, Augustine reads as Christ taking on *our* cry of abandonment.

Importantly, Augustine stresses that the interpenetration between Christ and the Church is not one way – it is not only that Christ is present with human persons, but humanity are also with Christ at the right hand of the Father. For, 'because the body is joined to its head, the head cries out on behalf of the body' but 'the body is likewise present in the head, as the apostle shows: he has raised us up with Christ and made us sit with him in the heavenly places' (*En.* 55.3). In participating in Christ, human beings come to share in Christ's ascension and in doing so come to be sat at the right hand of the Father (*En.* 55.3).

On the basis of Augustine's theology of the *totus Christus*, I propose that participating in the Word shapes a God-representation such that human persons come to know God as perfectly attuned to their experiences within the world. The loving holding of the Spirit reshapes the Internal Working Model, but it is in participating in the Word that these patterns of relationality are connected to a God-representation. It is in participating in the play of the Word that we learn that God loves us, and it is in Christ and especially in the Triduum that God reveals the radical extent of God's love *for* us.

To develop this further I suggest that, in participating in the Word, our God-representations come to take on a Christological shape. By this I mean that, through the play of the Word, our God-representations come to be characterised by the pattern of interaction between God and humanity which is revealed in Christ. Importantly, for Augustine, coming to know God according to this pattern not only changes our God-representation it also changes our self-representation. Participating in the play of the Word not only teaches us that God is loving in an abstract sense, it also teaches me that God loves me. As Bernadine comes to participate in the Word, she comes to know that God is both loving and loves *her*. United to Christ we come to recognise that the Father loves us with the love which the Father has for the Son, in doing so we come to know ourselves as the beloved child in whom God is well pleased (Mt. 3:17; Mk. 1:11; Lk. 3:22). As Proverbs 8 puts it, in the play of the Word we come to know ourselves as 'His daily delight' (v.30). Indeed, Augustine often preaches with the aim of provoking this realisation in his congregation

See, for instance, Augustine's argument that Christ's 'soul suffered along with his flesh in the passion. What we call bodily pain cannot leave the soul unaffected, for when bodily pain looms it is invariably preceded by sadness, which is the pain of the soul alone. The soul can be in pain even when there is no pain in the body, but the body cannot be in pain without there being pain in the soul' (*En.* 87.3).

(e.g. *En.* 26.2.10; *Serm.* 215.5). As Michael Cameron says, in a passage cited previously, Augustine preaches with the purpose of ‘actualiz[ing] the union of flesh between believer and Christ within consciousness, and to provoke responsive love’ (2005: 66).

In the play of the Word the human person is led into the hyper-actuality of who they are as a person. They come to know themselves as more loved and more wanted by God than they could have possibly imagined. Moreover, in doing so human persons are enabled to know *God* as more loving than they could have possibly imagined. That the reformation of a God-representation and self-representation are intertwined reflects an understanding of God-representations as modes of relatedness. It also reflects my proposal that a God-representation is changed through participating in the Word which includes God’s knowing of all creatures. Participating in the Triune Life the human person is held by the Spirit to their truth within the Word and in doing so comes to know themselves as God knows them, just as their God-representation comes to be increasingly modelled on Godself. Following the argument of the last two sections, I suggest that such a reformation of both self-representation and God-representation will take place in an iterative movement of deconstruction and reconstruction.

As this chapter comes to a close, I draw together Augustine’s presentation of Christ as perfectly attuned to the Church and the importance of the Triduum for this revelation to suggest that participating in the Word’s play leads to knowing God as ‘saviour’ (*soter*), (e.g. Lk. 2:11; Jn. 4:42; 1Jn. 4:14; Eph. 5:23; 1 Tim. 4:10). In coming to know God as infinitely loving, so we come to recognise the way in which God’s love led God into the far-off places (Eph. 2:13), we come to know God as the one who did that which we were unable to do (Rom. 5:6). Implicit in this mode of relatedness is a profound acknowledgement of need and dependence, amidst an equal acknowledgement of care and provision. It is a dynamic characterised by divine deliverance, motivated by the abundance of divine love. As we come to recognise this deliverance, I suggest that doxology becomes the natural response. As Winnicott says, ‘gratitude is dependence that is acknowledged’ (*CW*, VI: 319).

As we come to recognise our profound dependency on God, we not only recognise God’s love for us, but we recognise the fittingness of responding to this love in praise. In doing so our God-representation comes to take on a doxological mode of relatedness which prepares us to move ever deeper into the reality which Christ has won for us. As we move ever deeper into this space, we come to recognise that God is not only worthy to be worshipped because of what God has done for us. God was infinitely worthy of worship before taking on flesh. In the play of worship, we come to glimpse the sheer profundity, the sheer abundance of the Triune glory which shone

before the foundation of the World. As Augustine puts it, the union between the Word and the Church not only means that the ascended Christ is united to the Church, it means that the Church is raised up to the heavenly places (Eph. 2:6). Seated with Christ in the heavenly places, God very much remains our saviour, but we find that we have far more reason to worship than gratitude. Playing with the Word reveals the Triune God as the one who is worthy to be worshipped. When we learn this, so our God-representation becomes capable of expressing the cry of the angels:

Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might, heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.

Concluding Thoughts

This chapter argued that the reformation of a God-representation is the result of deifying participating in the play of the Word. I argued that deifying participation in the Word made use of the same psychological dynamics as the play in the infant-mother and the client-psychotherapist relationship, in which the internal world of the mother and the psychotherapist came to shape the infant and the client's internal world. In making this argument, I began by outlining an account of the Word as God's knowing of Godself. Having done so I turned to ask how we might understand human persons to participate in this knowing. To develop a response to this question, I turned to Winnicott and Rizzuto who drew connections between play, liturgy, and psychotherapy. In particular I drew attention to Winnicott's proposal that psychotherapy is 'the overlap of two areas of playing'. In this dynamic, the 'knowing' of the psychotherapist came to shape the knowing of the client. Noting the basic compatibility with participatory accounts of knowing God, where God's knowing shapes the knowing of the human person, I investigated whether 'play' could be a category by which we understand participation in the Word.

To further understand the category of 'play' theologically, I turned to the Church's liturgy, noting the widespread observation of a connection between liturgy and play. The appropriateness of turning to liturgy was further accentuated by the connections Winnicott and Rizzuto make between play and liturgy, as well as theological work which has drawn connections between liturgy and play. In section 2.2 I argued that liturgy has a play structure, just as play opens a 'play world' so I suggested that the play world of the liturgy was the Triune life, arguing that as human beings come to play with the Word so they come to know creation according to the hyper-actuality of the Triune Life. That the play of the Word can reveal the truth of creation reflects the association Proverbs 8 makes between the Word's play and the Word's creative action. Expanding on this I suggested that the play of the Word leads persons into the truths established

by God's creative action. In short, the play of the Word leads human persons into God's knowing of Godself.

In section 3 I went on to explore how participation in the Word's play might reshape a God-representation. In doing so I made three claims. First, I argued that participating in the play of the Word could deconstruct a God-representation. Second, I argued that participating in the play of the Word could reconstruct a God-representation. Third, I finished by arguing that participating in the play of the Word led to a Christoform God-representation, in which God came to be known as perfectly attuned to human experience. Central to this revelation is the Triduum. Reflecting on this, I tentatively proposed that participation in the play of the Word not only revealed God as attuned to human experience, but as saviour and deliverer. In coming to know God in this way, human persons come to know God as worthy of worship, not only because of God's deliverance from sin but because of the glory of the Triune Life by which human beings are delivered from sin. As human beings sit with Christ in the heavenly places, so they come to recognise God as the One who is infinitely worthy of worship.

Conclusion

This thesis has developed a psychologically engaged theology of participation in the Triune Life. To do so I have: one, drawn connections between the intra-Trinitarian identity of the Triune persons and the material effects which flow from participation in this identity. Second, I have used specific psychological concepts to develop what it means to participate in the Spirit and the Word in a more phenomenological direction. I suggested that participation in God's loving of Godself, the Spirit, could be developed by understanding the Spirit as the One who Holds. Similarly, I argued that participation in God's knowing of Godself, the Word, could be developed by understanding the Word as the One who Plays.

In doing so I have made three key claims. My first claim was a methodological argument proposing that deifying participation in the Triune Life made use of human psychology. Second, I argued that participating in the Spirit's holding revises the Internal Working Model. Third, I suggested that playing with the Word led to the revision of a God-representation. In this conclusion I provide a summary of these claims, identify the key contribution this thesis has made to the literature and reflect on ways in which my account might be further developed.

The Three Claims of this Thesis

A Psychologically Engaged Theology

Running throughout this thesis has been the claim that psychological research on the infant-parent relationship can help develop the 'material effects' of participation in the Triune Life. In chapter one I rooted this proposal in Thomas' principle that grace perfects nature, arguing that this provided a theological basis for thinking that deifying participation in the Triune Life would make use of human psychology. Such a proposal was further affirmed by Aquinas' theological anthropology in which human psychological faculties are grounded in the Trinitarian processions. In doing so Thomas argues that the perfection of the human person lies in the ever deeper participation of these faculties in the Trinitarian processions.

Ana-Maria Rizzuto's development of Winnicott's thought was particularly important in identifying the psychological dynamics involved in knowing God, arguing that God-representations are materially shaped by the infant-parent relationship. Here, infant experience of parental attunement provided a foundational sense of relationality which went on to shape a God-representation. Moreover, using Winnicott's work I argued that if grace works to perfect nature then there was a foundation for thinking that the dynamics operative in the infant-parent

relationship would also be operative between human persons and Godself. In doing so I argued that we had a foundation for thinking that the Triune God would hold human persons, leading them to play with the Living God.

Chapter two further developed the psychological dynamics operative in coming to know God. In doing so I particularly focused on how a foundational sense of relationality might shape a God-representation. Attachment theory clarified the link between parental attunement and the development of a God-representation, introducing the concept of the Internal Working Model. Moreover, attachment theory further emphasised that the Internal Working Model could be revised through the attunement of a surrogate attachment figure. Drawing on ICS, I clarified that the Internal Working Model was an implicational schema, and as such is affectively laden and non-propositional. To develop this in a theological direction I noted the role of the Internal Working Model and implicational schema more broadly in emotion production. This helped to generate a dialogue with Augustine's theology of emotions, in which participation in the Spirit shaped emotional production. Bringing Augustine's thought into conversation with ICS and attachment theory I argued that participation in the Spirit reshaped the implicational code of the Internal Working Model.

The Spirit Holds: Reconfiguring a Sense of Relationality

These first two chapters set the scene for the more constructive chapters which followed. Drawing on my proposal that deifying participation in the Triune Life made use of the same psychological dynamics as those present in the infant-parent relationship, chapter three claimed that God reforms the Internal Working Model through the Spirit's holding. In developing this argument, I found initial support from Augustine who proposed that the Spirit is the embrace of the Father and the Son. I argued that the Spirit's intra-Trinitarian identity as the One who holds the Father and the Son provided the ground for the Spirit's economic mission as revealed in the Triduum. Moreover, the Spirit's relationship to Christ throughout the Triduum fundamentally shapes what it means for human persons to participate in the Spirit.

Turning to the Triduum, I argued that the Spirit held the Father and the Son as the Son took on the infinite distance from the Father. The Spirit's holding of the Son deconstructs the possibility of forsakenness ensuring that nothing can separate us from the Love of God. Throughout Holy Saturday the Spirit holds the dead flesh of Christ and therefore the Spirit can hold the death that it finds in the Internal Working Model. The Spirit holds our painful histories and in doing so brings forth resurrection life.

Drawing attention to the material effects which spring from participation in the Spirit's embrace I argued that the Spirit deconstructs our defence mechanisms allowing us to recognise the pain of our histories. In their holding the Spirit unravels the logic which causes us to deny or suppress the wounds we carry. As these wounds emerge, the Spirit continues to hold us. I likened this holding to the construction of an intersubjective space in therapy, what I referred to as the 'moving along process'. I emphasised that when this holding works imperceptibly, this invisibility is due to the abundance of the Spirit's love which goes unrecognised because of its unfamiliarity. However, it is this invisibility, the fact that the Spirit deploys patterns of relationality not recorded in the Internal Working Model, which allows the Spirit to revise the Internal Working Model. As the Spirit continues to hold us in radical love, so the patterns of relationality recorded in the Internal Working Model come to be reworked according to the pattern of the Spirit's love. When this happens a now moment occurs. Now moments are affectively hot, the subjective manifestation of the revision of implicational schemata according to the patterns of the Spirit's relationality. In essence, the holding of the Spirit comes to shape the Internal Working Model according to the patterns of Divine Love.

The Word Plays: Knowing God

Having mapped out the way in which the Spirit reworks the Internal Working Model, chapter four considered how participation in the Word revises a God-representation. In doing so I extended my proposal that deifying participation in the Triune Life makes use of the same psychological dynamics as those involved in the infant-parent relationship.

To develop an account of the Word's play I began by noting the widely held proposal that the Word's intra-Trinitarian identity consists in being God's knowing of Godself. From this I turned to ask what it might mean to enter into this knowing. Intriguingly, both Winnicott and Rizzuto had made connections between liturgy and play, suggesting that liturgy operates in a similar way to the play of psychotherapy in which foundational representations are revised through the creation of an intersubjective space.

To investigate these psychological claims theologically, I asked whether we might understand the Church's liturgy as participation in the Word's play in which human persons' knowing came to be reshaped by the Word's knowing. I found an initial basis for this in the Gospel of John which connects the mutual glorification of the Triune Life with the Word's revelation of the Father. Attending to this I argued that the Word reveals the Triune God in doxology, in the Church's liturgy. That liturgy might function as a participation in the Word's play was further strengthened by a substantial amount of theological work which has emphasised the participatory and ludic

dimensions of liturgy. Drawing this together I developed an account of liturgy as a kind of play, emphasising that the play structure of the liturgy led human persons into the hyper-actuality of the Triune Life, allowing persons to know creation and Godself as God knows them. Drawing on Proverbs 8:30-31 I argued that in liturgy human persons come to participate in the play of the Word which I understood as the Word's knowing of creation, a knowing which establishes the truth of creatures.

Drawing out the material effects of participation in the Word I argued that participation in the play of the Word connected the Internal Working Model reformed by the Spirit to a God-representation. In doing so I emphasised the way that participating in the play of the Word led to both the deconstruction and the reconstruction of a God-representation. The Word's play leads human persons into the hyper-actuality of Godself and in doing so reveals the inadequacy of a God-representation. The deconstruction of a God-representation creates psychic space for a new God-representation to be constructed according to the Word's knowing of Godself. God-representations are, I suggested, necessary to approach Godself, and yet can never capture the fullness of Godself.

I finished by looking at the mode of relatedness which playing with the Word might inculcate in a God-representation. I argued that in playing with the Word human persons come to know God as perfectly attuned, as perfectly loving. While it is the holding of the Spirit which reforms the Internal Working Model it is the play of the Word which connects this reformed Internal Working Model with a God-representation. More specifically I argued that in the Word's play human beings come to develop a Christoform God-representation. In the play of the Word we come to know God as saviour, as the one whose abundant love led God to go the ultimate distance that we might share in the Triune Life. As we come to recognise God as saviour, I suggested that we also come to recognise God as worthy to be worshipped, not only because of God's salvific action, but because of the glory of the Triune Life from which this salvific action proceeds. In doing so the play of the Word invites us into a doxology of ever deepening knowing.

Key Contribution to the Field

To draw out the key contribution this thesis has made it will be helpful to situate this thesis amongst the four thinkers whom I discussed in my introduction.

In developing this psychologically engaged theology of participation in the Triune Life, I have drawn from the work of both Mark McIntosh and Simeon Zahl. McIntosh provided the Trinitarian ontology which has pervaded this thesis. Zahl has fundamentally shaped its methodology, inspiring me to 'draw connections between metaphysical or otherwise abstract dogmatic

statements about the status of believers before God in the Spirit and their phenomenological correlates, and where possible to refuse the distinction entirely' (2020: 75). In bringing the two approaches together something fundamentally new has emerged. This thesis has focused on how the intra-Trinitarian identity of the persons shapes the phenomenological dimension of participation in the Triune Life. This is a question which neither McIntosh nor Zahl makes central to their work. Although McIntosh does comment on the appropriateness of such an approach (1998: 62-89; 151), this thesis makes the question central to its investigation. In doing so I help to extend the type of Trinitarian ontology found in McIntosh's thought into conversation with psychology, identifying some of the psychological dynamics involved in participation in the Triune Life, and the material effects such participation brings about.

My contribution to Zahl's project lies in developing his methodological argument in three important ways. First, this thesis suggests that it is not only pneumatology which needs to make connections between ontological and phenomenological claims but Trinitarian theology more broadly. I do not think Zahl would disagree with such a proposal, but it is not an argument he explicitly makes. Second, I have argued that an account of the material effects which spring from participation in the Triune Life needs to be rooted in a theology of the intra-Trinitarian identity of that person. This naturally flows from an understanding of the economic Trinity as the outworking of the immanent Trinity. Third, I have argued that phenomenological accounts of participation in the Triune Life should encompass not only the types of experience which happen at the level of conscious awareness but those which Lacoste calls 'inexperience'. Pastorally attuned doctrinal claims also need to account for the possibility of coming before God in the silence of Holy Saturday. Indeed, these can be some of the most difficult and confusing moments of Christian discipleship and it is essential for the Church to be properly resourced to respond to them. Attending to such modes of experience is exceedingly difficult without a robust account of the intra-Trinitarian identity of the Spirit. In my argument, in the silence of Holy Saturday we remain held in a love too abundant to fully know, awaiting the conscious culmination of a process that has already begun.

Turning towards the kind of interdisciplinary literature exemplified by Fraser Watts and Ann Belford Ulanov, my key contribution lies in the way I have developed a robustly theological, and indeed Trinitarian, grounding for the psychological phenomena I have explored. In doing so I have sought to treat both disciplines with real integrity, giving substantial attention to both the psychological dynamics present in deifying participation in the Triune Life as well as working to ground these dynamics within a robustly theological analysis. This is perhaps most clearly seen in my examination of 'attunement'. The psychological literature had a profound impact in

directing my attention to this phenomenon. However, once I began to investigate what it might mean for God to be attuned to human experience, I developed a thoroughly theological proposal in which the Spirit's attuned love is grounded in the Spirit's relationship to Christ throughout the Triduum. Similarly, it was Winnicott's understanding of play which drew my focus to the deconstruction of a God-representation, however, this was then located within the Creator-creature distinction as expressed in Thomas' theology of analogy. In doing so I have attempted to provide a worked example of the kind of approach which Watts commends, in which psychology is related to theology as 'a close-up picture to a panoramic view' (2002: 8).

For theologians who value the conclusions drawn I hope this work might inspire a closer reading of the psychological texts and theories I draw upon. Considering its widespread support and significant evidence base it is particularly striking that there has not been a more substantial theological engagement with attachment theory.

Opportunities for Further Development

Looking to the future the constructive argument of this thesis points to two areas which particularly deserve further development. First, the psychological theories which I have focused on throughout this thesis have primarily conceived of human relationality in dyadic terms.¹¹⁸ Winnicott's work focused on the relationship between the infant and the mother, similarly Bowlby and Ainsworth's work looked at the infant's experience of a caregiver, and so when I have developed this theologically, I have primarily referred to the *individual* participating in God. Of course, human persons do not only exist in dyadic relationships, they also exist in groups. Moreover, human persons do not approach God only as an individual, especially in liturgy, they approach God as a *people*, the people of God. Future research should explore the way in which social psychology might help us better understand the material effects of deifying participation in the Triune Life. Indeed, concepts such as 'collective emotion' (von Scheve and Ismer, 2013; von Scheve and Salmela, 2014; Sullivan, 2015; Stanley, 2021), and 'emotional contagion' (Hatfield, 1993; 1994; 2014; and Brennan, 2014) offer rich potential for theological engagement, with Simeon Zahl having already provided a very helpful initial engagement with these concepts (2021). Moreover, Augustine's attention to the way the Spirit forms and shapes groups would make him a natural conversation partner for this project. In particular Augustine's proposal the Spirit as the 'very fountain of love' makes it possible for 'many souls through love [to be] one soul

¹¹⁸ I am also indebted to Zahl (2021) for drawing attention to the language of 'dyadic and group' rather than 'individualistic and communal'. The former better captures the fact that even 'solitary' experience is mediated by schemata formed in relationship with others, while also drawing attention to the fact that specific psychological dynamics arise within groups.

and many hearts one heart' (Augustine, *Io. Ev. Tr.* 39) is rich with potential. In addition to this, Augustine also clearly understands participation in the Word to have a group dimension as human persons are brought into the Church, the Body of Christ.

The second area worthy of further reflection is the relationship between psychotherapy and participation in the Divine Life. While theological engagement with psychotherapy certainly exists, the use of concepts in psychotherapy to understand participation in the Divine Life is rare. Though a relationship has been hinted at (e.g. Stump, 2018: 125-6; Hall and Hall, 2021) it has not been substantially developed by theologians. Moreover, as theology explores the psychological dynamics at work in participation in the Triune Life, it will be important to not only consider pathology-based models of psychotherapy but also strengths-based models.¹¹⁹ For the divine physician is One who not only heals wounds, but prepares us for glory.

It strikes me that greater engagement between psychotherapy and theology would have particular value for the life of the Church, providing a culturally accessible way to communicate theological truths. Participating in the knowing of Godself might seem abstract to cultures which have abandoned participatory metaphysics (or indeed the very concept of metaphysics) but to compare sharing in God's knowing to the revision of representations within therapy provides an image through which people might better understand the nature of deification. Indeed it may be that the image of psychotherapy provides a contemporary expression of Augustine's *medico*, an image that Christ himself uses to describe his ministry (Mk. 2:17; Mt. 9:12; Lk. 5:31).

God the divine physician has been at the heart of much of this thesis. In the introduction I emphasised that behind this thesis was the basic claim that as we come before God we are changed. Held by the Spirit, our past histories surface so that they might be transfigured by Divine Love. Playing with the Word, we come to know God as the One worthy of worship. The One whom heaven and earth declare is worthy 'to receive power, wealth, wisdom, might, honour, glory, and blessing... to Him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be the blessing, the honour, the glory, and the dominion forever and ever' (Rev. 5:12-13). Amen, maranatha.

¹¹⁹ Indeed, Positive Psychology has made a strong argument for the importance of considering not only pathology-cure but strength-building. For classic examples of this within Positive Psychology see, for instance, Seligman (1999; 2019) and Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi (2000). For theological engagement with Positive Psychology see Collicutt (2015), Strawn (2012) and Ambler et al (2017).

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